

# Hebrews 9:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

## Analysis

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The Greek 'diathēkē' means both covenant and testament (will). For a will to take effect, the testator's death is necessary. Christ's new covenant functions like a will - His death activated its provisions. This explains why death was required - not just to pay sin's penalty but to inaugurate the new covenant arrangement. Reformed theology sees Christ's death as both penal substitution and covenant inauguration.

## Historical Context

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Ancient wills took effect upon death, distributing inheritance to heirs. Christ's death made believers heirs of the promises (Romans 8:17, Galatians 3:29), securing their eternal inheritance through His blood.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding the new covenant as Christ's 'will' help you appreciate your status as heir?
2. What inheritance has Christ's death secured for you?

## Interlinear Text

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ὅπου γὰρ διαθήκη θάνατον ἀνάγκη<sup>1</sup>  
where For a testament the death is there must also of necessity  
G3699 G1063 G1242 G2288 G318

φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου·  
be of the testator  
G5342 G3588 G1303

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