

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

<https://www.foi.org/zvikalisher/>

AN HISTORIC MEETING

Many times I go to the ultra-Orthodox yeshivas and engage the people in long discussions, trying to bring them back to the Bible. They, in turn, always show me the many books from their Halacha—literature written by rabbis. They try to convince me that only through the Halacha can I be a “good Jew.”

I always listen politely, but then I tell them the Halacha is made up of fictitious stories.

On a recent visit, an elderly man approached me. He shouted, “Zvi! Do you not know me?” But I did not recognize him. He said, “I know you very well. We spent a lot of time together—good times and hard times.”

I told him, “It is obvious on the outside I have not changed much because you recognized me so quickly. But I have changed on the inside. As it is written in Ezekiel 36:26, ‘I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.’ I can see you have changed on the outside, with your clothing, long beard, and side curls, but you still have the same heart of stone because you are here in this place.”

Finally he identified himself as a man with whom I had served in the army in 1948. We had the same job, diffusing mines in the minefields, and we were good friends. Now here we were, meeting again after 48 years.

He said, “Zvi, I have heard about you a lot over the years, but I never believed what I heard. Now I know all of those reports were true. How could you leave the faith of our fathers and preach something that is against our rabbis and traditions?”

I said, “I do not wish to speak against anyone. Rather, I am here to remind you to whom you belong. As it is written in Malachi 3:7, ‘From the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances. Return to Me, and I will return to you.’

“The Bible does not mention your rabbis. In it you will read only about what the Lord has done for us. I could not recognize you because you have changed your face and your style of dress, but you have not changed your heart. You still have a heart of stone. Though I have not changed my outward appearance, God has given me a heart of flesh. I have not changed His laws or commands, as you have done.”

My old friend then asked, “How can you say such things?”

I replied, “God Himself has said it in the Bible. Here, in your house of prayer, you have hundreds of books, but you do not have one Bible. I have come here to warn you about the false teachings you are following. I pray I am not too late. This is my obligation before God and all people. Ezekiel 3:17 says, ‘Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore, hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.’”

When I read from the Bible, they looked at it very carefully to be sure I was not lying. By the end of our conversation, one said, “You are very interesting, and we would welcome you back to speak with us again.” I was grateful to the Lord for the good conclusion to our meeting, and I pray I will have more opportunities to tell them how to have true faith in the Lord. I pray it is not too late to reach them with the good news about their

Messiah.