

Pastor-teacher Don Hargrove
 Faith Bible Church
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<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (35)
 ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #26
 (DDR #654)

Objection #26: Christians have always hated and persecuted the Jewish people.

Michael Brown's short response:

It is true that many false followers of Jesus have hated and persecuted the Jewish people and that many true followers of Jesus have been stained with an ugly anti-Semitic spirit, thereby making a mockery of the very faith they profess. This is tragic and reprehensible. But there is far more to the story than you know. Multitudes of true followers of Jesus—in our day and throughout history—have loved, helped, and defended the Jewish people, thereby demonstrating the reality of the faith they profess. Also, there is a history of Jewish hatred of Jesus and his followers, including some violent persecution too. Many of the problems that arose were political more than religious. Consequently, things are not as simple as you might imagine.¹

After recounting the ugly and inexcusable anti-Semitism by the church throughout history, Brown writes:

At times, this church probably killed as many true Christians for refusing to follow its traditions as it killed Jews for refusing to follow its traditions. . . .

[however] Christian acts of violence and hate against the Jews were virtually nonexistent for more than three hundred years after Jesus' death and resurrection. After that, they were quite sparse and sporadic for the next eight hundred years until the Crusades at the end of the eleventh century—and that murderous, destructive representation of Christianity bore no resemblance to the real Christian faith.

All this clearly demonstrates that it is an overstatement to claim "Christians have always hated and persecuted the Jewish people." Hardly, in fact, it would be far more accurate to say that throughout history some Christians have hated and persecuted Jews and some Jews have hated and persecuted Christians.

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 1ST ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), see 124-45 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).

Let's remember what we find in the pages of the New Testament: Jews persecuting Christians—not the other way around:

Acts 7:59 And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon *the Lord* and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

Acts 14:19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

While one should never whitewash over the anti-Semitism that occurred later in church history, let us not forget the ugly history of Jewish violent hatred of Christians throughout history and up to this very day. Brown cites the learned historian Marcel Simon's summary of the first few centuries of this era:

They [Christians] were driven from Jerusalem on the eve of the first war, harassed from time to time by religious authorities, anathematized in the Synagogue liturgy, and persecuted during the second war by Bar Cochba troops. . . . They were regarded as dissidents, sectarians, by both Synagogue and Church. By professing Christianity, as the gentiles did, they had classed themselves as gentiles in the eyes of the synagogue.

After Brown discusses the often untold story of unconditional Christian love throughout history, he notes:

My friend, I tell you the truth in the sight of God, *this* is the spirit of the true church, the spirit of philo-Semitism not anti-Semitism. Where a true expression of the New Testament faith has dominated the church, philo-Semitism—not anti-Semitism—has been the rule. . . .

This Christian spirit of love of the Jewish people is not just sentimental, nor is it tied in only with some expected endtime conversion of the Jews. Rather, it is tangible, it is committed for the long haul, and it is often sacrificial. . . .

I will say it again: True Christianity shines with Jewish love—unconditional and sacrificial. . . .

And so in answer to you charge that Christians have always hated and persecuted the Jewish people, I reply, "No, no, and a thousand times no!" In fact, I would encourage you to get to know some real, sincere Christians and find out for yourself. You'll be pleasantly surprised to see how gracious and respectful they are toward you when they find out that you, like their Savior, are a Jew. They may even thank you, since many Christians feel a special indebtedness to the Jewish people, recognizing that their Scriptures come from the Jews, their Messiah is a Jew, and without the faithful witness of

Jewish people to Jesus the Messiah, there would be no Gentile Christians in the world today. . . .

If they want to share their faith with you, it's just an expression of love, their way of repaying the debt to you. How could they do anything less?

Saved and Delivered from mastery of the OSHGEN—all because of grace!

Romans 6:11-14, ¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

Pastor Don