

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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A PACKAGE OF GOOD DEEDS—OR MISDEEDS?

I recently was walking in the Old City of Jerusalem, and I saw two young Orthodox Jewish students carrying a very heavy package. When I asked what was in the package, one answered, “This is a package of good deeds.”

Then one of the boys asked, “Do you know what is in this package?”

“Clothing or food for poor people,” I responded.

“Oh no!” they said. “What we have here are holy commentaries for the ultra-Orthodox students.”

When I heard that I said, “Then you hold a big package of misdeeds. Which is more important, the Mosaic Law or the so-called laws contained in your package?”

“That is a very hard question,” one boy said, “Come with us, and we will ask our rabbis.” I agreed to go with them, and as we walked, I shared God’s Word with them.

When we arrived at their yeshiva, the students told their rabbi, “This man helped us carry these heavy books.” The rabbi was very thankful. One of the students said, “This kind man has also asked us a question we would like you to answer.”

The rabbi asked, "What would you like to know?"

So I asked, "Rabbi, why do you spend all your life and encourage your young students to spend their lives studying these books that have no value?"

"Who are you, to speak to me like this!" he demanded. "Do you have anything further to say?"

"Yes," I replied. "I am sorry to see such young boys following after false teachings."

"What do you mean?" the rabbi asked.

I then took out my small Bible and said, "You do not even know what is written in this book. Deuteronomy 6:16–17 says, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God. You shall diligently keep [His] commandments.' But instead of keeping God's commandments, you have spent your entire life studying commentaries, casting away the Word of God. You have tempted God because what you are doing is against His will."

By this time, others had gathered around us. They angrily asked, "Are you an apostate?"

"No! I have been a complete Jew since I came to know the Lord according to the way He has instructed us in the Bible. I am sorry for you because you have been living in darkness, and you are taking these young boys with you. As we say, when the shepherd strays, the sheep will stray after him; and you have all gone astray. But there is a way to escape the darkness and come into the light."

I then read Isaiah 53, emphasizing verse 6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way." I then asked, "Now tell

me, who are the apostates? It cannot be those of us who believe Deuteronomy 6:14, 'You shall not go after other gods.'"

One man responded, "We are Jews, but you are not a Jew because you believe in another god."

I asked, "How is it possible for one who believes and follows all that is written in the Bible to believe in another god? I have shown you facts from God's own Word—facts to show that you are the apostates. If you will study with an open mind and heart before God, He will show you the truth."

They all became very quiet, and I added, "Let me read Deuteronomy 6:16 again: 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' If you put your trust in the Lord alone, He will give you what you can never receive by studying these false teachings. Think about this."

"You have certainly given us much to think about," they admitted.

I pray these students and rabbis will close their commentaries and open God's Word, which alone has the answers to life's questions. Through His Word they can find the real way to God and the salvation He freely gives to all who receive His Son and our Messiah, the Lord Jesus.