

VI. Laws of Divine Establishment and the Royal Family Honor Code: 20th-Century Zeitgeist: The Contorted Period

It is a compound word: *zeit* means “time” and *geist* means “spirit,” thus, literally, “the spirit of the times.”

The various dictionaries give similar definitions but they are different enough to warrant a quote from each:

Websters Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “zeitgeist”:

the general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “zeitgeist”:

The spirit which marks the thought or feeling of a period or an age.

American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. “zeitgeist”:

the taste and outlook characteristic of a period or generation.

The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms, s.v. “zeitgeist”:

refers to the prevailing mood or attitude of a given period.

The most detailed examination of the word’s use is found in:

Kohl, Herbert. *From Archetype to Zeitgeist*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1992; 161-62:

Geist refers to mind as well as spirit--to intellectual and cultural aspects of experience, which are thought to exist above and beyond individuals. The geist supposedly manifests itself in all aspects of human experience: in games, songs, musical and artistic forms, in literature and poetry, as well as mathematics and sciences. The deepest expressions of human thought and feelings, as well as the most ordinary activities of daily life, are supposedly emanations from the geist.

German idealists claimed that each historical time period (the zeit) had its own spirit which they called the zeitgeist. Thus the modern period (late 19th and early 20th centuries) had a zeitgeist that differed from the zeitgeist of the Romantic period (late 18th and early 19th centuries).

The (modern period) can be partially characterized by a glorification of rationality and a belief in the perfection of humankind through the use of technology. The (Romantic period) longed for a return to nature and liberation from the rational. It glorified the irrational and the unconscious and elevated feelings over reason.

J. N. Hook's, *The Grand Panjandrum* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), p. 324:

. . . the existent moral, intellectual, religious, or cultural state: <The twentieth century is so varied that no one can catch its Zeitgeist in a few words.>

This is true but I will give it a try: The Contorted Period.

And such was the period in which the believers at Philippi found themselves at the time Paul wrote this epistle.

Their duty was to present themselves “*blameless and undiluted by evil*” so as not to be “*a disgrace to society*.”

They are to accomplish this task “*in the midst of a crooked, perverted, and contorted Zeitgeist*.”

We have learned that the word Zeitgeist contains many characteristics of a collective national conscience: the intellectual, moral, and cultural climate; the thought or feeling; the taste and outlook; the prevailing mood or attitude; the existent moral, intellectual, religious, or cultural state of an era, period, age, or generation.

Philippians 2:15 [Corrected Translation] - In order that [purpose clause] you yourselves might become [potential for historical impact] blameless [establishment integrity] even undiluted by evil [Christian integrity], students under the discipline and authority of God [genuine humility], not a disgrace to society [person of honor], in the midst of a crooked, perverted, and contorted Zeitgeist.

We have recently learned that Jesus Christ keeps a running account of every believer's soul inventory for the purpose of blessing or discipline to the client nation.

Revelation 2:23 – Furthermore, I will execute her followers by means of the sin unto death and so all the churches will know that I am He Who constantly inventories the emotions and the stream of consciousness, and I will impose punishment to each one of you according to your production from the Cosmic System.

There were many believers in the Roman Empire who were a part of the “*crooked, perverted, and contorted Zeitgeist*” problem.

Within this environment, these loyal Philippian believers perform the greatest service a citizen can offer to his client nation, they positively influence the Empire's Zeitgeist.

The manner in which they have this historical impact is revealed in verse 15's final clause which begins with the proposition: *en* + the pronoun *hos* - “*among whom.*”

Refers to the citizens of the Roman Empire who presently influence the Zeitgeist in a “*crooked, perverted, and contorted*” manner.

In the midst of this environment, the Philippian believers are said to continuously: *phaino* - “*keep on shining.*”

present - Customary; denotes what habitually occurs when mature believers have historical impact in their generation. All mature believers, whether they realize it or not, have definite historical impact.

middle - Indirect; the mature believers at Philippi are the agents who produce the action of influencing their client nation's Zeitgeist.

indicative - Declarative; historical reality of the fact that these believers impacted their own generation as well as others through blessing by association.

TXL: “*among whom you keep shining.*”

Paul now gives an analogy which describes the manner in which they keep shining.

We will, in turn, be reminded of a recent study which will immediately explain how invisible historical impact is accomplished.

The analogy begins with the comparative particle: *hos* - “*as*”; followed by the plural noun: *phoster* - “*luminary; light-giving source; star. Also, splendor, radiance.*”

The Philippians are compared with the stars of heaven which shine brightly within the darkest of nights.

They are light-giving sources which illuminate the darkness of a corrupt world system.

This corrupt world system is embodied in their generation by the government and the people of the Roman Empire. Their light keeps on shining: *en + kosmos* - “*in the world.*”