

The Reading Of The Will

“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” (Heb. 9:16, 17).

It was recently published by the Associated Press that the youngest son of a well-known performer was not included in the will. Since the will was signed ten months before the child’s birth, and because many legal questions hang over the legitimacy of the performer’s last marriage, the will was only read to the six adult children of the performer. We can be sure that much more will be heard about this matter.

A will is a legal document by which a person gives others the rights to his or her estate, assets or family after death. Another word for “will” is “testament” and another name for the person making the will is “testator.” The text before us, then, is referring to a will, and that will becoming effective when the one making the will is dead. Upon death, the will may be read to those included in the will.

From a spiritual perspective, Jesus Christ has a will that includes His people, a will that was written in His own blood. When He celebrated the last supper with His followers, He explained to them, “This cup is the new testament (will) in My blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20). On the cross, as the Testator, Jesus died to enact the will. Here are a few questions that hopefully will provoke us to gratitude.

Who is the Author of the divine will? The Lord Jesus Christ is the Maker and the Author of the will! The covenant finds its springs and flow in Him and in Him alone. In other texts in the book of Hebrews, He is set forth as “a Surety of a better testament” (Heb. 7:22); “the Mediator of a better covenant” (Heb. 8:6); and “the Mediator of the new covenant” (12:24; cf. 9:15). Even now, He lives to enforce what He determined.

Who is the Agent of the divine will? The Agent and Executor of the will is the Holy Spirit. Upon Christ’s resurrection, He came to notify those included in the will of their inheritance in Christ. He is not here to change the will or misread it to our hearts. About the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, “He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:14).

Who is the audience of the divine will? All believers are the ones to whom the Holy Spirit reads the will. Only “they which are called” can “receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15). Of course, believers are not only partakers of Christ’s fullness here but “partakers of the heavenly calling” (Heb. 3:1). Those who hear the reading of the will, therefore, are blessed in both worlds. Have you heard the reading of the will?