

Pastor-teacher Don Hargrove
Faith Bible Church
Friday, March 18, 2011
<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (42)
ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #33
(DDR #661)

Objection #33: Just look at the church! Who's right? The Protestants, the Roman Catholics, the Greek Orthodox, the Mormons, the Messianic Jews? Even so-called Christians can't agree among themselves.

Michael Brown's short response:

I'm a little surprised at your objection, since there are several major variations in Judaism, ranging from Reconstructionist to ultra-Orthodox, and some branches don't even regard the others as truly Jewish at all. So how can you indict Christianity because of differences? Still, I'm happy to answer your question: First, not everyone who calls himself a Christian really is. Second, there is harmony around the world among true Christians regarding the fundamentals of the faith. Third, major disagreements tend to arise only when the authority of the New Testament is either denied or subjugated to human traditions and interpretations. When you get back to what Jesus and his followers taught, you can see who his real followers are today.¹

I would add two other reasons for believers often disagreeing: one has to do with biblical languages and the other has to do with philosophical metaphysics. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. It is impossible to translate *all* the thoughts and concepts embedded in these languages to an exact English one to one correspondence. All Bible translations really are to some extent *interpretations*. If one translated all that was contained in each Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek word, the Bible would be in multivolumes. Imagine carrying a twenty-four volume Bible to church. There is also a matter of grammatical concepts in these languages which are much different than English. The other factor is in the area of metaphysics.

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 1st ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 205-208. In his book, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response that 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).

Metaphysics deal with how we approach everything. It would include all of the views that form you and form your way of looking at things. There are *powerful* preconditions that affect the way we look at *everything*. Everyone imposes their filter and framework on life and the Bible. It takes a lot of hard conceptual thinking in metaphysics to examine, correct and uproot those preconditional ways of looking at things. This can most readily be seen when opposing views are given on *Fox News*. Each opponent (e.g. liberal vs. conservative) thinks he is right *based on evidence*. However, in reality there are preconditions which are choosing the facts. We do that in regard to the Bible as well. I am always surprised at the different comments after Bible class. More than one has expressed their appreciation of the class, yet, what they appreciate about the class is something *different*. On the same class, one may express their appreciation of the concept of natural revelation and natural law while the other one may really appreciate what I taught about Satan's intent to be like the Most High. Yet, it was the same class. One thought it was good for one reason and the other for another reason—yes, and some may have thought I laid an egg. Who is right? What are the standards? Truth? Conviction? Something new? We are all at different stages of our lives and who we are shapes our attitudes. All of this to say that the two biggest reasons for disagreements *among conservatives* is lack of Biblical scholarship and preconditions—which often guide a Christian *even in the selection of scholarly resources* to agree with what “he knows must be right” (decided by his metaphysics—all unbeknownst to him).

I have been blessed with advanced training in Biblical languages and exegesis. It has only been within the last few years that I have come to realize the power of metaphysics in coming between me and the biblical text—without me even being aware of it. It is metaphysics that

enables a person to put everything in its place. I appreciate your prayers as I continue my studies in philosophy for the advancement of Bible doctrine.

On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don.