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

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (34)  
 ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #25  
 (DDR #653)

**Objection #25: Jesus himself taught that he did not come to bring peace but a sword. We Jews have felt the edge of this sword for more than fifteen hundred years now!**

Michael Brown's short response:

Jesus was actually referring to the Hebrew Scriptures when he said that he did not come to bring peace but a sword (see Micah 7:5-6 and Matt. 10:34). That same passage is quoted in the Mishnah with reference to family conflicts that will come with the advent of the Messianic age. In any case, what Jesus and Micah were talking about was bringing division into families over the issue of loyalty to God and his Messiah. As for literally taking up swords for the faith, Jesus utterly renounced this.<sup>1</sup>

Let's take a look at the context of the passage where Christ speaks of bringing a sword:

**Matthew 10:34** "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.<sup>35</sup> "For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;<sup>36</sup> and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.<sup>37</sup> "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

When Christ says that He came to bring a sword, He was not speaking of a literal sword.

The context clearly shows that He was talking about a sword of separation in families. His point is that allegiance to Him is more important than family. Furthermore, Christ is quoting Micah 7:5-6—so if the Jew is going to try to use this saying of Christ against Christianity, he will end up with egg on his face because it came from the Old Testament. It is also interesting that the

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<sup>1</sup>Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 1ST ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), see 116-24 for his full response to this objection. 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 responses (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

Mishnah also quotes this passage in reference to the coming of the Messiah. So rather than being evidence against Christ, it is actually evidence from the Jewish Bible and commentaries that identifies the coming of the Messiah with Christ.

Christ did come to bring peace to all, but there will always be those who reject Him, and this rejection would bring conflict between them and those who accept Christ (cf. Luke 19:42-44). He did come as the Prince of Peace, but He was rejected, and this rejection would have consequences (Luke 1:78-79)—the world would hate believers because it first hated Christ (John 15:18-21).

In his longer response Brown notes,

No honest person reading these words [Matt. 10:34-37] could question for a moment what Yeshua was saying: His servants would *not* be the ones taking up the sword. Rather, the sword would be taken up *against them* in the form of persecution, family separation, imprisonment, and death. Any other interpretation of the Messiah's teaching here is simply impossible.

Did you know that for several hundred years after the Messiah's death and resurrection, there is not a single example in a single recorded source, be it Jewish source, a Christian source, or a secular source, of a single Jewish person being put to death because he or she refused to believe the gospel? Not one. And yet, during this same time period, thousands of Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus were put to death or imprisoned or tortured for refusing to renounce their faith.

The amount of time, "several hundred years after the Messiah's death and resurrection," of non-persecution by Christians is significant. It would be like saying not a single Christian in the entire history of America persecuted anyone for not accepting the Bible or the gospel. Furthermore, the fact that the Christians did not persecute the minority group—the Jews—would also be as if no Christian persecuted a minority group in all of American history. When we see early Christianity not persecuting anyone for centuries—unlike Islam which was violent from the beginning—we can see the normal biblical pattern of Christianity. Furthermore, if Christianity was a religion of the sword, then why don't we see people being killed in the name of Christ all

over the world today? The point here is that before one dives into the ugly horrific anti-Semitism of Roman Catholicism in the Middle Ages, let's note the context of the passage (Matt. 10:34), church history for the first few *hundred* years, and the present day church.

With regard to the present church, it is the one being persecuted, not the other way around. Brown writes about an incident November 12, 1998.

During a government crackdown on Egypt's Coptic Christian community two weeks ago, a thousand Christians were manacled to doors, then beaten and tortured with electric shocks to their genitals. Teenage girls were raped. Even babies were not spared. Mothers were forced to lay their infants on the floor and watch helplessly while police struck them with sticks. And in the scene right out of ancient Rome, Christian men were nailed to crosses. It was a grisly example of a grave problem in the Middle East: the persecution of Christians by Arab governments—including governments like Egypt *that America supports financially* [emphasis mine].

Brown adds,

Such scenes are increasingly common in Islamic nations, including Indonesia, where Christian survivors have to live to describe what it felt like to have their entire families butchered and raped in front of their eyes.

Thank God for our founders who had enough Christian presuppositions to establish our nation under the rule of law (constitutionalism) and not the arbitrary rule of man (socialism, fascism, communism, Roman Catholic Church State, Welfare State, interventionism, Islam). How long will America last? God only knows! What good are believers if they are not positive to God, the plan of God, and Bible doctrine?

**Matthew 5:13** "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

Blessed!

Pastor Don

**Romans 4:7** "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered.

**Romans 4:8** "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."

**Ephesians 1:3** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,