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Faith Bible Church
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<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (12)
ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #3:
“A Person is Either Jewish or Christian. I’m Jewish”
(DDR #631)

“A Person is Either Jewish or Christian. I’m Jewish”

On this objection, Dr. Michael Brown writes,

You’re mixing apples with oranges. People are born Jewish or Gentile, but in order to become a Christian (or “Messianic”) you must be born anew. This new birth comes through putting your faith in Jesus the Messiah. Your sins are forgiven, you receive a new heart, and you become a follower of the Messiah. That’s what it means to be a Christian, or Messianic. But no one is born a Christian. That’s where the misconception lies. Nor is Christianity (or Messianic Judaism) merely another religion. Rather, it speaks of a living relationship between God and his people—both Jews and Gentiles—through the Messiah. Through physical birth you are either Jew or Gentile; through spiritual birth you become a follower of Jesus the Messiah.

Why would someone view being Jewish or Christian as an either-or proposition? This dichotomy is the product of many forces chief among them are rabbinical Judaism, anti-Semitism in church history, the Roman Catholic Church, and the apostasy/reversionism of contemporary Christianity. For many, the claim to be a Jewish Christian would be tantamount to being a vegetarian eating nothing but meat.

As Brown pointed out above, one becomes a Christian by “putting your faith in Jesus the Messiah.” This is not the way one becomes a Jew or a Muslim. When does a Jew become a Jew? One becomes a Jew at birth. One could convert to Judaism, but if you are born a Jew, you are a Jew at birth. When does someone born into a Muslim family become Muslim? At birth! Basically, a person is born a Jew or Muslim. They mistakenly believe that just as a baby born into a Jewish or Muslim family is Jew or Muslim, that a baby born in a Christian family is

automatically Christian. The idea that one is not a Christian, although he is born into a Christian family is totally foreign to them.

It is often best not to identify yourself as a “Christian” to a Jew because of all the baggage that term carries. You and I know what “Christian” means—that one has been regenerated as a result of placing faith in Jesus Christ—but when you self-describe yourself as Christian this is going to bring in many negative and false views. It is always best to keep the focus on Jesus and describe yourself as a follower of Jesus/Yeshua the Messiah. With this focus, you can proceed to show that anyone can believe in and follow Yeshua as the Messiah.

Let’s note some of the stereotypes Muslims and Jews have of Christianity. For the most part, they believe America is Christian—that America is what Christianity is. The reason that Islam calls American the Great Satan is not only because of support of Israel, but because of secularism, extreme sexual exploitation, sensuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, liberalism, and Hollywood. In sum, if you describe yourself as a Christian you will be categorized with a decadent America. If you have time to do some deprogramming, then you should. However, it is always best to keep the focus on Jesus Christ. The Great Commission of Christ is to make Him known—not forms of “Christianity.”

You might not feel comfortable by avoiding the self-identifying term “Christian.” However, would you feel comfortable using the term “Christian” if by that term the Jew would automatically “lump” you in with Roman Catholicism? You might think, “but I will explain how I am not Catholic.” Perhaps, but that will take a while and besides the results would likely be that you will still be viewed as a sect of Roman Catholicism, nonetheless, if not in name, in essence—even if separated from the “mother church.” What I am saying is that there is simply a great deal of deprogramming to do with the term “Christian.” It is often best to describe yourself

as a follower of Jesus and explain how they can receive His salvation by faith—thus avoiding the whole discussion of the Christian church.

It is interesting that in Israel, a Hebrew speaking saved (Christian) Jew, who shares the gospel with fellow Jews, will most emphatically tell other Israelis that he is *not* a “Christian”—lest he be identified with some aspect of the Roman Catholic Church. In recent years there have been inroads made in Israel by evangelical Christianity in providing understanding that Christianity is a friend to Israel and is not Catholic, but there is still a long way to go. However, today Christianity is perceived by many Jews as a hateful religion bent on the destruction of Israel as “evidenced” in church history. Let’s keep the focus on Jesus Christ and let’s not forget the Jewish roots of Christianity (as did Roman Catholicism)—as the Bible puts it: we are the ones grafted in,

Romans 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, *remember that* it is not you who supports the root, but the root *supports* you. ¹⁹ You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” ²⁰ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

Permanently In Union with Jesus Christ,

Pastor Don