

## THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “COVENANT” AND “TESTAMENT”

*Genesis 6:18, KJV But with THEE (Noah) will I establish My COVENANT (first mention); and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.*

**NOTE:** The HEBREW word for “COVENANT” is *ber-eeth'* and it means, “TO CUT” (compare *baw-raw'* – to create; shape, form, fashion, CUT DOWN or CUT OUT); a compact (made by passing between pieces of cut flesh); alliance, confederacy, treaty, or league; an agreement or a pledge.” *Ber-eeth'* is most probably derived from an Akkadian root meaning, “to fetter.”

*Hebrews 8:6,8-10, KJV But now hath HE (Jesus) obtained a MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, by how much also He is the MEDIATOR of a BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon better promises...Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda...I will put My LAWS into their MIND, and write them in their HEARTS... (compare Jer. 31:31-34).*

**NOTE:** The GREEK word for “COVENANT” is *diatheke* and it means, “a disposition, a contract, a devisory will; an arrangement which one wishes to be valid, the last disposition which one makes of his earthly possessions after his death, a testament or will; a compact, a covenant, or a testament.” It is derived from the verb *diatithemai* (to put apart, to dispose by assignment, compact, or bequest; to make a testament). Both words come from *dia* (through) and *tithemi* (to set, put, or place).

*Diatheke* is also translated in the KJV as “TESTAMENT”:

*Matthew 26:28, KJV For this is My BLOOD of the NEW TESTAMENT which is shed for many for the remission of sins (compare Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25).*

*2 Corinthians 3:6, KJV Who also hath made us ABLE ministers (enabled, qualified) of the NEW TESTAMENT; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*

**Hebrews 7:22, KJV** *BY so much (the OATH of the FATHER) was Jesus made a SURETY (bail, bond) of a BETTER TESTAMENT.*

**Hebrews 9:15-17, KJV** *And for this cause HE (Jesus) is the MEDIATOR of the NEW TESTAMENT....For where a TESTAMENT is, there must also of necessity be the DEATH of the TESTATOR. For a TESTAMENT is of force AFTER men are dead: otherwise it is of no STRENGTH (force) at all while the TESTATOR liveth.*

**Hebrews 10:16, KJV** *This is the COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE (middle voice) with them (God cut covenant WITH HIMSELF)....*

**NOTE:** “TESTATOR” is *diatithemai* (see above)—“to arrange, to dispose.” In Hebrews 10:16, the present participle is with the article, literally, “THE (one) making a testament (or covenant),” showing “the testator” Himself to be the COVENANTING ONE! He who made this NEW TESTAMENT did so at the cost of His own life. He did not die simply that the terms of a testamentary disposition might be fulfilled for the heirs; the MEDIATOR HIMSELF is the Victim whose death was necessary! **NOTE:**

1. A “COVENANT” can be broken (where man is involved) - a marriage or a business can FAIL. But a “TESTAMENT” cannot be broken (it is all God, dependent on Him)!
2. A “TESTAMENT” depends solely upon the DEATH of the TESTATOR, not the LIFE (works) of the benefactors!

**NOTE:** A parallel truth is the difference between HARVEST and INHERITANCE. In order to obtain a HARVEST, one must DO something—plant, cultivate, and then harvest. But to receive an INHERITANCE, one must BE someone, a SON and an HEIR!

**Hebrews 6:13-20, KJV** *For when God made PROMISE to ABRAHAM (Gal. 3:29), because He could SWEAR (affirm) by no greater, HE SWARE BY HIMSELF...For men verily swear by the greater: and an OATH for CONFIRMATION (establishment) is to them an END OF ALL STRIFE (anti-logia). Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the IMMUTABILITY of His COUNSEL (purpose), confirmed it by an OATH:*

***That by TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS, in which it was IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE, we might have a STRONG CONSOLATION, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon THE HOPE SET BEFORE US: Which hope we have as an ANCHOR of the soul, both SURE and STEDFAST, and which entereth into that WITHIN THE VEIL; Whither the FORERUNNER is FOR US entered....***

**NOTE:** The “TWO IMMUTABLE (unchangeable) THINGS” of Hebrews 6:18 are solidly based upon His NATURE and PERSON:

- 1. His PROMISE – This is the PLEDGE of His faithfulness and justice!**
- 2. His OATH – This is the PLEDGE of all the infinite perfections of His Godhead, for He swore by HIMSELF!**

**AGAIN,** there is a difference between HARVEST and INHERITANCE. In order to reap a HARVEST, one must DO something—plant, cultivate, and then harvest. But to receive an INHERITANCE (TESTAMENT), one must BE someone, a SON an HEIR!

## **THE END OF THE ARGUMENT**

***Exodus 32:13, KJV Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, TO WHOM THOU SWAREST BY THINE OWN SELF, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.***

***Hebrews 6:16, KJV For men verily swear by the greater: and an OATH for CONFIRMATION is to them an END OF ALL STRIFE.***

***...a guarantee that ends any dispute (Moffatt).***

***...the oath ends all argument... (TLB)...all quibbling (Phillips).***

**NOTE:** “OATH” (*horkos*) = “from *herkos* (a fence or enclosure, that which restrains a person); a boundary-line, border, or limit; (sacred) restraint (specifically, what has been pledged or promised with an oath).”

**NOTE: “CONFIRMATION” (*bebaiosis*) = “stability.” This is taken from the verb *bebaioo* (to make firm or sure, establish, confirm) and *bebaios* (stable, fast, firm; sure, trusty) and *basis* (foot). *Bebaios* is found frequently in the papyri to speak of the settlement of a business transaction.**

**NOTE: “END” (*peras*) = “extremity, bound, boundary, end, or termination.” It is taken from *peran* (to go through, go across or over to the other side).”**

**NOTE: “STRIFE” (*antilogia*) = “dispute, disobedience; gainsaying, contradiction, opposition, rebellion.” It is derived from *antilego* (to refuse; to speak against or contradict; to oppose oneself to one, to decline to obey him, to declare oneself against him, to refuse to have anything you do with him). Both are derived from:**

1. *anti* = “opposite to, instead of or in place of.”
2. *lego* = “to say, to speak.” Compare *LOGOS* = the **WORD!**

**SUMMARY: God’s IMMUTABLE OATH brings:**

1. An **END** of all *ANTI-LOGIA*, the spirit of **ANTICHRIST**.
2. An **END** of any idea or concept contrary to the **WORD**.
3. An **END** of anything or anyone instead of the **WORD**.
4. An **END** of anything or anyone instead of **HIM!**

**NOTE: On a practical level, this would cause every bit of STRIFE and QUARRELING to CEASE within the INDIVIDUAL himself or herself, within all relationships in the HOME and among FAMILY MEMBERS, and within all relationships in the CHURCH, locally and extra-locally, between SHEEP and among SHEPHERDS!**

## CONCLUSION

If God had sworn by anything FINITE, that thing or matter MIGHT FAIL, and then the obligation would be at an end.

But God has sworn by what is INFINITE (Himself, His own Person), and HE CANNOT “LIE” (utter an untruth or falsehood) OR FAIL—therefore His oath is of eternal obligation!

It is “IMPOSSIBLE” for God to lie—this word is *adunatos*, and reveals that it is the very SPIRIT OF GOD, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH (see Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; and 1 Jn. 4:6) who energizes the immutability of His counsel and purpose!

*2 Timothy 2:13, KJV If WE believe not (“are faithless” – NIV), yet HE ABIDETH (meno, stays, remains) FAITHFUL (pistos – trustworthy, reliable): He CANNOT (ou dunamai – is not able to) DENY HIMSELF (amemomai – contradict, disavow).*

*2 Timothy 2:13, TLB Even when we are too weak to have any faith left, He remains faithful to us and will help us, for He cannot disown us who are part of Himself, and He will always carry out is promises to us.*

Thus, the NEW “TESTAMENT” in His BETTER BLOOD—the DEATH of the TESTATOR, is solely dependent upon HIM and His FINISHED work. The LAMB “was SLAIN” (Rev. 13:8) and DIED in the “MEETING” (see my book *Chosen for Greatness*) BEFORE the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8)!

BEFORE the “BEGINNING” began (Jn. 1:1), the FATHER DECREED (“Thou art My SON” – Psa. 2:7; AND “Thou art a PRIEST” – Psa. 110:4); and the SON AGREED (“LO, I come” – Psa. 40:6-8 with Heb. 10:5-10). Within the Godhead, GOD essentially made this intertheistic, “EVERLASTING COVENANT” with HIMSELF (Heb. 13:20)—we are but the benefactors.

*2 Samuel 9:7, KJV And DAVID said unto HIM (Mephibosheth), Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for JONATHAN thy father's sake...and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually...*

Even so, DAVID and JONATHAN made COVENANT, and included their SEED (1 Sam. 18; 2 Sam. 9); so we were blessed BEFORE we were born (Eph. 1:4; 2:10)! As His HEIRS and SONS (male and female), we can but RECEIVE of ALL that which He has already done and made provision for (Rom. 8:17; Heb. 4:3)!

*Genesis 15:2-18, KJV And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?...And He said unto him, Take Me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon...And when the sun was going down, a DEEP SLEEP fell upon Abram...And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a SMOKING FURNACE, and a BURNING LAMP that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a COVENANT with Abram....*

Another picture of this UNCHANGING TESTAMENT is when God made PROMISE to the patriarch ABRAHAM. The “SMOKING FURNACE” (the Father) and the “BURNING LAMP” (the Son) walked arm in arm down between the pieces of the sacrifice—making COVENANT—while Abraham slept (rested)!

## SUMMARY

In SUMMARY, the New “TESTAMENT” in His BETTER BLOOD depends solely upon HIM, the DEATH of the TESTATOR, not upon the LIFE—the works or efforts—of the benefactors!

Such is the case in Ruth, chapters 3-4. She could but REST until Boaz FINISHED the WORK of purchasing her! Like Ruth, let us “LIE DOWN (in rest and complete trust) until the MORNING (the full dawn of the New Day)” (Ruth 3:13).

*Psalms 138:8, KJV The LORD will PERFECT (end, complete, perform) that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands.*

**Jeremiah 29:11, KJV For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you AN EXPECTED END (“ a hope and a future” – NIV).**

**Zechariah 4:9, KJV The hands of ZERUBBABEL (a type of Jesus the Governor) have LAID THE FOUNDATION of this house; his hands shall also FINISH it (complete, accomplish)....**

**Philippians 1:6, KJV Being CONFIDENT (peitho – persuaded, convinced) of this very thing, that He which hath BEGUN (to make a beginning, commence) a good work in you will PERFORM it until the day of Jesus Christ (epiteleo – to bring to an end, to accomplish, to perfect, to execute, to complete).**