

# Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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

## THE LORD IS ON MY SIDE

It is 63 years since Israel became a state. Much time has passed, and after everything I endured in my life, I am humbled and amazed I am still alive.

I grew up in Poland and have been without parents since the age of 10. Either they were killed by the Germans in the Warsaw Ghetto or Treblinka during World War II, or they died from hunger. Realizing the Nazis were going to invade Poland, my mother brought me to a Polish orphanage. I was very blond and did not look Jewish. She told me, "Be strong. You are no longer a child. You are a man." And with those words, she left me. I never saw her again.

Soon the orphanage was disbanded, and I was alone. I had no money, no food, and nowhere to go. Often I was jealous of those who had died. But I remembered my mother's words: Be strong.

At one point I found work with a German farmer. He was extremely cruel and did not know I was a Jew. Had he known, he would have butchered me. He also did not know I knew German. One day I overheard him ask his wife, "What would you say if I killed this Polish swine?"

She replied, "Do what you want."

Then I remembered my mother's words: Be strong! So I ran away before he could kill me.

For six years I lived on the edge of death. When I arrived in Israel, I thought I would have rest. I wondered, How am I still alive? Who was on my side, protecting me from all the dangers I faced?

In Israel, however, the situation was also dangerous. It was 1948. We were a mere half-million people. And when we declared our independence, eight Arab countries descended on us like locusts, determined to destroy us.

We went from the ship into the army. My job was with the strike-force, clearing minefields. I was told, "You have only one chance. If you make a mistake, you are no more."

I was very careful. I never made a mistake. And I kept asking myself, "Who is on my side? Why am I not dead yet?"

One evening, on Israel's first Independence Day, I was in Tel Aviv. An older lady approached me and gave me a Bible. "Read this, soldier," she said, "so you will know who is on our side."

It was the first time in my life I ever opened a Bible. And this is what I read: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me" (Ps. 27:10). I had finally received the answer to my question. The Lord was on my side.

I began to read the Bible. I have had many troubles in life, but the Bible has been my greatest comfort and showed me the way to redemption. So I came to know my Savior.

I never dreamed I would live long enough to grow old. I have a wonderful wife, three sons, one daughter, and 16 grandchildren; and they all love the Lord and are active believers.

We started a congregation a number of years ago with a handful of people, and today we are almost 300. One of our sons is the pastor, and some of our grandchildren minister there in music. After the long *via dolorosa* I passed through in the Holocaust, it is my greatest joy in life to see my family serve the Lord.

It is my greatest joy to see what the Lord has done for us here in Jerusalem. And today we are able to help others. I am also thankful to The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, which has been with us from the beginning. As it is written, "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. 126:5).