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

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (51)
ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #42
(DDR #670)

Objection #42: We are righteous by what we do, not by what we believe. Christianity is the religion of the creed, Judaism the religion of the deed.

Brown's short response to this objection:

The New Testament clearly teaches that faith without works is dead. But it also teaches that without faith there can be no meaningful works, and the first thing God wants from us is our total trust and dependence. That is called faith, and it is foundational to the Hebrew Scriptures as well. Our forefathers died in the wilderness because of their unbelief, and being pronounced righteous by God begins with absolute faith in him. So right living is the result of right believing. As a Jew, you should also remember that "the creed" is important in traditional Judaism too.¹

Following this, Brown provides an excellent discussion of the relationship between faith and works as far as phase 2 (the period between salvation and physical death). The only problem with Brown when he generally gets into the area of faith and works is his failure to understand positional truth and how salvation is a result of faith alone that results in permanent positional salvation. He tends to put focus on a believer's works after salvation as proof of authentic faith *back at the moment of salvation faith*. There is no biblical basis for this. While it may be obvious from someone's works whether that person has faith, *this only has to do with his faith at that moment*, this has nothing to do with the person's faith at the moment of faith in Christ.

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections—Volume 2*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 60-69. 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).

However, apart from Brown's lack of understanding of positional truth, he does provide an great overview of the importance of works that flow from true faith in both Christianity and Judaism:

It is therefore right to say that Christianity and Judaism are religions of both grace and good works, faith and law, the former emphasizing grace and faith without minimizing the importance of good works and law, the latter emphasizing good works and law without minimizing the importance of grace and faith. But given the state of the human race, the track record of our people Israel, and the corruption of each of our hearts, it makes a great deal of sense to put our hope in the grace of God more than in our works, no matter how righteously we may live.

On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don

Romans 3:28 For we *maintain* that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.