

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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

HE IS WAITING FOR YOU

Many years ago new immigrants moved into our neighborhood in Jerusalem. One family in particular became special to us because they spoke about the faith. Yet they did not like people who believed in Christ, even though they were not religious themselves. Several years ago they moved away, and we never heard from them again.

Recently my wife and I were waiting for a bus, and whom should we see but our former neighbors. As we boarded, we began to inquire about each other's families. In a loud voice, our friend said, "We are very happy to tell you our son repented!"

When they showed us his picture, there he was, wearing a long beard and the black clothing of the ultra-Orthodox!

"What do you say about this?" the mother asked me.

"I say this is nice clothing for the Purim carnival." The mother was no longer happy.

"Why do you say such a thing?" the father asked. I explained that to repent means to come before the Lord with a broken heart and to turn from the evil way to the path of righteousness. Repentance does not involve changing one's clothing but, rather, changing one's heart.

"He is not serving the Lord according to the Bible," I told them. "He is

serving men. He does what the rabbis tell him, not what the Bible tells Him.”

“Why do you say such a thing?” the mother asked.

So I asked them, “What is more important? To worship God according to the Bible or according to the fictitious stories in rabbinical commentaries?”

“The Bible, of course,” they both replied.

So I quickly opened my Bible to Jeremiah 17:7–8, where it is written, “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters.”

As I spoke, others on the bus began listening to our lengthy conversation and asked me to read the passage aloud. Then I gave my Bible to others on the bus, and asked them to read verses 5–6, which say, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert.’”

“So,” I asked, “in whom shall we trust? In those who disguise themselves so they will appear holy or in God, who is holy?” Suddenly, the atmosphere in the bus became very tense. More and more people joined the conversation.

“How can you come here and start to speak about faith?” someone asked. “You do not even cover your head!”

I replied, “When God gave Moses the Torah at Mount Sinai, did God ask him, ‘Why did you come here without your head covered?’? Moses went to God with his heart. That is the most important thing to the Lord. Everything else is like camouflage to make you believe someone is holy when his

heart is still far from God.

“I come to you plainly. I do not have a long beard or try to persuade you I am holy by wearing special clothes. Nor do I bring a stack of fictitious stories. I come to you only with the Word of God. In here it is written how we should worship the Lord.”

I began to read Deuteronomy 6:13–14: “You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him.... You shall not go after other gods.” Everyone on the bus grew quiet.

“Yes, you are to repent,” I told them. “But you are to repent before the Lord and follow Him alone. Only through Him can we be forgiven of all we have done.”

Many were disappointed when the bus finally arrived at the station, because they wanted to talk longer. I encouraged them to study God’s Word. “He is waiting for you,” I said.