

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

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

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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

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

ὅπου	γὰρ	διαθήκη	θάνατον	ἀνάγκη
where	For	a testament	the death	is there must also of necessity
G3699	G1063	G1242	G2288	G318
φέρεισθαι	τοῦ	διαθεμένου·		
be		of the testator		
G5342	G3588	G1303		

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