How Was the New Covenant Instituted?

By Ron Graham

You and I are thinking about the statement, “Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry, because he is the mediator of a better covenant, which is based on better promises” (Heb 8:6-8). In this lesson we ask, “How was the New Covenant Instituted?”

Three Kinds of Covenants

Covenants come in three styles, so our first task in this lesson is to clearly distinguish between these...

(Additional notes continued)

How many times did Jesus say, "keep my commandments... keep my words..." (eg Jhn 8:51-52, Jhn 14:15,23). The new covenant is a covenant of magnificent promises to those who keep its commandments. For those who don't, it has dire warnings.

The new covenant mediated by Christ is therefore likened to a person's last will and testament granting an inheritance (Heb 9:15-17). God has written his will so that anyone can become heirs of God. His will promises certain blessings, stipulates certain conditions, and decrees the penalty for non-compliance.

To summarize:

God did not negotiate the new covenant with human beings. He mediated it to them through the appointed High Priest Jesus who offered himself as the necessary sacrifice.

So, through the authority of Jesus, every person has a “covenant relationship” with God. Everybody is subject to the new covenant.

This is a law covenant, because it is conditional, with either of two outcomes for each person — namely grace or wrath. Which of those alternatives is the outcome for any individual, depends on whether that person obeys or disobeys the terms or commandments of the covenant.

That is how the new covenant was instituted.