

Pastor-teacher Don Hargrove
 Faith Bible Church
 Wed., February 2, 2011
<http://fbcweb.org/doctrines.html>

JEWISH APOLOGETICS (19)
 ANSWERING JEWISH OBJECTION #10
 (DDR #638)

Objection #10: “What happens to Jews who do not believe in Jesus—especially those who never heard about him? What happened to my wonderful Jewish grandmother who never hurt anyone in her entire life? Is she in hell?”

Michael Brown’s shorter response:

These are not questions to be answered lightly, as if heaven and hell were mere figures of speech. And, to be perfectly frank, we’re not just talking about your grandmother; we’re talking about my grandmother too. Still the bottom line is this: While I don’t know your grandmother and I am certainly not her judge, I do know that countless millions of Jews and Gentiles have lived lives that have displeased God (and this includes at least some of our grandmothers.) countless millions of people have condemned their souls through their words and deeds, and countless millions of people will be pronounced guilty on judgment day. It wouldn’t be fair to you if I failed to warn you in advance. Of course, I will be the first to say that the New Testament does not explicitly address the issue of what happens to those who never heard the message of forgiveness of sins through Jesus, but of this much we can be sure: God is both a compassionate and righteous Judge, there are consequences to breaking his commandments, his standards are high, and if we reject his ordained means of atonement, we are in trouble.¹

I do have plans to develop a series that deals with those who have never heard. However, instead of burying them into complex theological issues—such as total depravity and unlimited atonement—it is often best to turn the focus on them: “Regardless of how God deals with those who have not heard, we would probably agree that He does hold those accountable who have heard—and this is the issue now.” Questions regarding hell should never be responded to in a flippant manner. These are serious issues.

¹Michael L. Brown, *Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: General and Historical Objections*, 1ST ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000), 24-28. In this work, Brown lists the objection and then gives a short response, which is followed by a more detailed 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 detailed responses (there is far too much material to include in the DDRs).

They may try not respond to the “issue” before them and go back to something like, “What happened to my wonderful Jewish grandmother who never hurt anybody? What about Gandhi or other individuals who brought peace?” A simple response could be, “Would you agree that anyone, no matter how great or sweet, who rejects the grace and mercy of God stands in grave danger before Him?” You could also ask what good is it for the rest of us when you pick out “great” people who are one in a million. What good does it do to pick out Mother Theresa if the rest go to hell?

An affirmation of God’s perfect righteousness needs to be part of the discussion. This is especially true in today’s society which is filled with so many caricatures of Him. Another point to make is that no other “religion” in the history of mankind ever made the claim to possess a perfect righteous Savior. Only Christianity does this. Isn’t this worth considering? The point needs to be made that you are not their judge or their grandmother’s judge. God is the judge of us all, and we all need to accept His mercy and grace in Christ. Regardless of how He deals with those who have never heard, He will judge all who reject Jesus Christ. Do you reject Christ?

You could talk about your own sweet (?) grandmother and how she needed to accept God’s mercy in Christ as well (this helps with emotional or psychological blocks to the gospel). I would add that when we talk about grandma or grandpa we tend to think in naïve terms. There are plenty of grandmas and grandpas who entertained unacceptable thoughts and slept around when they were young and healthy. Just because they are these wonderful sweet harmless people in the old age does not mean that they were not real hell raisers when they were young with plenty of unacceptable thoughts. What would grandma want from you more than anything? Truth! I just add this because many in society have mythical views grandmas and grandpas

which feeds into a lot of false perceptions about mankind in general. The truth is that we are all sinners—young and old. We all need God's grace. We all need His salvation in Christ.

You could tell the person that it all boils down to a relationship with God and ask him, "Do you know that you have a relationship with God? That your sins are forgiven? That God accepts you?" This brings you back to the good news of the gospel. This brings the conversation back to the person in the *here and now and to him personally!*

Recipient of the down payment of the Spirit of my inheritance in the Millennium,

Ephesians 1:13-14 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is given as a down payment of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13 NAS)

Pastor Don