

39. The word “footstool” completes the three-part protasis. Here is our expanded translation for verses 2 and 3 [For v. 2, see visual: James 2.2-EXT]:

NOTE: There are 3 imperative moods in v. 3, all made by the reversionistic usher and underlined in blue. These will not be included among our ongoing survey.

James 2:3 and you kowtow to the one who is carrying his flashy multicolored mantle and toga, and you say in a pleasant voice, [3d 3CC] “You sit here in this place of honor,” and you say officiously to the beggar, “Stand there or sit down by my footstool,” (EXT)

40. We have now completed the protasis which introduces three, third-class conditions: **(A) Condition #1:** If an aristocrat enters into the synagogue who appears to be wealthy and is also a man to whom you are obligated; **(B) Condition #2:** and there also enters a beggar in filthy clothes and is also a friend; and **(3) Condition #3:** You kowtow to the aristocrat by giving him a choice seat but talk down to the beggar by ordering him to sit on the floor.
41. The precise definition of such a conditional sentence follows:

A conditional clause (also called a *protasis*) is an adverbial clause, typically introduced by *if* or *unless*, establishing the condition in a conditional sentence. Usually this is a direct condition, indicating that the main clause (also called the *apodosis*) is dependent on the condition being fulfilled.⁵

42. This brings us to the apodosis which occurs in:

James 2:4 [the apodosis] have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? (NASB)

1. The protasis has described the congregation of this synagogue to be in the advanced stages of reversionism. This is clarified by the opening verb, the aorist passive indicative of **διακρίνω** (*diakrínō*): “to discriminate.”
2. James is the pastor of the Messianic Jews of Jerusalem. He has given a sermon to the congregation by describing the mental attitudes of a fictitious usher toward two men, a wealthy aristocrat and a poor beggar.
3. The mental-attitude breakdown by the usher is stated in the apodosis beginning with the verb, *diakrínō*. This refers to the collective decline over time of the doctrinal inventory of parishioners.
4. The verb means “to differentiate by separating; to conclude that there is a difference; to make a distinction; differentiate; concede superiority to someone.”⁶

⁵ Bryan A. Garner, *The Chicago Guide to Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 166.

⁶ Bauer, “διακρίνω,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 231.



5. In the aorist indicative it means to be divided against oneself; to waver, distinguish, to make differences. The best word to use is one that has both positive and negative applications: discriminate. Here are definitions:

Discriminate. To make a clear distinction. To make distinctions on the basis of class or category without regard to individual merit, especially show prejudice on the basis of ethnicity, gender or similar social factor. To perceive or notice the distinguishing features of.

Discrimination. The ability or power to see or make fine distinctions; discernment. Treatment or consideration based on class or category, such as race or gender, rather than individual merit; partiality or prejudice.⁷

6. There is absolutely nothing wrong with discrimination done objectively. When a person is objective, he is able to distinguish between competing ideas, products for purchase, sources of information, character of individuals, or groupings of biblical categories. Different people may choose differently, but their choices are based on legitimately possessed inventories of ideas.
7. We discern that the Bible is to be interpreted literally unless the passage instructs otherwise. Others discern that the Bible is to be interpreted allegorically unless the passage instructs otherwise. The two can get along when the principle of “free exercise” is observed and applied.
8. There is absolutely nothing right about discrimination when done subjectively. In a church, those who enter the building and auditorium are there because they are members of the royal family of God or, in some cases, are unbelievers who, under common grace, were decreed to enter for the opportunity to hear the gospel.
9. Grace is God’s policy for the human race. We each are saved by grace through faith, not by works lest anyone should boast.
10. There are numerous distinctions among those who attend a church, and many are obvious. Not a car on the parking lot is just like another, if so, the colors are most likely different. No one wears exactly the same clothing. Few if any eat exactly the same food at halftime. These are called personal habits, idiosyncrasies, diets, and opinions.
11. No one in the congregation has the same historical inventory of ideas. Age, experience, and opinion play a large part in these differences. Not all are employed; some may be retired while others are students. Among the employed no one performs exactly the same task.

⁷ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. (2016), s.vv. “discriminate, discrimination.”



12. And in our passage, one man is an aristocrat while another is hoi polloi. Mr. Usher is blindly ignoring that Mr. Beggar is a believer in Jesus Christ as Mr. Got Rocks may be as well. Conversely, both may be unbelievers or one or the other may be saved with the other unsaved.
13. The church is not the place where obvious differences among those in attendance have any importance. All believers in attendance are members of the royal family of God, brothers and sisters in the faith, and recipients of all the blessings and accouterments associated with the heavenly *políteuma*.⁸
14. *Políteuma* is part of a word group in the Greek language and is itself a hapax legomenon, used only once in the New Testament. The word group includes the nouns, **πόλις** (*polis*): “city,” **πολιτάρχης** (*politárchēs*): “a city ruler,” **πολιτεία** (*politeía*): “citizenship,” and the verb **πολιτεύω** (*politeúō*): “to live as a free citizen.”
15. Those who have placed their personal faith in Jesus Christ for salvation are members of what Paul refers to as citizens of the heavenly *políteuma*. This is a perfect illustration by which Paul uses the relationship between the Roman government and the residents in the Greek colony of Philippi:

Paul seeks to motivate his readers to imitate him and those who walk like him by painting two pictures: His dark picture of those who set their minds on earthly things portrays their future destruction; his radiant picture of us who belong to a heavenly state depicts the future triumphant return of our Savior and the transformation of our bodies by his power. From Paul’s eschatological perspective, we are already citizens of the heavenly order of reality. Our *citizenship in heaven* is not based upon wishful thinking of an imagination of future possibilities, but on *the righteousness that comes from God*. By God’s judicial decision we belong to the heavenly community.

The term *citizenship (políteuma)* connotes an active, “constitutive force regulating its citizens.” By extension the term refers to the state and the citizens under the sovereign power of the government. According to Aristotle, “The government (*políteuma*) is everywhere sovereign in the state.”⁹ Paul’s use of the word emphasizes the membership of Christians in the heavenly kingdom governed by Christ.

⁸ In the New Testament, the state itself, community, and commonwealth, used metaphorically of Christians in reference to their spiritual community and their status as citizens of heaven. Philippians 3:20, “For our citizenship (πολίτευμα) is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB).

⁹ Note: Aristotle’s statement is only partially cited. The complete sentence reads, “The government is everywhere sovereign in the state, and the constitution is in fact the government. For example, in democracies the people are supreme, but in oligarchies, the few; and, therefore, we say that these two forms of government also are different” (Aristotle, in “Politics,” book 3 in “The Works of Aristotle,” vol. 2, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins [Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952], 9:475, 6:11–12).



Our governing power, our executive authority is in heaven. The implication of asserting our citizenship in the heavenly state is that we are a “colony of heavenly citizens” here on earth. This concept of belonging to a community of foreigners who pledge allegiance to the government in their home country became a metaphor for living in exile.

[Paul’s] terminology carries significance for the church in the Roman colony called Philippi. Because Augustus conferred on Philippi all the rights and privileges of being governed under the Roman form of constitutional government, Philippi was on an equal footing to cities in Italy. The official language of Philippi was Latin, the language of Rome. The fact that the majority of inscriptions found in Roman Philippi are in Latin confirms the Roman orientation of the citizens of Philippi. In contrast to the allegiance of Roman Philippians to their governing power, their *políteuma*, is in heaven.

The close connection between Roman colonial language and Paul’s terminology comes into even sharper focus in the next phrase: *we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ*. In the Roman Empire, Caesar Augustus was acclaimed to be the “savior of the world” because he restored order and peace not only in Italy but also throughout the provinces and regions under his sovereign rule. Paul’s use of the term *Savior* in his letter to Christians in Roman Philippi “sharply opposes Jesus Christ as Lord to the imperial savior.” By applying the imperial title *Savior* to Jesus Christ, “Paul explicitly (and we must assume deliberately) speaks of Jesus in language which echoes, and hence deeply subverts, language in common use among Roman imperial subjects to describe Caesar.” Paul redirects the focus of his readers from the savior in Rome, Caesar Augustus, to the Savior in Heaven, Jesus Christ the Lord.¹⁰

16. Paul uses the peculiar situation at Philippi to illustrate what we may refer to as dual citizenship. The believers in the church at Philippi were citizens of the Roman Empire in their temporal lives, but also citizens of the heavenly community because of their membership in the royal family of God.
17. This is true for every believer in the Church Age. Presently, we are citizens of the United States of America while, at the same time, we are citizens of the heavenly community of believers.
18. Therefore, the city and state in which you live may be characterized as your earthly *políteuma*. The same is true for the reversionistic usher who is a citizen of Palestine but typifies so many believers throughout history.

¹⁰ G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* in *The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, gen. ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 268–69, 269–70.