

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE MESSIAH?

The situation in Israel is very tense. There is no peace. Most of the time I am on duty and must patrol the dark streets of Jerusalem on the Arab side. My task is to look for mines and booby traps. I must watch my step all the time.

Our neighboring Arab countries continually threaten to destroy us, but we are not afraid and trust in the Lord. We must hold on to this land; otherwise, they shall drive us into the sea. The Lord has promised this land to our people, and there is no power on earth that can gainsay the Lord's will. In the meantime, I give my testimony concerning our Messiah and Savior to as many people as possible. I have visited many friends, witnessing to them, because we do not know what the next day will bring.

Last Thursday, I was on patrol in the main street of former Arab Jerusalem. Around three o'clock in the morning, I noticed a group of people coming my way. They were fully dressed in black robes. I thought they were priests, but when they came close I realized that they were students at an Orthodox Jewish school. Because it was my duty to do so, I stopped them and asked what they were doing out so early in the morning. They answered in unison, "We are going to the West Wall to recite Slichot" (penitential prayers usually recited before New Year and the Day of Atonement).

At first they were frightened, but when they saw that I was an Israeli soldier, they took courage. I asked, "When do you think the Temple will be

rebuilt? Why don't you start now, since you have the Wailing Wall in your possession?" One of them said, "Only when the Messiah comes will the Temple be rebuilt." "And where is the Messiah?" I asked. He answered, "He is already here, but He is waiting to make Himself manifest. He will build the Temple, and all the dead shall rise from their graves. We ourselves have no right to build the Temple. We are unclean and must not touch this work on the Holy Temple."

Their leader, who was a rabbi, asked, "What do you think of the Messiah, the son of David, soldier?" I answered, "The Messiah, the son of David, has come and is coming again. I know Him, and many other people know Him and have received Him as their Messiah and Savior. He laid down His life for our sins and made full atonement for us, according to Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22." I gave them many other Scriptures to make my point.

They stood there amazed, hearing things that apparently they did not know. The Lord Himself put the words into my mouth. Whatever the question, I gave them a scriptural answer. I was amazed at myself and realized that the Holy Spirit was guiding me. Usually Orthodox Jews do not talk to anyone who confesses Jesus as the Messiah, but they were most thrilled and impressed by the fact that I was a soldier guarding their safety while they are asleep or when they go to the Wailing Wall to pray. After I gave them my testimony, I asked, "Do you think I should have the same rights as any other Jewish person here in Israel? Or don't I deserve such rights?" The rabbi said, "You have asked a hard question, one that is difficult to answer." I insisted that he give me an answer because I wanted to know his opinion. "Well," he said, "if all the Jewish Christians were like you, we would have no difficulty at all."

Instead of going on to the Wailing Wall, they lingered around me and discussed the Messiah and messianic prophecies until nearly six o'clock in the morning. We hardly realized that the night had passed and the morning had arrived.