

Is the word "testament" incorrect?

The New Testament

At our * Facebook King James Bible Debate club * another man who sets himself up as his own final authority and does not believe that ANY translation got everything right, posts this complaint against the word "testament". He says: "I will give you all another example... the use of the word testament. God does not write wills, He makes covenants. However, there is no word in Greek that equals the Hebrew concept of b'rit. B'rit is the word we would use for covenant, but even covenant does not take in the full concept of b'rit because a b'rit is "cut in blood," whereas a covenant is a simple agreement or contract. So when b'rit was taken into Greek, there was no word that fit that concept, so they used diatheke because it was the closest fit...Yet, diatheke is translated as covenant in some places and as testament in others, even when the context is clearly "covenant." **The word testament does not belong in the bible.**"

Keep in mind that this same man who tells us "the word testament does not belong in the bible" also said that every bible translation that has ever been done got Romans 9:27 wrong when they say "a remnant shall be saved". He told us that it should be "a remnant will return". He also said the word "soozo" (to save) should be translated as "return". Yet no Bible has ever done this. When I asked him if he knew of any Bible that translated Romans 9:27 the way he thinks it should be, he came back with this: "It doesn't matter if the Romans 9:27/Isaiah 10:22 miscue has been caught by any translators or scholars... it doesn't matter whether or not any bible version made the correction. Isaiah said return, Paul's quote of the same says saved... the concepts are opposed."

So, remember, we are dealing here with a self-appointed Bible critic who claims to be a Christian who has taken it upon himself to "correct" not only every Bible translation in history but it seems also the apostle Paul and God himself! Notice his remark - "So when b'rit was taken into Greek, there was no word that fit that concept, so they used diatheke because it was the closest fit." He clearly seems to be looking at the New Testament as being just another human book whose authors did the best they could with what impoverished words they had to work with, instead of it being God Himself who inspired it.

Now, let's take a closer look at the meaning of the English word Testament and the underlying Greek word diatheke to see how it should be translated.

Testament - meaning of the word

Collins English Dictionary

noun

1. (law) a will setting out the disposition of personal property (esp in the phrase last will and testament)

2. a proof, attestation, or tribute ⇒ “his success was a testament to his skills”

1. **a covenant instituted between God and man, esp the covenant of Moses or that instituted by Christ**

2. a copy of either the Old or the New Testament, or of the complete Bible

Oxford English Dictionary Compact Edition

Testament = (in biblical use) **a covenant** or dispensation. (Testament) a division of the Bible. See also Old Testament, New Testament.

(Testament) a copy of the New Testament:

Random House Unabridged Dictionary, Copyright © 1997, by Random House, Inc.

1. Law.

a. a will, esp. one that relates to the disposition of one's personal property.

b. will² (def. 8).

2. **either of the two major portions of the Bible: the Mosaic or old covenant or dispensation, or the Christian or new covenant or dispensation.**

3. (cap.) **the New Testament, as distinct from the Old Testament.**

4. (cap.) a copy of the New Testament.

5. **a covenant, esp. between God and humans.**

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary 1913

2. One of the two distinct revelations of God's purposes toward man; **a covenant; also, one of the two general divisions of the canonical books of the sacred Scriptures, in which the covenants are respectively revealed; as, the Old Testament; the New Testament;** -- often limited, in colloquial language, to the latter.

He is the mediator of the new testament . . . for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament. Heb. ix. 15.

Wordsmyth English Dictionary

1: a statement expressing belief or conviction; credo.

2: **one of the two main parts of the Bible, the Old Testament or the New Testament.**

3: a legal document containing instructions as to how one's personal property should be disposed of or distributed after one's death; will. my last will and testament

Online Greek - English/ English-Greek Dictionary.

Just type in the word 'testament' and up comes diathiki. Then type in diathiki and up comes 'testament' Here is the site

<http://www.kypros.org/cgi-bin/lexicon>

Divry's Modern English-Greek and Greek-English Dictionary 1974

Look up English word 'testament' on page 340 and you find diathiki. Then look up the Greek word diathiki on page 472 and it says: "a will, testament. Kaine diathiki - New Testament; Palaia diathiki - Old Testament.

The Greek-English Lexicons

Diathiki - Testament or Covenant

Liddell & Scott Greek - English Lexicon, Oxford Press 1968 page 394 Diathiki = a disposition of property by will; **Testament, a compact, covenant.**

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament

Page 137 diathiki = a disposition, arrangement, a **testament**, or will; a compact, **covenant**. H Palaia diathiki is used in 2 Corinthians 3:14 of the sacred books of the Old Testament, because in them conditions and principles of the older covenant are recorded.

"Finally must be noted the twofold use by which the writer to the Hebrews, in 9:16 substitutes for the meaning **covenant** which diathiki bears elsewhere in the Epistle, that of **testament** and likens Christ to a testator - not only because the author regards eternal blessedness as an inheritance bequeathed by Christ, but also because he is endeavoring to show, both that the attainment of eternal salvation is made possible for the disciples of Christ by his death, and that even the Mosaic covenant had been consecrated by blood." (page 137)

Also take note of the fact that Thayer's and other Lexicons are usually titled "Greek-English Lexicon of the NEW TESTAMENT.! They use the word "testament" right there in the title, and yet our "know it all" Bible corrector tells us that the word "testament" does not belong in the

Bible. Even the printed Critical Texts most modern versions are based on are called the Nestle-Aland NOVUM TESTAMENTUM GRAECE and the UBS THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT.

In the King James Bible the Greek word diatheke is found 33 times and is translated as both Covenant (16 times) and Testament (17 times). It should be obvious from reading the Bible, looking at English Dictionaries and consulting Greek Lexicons that the two words are often synonymous.

English Bibles to translate the word as Testament, as in The New Testament, are the following:

King James Bible

Mt 26:28 - For this is my blood of **the new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mr 14:24 -And he said unto them, This is my blood of **the new testament**, which is shed for many.

Lu 22:20 - Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is **the new testament** in my blood, which is shed for you.

1Co 11:25 - After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is **the new testament** in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

2Co 3:6 - Who also hath made us able ministers of **the new testament**; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

2Co 3:14 - But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of **the old testament**; which vail is done away in Christ.

Heb 7:22 - By so much was Jesus made a surety of **a better testament**.

Heb 9:15 - And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under **the first testament**, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Heb 9:16 - For where a **testament** is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

Heb 9:17 - For **a testament** is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all

while the testator liveth.

Heb 9:18 -Whereupon neither **the first testament** was dedicated without blood.

Heb 9:20 - Saying, This is the blood of **the testament** which God hath enjoined unto you.

Re 11:19 -And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of **his testament**: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

William Tyndale's New Testament 1325

The word Testament is found 25 times

Mt 26:28 -For this is my bloude of **the new testament** that shalbe shedde for many for the remission of synnes.

Mr 14:24 -And he sayde vnto them: This is my bloude of **the new testament** which is sheed for many.

Lu 22:20 - Lykewyse also when they had supped he toke the cup sayinge: This cup is **the newe testament** in my bloud which shall for you be shedde.

1Co 11:25 -After the same maner he toke the cup when sopper was done sayinge. This cup is **the newe testament** in my bloude. This do as oft as ye drynke it in the remembrance of me.

Ga 3:15 -Brethren I will speake after the maner of men. Though it be but a mans **testament** yet no ma despiseth it or addeth eny thinge therto when it is once allowed.

Ga 3:17 -This I saye that the lawe which beganne afterwarde beyonde .iiii.C and .xxx. yeares doth not disanull the **testament** that was confermed afore of God vnto Christ ward to make the promes of none effect.

Heb 7:22 -And for that cause was Iesus a stablyssher of **a better testament**.

Heb 8:6 -Now hath he obtayned a more excellent office in as moche as he is the mediator of **a better testament** which was made for better promyses.

Heb 8:7 -For yf **that fyrst testament** had bene fautelesse: then shuld no place have bene sought for the seconde.

Heb 8:9 **a newe testament**: not lyke **the testament** that I made with their fathers at that tyme whe I toke them by the hondes to lede them oute of the londe of Egipte for they continued not in **my testament** and I regarded them not sayth the lorde.

Heb 8:10 -For this is **the testament** that I will make with the housse of Israhell: After those dayes sayth the lorde: I will put my lawes in their myndes and in their hertes I will wryte the and I wilbe their God and they shalbe my people.

Heb 8:13 -In yt he sayth **a new testament** he hath abrogat the olde. Now that which is disanulled and wexed olde is redy to vannysse awaye.

Heb 9:4 - which had the golden senser and the arcke of the **testamet** overlayde round about with golde wherin was the golden pot with manna and Aarons rodde that spronge and the tables of **the testament**.

Heb 9:15 -And for this cause is he the mediator of ye **newe testament** that thorow deeth which chaused for the redempcion of those transgressions that were in ye **fyrst testamet**) they which were called myght receive the promes of eternall inheritaunce.

Heb 9:16 For whersoever is **a testament** there must also be the deeth of him that maketh the testament.

Heb 9:17 -For **the testament** taketh auctoritie when men are deed: For it is of no value as longe as he that made it is alive.

Heb 9:18 - For which cause also nether that **fyrst testament** was ordeyned with out bloud.

Heb 9:20 -sayinge: this is the bloud of **the testament** which god hath apoynted vnto you.

Heb 10:16 - This is **the testament** that I will make vnto them after those dayes sayth the lorde. I will put my lawes in their hertes and in their mynde I will write them

Heb 10:29 -Of how moche sorer punyshment suppose ye shall he be counted worthy which treadeth vnderfote the sonne of god: and counteth the bloude of **the testament** as an vnholly thyng wherwith he was sanctified and doth dishonoure to the sprete of grace.

Heb 12:24 - and to Iesus the mediator of **the newe testament** and to the spryncklynge of bloud that speaketh better then the bloud of Abell.

The Geneva Bible 1587 -

Mt 26:28 -For this is my blood of **the Newe Testament**, that is shedde for many, for the remission of sinnes.

Mr 14:24 - And he saide vnto them, This is my blood of that **newe Testament**, which is shed for many.

Lu 22:20 -Likewise also after supper he tooke the cup, saying, This cup is that **newe Testament** in my blood, which is shed for you.

1Co 11:25 - After the same maner also he tooke the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is **the Newe Testament** in my blood: this doe as oft as ye drinke it, in remembrance of me.

2Co 3:6 - Who also hath made vs able ministers of **the Newe testament**, not of the letter, but of the Spirite: for the letter killeth, but the Spirite giueth life.

2Co 3:14 - Therefore their mindes are hardened: for vntill this day remaineth the same couering vntaken away in the reading of **the olde Testament**, which vaile in Christ is put away.

Heb 7:22 - By so much is Iesus made a suretie of **a better Testament**.

Heb 8:6 -But nowe our hie Priest hath obtained a more excellent office, in as much as he is the Mediatour of **a better Testament**, which is established vpon better promises.

Heb 8:7 - For if **that first Testament** had bene vnblameable, no place should haue bene sought for the second.

Heb 8:8 - For in rebuking them he saith, Beholde, the dayes will come, saith the Lorde, when I shall make with the house of Israel, & with the house of Iuda **a newe Testament**:

Heb 8:9 - Not like **the Testament** that I made with their fathers, in the day that I tooke them by

the hand, to leade them out of the land of Egypt: for they continued not in my Testament, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Heb 8:10 -For this is **the Testament** that I will make with the house of Israel, After those dayes, saith the Lord, I will put my Lawes in their minde, and in their heart I will write them, and I wil be their God, and they shalbe my people,

Heb 8:13 -In that he saith **a new Testament**, he hath abrogate the olde: nowe that which is disanulled and waxed olde, is ready to vanish away.

Heb 9:1 -Then **the first Testament** had also ordinances of religion, and a worldly Sanctuarie.

Heb 9:4 Which had the golden censer, and the Arke of **the Testament** ouerlayde rounde about with golde, wherein the golden pot, which had Manna, was, and Aarons rod that had budded, and the tables of the Testament.

Heb 9:15 -And for this cause is he the Mediatour of **the newe Testament**, that through death which was for the redemption of the transgressions that were in **the former Testament**, they which were called, might receiue the promise of eternall inheritance.

Heb 9:16 For where **a Testament** is, there must be the death of him that made **the Testament**.

Heb 9:17 -For **the Testament** is confirmed when men are dead: for it is yet of no force as long as he that made it, is aliue.

Heb 9:20 -Saying, This is the blood of **the Testament**, which God hath appointed vnto you.

Heb 10:16 -This is **the Testament** that I will make vnto them after those dayes, sayth the Lord, I wil put my Lawes in their heart, and in their mindes I will write them.

Heb 10:29 - Of howe much sorer punishment suppose ye shall hee be worthy, which treadeth vnder foote the Sonne of God, and counteth the blood of **the Testament** as an vnholly thing, wherewith he was sanctified, and doeth despite the Spirit of grace?

Heb 12:24 -And to Iesus the Mediatour of **the new Testament**, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things then that of Abel.

Bishops' Bible 1568

The word Testament is found 17 times

Coverdale's Bible 1535

The word Testament is found 27 times

English Revised Version of 1881 and the ASV of 1901 -

Heb 9:16 -For where **a testament** is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it.

Heb 9:17 -For **a testament** is of force where there hath been death: for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth?

New King James Version 1982 -

2Co 3:14 -But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of **the Old Testament**, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

Heb 9:16 -For where there is **a testament**, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

Heb 9:17 - For **a testament** is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

Lamsa's Translation of the Syriac - Testament

1 Co 11:25 - Likewise after supper, he gave also the cup, and said, This cup is **the new testament** in my blood: do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

And also in **2 Cor. 3:14; Hebrews 9: 15, 16, 17, 20**

World English Bible -

Heb 9:16 - For where a last will and **testament** is, there must of necessity be the death of him who made it.

Bible in Basic English 1960 -

Mat 26:28 - Take of it, all of you, for this is my blood of **the testament**, which is given for men for the forgiveness of sins.

Mr 14:24 -And he said to them, This is my blood of **the testament**, which is given for men.

Lu 22:20 - And in the same way, after the meal, he took the cup, saying, This cup is **the new testament**, made with my blood which is given for you.

1Co 11:25 - In the same way, with the cup, after the meal, he said, This cup is **the new testament** in my blood: do this, whenever you take it, in memory of me.

And also in Hebrews 9:16 and 9:17

Darby's Translation

Testament found in Hebrews 9:16 and 9:17

John Wesley's Translation 1755 -

Mt 26:28 -For this is my blood of **the New Testament**, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.

Mr 14:24 And he said to them, This is my blood of **the New Testament**, which is shed for many.

Lu 22:20 -Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is **the new testament** in my blood which is shed for you.

Also found in 2 Cor. 3:14; Hebrews 9:16, 17, 18 and 9:20.

The 21st Century King James Version 1994

The word Testament is found in Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 9:16, 17, 18, and 20; and in Revelation 11:19.

The Amplified Bible of 1987 by Lockman Foundation has the word in 9 verses in the New

Testament. For example:

Luke 22:20 - "And in like manner, He took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is **the new testament** or covenant [ratified] in My blood, which is shed (poured out) for you." The word "testament" also occurs in 2 Cor. 3:14; Galatians 3:15; Hebrews 9:15, 16, 17, 20; Hebrews 10:16 and 13:20.

Foreign Language Bibles

Let's also take a brief look at some foreign language translations of God's inspired words. I won't list all the times the word "testament" is used, but just one or two so you can see that the word "testament" is a perfectly good translation of the Greek word diatheke.

Spanish

Reina Valera 1995 - "Hebreos 9:17 "porque **el testamento** con la muerte se confirma, pues no es válido entre tanto que el testador vive."

La Biblia de las Américas 1997 (Lockman Foundation) - Hebreos 9:16 Porque donde hay **un testamento**, necesario es que ocurra la muerte del testador."

NIV Spanish edition 1995 La Nueva Versión Internacional - Hebreos 9:16 "En el caso de **un testamento**, es necesario constatar la muerte del testador"

French

French Ostervald 1996 - 2 Corinthians 3:14. " Mais leurs esprits ont été endurcis jusqu'à présent. Car encore aujourd'hui ce même voile demeure sur la lecture de **l'Ancien Testament**, sans être levé, parce qu'il n'est ôté que par Christ."

La Bible du Semeur 1999 - 2 Corinthiens 3:14 "Mais leur esprit est devenu incapable de comprendre: aujourd'hui encore, lorsqu'ils lisent **l'Ancien Testament**, ce même voile demeure; il ne leur est pas ôté, car c'est dans l'union avec le Christ qu'il est levé."

Louis Segond 21 of 2007 - Galates 3:17 - "Voici ce que je veux dire: **un testament** que Dieu a établi, la loi survenue 430 ans plus tard ne peut l'annuler et rendre ainsi la promesse sans effet."

Italian

Italian Nuova Diodati 1991 - Ebrei 9:17 - "**Il testamento** infatti è valido solo dopo la morte di qualcuno, perché non ha alcuna forza mentre vive ancora il testatore."

La Parola é Vita 1997 - Romani 1:17 "perché nel Vangelo viene rivelata la giustizia di Dio da fede a fede. Come dice l'Antico **Testamento**: "L'uomo giusto vivrà per fede".

Nuova Riveduta 2007 - Galati 3:17 - "Ecco quello che voglio dire: **un testamento** che Dio ha stabilito anteriormente [in Cristo], non può essere annullato, in modo da render vana la promessa, dalla legge sopraggiunta quattrocentotrent'anni più tardi."

Portuguese

Joao Ferreira de Almeida Actualizada Gálatas 3:15 "Irmãos, como homem falo. **Um testamento**, embora de homem, uma vez confirmado, ninguém o anula, nem lhe acrescenta coisa alguma."

Portuguese Easy to Read Version 1999 - 2 Coríntios 3:14 "Mas eles não conseguiam entender. Mesmo hoje, quando lêem o **Velho Testamento**, aquele mesmo véu permanece e esconde deles o significado do que lêem. E esse véu somente é retirado por Cristo."

NIV Portuguese edition Nova Versao Internacional 2000 Gálatas 3:15 "Irmãos, humanamente falando, ninguém pode anular um **testamento** depois de ratificado, nem acrescentar-lhe algo."

O Livro 2000 - Hebreus 9:18 "Também por essa mesma razão é que **o antigo testamento** exigia o derramamento de sangue como prova de morte."

It should be obvious at this point that the word "testament" is a legitimate and accurate translation of the Greek word diatheke, not only in the English language but in many languages all over the world. The particular Bible corrector who brought up this example of alleged "error" in the King James Bible has no idea what he is talking about and he himself has NO Bible in any language that he believes is or ever was the complete, inspired and 100% true words of God. We are living in times that are very similar to the times of the Judges when "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges 21:25. Fewer and fewer Christians believe in the Inerrancy of the Bible and it's now a free for all battle with Every Man For Himself Bible Versionism gone to seed. See my article on "Every Man For Himself Bible Versionism" here -

<http://brandplucked.webs.com/everymanforhimself.htm>

Facebook King James Bible Debate Club

If you are interested in learning a lot more about the battle going on today as to whether or not there really exists such a thing as a complete, inspired and 100% true Bible in any language, you might enjoy our Facebook King James Bible Debate forum. We presently have 269 members and climbing. I obviously am a King James Bible believer, but we have people from every point of view imaginable. The battle gets a bit heated at times. People are passionate about this most important issue. But the forum will serve as a real eye opener regarding what people really think and believe about The Bible. Here is our site -

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/21209666692/?ref=ts>

All of grace, believing The Book,
Will Kinney

Return to Articles - <http://brandplucked.webs.com/articles.htm>