



Clanking Chains: Self-Righteous Arrogance: Introduction: Thomas Sowell's "Anointed vs. the Benighted"

X. Self-Righteous Arrogance:

A. Introduction:

- 1- A brief definition of self-righteous arrogance is provided by the Colonel in:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Christian Integrity*. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1997), 152:

Self-Righteous Arrogance. The devil incorporates all possible good into his cosmic system ("Satan disguises himself as an angel of light," 2 Corinthians 11:14.), attempting to establish his own Millennium and prove himself "like the Most High [God]" (Isaiah 14:14). Satan distorts the virtue-morality ordained by divine establishment into self-righteous arrogance. The self-righteous, legalistic Christian believes his experiences and achievements give him special standing with God, but "there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11). God deals with all mankind by the same standards of justice. Self-righteous people often become crusaders, imposing their prejudices on others. Haughty and vain, they judge anyone less perfect than themselves (Matthew 7:1-2, "Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.").

- 2- Self-righteousness implies that an individual assumes himself to be righteous in his own estimation. This righteousness is constructed on his own system of values arrived at through rationalism or it can be developed by submission to a set of standards devised by others.
- 3- True righteousness is submission to the only righteous standard with virtue and that is the Word of God. When a believer functions under true righteousness he does not judge others from that standard since the responsibility of judgment under this system is delegated by God to Jesus Christ
- 4- A self-righteous believer deemphasizes making the righteous standard a guideline for his own behavior but uses it instead as a means of judging the behavior of others.
- 5- The unbeliever submits to a false righteousness that develops under self-righteous arrogance and uses it as a source of power to influence, manipulate, and control others.
- 6- Those who assume the moral high ground automatically conclude they are superior to anyone who does not measure up to their standards.
- 7- Thus, they consider themselves to be "the anointed" and those who do not measure up are "the benighted" who must be instructed by them to do better. If the benighted refuse to follow then the anointed have no compunction about forcing compliance.
- 8- The Scripture provides an excellent example of the anointed self-righteous unbeliever and the Lord's evaluation of them:

Matthew 23:13 - "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

- 9- His scathing evaluation of these religious bullies is the subject of eight "woes" found in Matthew 23:13-36.
- 10- Self-righteousness, one of the manifestations of cosmic arrogance, is a conceited conviction that one's own righteousness is superior to that of others and thus justifies intolerance of them.



- 11- The proponents of progressivism, cultural Marxism, and utopian democracy may be classified as self-righteous elitists who are convinced they have a vision that will heal the world's ills, do away with poverty and disease, and make war obsolete.
- 12- Thomas Sowell refers to these types as The Anointed, and to those they wish to convert as The Benighted. One who is anointed is defined by:

The New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v. "anoint":

 - figurative nominate or choose as successor to or leading candidate for a position; *officially anointed heir.*
- 13- Sowell refers to those whom we have described as cultural Marxists, revolutionaries, or progressives as The Anointed, meaning that they have nominated and chosen themselves as the illuminati who know best how we all should live and intend to see to it that we all get around to their way of thinking.
- 14- On the other hand, Sowell refers to the ones The Anointed intend to lead to their Golden Age of utopian democracy as The Benighted, defined as follows by:

The New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v. "benighted":

In a state of pitiful or contemptible intellectual or moral ignorance, typically owing to a lack of opportunity; overtaken by darkness.
- 15- Sowell refers to those whom we have described as traditionalists, reactionaries, or conservatives as The Benighted, meaning that they have been identified by The Anointed as ignorant *hoi polloi* whose frame of reference is hopelessly isolated in the past and who tenaciously cling to the authoritarian standards of Western culture and the traditions of Christian theology.
- 16- Dr. Sowell classifies these competing worldviews as the Tragic Vision versus the Anointed Vision. The contrasts he draws between the two are helpful in our understanding of the cultural conflict that rages between the Frankfurt philosophers and Western European traditionalists.