

Cognitive Independence: The mature believer's huge inventory of doctrinal ideas gives him the power to resolve issues with the sophisticated application of Bible doctrine.

Maximum Grace Orientation: The spiritual underpinning of the life of a believer is orientation to the grace of God. Over time he is able to see the grace of God function with efficiency over the course of his spiritual life. Steeped in his history of seeing grace in action, he applies grace habitually. This enables him to be copacetic in all circumstances without any notion of utilizing any application from human viewpoint rationales.

Maximum Doctrinal Orientation: This category of spiritual maturity stresses spiritual common sense. This allows him to have keen analysis of the situations in life. He is not deceived by cosmic propaganda. Wisdom provides him with the ability to analyze circumstances and then plot the best solution and the courage to follow through on his analysis.

Great Decisions are Based on a Position of Maximum Strength: Knowing the spiritual mechanics of the plan of God, he is competent to make his decisions from the inventory he has and his inventory of previous applications. He is able to always do the right thing in a right way.

Maximum Control of One's Life: The mature believer lives independently within the privacy of his priesthood while functioning under the royal family honor code. He makes good decisions from his position of strength: a high inventory of ideas from maximum doctrine resident in his soul. If his norms and standards need changing, they do so from his spiritual growth that requires adjustments to his inventory of ideas. In other words, doctrine changes his decision-making process, not influence from other people. He makes his decisions based on biblical guidance and takes full responsibility for them.

Maximum Spiritual Dynamics. The mature believer lives in the light of his personal sense of destiny. God deals in absolutes. His Word conveys those absolutes pertinent to the believer. Whatever circumstances he faces he views them as a part of God's plan for him and he is to apply doctrine to address them. Every event in his personal life is associated with his personal sense of destiny.

(End JAS3-60-Review. See JAS3-61-Review for continuation of study at p. 61.)



Escrow Blessings: Every believer of the Church Age has already inherited escrow blessings. They are revealed in Ephesians 1:3–4 and 1 Peter 1:3–5:

Ephesians 1:3 Worthy of praise is God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who [as First Party or Grantor] has blessed [aorist active participle of the verb: εὐλογέω (*eulogéo*): creation of the escrow] us [believers, the Second Party or Grantees] with every spiritual blessing [the contents of the escrow] in heavenly places [the Depository] in Christ [the Third Party, Escrow Officer, or Depository],

v. 4 since He Himself has elected [main verb: ἐκλέγω (*eklégō*)] us in Him before the beginning of the world [eternity past & prior to Genesis 1:1] that we should be holy and blameless in His presence. (EXT)

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again through a constantly living confidence in the resurrection of Jesus Christ out from the dead,

v. 4 that is, Who has secured for us an inheritance which is nonperishable and undefiled and will not fade away [escrow blessings imputed in eternity past], reserved in heaven for you [on deposit in the Depository],

v. 5 who are garrisoned on earth by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (EXT)

The distribution of these escrow blessings will occur in heaven at the evaluation tribunal of Christ mentioned in:



2 Corinthians 5:10 We must all appear before the evaluation tribunal of Christ for the purpose that each one may receive back the things done through his body, whether good [ἀγαθός (*agathós*): of intrinsic value] or bad [φαύλος (*phaúlos*): evil, wicked, corrupt, depraved]. (EXT)

There are seven passages in Revelation 2 and 3 that reveal the distribution of escrow blessings at the evaluation tribunal of Christ.

The inventory is cited by John in prophecies made to the seven churches of Asia Minor. The order in which they appear in context are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

John describes those who receive escrow awards by one of two Greek phrases in his comments on each of the seven churches:

1. Ephesus:

Revelation 2:7 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes [“is a winner”: τῷ νικῶντι (*tō nikōnti*)], I will grant to eat from the tree of life [NA #1] which is in the Paradise of God.”

NOTE: The root verb is **νικάω (*nikáō*)**: “to be victorious, to prevail, overcome, conquer, subdue.” The noun form is **νίκη (*nikē*)**: “victory.” He who “overcomes” through spiritual growth in the Invisible War is victorious and therefore a “winner” by means of doctrine in the soul.

The insert “[NA]” followed by the symbol [#] and an integer refer to specific Nike Awards, a term used to describe the grants mentioned in chapters 2 and 3. These awards are referred to as “every spiritual blessing” in all major English translations of:

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, (NASB)



2. Smyrna:

Revelation 2:11 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who overcomes [ὁ νικῶν (*ha nikōn*): the winner] will never be hurt by the second death [great white throne judgment].”

The Nike Award for believers at Smyrna is revealed in the previous verse. Here is the expanded translation of:

Revelation 2:10 “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, in order that you may be tested, and you will have special persecution ten times.¹ Keep on becoming faithful until death, and I will give you a crown of life.” [NA #2] (EXT)

In A.D. 313, Constantine, Roman emperor in the West, and Licinius, Roman Emperor in the East, issued the Edict of Milan which terminated these ten persecutions noted by John in Revelation 2:10.

Edict of Milan, a proclamation that permanently established religious toleration for Christianity within the Roman Empire. It was the outcome of a political agreement concluded in Milan between the Roman emperors Constantine I and Licinius² in February 313. The proclamation, made for the East by Licinius in June 313, granted all persons freedom to worship whatever deity they pleased, assured Christians of legal rights (including the right to organize churches), and directed the prompt return to Christians of confiscated property. Previous edicts of toleration had been as short-lived as the regimes that sanctioned them, but this time the edict effectively established religious toleration.³

¹ These persecutions were imposed by 10 Roman emperors beginning with Domitian in A.D. 81 and lasting through Diocletian's reign in 305. He was succeeded by Galerius who reluctantly issued an edict of toleration that canceled all persecution of believers and pardoned all Christians still living.

² “Constantine I, emperor of the Western Roman Empire and Licinius, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, issued the Edict of Milan extending rights and toleration to Christians” (*Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary* [Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Publishers, 1995], s.vv. “Constantine I,” “Licinius”).

³ “Milan, Edict of” in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed., (2010), 8:123.



Principles:

1. The church is never ready to evangelize and send out missionaries until the church is toughened by testing.
2. Testing toughens and prosperity softens. To pass both tests the church had three centuries of persecution before prosperity in the fourth century.
3. Persecutions in a client nation are historical trends until the exit resurrection of the church.
4. The precedent for persecution of the church is found in Revelation 2:10, “the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, in order that you may be tested, and you will have special persecution ten times.”
5. The church must be separated from the state. Human government is to be honored by the church, but the government is populated by fallen men and women.
6. Consequently, during historical downtrends, the church and believers are persecuted by the state. The suffering of believers is the result of suffering for blessing for those who function inside the divine power system and suffering for punishment for those who function in the cosmic systems.

3. Pergamum

Revelation 2:17 “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit communicates to the churches. To him who overcomes [τῷ νικῶντι (*tō nikōnti*): “to the winner”], I will give blessing from the source of the hidden manna [NA #3], and I will give him a white stone; furthermore on the stone has been written a new name of aristocracy [NA #4] which no one knows but he who receives it.” (EXT)

The issuing of a new name is illustrated by the Roman system of adoption. Every adult son was given new names, usually three or trinomial.

The first name was the family name or praenōmen, given at birth, the second the nōmen, the name of the original Roman family or clan. The third was the cōgnōmen or nickname.

