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<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (23)
ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #14
(DDR #642)

Objection #14: “Those religious Jews who did become followers of Jesus always had the tendency to stray. If you study their lives, you’ll see that most of them threw out their traditional values and beliefs before they ever considered nonsense like Christianity.

Michael Brown’s shorter response:

Who told you that? How many of these people have you interviewed? Are you aware that many of the religious Jews who put their faith in Jesus were absolutely shocked to learn that he was the Messiah? They were living traditional lifestyles and were very much against anything Christian, but they couldn’t resist the truth of the Scriptures, in spite of the consequences of believing. As for those religious Jews who did begin to question their traditions before believing in Jesus, there is nothing illogical about this. They found problems with their spiritual foundations and sought truth elsewhere.¹

It is not hard to see the attempt to discredit the person. If someone in any community strays, there is usually some attempt to discredit the person. We see this in all kinds of cults. Someone leaves the cult and so what follows is usually something like, “well they certainly were not really believers/faithful/godly anyway. . . . they have always been lukewarm and not totally devoted to the Lord.” The reason that there is a felt need to discredit them is due to some perceived threat by them leaving the group.

One way of dealing with this objection is simply asking the person if they have firsthand knowledge—did he interview the person? Another way is to ask the person: “Is it wrong to question traditions? Should a Hindu question tradition? Should an atheistic Jew question his

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 1ST ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 50-52. In this work, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response, which is followed by a more developed response. This DDR series, for the most part, tracks the objection and his *short* response, after which you will find my comments. I highly recommend his book if you are interested in his longer response (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

“tradition”? Is it healthy to ask questions? Don’t you encourage your kids to ask good questions?” Good questions are always a good thing because it is the way one can come to good solid answers. We admire many people who did ask questions and broke away.

Let us note an example of a notable Jew, Yechiel Lichtenstein, who was not “straying” and had not “tossed out traditional values” when he found Jesus Christ:

Yechiel Lichtenstein was a nineteenth-century Hungarian rabbi who despised Christianity, believing—to cite his own words—that “Christ himself was the plague and curse of the Jews, the origin and promoter of our sorrows and persecutions. With his own eyes, he witnessed so-called Christians committing murderous acts against his people, acts committed in the name of Christ. Yet he also read passionate defenses of the Jewish people by others who called themselves Christians and who utterly renounced anti-Semitism—also in the name of Christ.

This led him to pick up a copy of the New Testament that forty years earlier he had angrily hurled into the corner of his study where it lay on the ground, covered with dust. He was in for the shock of his life. He wrote:

“I had thought the New Testament to be impure, a source of pride, of selfishness, or hatred, and of the worst kind of violence, but as I opened it, I felt myself peculiarly and wonderfully taken possession of. A sudden glory, a light flashed through my soul. I looked for thorns and found roses; I discovered pearls instead of pebbles; instead of hatred love; instead of vengeance forgiveness; instead of bondage freedom; instead of pride humility; conciliation instead of enmity; instead of death life, salvation, resurrection, heavenly treasure.”²

He became an outspoken follower of Yeshua the Messiah, despite persistent persecution inflicted upon him by his fellow Jews. To this day, an increasing number of Jewish scholars is involved in rediscovering the Jewish roots of Jesus and the New Testament and finding that Yeshua is indeed the Messiah.

As Brown put it, “There have been plenty of religious Jews who were happy with their traditions and beliefs before they came to the inescapable conclusion that Jesus is the Messiah, deciding to follow him no matter what their teachers, peers, or family said.”³

²Ibid., 150.

³Ibid., 51.