

39. This usher, or chazzan, of the synagogue is presented as a person in the throes of advanced reversionism. He gives favor to the one in ostentatious attire while treating rudely the poor man whose clothes are worn out and threadbare. Our Lord's description of the Pharisees may be applied to this usher's decision to seat the aristocrat up front:

Matthew 23:6 "They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues."
(NASB)

40. The word "footstool" completes the three-part protasis. Here is our expanded translation for verses 2 and 3:

James 2:2 If [the protasis of three, third-class conditions] a nobleman [ἀνὴρ (*anēr*): aristocrat] enters into [εἰσέρχομαι (*eisérchomai*): 1st 3CC] the synagogue of Messianic Christians wearing golden rings on all his fingers and dressed in a dazzling, expensive tunic girded with a belt studded with fine gems, and there also enters [2d 3CC] a beggar in filthy clothes,

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.

v. 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)

41. 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.
42. 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.¹⁵

¹⁵ Bryan A. Garner, *The Chicago Guide to Grammar, Usage, and Punctuation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 166.



43. 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 made abundantly clear with 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.”¹⁶
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.¹⁷

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.

¹⁶ Bauer, “διακρίνω,” in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 231.

¹⁷ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. (2016), s.vv. “discriminate, discrimination.”



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 God allowed 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.
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 well may. Conversely, both may be unbelievers or one or the other may be saved or 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*.¹⁸
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.”

¹⁸ 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).

