

A Closer Look at Pergamos

In this message Pergamos is spoken of as “Satan’s Seat.” When Attalus III (170-133 BC), the Priest-King of the Chaldeans, fled before the conquering Persians to Pergamos and settled there, Satan shifted his capital from Babylon to Pergamos. Attalus III was also known as the last King of Pergamum.

¹The Roman Emperor Domitian in A.D. 83 persecuted the followers of Christ, and Antipas was one of the martyrs (Rev.2:13). Antipas was consecrated “Bishop of Pergamos” by John during the reign of Emperor Domitian. His name means "against all" which could mean that he was standing alone for the faith against the forces of evil.

Soon Satan changed his tactics and began to exalt the Church, and through Constantine united the Church and State, and offered all kinds of inducements for Pagans to come into the Church. Constantine’s motive was more political than religious. He wished to weld his Christian and Pagan subjects into one people, and so consolidate his Empire.

The result of this union was that two false and pernicious doctrines crept into the Church. The first was the “**Doctrine of Balaam,**” and the second the “**Doctrine of the Nicolaitans.**” The latter we have already considered under the Message to the Church at Ephesus. The foothold it had secured in the Church was seen in the First Great Council of the Church held at Nicaea, in A.D. 325. The Council was composed of about 1500 delegates, the laymen outnumbering the Bishops 5 to 1. It was a stormy council, full of intrigue and political methods, and from the supremacy of the “Clergy” over the “Laity” it was evident that the “Doctrine of the Nicolaitans” had secured a strong and permanent foothold.

History

The “Doctrine of Balaam” is disclosed in the story of Balaam found in the Book of Numbers, chapters 22 to 25. When the Children of Israel on their way to Canaan had reached the land of Moab, Balak the king of Moab sent for Balaam the Son of Beor, to come and curse them. When the Lord would not permit Balaam to curse Israel, he suggested to Balak that he invite them to the licentious feasts of “Baal-Peor,” and thus cause Israel to fall into a snare that would so anger the Lord that he would Himself destroy them. This Balak did, and the result was that when the men of Israel went to those sensual feasts and saw the “daughters of Moab,” they committed whoredoms with them, which so kindled God’s anger that He sent a plague that destroyed 42,000 of them.

¹ <http://latter-rain.com/escha/antipas.htm>

Now the word “Pergamos” means “Marriage,” and when the Church entered into a union with the State it was guilty of “Spiritual Fornication” or “Balaamism.”

The “Balaam Method” that Constantine employed was to give to the Bishops of the Church a number of imposing buildings called Basilicas for conversion into churches, lavish them in the gift of money. He also supplied superb vestments for the clergy, and soon the Bishop found himself clad in costly vestments, seated on a lofty throne in the apse of the Basilica, with a marble altar, adorned with gold and gems, on a lower level in front of him.

A sensuous form of worship was introduced, the character of the preaching was changed, and the great Pagan Festivals were adopted with little alteration to please the Pagan members of the church, and attract Pagans to the church. For illustration, the Winter Solstice falls on the 21st day of December, which is the shortest day in the year. It is not until the 25th that the day begins to lengthen, that day was regarded throughout the heathen world as the birthday of the “SUN-GOD.” It was a high festival, celebrated at Rome by the Great Games of the Circus. It was found advisable to change the birthday of the Son of God from an April time frame, (1st day of the month of Nissan when He was probably born), to December 25th, because as He was the “Sun of Righteousness.” What more appropriate birthday could He have than the birthday of the Pagan “sun-god”?

It was at this time that “**POST-MILLENNIAL** Views” had their origin. As the Church had become rich and powerful, it was suggested that by the union of Church and State a condition of affairs would develop that would usher in the Millennium without the return of Christ. Since some scriptural support was needed for such a doctrine, it was claimed that the Jews had been cast off “forever,” and that all the prophecies of Israel’s future glory were intended for the Church. (*See note below)

This “Period” extends from the accession of Constantine A.D. 313 to A. D. 538, when Boniface III was crowned “Universal Bishop.”

* Note: The teaching that the church has replaced Israel is known today as “Replacement Theology” and is a false doctrine or teaching.

Replacement Theology basically teaches that the church has completely replaced Israel in God’s plan. Adherents of Replacement Theology believe that the Jews are no longer God’s chosen people and God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel. There are really only two views:

1. The Church is a continuation of Israel (Replacement Theology)
2. The Church is totally different and distinct from Israel

Teaching

Excerpts from the
"Doctrine of Balaam"

A Teaching Widely Taught and Accepted Throughout Christendom Today

²By Arlen L. Chitwood

The Doctrine



he doctrine of Balaam is one of the most widely taught doctrines in the Church today. Christians know -- as their counterparts in the Church in Pergamos did that they have been saved by grace through faith, and nothing can change that which has been brought to pass through their conversion experience. They now possess spiritual life, which can never be taken from them; and, because of the unchangeable nature of the life which they presently possess, they reason that they can conduct their lives in any manner which they choose, and it will make no difference.

“The main facet of the doctrine of Balaam which is being taught in Churches (although under a different name) today is the teaching that future blessings and rewards have been set aside for every Christian solely on the basis of Christ's finished work on Calvary and the Christian's positional standing "in Christ." In this respect, all Christians – **regardless of their conduct during the present time** -- will receive crowns and positions of power and authority with Christ in the kingdom.”

“However, that which is clearly taught throughout the Word of God is to the contrary. The Israelites did not sin with immunity, and neither can Christians. Sin in the camp of Israel resulted in the Israelites being overthrown in the wilderness, short of the goal of their calling. And it will be no different for Christians.”

“Balaam suggested intermarriage with the Moabites, eating food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality as the method to destroy Israel. This is the doctrine of Balaam, to combine the things of God with the ways of the world.

This was happening in Pergamum, the church was permitting practices of the pagan Greeks to be introduced into the church.”

² <http://lampbroadcast.org/plots/phtm6/DoctrineB.html>

2 Corinthians 6:14, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”

“These groups would later be known as the *Gnostics*. Today, a great example of Gnosticism is *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. Many Christians are embracing a novel with a different Jesus. The Jesus of Gnosticism was married to Mary Magdalene, a Temple prostitute, and had a child named Sarah. Dan Brown presents this as fact, and many who might call themselves Christians are embracing this book. The same was occurring here in this Church.”

“Sexual immorality - This proto-Gnostic group was teaching sexual freedom. The Greeks at their various temples had temple prostitutes. This church allowed those who taught sexual promiscuity to be part of the leadership.”

“These very issues plague the church today, and again some churches teach the permissibility of sexual freedom, including gay rights, marriage and sexual liberty.”

“The reward for righteous living (rewards laid up in heaven)”

2 Timothy 4:7-8, “⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

“The reward for living the “Doctrine of Balaam” (loss of rewards)”

"...and I took the crown that was upon his head" (II Sam. 1:10; *cf.* Rev. 3:11).

1 Corinthians 10:21, “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.”

2 John 1:8, “Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.”

Revelation 3:11, "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”