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What Is the Origin of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:6, 15)?

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Nicolaitan means "a follower of Nicolas." It comes from two Greek words, *nikos* and *laos*. *Nikos* means "conqueror" or "destroyer," and *laos* means "people." The original Nicolas was a conqueror or destroyer of the people!

Some people believe that the original Nicolas was Nimrod—the original archrebel, who conquered the people and founded a man-made civilization within two centuries after the Flood ([Genesis 10:8-12](#))! While he was alive, Nimrod put himself in the place of God, or as the biblical text puts it, "he was a mighty hunter before the LORD" (verse 9). When he died, his admirers continued to worship him as a divine hero. They called him "Baal," a name found throughout the Old Testament, meaning "master" or "lord."

Nimrod also had other names. One, commonly used throughout Asia Minor, was "Santa" (see *Lempriere's Classical Dictionary*.) "Santa Claus" is but a shortened form of "Santa Nicholas" or "Saint Nicholas." Many unknowingly honor this Nicholas even in our day by observing customs associated with December 25. [Christmas](#) originally was the *Saturnalia* or birthday of Nimrod. Of course, these customs handed down from ancient paganism have been renamed and made to appear innocent and good!

Others think that the Nicolas mentioned in Revelation 2 is the man called "Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch," ordained a deacon early in the church's history in [Acts 6:1-6](#). Writings of the time say he later came to follow Gnostic teachings and became an ascetic, and many followed his new [doctrine](#). For further information on this Nicolas and his affect on the church, please see [Nicolaitanism Today](#).

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