

Antipas of Pergamos and the Nicolaitans

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, [even] where Satan's seat [is]: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas [was] my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.”
Revelation 2:12-13

The word *martyr* was translated from *martus* which appears in the Bible 34 times and is normally translated *witness*, but is translated *martyr* only three times and *record* twice. It means a witness, but often in a legal or an historical sense. It does not necessarily mean to die although in this text they speak of him being slain.

Many interpret Antipas as a Christian of Pergamos who suffered martyrdom. Pergamos was organized within the framework of the Roman State's syncretism of its religious practice of Qorban¹ with the authority of the Emperors of Rome who were considered as *gods*. Octavius, called Augustus Caesar, was the *Apo Theos* of Rome and *appointed its gods*. To understand what this means one should read the article or pamphlet *There are gods many*.²

The *goddess* of Rome was *worshiped* in Pergamos and a temple was built to honor her in 29 B.C.. These temples³ were important institutions of those societies and change over the years. Often they were a part of a *cestui que charitable* trust established by Rome for the distribution of welfare including forms of health care for the people.

There was a famous Asclepeion, an important healing sanctuaries (Medical Center), where Asclepeios was worshiped. Asclepeios was the god of physicians who were called Asclepiads or "sons of Asclapios". Their symbol was a staff with a snake twined around it. In the modern medical profession the symbol of a staff and snake have been adapted to the caduceus of Hermes. The modern medical practitioner and the Asclapios differ little in their art of being more rational and empirical than supposedly superstitious.

Antipas was a doctor who had studied Dentistry in Pergamos. He became an *episcopate* or Bishop of the Church. This meant he was guiding and teaching other ministers. He served about ten ministers of the Church as their minister. Few today understand what the Church was in those days of social change. The Medical profession at that time strictly coveted their secret knowledge and regulated the way in which you practiced any licensed profession.

The word Greek Antipas can *against all, over against, or opposite*. It may have become a name that he was known as. Antipas offered his medical services and preached the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven freely without charge relying on charity to sustain him and his ministry. There were reports of instant healing of his patients miraculously as he laid his hands upon them. He was becoming not only a *"healer of their flesh, but of their souls too"*. He preached against the heresy of the Nicolaitans and would not take of the gratuities of the established welfare system of Roman altars.

1 The Corban of the Pharisees <http://www.hisholychurch.net/sermon/corban.php>

2 There are gods many <http://www.hisholychurch.net/sermon/godsmany.php>

3 Investing in Diana <http://www.hisholychurch.net/media/books/TKC/TKCi9-2InvestinDiana.html>

The temptation for the church to become a part of the “world” was there from the beginning but the imperial church would not get a firm hold on many until the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. That would last until the seventh century at which time one brand of Christianity would begin to “reform” itself into variations of what it has become today.

Religious philosophies and the twisting of history and the private interpretation of scriptures led to the development of a powerful religious apostasy and the rise of the kings they crowned over men at the turn of the millennium. Millions would be persecuted, murdered and driven from their homes to stamp out the memory of the nature of the ways of the kingdom of God at hand.

"The real destroyers of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits."⁴

Who are the Nicolaitans?

“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”
Rev. 2:6

What was the doctrine of the “Nicolaitans”? There was a connection between them and Balaam. Balaam is from the Hebrew word *Baal*, meaning “lord” or “master” and am references the people. It is an expression of superior rank over the people, contrary to the directive of Christ, the King.

Nike is the Greek word for “conqueror” with *nikos* meaning “victor”. *Laos* is a word for “people”. *Nicolaitan* and *Balam* are two different forms of the same idea. Both include the idea of rank, lordship, and submission to an exercising authority who can judge the people. They are systems that make gods, judging rulers, of men to whom other men must pay homage, homage being fealty and allegiance.

Nicolaitans were people “who were charged with holding the error of Balaam, casting a stumbling block before the church of God by upholding the liberty of eating things sacrificed to idols as well as committing fornication.” They were snared by their own appetite for benefits at the expense of their neighbor. The people are devoured in the civic pot of their own flesh.⁵

The things sacrificed to idols were the welfare programs ministered by the civic or licensed altars of those various governments. One could become eligible for those benefits by an application for membership. This application often included an agreement to serve and contribute regularly to those incorporated altars of the state. There usually was an oath required, under the penalty of the courts, attached to those systems.

Both God’s Kingdom and the kingdoms of the world had ministers (clerks, bureaucrats, clergy, ministers) who managed the institutions or altars of contributions. The problem arises in distinguishing the Nicolaitan or Balam system of clergy and laity from what was established by

⁴ Plutarch.

⁵ “...This city shall not be your caldron, neither shall ye be the flesh in the midst thereof; but I will judge you in the border of Israel...” Eze. 11:3, 11. Exodus 16:3; Proverbs 1:10, 33; Micah 3:1, 4; Zechariah 14:21

Christ. Some systems of faith have a top-down clergy that exercises authority, compel service and contributions, but this is contrary to the Kingdom of God.

It is clear by the Biblical text that Jesus appointed men to serve the people. Those individuals also made appointments of men chosen by the people.⁶ The clergy is simply the clerks of the kingdom, the bondservants of the King, in service to the laity or people who live by the perfect law of liberty with its burden of individual responsibility.

In Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", he praised "the union and discipline of the Christian republic." This personal discipline included the rights and responsibilities of freedom. It was a kingdom that depended on faith, hope, and charity. He also pointed out that "it gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman Empire."

The reason early Christians gathered together was to take care of the business of the kingdom of God. There was religious freedom guaranteed by the Roman constitution. There was no persecution because men loved one another. The problem was the difference between these two systems of government. Christ was turning the world right-side up. To those who did not want to change, they accused His followers of turning the world upside down.

The bureaucrats of Nicolaitan or Baalam system of governance entice the people to give their allegiance, with promises of benefits, but then exercise authority, compel taxes, and make laws and regulations. The Clerks of Christ's Kingdom of God at hand offer their service in a system that only works if we love one another in faith, hope, and charity. Christians would not apply to the Romans nor the Jews who would not follow Christ. They would not touch benefits paid for by the compelled sacrifices of the people. If they did that, they would be Nicolaitans.

"When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat." Proverbs 23:1-3.

Nicolaitans were accused of casting a stumbling block before the church of God by upholding the liberty of eating things sacrificed to idols as well as committing fornication. How did they conquer the people?

Eating of idols was taking the benefits of these welfare systems established by Rome and others⁷ that depended upon extracted contributions rather than pure charity. The word fornication was not at all exclusively referencing sexual intercourse. It was considered fornication to indulge in the membership required to receive such gratuitous benefits of the benevolent but authoritarian benefactors⁸ of the State of Rome. This status changing membership often began with application

6 Acts 6:3 "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men ... whom we may appoint over this business."

7 1 Corinthians 10:18 "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

8 Luke 22:25 "And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: .."

for benefits at the expense of your neighbor and eventually required an oath under penalty of perjury which was forbidden by Jesus.⁹

Bishop Antipas' reputation for condemning the practice of using state sponsored medical care as idolatry and membership in such schemes as fornication enraged the population. In the Kingdom of God the contribution to His government is entirely composed of *free will offering* while in the government of the gentiles intimidation, force and even violence is used to extract the contributions used by those authoritarian benefactors to support the welfare of the people.

Under these authoritarian benefactors and the apostate churches the people are taught to covet their neighbor's goods through the power of their elected or appointed leaders. From kings to prime ministers, presidents to men in congress the people seek gain by relinquishing rights and responsibilities and are provided for through forced contributions.

The State becomes a might provider instead of the Lord.¹⁰ *The voice of the people*¹¹ cries out to consent to become a civil state where men devour one another through offices of power.¹²

Jesus made it clear that our applications or prayers were to be to the Father in Heaven and not the Father of the earth¹³ including Rome which was eventually the adversary of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth¹⁴ as the precepts of that kingdom moved from country to country and Rome began to collapse under the weight of its own corruption.

There has always been a need to establish an efficient system for the welfare of the needy in any healthy society. In the Kingdom of Heaven we should depend on individual charity distributed through out the Kingdom by faith to care for the sick and needy that have no family to care for them. This was seen in the old Testament and the New. This is in part the purpose and mission of His Holy Church and His Church Sacred Purpose of Christ. Nothing is more healing than the responsibility of liberty under God¹⁵ to practice charity by faith in hope. Any system that oppose that liberty granted by God opposes God.

“And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” Luke 10:9

9 Matthew 5:34 “But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.... But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

James 5:12 “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.”

10 Nimrod, The Hunter <http://www.hisholychurch.net/news/articles/hunter.php>

11 Voice of the People <http://www.hisholychurch.net/news/articles/voice.php>

12 Ezekiel 11:3 Which say, [It is] not near; let us build houses: this [city is] the caldron, and we [be] the flesh.

Micah 3:3 Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

13 Call no man on the earth Father <http://www.hisholychurch.net/sermon/fatherabba.php>

14 **The Kingdom of Heaven** <http://www.hisholychurch.net/sermon/kingdomofheaven12.php>

15 Romans 13 <http://www.hisholychurch.net/news/articles/Romans13.html>