

Glossary: Nobility: "Eugenes": Cosmopolitan Corinth: Not Many Noble Called but All Spiritual Nobility; Royalty: the Royal Law; Propriety; Rectitude: Noah Webster

NIV Archaeological Study Bible. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 1887:

This city was destroyed in 146 B.C. by the Roman general Lucius Mummius \mam'-ē-as\. While some inhabitants stayed in the vicinity of Corinth, the city did not rise to prominence again until 44 B.C., when Julius Caesar refounded it as a Roman colony.

The new city was Roman in its administration and architecture, with the majority of its settlers being freedmen. The natural advantages of the site, coupled with the entrepreneurial vigor of the freedmen, soon led to renewed prosperity. The Corinth of the New Testament era was reputed to be one of the most beautiful cities of the Greco-Roman world. Its importance in trade and its status as a Roman administrative center made Corinth a significant city in Paul's day.

Corinth had a mixed, cosmopolitan populace, as reflected in its many religious shrines. Visitors to Corinth can still find archaeological evidence of votive offerings made to Asclepius [Ἀσκληπιός, *Asklēpios*] la-sklē-pē-os\, the god of medicine, in gratitude for healings.

Corinth was home to a famous temple to Aphrodite that supposedly employed 1,000 temple prostitutes. While this number may be an exaggeration, scholars can hardly doubt that this port city supported a thriving prostitution industry, probably centered around such a shrine.

The cosmopolitan nature of Corinth is reflected in the fact that it also had numerous places of worship for foreign deities, such as a shrine to the Egyptian goddess Isis—as well as a Jewish synagogue.

With its cultural diversity, wealth, paganism and infamous debauchery, Corinth was perhaps not the place onlookers would have expected the church to flourish. Yet it was precisely here that Paul enjoyed one of his most successful ministries—and also here that he experienced some of his greatest challenges with early converts to Christianity.

Thus the word *eugenēs*: “nobility, well-born, aristocrat,” was found in short supply in the Corinthian church as Paul’s opening comments to his first epistle to them make clear:

1 Corinthians 1:26 - Fellow believers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many of you were influential; not many of you were of noble birth [εὐγενής, *eugenēs*].

v. 27 - But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise [human viewpoint of the unbeliever]; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong [those in positions of authority].

The Lord refers to Himself as nobility in the parable of the ten minas [a denomination of money equal to 100 drachmas and amounted to about \$17] in Luke 19:11-27. The message of this parable instructs the people who were following Him that the kingdom was not going to commence immediately but instead would follow a period of time during which believers were to take their divine operating assets and produce divine good with them. The parable opens with this comment:

Luke 19:12 - So Jesus said, “A nobleman [εὐγενής, *eugenēs*] went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.”

All believers are noblemen by spiritual birth but they function as noblemen when they grow in grace and produce divine good as was the case for the believers of the church at Berea in:

Acts 17:10 - The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

v. 11 - Now these were more noble-minded [εὐγενής, eugenēs: to have nobility of thought] than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

Notice that those with nobility of thought do not accept the teachings of Paul without doubt. They are positive to his teachings but are wise enough to understand that the veracity of his teachings is confirmed by Scripture thus they studied the Word daily to verify what they had been taught.

When I teach you I begin with exegesis noting the word or phrase being studied in its original language with grammatical analysis from which is developed an English translation that best represents the meaning expressed by the author. From this we develop principles and doctrines that conform to the hermeneutics of dispensational, infralapsarian theology.

The next word we note in our glossary of spiritual aristocracy is:

5. **Royalty:** A person of royal station, birth; kinship [WNCD-2]. A king, queen, or other person of royal lineage. Monarchs and their families collectively. The lineage of a king or queen [AHD/EL].

The Scripture speaks of a “royal law” that is to be upheld by the believer toward fellow members of the royal family:

James 2:8 - If you are fulfilling the royal law [βασιλικός νόμος, basilikos nomos] according to the Scripture [**Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31a**], “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing a right thing in a right way.

Note that the royal law is functional in three dispensations although not described as “royal” until the Church Age. The mandate is a part of the Mosaic Law, cited in Leviticus 19:18 in association with the mandate to never seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow believer. The application requires the Jewish believer to put the case before the Supreme Court of Heaven and leave it there for divine prosecution. This is applied in the New Testament by the use of unconditional love directed toward those who have wronged you in some way and having absolute confidence in the justice of God to handle the case as He sees fit.

In the Incarnation, the Lord mandated the use of the royal law to His disciples and demonstrated it on the cross when he willingly became the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the entire human race motivated by unconditional love.

The commandment for the Church Age believer is found in James 2:8 where the adjective “royal”—*basilikos*—elevates the virtue to a function of spiritual aristocrats toward all mankind.

6. **Propriety:** Consonance with established principles, rules or customs. Propriety in conduct, in a moral sense, consists in its conformity to the moral law. Propriety in behavior consists in conformity to the established rules of decorum [AD/EL]. Conformity with good manners; correctness of behavior or morals; decency [OED]. The customs and manners of polite society; decorum: a standard of what is proper or correct, as in conduct, and, often, implies extreme formality in observance [WNCD-2].

James 1:25 - The one who looks intently at the perfect law of liberty [the mandates that provide spiritual freedom], and applies it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be happy in what he does.

7. **Rectitude:** Undeviating adherence to moral standards and uprightness. Correctness of judgment and procedure [WNCD-2]. Morally correct behavior or thinking [NOAD]. In *morality*, rightness of principle or practice; uprightness of mind; exact conformity to truth, or to the rules prescribed for moral conduct, either by divine or human laws. Rectitude of *mind* is the disposition to act in conformity to any known standard of right, truth or justice. Rectitude of *conduct* is the actual conformity to such standard. *Perfect rectitude* belongs only to the Supreme Being. The more nearly the rectitude of men approaches to the standard of the divine law, the more exalted and dignified is their character. Want of rectitude is not only sinful, but debasing [AD/EL].

Galatians 5:22 - The fruit [the rectitude of Christ] which has its source in the Holy Spirit is: virtue love, inner happiness, tranquility of soul, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

v. 23 - grace thinking, self-control; against such there is no law.

v. 24 - Now those belonging to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh [retroactive positional truth] with its passions and desires [lusts that solicit immoral behavior].

Galatians 5:25 - If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.