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# Words of Truth

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## Hebrews 9:16-21

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In the last article, part of our study was about Jesus being the mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15). This study will look further into how the death of Christ relates to the New Testament. We will be looking into the following passages: *“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 at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry”* (Hebrews 9:16-21).

Since we studied the word “testament” in last week’s article, we are going to talk first in this article about what a testator is. The Greek word [διατίθημι] that is translated as “testator” means: “to put apart, i.e. (figuratively) dispose (by assignment, compact, or bequest): — appoint, make, testator. To arrange, dispose of, one's own affairs; of something that belongs to one; to dispose of by will, make a testament; to make a covenant, enter into a covenant, with one” (Strong’s # 1303). To make it simple, the testator is one who makes a covenant. That is why the term is translated “make” in other passages (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16).

For a covenant to be in effect, death must take place. We understand the principle when we look at the modern day practice of a person making a last will. While a person is alive, that person makes their wishes known in a last will. That last will does not take effect while the person is living. So, this may make sense to us. However, the Jews might have had a little reason to be confused. For Jewish Christians in the first century, the death that brought the New Testament into effect was a little different than what happened under the Law of Moses.

When the old covenant was brought into effect this is what happened: *“And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him. And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the*

*words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words. Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink. And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights” (Exodus 24:1-18).*

In addition to what you just read, Moses also sprinkled the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry (Exodus 29:10-46). There were laws for purification that included scarlet and hyssop (Numbers 19:1-22). At the time this letter called Hebrews was written, Jesus had already died. His blood was shed for the New Testament (Matthew 26:28). There was no longer a physical tabernacle or temple. There were no more physical vessels to the service of God. The priesthood, as we have studied thoroughly in this letter, has now changed. In fact, these Jewish Christians are now all priests as we in Christ today are as well (I Peter 2:1-9 and Revelation 1:4-6). The Jews believed they were under an “everlasting covenant” (I Chronicles 16:13-18). Think about how hard these changes would be to grasp. One would reasonably wonder, what else will change.

We know the first covenant was found to be faulty (Hebrews 8:1-13). When we come to the end of this letter, we are going to read this: *“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”* (Hebrews 13:20-21). The blood of Christ has brought about a true everlasting covenant (Matthew 24:35-36). We are under the perfect law (James 1:25; 2:12). Be thankful!