

Introduction; Glossary of the Privileged Class: Dictionary Definitions; the Royal Aristocrat: Believers Are Superior in Rank, Privileges, Wealth, & Intellect to that of Unbelievers

The 2008 Shreveport Bible Conference

Politeuma: The Heritage of the Privileged Class

East Ridge Bible Church

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He who will not go through the process of learning Bible doctrine subjects himself to the hazards of living a spiritual life of conjecture, sentiment, and emotion.

1. Introduction:

God has provided a perfect plan for every believer in human history. That plan is three-phased: salvation, the believer in time, and the believer in eternity.

Our personal recognition of how we fit into this plan *is* the meaning of life and the reason for learning the Word of God. It is through Bible study that we learn the plan, live the plan, and love the plan. To accomplish these objectives requires the believer to utilize spiritual assets granted at salvation.

Phase two of the plan requires the believer to prepare himself to do battle in the Invisible War in order to contribute positively in our Lord's victory in this Angelic Conflict.

This war is spiritual, the battlefield is our souls, and the artillery is thought. Only those who have the proper credentials may fight in this war; only those who successfully utilize their unique provisions will be declared winners. These credentials and provisions are issued at the moment of salvation to all who believe, but they do not become operative until the believer accesses them through the power of the Holy Spirit and the inculcation of Bible doctrine.

Efficient and rapid advance to front-rank status is facilitated when the believer recognizes that he is a member of a privileged class.

Believers must get over the human viewpoint notion that there is something wrong or evil about having privilege and prosperity. We often find that those who lack such things are the ones most loudly assailing those who do.

Privilege and prosperity are good things. Why magnify and aggrandize being without any advantages or the enjoyment of success? This is not what God desires for the believer. Privilege and prosperity are good things. It is God's desire to bless us exceedingly abundantly:

Ephesians 3:20 - He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.

Depravity and poverty are not symbols of a spiritual life, they are the fate of believers who fail to utilize their assets. And to emphasize how the human viewpoint of the "prosperity gospel" intrudes into such a statement, it must be understood that in the Christian way of life depravity refers to a soul in reversionism and poverty refers to an inventory of ideas absent divine viewpoint.

The devil's world has its categories of privilege and prosperity but so does the plan of God. Those who believe in Christ instantly become members of a heavenly aristocracy: a royal family that possesses privileges, opportunities, assets, and responsibilities that stagger the imagination.

The advantages enjoyed by a prosperous client nation are under direct assault today by emissaries of Satan. They wish to deconstruct our culture, which is based on traditional standards, in order to transform it into a collectivist global community.

Regardless of what happens to this nation in the future; regardless of what happens to its people; the fact remains that believers, although not immune to the vagaries of national upheaval, possess advantages that the hoi polloi do not.

We are royal aristocrats; we are elite nobility; we are the privileged class. This study will justify these claims.

2. Glossary of the Privileged Class:¹

1. Privileged: One who is not subject to the usual rules or penalties because of some special circumstance.

¹ John P. Bethel (ed.), *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1958); Frederick C. Mish (ed.), *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1085); and William Morris (ed.), *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. (Geneva: Ill.: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1971).

Romans 8:1 - Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2. Privilege: To invest with a peculiar right, immunity, or prerogative. Rights given or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor.

John 1:12 - But to all who have received Him—to those who believe in His name—to them He has given the right to become the children of God.

3. Prerogative: A right to exercise a power or privilege to the exclusion of others. Discretionary powers belonging to royalty.

Hebrews 4:16 - Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need.

4. Advantage: Any condition, circumstance, or opportunity favorable to accomplishing any desired end. That which is gained from superiority of position.

1 John 3:1 - See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us: that we would be called children of God. And that is what we are! For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

v. 2 - Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, and we shall see Him as He is.

5. Empowerment: The delegation of legal power and official authority to accomplish an end.

Ephesians 1:18 - I pray that the eyes of your *kardia* may be enlightened in order that you may know what is the confidence of your election and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

v. 19 a - and what is the surpassing greatness [δύναμις, *dunamis*: omnipotence; intrinsic power] of His power [ἐνέργεια, *energeia*: active or operational power] delegated to us who believe in accordance with the ruling power [κράτος, *kratos*: manifest power, i.e., expressed in Scripture] of His inner power [ισχύς, *ischus*: functional power, i.e., resident in the believer's soul].

NOTE: There are four words that relate to categories of divine power in this verse all of which have been made available to the believer for execution of the plan of God in time.

6. Commission: A formal written authority granting certain powers and authorizing the performance of certain duties. Authority to act for and in the place of another.

2 Corinthians 5:20 - We are ambassadors [πρεσβεύω, presbeuō: an emissary or envoy; “persons who are to deliver a certain message or are commissioned with executing a certain task”²] for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Hebrews 5:1 -Every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God ...

1 Peter 2:9 - You are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people possessed by God, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

7. Opportunity: A favorable situation wherein one can take advantage of options for advance and progress:

Matthew 6:31 - “Stop worrying [μη οδν plus the aorist subjunctive of μεριμνάω, mē oun merimnaō, forms an imperative of prohibition], saying, ‘What will we eat, what will be drink, what will we wear?’

v. 32 - “For the Gentiles eagerly strive for these things; but your heavenly Father has always known that you need all of them.

v. 33 - “Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness [δικαιοσύνη, dikaiosunē: imputed at salvation], and all these things shall be provided to you for your advantage.”

NOTE: Logistical grace support is provided by God to every believer. It is the equal opportunity of each believer’s election to privilege that sustains him for the advance to spiritual maturity.

8. Resources: A source of supply and support; a natural source of wealth and revenue; that upon which one depends for problem-solving:

2 Peter 1:3 - His divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life [temporal] and godliness [spiritual] through the knowledge of Him who elected us to His very own glory and virtue.

v. 4 - By these He has granted to us extremely valuable and fantastic promises [ἐπάγγελμα, epangelma], so that through them you may become partners in the divine endowment ...

9. Inheritance: That which is derived from an ancestor; that which is transmissible to an heir. A possession received by grace. Applies to that which passes from parents to children.

1 Peter 1:3 - Blessed be the God, even the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has given us new birth from above [ἀναγεννάω, anagennaō: to be born from above, i.e., salvation] through a living confidence in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

² Horst Balz and Gerald Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 3:147.

1 Peter 1:4 - that is, confidence in an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for you.

10. Birthright: Property that comes to one by right of birth. Any privilege granted a person by virtue of his birth.

Ephesians 1:3 - Worthy of praise and glorification is the God, even the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing [the temporal and eternal escrow accounts] in heavenly places [depository: the place where something is deposited especially for safekeeping, i.e., our escrow accounts] in Christ [Depository: the Person to whom something is entrusted, i.e., the escrow accounts].

3. The Royal Aristocrat:

The individual who has been endowed with the above qualities, attributes, assets, and possessions may be characterized in many ways. The English language contains many words to describe individuals who are members of a privileged class.

It should be noted that a person of privilege has inherent responsibilities toward those who do not share his estate in life or his position in society. He must first of all maintain the system which allows him to prosper. When this environment is properly maintained all those outside the privileged class are blessed by association. This emphasizes the function of the priesthood.

Second, he must seek to lead, direct, and encourage those outside the system to join him inside it. Such recruitment enlarges the number of the privileged class. This emphasizes the function of ambassadorship.

The word which describes the privileged class is:

Aristocrat: Those regarded as superior to the rest in rank, wealth, or intellect. A person having the tastes, opinions, manners, and characteristics of the upper class.

Rank is a position of dignity, eminence, or excellence. A number of persons forming a distinct class in the social scale, or in any organized body.

Hebrews 2:9 -We see Jesus, having been made lower than the angels for a brief time [the Incarnation], now crowned with glory and honor [superior rank over all creation] because he suffered spiritual death, so that by God's grace, He should taste death as a substitute for all.

NOTE: In His resurrected humanity, Jesus Christ possesses the glory and honor associated with divine royalty and promoted to a station higher than the angels as noted in:

Hebrews 1:4 -Having become superior to the entire angelic creation, Jesus Christ has inherited a more excellent name than they.

v. 5 - For to which of the angles did He ever say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me.

v. 6 - And when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He Says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

NOTE: We are able to compare these two passages from Hebrews with yet another from the same context:

Hebrews 2:11 - The One sanctifying [**Jesus Christ**] and the ones being sanctified [**Church Age believers**] are all from one Father. For this reason He is not ashamed to call them members of the family.

This family rank results in a number of things including the power and authority of believers to judge angels, noted in:

1 Corinthians 6:3a - Do you not know that we will judge angels?

From these passages we are able to conclude with this rationale: If Jesus Christ is superior to the angels; if we are considered by Him to be family; if we are to judge angels, then it follows, a fortiori, that with even greater reason, we are superior to the unbeliever who is yet unregenerate humanity. Further, we have superior wealth to the unbeliever's due to our escrow blessing noted in Ephesians 1. That we have superior intellect to that of the unbeliever's is outlined in 1 Corinthians 2.