

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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IT IS HARD FOR US TO FORSAKE THE OLD WAYS

The Bible says the people of Israel are God's Chosen People, His peculiar treasure. Israelis consider this to be a great honor, but most forget there are conditions for them to receive God's blessings.

In Deuteronomy 11:26–28 the Lord said, “Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey [My] commandments; and the curse, if you do not obey [My] commandments.”

Many Israelis believe that just because they live in Israel, God will bless them, regardless of disobedience. I recently met some who believe this way. I told them, “My friends, it is not enough that you live in Israel. Deuteronomy 12:1 states, ‘These are the statutes and judgments which you [must] observe in the land which the Lord God is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the earth.’ Because we are the Chosen People, we must be an example to the nations. We must not believe that simply because we live in Israel, we are free to do whatever we like.”

One man challenged, “Show me any other nation whose people have studied their holy books for as long as we have studied the Talmud.”

I told him, “You are still far from the truth. You can spend all your lives studying your holy books, but the Lord will consider it only vanity.”

They responded, “We realize you are a Christian, and you want us to

receive Jesus as our 'Savior,' as you people always say. We know you are not courageous enough to tell the rabbis what you are telling us."

"Never!" I replied. "Everyone must hear the truth about our Savior, and, actually, many times I have told rabbis what I just told you. One day, when you stand before the Lord to give an account for your life, your rabbis will not stand with you. You will stand before Him alone. Neither do the rabbis have the power to forgive your sins."

They became interested in what I was sharing, but one of them said, "Our fathers lived and died following these traditions. It is hard for us to forsake the old ways."

"I understand your concerns," I told them, "but if you do not change your ways, when you die you will be lost forever with no opportunity to be saved."

They seemed frightened and asked, "Do you think we have already gone too far?"

"No," I answered. "This is only the beginning. When you start to fear, your eyes will be opened to see biblical truth. You will see the folly of following old traditions and not accepting the responsibility for your eternal souls."

One of the men said, "We have studied the Talmud all our lives. You cannot teach us anything we do not already know."

I then asked the entire group, "Which book is more important—the Talmud, or the Torah? If you are good Jews, why do you not keep the law as it is written in Deuteronomy 5:7: 'You shall have no other gods before me'? This is only one of the many commandments that Israelis do not keep. Every person is responsible for himself before the Lord, and Ezekiel 18:20 tells us, 'The soul who sins shall die.' Our fathers and rabbis cannot

save us. But if you receive the Lord, you will be blessed rather than cursed.”

At the end of our conversation, one said, “We never realized that those who believe in Jesus follow the Bible so closely. This is the first time we have heard what you really believe.”

I pray for them and many others in Israel, that the Lord will cause them to meditate on what they hear, that they will recognize the truth as it is written in His Word, and that they will open their hearts to Him as their Savior and Messiah.