Requirements For A Will To Be Valid

Intro: The Bible is divided into two main divisions, the Old Testament and the New Testament. A testament is the declaration of one's will. The “last will and testament of...” It is a document in which a person sets forth his wishes for the disposal of his property after his death. The New Testament is the last will and testament of Jesus of Nazareth. There are certain legal requirements a will must meet to be valid. There are at least eight requirements for a testament to be valid no matter where or when one lives. A study of these requirements are a benefit to us today.

I. REACHED HIS MAJORITY (MUST BE OF AGE.)
   A. In most states today ones majority is 18 years of age.
   B. According to the law during Jesus days the majority for public teaching was 30 years of age.
      1. Jesus waited until after He was thirty years old to begin giving His last will and testament.
      2. Luke 3:23 “And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,”

II. MUST BE ALIVE WHEN IT IS DRAWN UP.
   A. If the person has died when the will is drawn it is a spurious will.
   B. For three years Christ set forth His will.
      1. John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
      2. Acts 1:3 “To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:”
      3. 1 John 1:1-3 “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

III. MUST BE OF SOUND MIND.
   A. A person who is crazy, not in his right mind, cannot write a will.
   B. Jesus was of sound mind.
      1. Mat. 22:
         a. Herodians (a political group in support of Herod) (vs. 15-22).
            (1) Notice question: “Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?”
            (2) Notice difficulties.
               (a) People thought that Jesus was a deliverer and that He would set up an earthly kingdom to destroy the Roman empire (cf. Dan. 2:44 “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”)
               (b) If Jesus said “yes” then His followers would have left Him saying that He was subservient to Rome and not going to deliver them.
               (c) If He said “no” then He would have been taken to Caesar and put to death for insurrection.
            (3) Jesus’ response; Mat. 22:18-21 “But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith
he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.”

b. Sadducees (vs. 23-33).
   (1) Notice the question.
      (a) “In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.”
      (b) “Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.”
      (c) “seven brethren... the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.”
   (2) Notice the difficulties with Jesus’ teaching.
      (a) There is a life after death.
      (b) Polygamy is sinful.
      (c) No sin will enter into heaven.
      (d) Jesus taught we must keep God’s law to enter heaven.
      (e) This woman was keeping the Law.
      (f) This situation is polygamy, which is sin.
      (g) Thus, you have someone who is keeping God’s law, but is in sin going to heaven.
   (3) Jesus response is that physical ties cease; Mat. 22:29-33 “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

c. Pharisees (vs. 34-40).
   (1) Notice the question; “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”
   (2) Notice the difficulties.
      (a) Jews had divided the law into 613 distinct laws (corresponded to the number of letters in the decalogue).
         i) They said 248 laws were positive laws (corresponding to the number of members of the human body).
         ii) They said 365 laws were negative laws (corresponding to the number of days in a year).
      (b) There were all divided as to which one of these 613 laws were the greatest.
      (c) Theoretically, whatever law Jesus said was the greatest, 612 groups would forsake Him.
   (3) Jesus quotes Deut. 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:”

d. Jesus question (vs. 41-46).
   (1) Christ is of the lineage of David.
   (2) If He is the Son of David how could He be David’s Lord, and thus before David?
   (3) By this Jesus shows that He is both God and man.
      (a) Mat. 1:23 “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
      (b) 1 Tim. 3:16 “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”
2. Mat. 22:46 “And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.”

IV. CLARITY OF THOUGHT, PURPOSE, INTENT, AND DESIRE. IT MUST BE ABLE TO BE UNDERSTOOD.
A. While wills today might not be understandable by the common person, the language is clear to those trained in legal matters.
B. Christ’s teachings are clear.
   1. Isa. 35:8 “And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”
      a. Err means to reel, stagger or be uncertain.
      b. Highway is a mounded up way that cannot be missed by the eye.
   2. Mat. 7:7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:”
   3. John 7:17 “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself;” John 8:32 “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
   4. Educators say the teachings of Christ are on a sixth grade educational level.
   5. If it is understandable why do we have such division concerning God’s Word; Mat. 13:15 “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

V. POSSESSIONS TO GIVE.
A. If a person does not have possessions to give there is no need for a will.
B. Christ has possessions to give.
   1. Necessities of life.
      a. Mat. 6:25-33
      b. Mark 10:28-30 “Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 30 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, 31 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”
   2. Rest.
      a. Isa. 11:10 “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”
      b. Mat. 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
      c. Heb. 4:1 “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”
   3. Peace.
      a. John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
      b. John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”
      c. Phi. 4:7 “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
      a. John 15:11 “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”
b. John 16:24 “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

c. Phi. 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”

5. Fatherhood of God.

a. Mat. 6:9 “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”

b. Mat. 7:11 “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

c. 1 Pet. 5:7 “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

d. Rom. 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

6. Forgiveness of sins.

a. Luke 24:46-47 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

b. Acts 10:43 “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”

c. Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”

d. Col. 1:14 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”

7. Eternal life or salvation.

a. John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

b. John 11:25 “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:”

c. John 20:30-31 “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

VI. THERE MUST BE A WITNESSING OF THE WILL.

A. In most cases today there must be two witnesses.

B. Jesus’ will has witnesses.

1. John 5:32-47

a. John the Baptist.

b. The works (miracles) of Christ.

c. The Father Himself.

d. Moses and his writings (the Scriptures).

2. Heb. 2:1-4 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

a. The apostles (them that heard Him).

b. God the Father.

3. The Spirit; 1 John 5:6 “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”
VII. **THE DEATH OF THE TESTATOR.**

A. **A will is in force only after a person dies.**
   1. Heb. 5:8-9 “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;" And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;”
   2. Heb. 9:15-17 “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. 16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”
   3. Luke 24:46 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day;”

B. **While a person is alive he can dispose of his property any way he wishes.**
   1. Christ had the right to give remission of sins and eternal life upon any basis He wanted before His death.
      a. The man let down from the ceiling; Jesus forgives his sins; Mark 2:3-12.
      b. To the impotent man, take up thy bed and walk; Mat. 9:2-8
   2. This is the answer to the thief on the cross; Luke 23.

C. **When a person dies the will goes into effect and only the one’s meeting the stipulations of the testament will receive the benefits of it.**

VIII. **SETTLEMENT MUST BE MADE ACCORDING TO THE TERMS SET FORTH IN THE WILL.**

A. **After we die, a lawyer probates (establishes the terms of the will) our will.**

B. **Christ acted as His own lawyer, reading and probating His own will.**
   1. Mat. 28:19-20 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
   2. Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
   3. Luke 24:46-47 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
      b. Samaritans: Acts 8:5-12
      c. Ethiopian: Acts 8:26-40
      e. Cornelius: Acts 10
      g. Philippian Jailor: Acts 16:25-34
      h. Corinthians: Acts 18:1-17
      i. Ephesians: Acts 19:1-7

Conclusion: Have you met the conditions Jesus established in His last will and testament?