

Way to Enter Covenant

Bernie Gillespie

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Email comment: First of all, my belief is that the way to enter into a covenant with God is Acts 2:38, but I believe that God can enter into a covenant with anyone on his terms, apart from Baptism.

My Response: I would like to hear how you understand Acts 2:38 as the way to enter into covenant with God. More, I would be interested in how you handle water baptism in Acts 2:38 as not being part of the way one enters into covenant with God. I would agree that water baptism is not the means for entering the covenant and is rather the sign of the covenant. More explanation would be necessary to talk more profitably about this statement.

You believe that Acts 2:38 is one way to be in covenant with God. But, you also believe there are other ways to be in covenant with God. My response is that there are really only two biblical covenants that God makes with Humanity. Each of these covenants is made by God in mercy and condescension (Isa. 40:13-17) to our human limitations. The first is a covenant of works. The blessings of this covenant – of life and provision – were given to Adam (Gen. 1&2) on the condition that they obeyed God. In Eden they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17). When they ate they broke the covenant of works and their punishment was death (Gen. 3:16-19).

The law given to Moses is a further expansion of this covenant. It is a law that will bring life as long as it is obeyed (Gal. 3:12; Rom. 10:5). But as Adam and Eve disobeyed, sinned and broke the covenant of works, so did Israel and all Gentiles (Rom. 3:9-20). Because this covenant was broken, God made a second called the covenant of grace. In this new covenant, God promises life and salvation to all who believe in Jesus Christ (Mk. 16:15-16; John 3:16; Romans 5:6-9 Gal. 3:11). In this new covenant God gives a new heart and new spirit to make us willing and able to believe in Christ (Ezk, 36:26-27; John 6:44-45).

Jesus announced this new covenant at his last supper (Lk 22:20). He is the mediator of this new covenant because it is by his death that the new and better covenant is confirmed (Heb. 7:22). It is a new covenant in the blood of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:25). These are the only two covenants given to us in Scripture. One is either right by covenant (covenant righteousness) through their own personal, perfect works; or, one is right with God through faith in Jesus Christ (Christ's covenant righteousness). Everyone will stand before God one day. Each will stand before God in either their own righteousness or the righteousness of Jesus, given by grace.