

A Testament
or
A Covenant?

A Testament
or
A Covenant?

by Robert G. Theophilus

THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

© 2026 All rights reserved
Printed in Canada

It has been traditional to separate the books of the Bible into 2 great parts which are named the Old Testament and the New Testament. Is the word "testament" an accurate summary description of the messages contained in these 2 great divisions of the Bible? How did the word "testament" come to be used and would it provide us with more clarity and understanding of the Bible to be more precise in how we refer to these 2 major divisions of the Bible?

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Php 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [I,Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., nothing existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 [Christ] Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and

no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no biblical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [God’s Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [the glorified Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate

and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

NOTE: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (**bolded** and/or in **blue**) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

We have all read and heard that the Bible has 2 major divisions with one of them being referred to as being the Old Testament and the other one being the New Testament.

I have always wondered why the word “testament” would have been used to describe these 2 great divisions of the books of the Bible. The word “testament” has several possible meanings according to a number of dictionaries which you can easily consult on the internet or in a library.

The one we are all probably most familiar with is that a testament is a document by which a person disposes of their property after death; what is commonly called a will. Another meaning less well known is that a testament is an expression of conviction. For example, “His charity work is a testament to his belief of the need to help others.” But these meanings do not tell us a whole lot about what is the main topic of the first major division of the Bible referred to as the Old Testament or of the second major division of the Bible referred to as the New Testament.

In modern-day English, the word “testament” is commonly associated with the 2 meanings that were just mentioned. In past ages, the word “testament” was generally understood as having a different meaning that being a will.

If we look at the etymology (the source of the word) “testament” and what was its originally understood meaning, we come to the Latin word: “testamentum” which has as one of its meanings “covenant with God.”

In *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* we are given the following information about the word “testament.” According to this dictionary, the word “testament”

“ occurs twelve times in the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15, etc.) as the rendering of the Greek *diatheke*, which is twenty times rendered “covenant” in the *Authorized Version*, and always so in the *Revised Version*. The *Vulgate* translates incorrectly the word *diatheke* by the word *testamentum*, whence the names “Old” and “New Testament,” by which we now designate the two sections into which the Bible is divided.”

What is the Vulgate?

“The Vulgate is a late-4th-century Latin translation of the Bible, primarily attributed to Saint Jerome, commissioned by Pope Damasus I. It became the standard Bible text for the Roman Catholic Church and was affirmed as its official Latin Bible at the Council of Trent.” (Source: *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*)

The word “Vulgate” has several different meanings which are important for us to know.

- 1 Vulgate : a Latin version of the Bible authorized and used by the Roman Catholic Church
- 2 a commonly accepted text or reading
- 3 the speech of the common people and especially of uneducated people

{Source: *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*}

Based on this publicly and easily available information, the practice of referring to the 2 great sections of the Bible as being “testaments” comes from the Latin translation of the Bible (called the Vulgate) where the Greek word *diatheke* (comes from the 2nd section of the Bible we refer to as the New Testament which was written in Greek) was incorrectly translated *testamentum*.

The 2 great divisions of the Bible should be more precisely, meaningfully and correctly translated into English as being the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

This makes it clear that the first section of the Bible deals with God making the old covenant with the physical and never converted nation of Israel and that the 2nd section of the Bible is about a new covenant that God will make with the descendants of the physical nation of Israel after Christ's 2nd Coming to Israel.

The making of the New Covenant began on the day of Pentecost with the promised Comforter and Spirit of truth coming to the disciples as promised by Christ. They were the very beginning of God's new spiritual nation of Israel where circumcision is not in the flesh but of the heart (mind) which is having an attitude of obedience to God in all things.

God's nation in New Covenant time, is no longer a physical nation descended from the Old Covenant physical nation of Israel; rather, it includes men from all nations who are called by the holy spirit God the Father (He is the only one who can call men), who follow their calling, who and are taught all things by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman, and who remain faithful until the end of their natural lives.

The ancient physical nation of Israel and their descendants alive at the time of Christ's Second Coming as well as those who have lived and died and were never called will have to become members of God's New Covenant spiritual nation of Israel by entering into the New Covenant. Physical Israelites who were never called will get their opportunity to enter into the New Covenant at the time of their calling in the resurrection of the Last Great Day.

All of mankind whether Israelites or Gentiles will be given a chance to become part of God's spiritual nation of Israel by following and remaining faithful to their calling which makes them part of God's New Covenant spiritual nation of Israel.

Last Comments

I realize that in this short study I have mentioned much information that you may not be familiar with. Who and what is the holy spirit has been covered in the following studies: [Who or What is God's Holy Spirit, Cliff Notes](#) [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#) and [Who is God's Spirit?](#)

How God's church is a New Covenant Church has been covered in this study: [God's Church A New Covenant Church?](#)

God's Church as a spiritual nation has been covered in the several following studies: [God's Church is Spiritual](#) [God's Church Today](#) [Who Can Feed the Flock?](#)-and [God's Church After its Scattering](#)

What happens during the Last Great Day has been explained in this study: [What Happens During the Last Great Day?](#)

It's all there for you to examine at your leisure.

The Bereans (Act 17:11) were greatly surprised by the teachings of Paul who used to be a zealous member of Judaism but who after his conversion became an equally energetic teacher of Christianity. Basically, in their eyes he was an apostate, someone who had fallen away from the truth but still, they listened to him with an open mind and checked out what he said against the Scriptures and many came to conversion.

Act 17:12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

Many of them became part of God's New Covenant spiritual nation of Israel.

You have nothing to lose by keeping an open mind and using your Bible to verify what is said in this study.

God tells all Christians to:

1Th 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

