

# Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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## HOW DO YOU PRAY?

In these times of great uncertainty in Israel, the rabbis of Cabala (Jewish mysticism) have decided to compose a new prayer—a poem to comfort the people of Israel. One is the leader of a large synagogue in my neighborhood. For a long time he would not even look at me because of my faith in Jesus, but when members of his synagogue told him I often make repairs to their homes for free, he gradually changed his attitude. We have since become good friends.

When I met him recently, He was the first to say “Shalom,” and I knew immediately he wanted my help. I was happy to do the work he requested, and, as always, I did not charge him. When I was finished, he asked, “Zvi, have you lost your head, believing in this man Jesus? How did you decide to believe in Him?”

Because we were in his synagogue, I pointed to the extensive library and said, “Can you show me even one copy of the Bible here?”

He answered, “Most of the books are prayer books. Other rabbis and I are trying to compose a new prayer. Could you offer any help in composing the new prayer?”

I replied, “If you want to know how to pray, you must ask God directly for His help. All of the poems and prayers in the world will not help you. If they do not come from your heart, they are nothing more than what King Solomon called ‘vanity’ in Ecclesiastes 1:2.”

The rabbi was listening intently, and then he asked, “How do you pray?” I opened my Bible to Psalm 25 and read, “To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. I trust in You; Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. For You are the God of my salvation” (vv. 1–2, 4–5). I told him, “These are the words of King David. He prayed all that was in his heart, without worrying about whether it was a nice poem. He knew all the sins he had committed against God, and so he prayed, ‘Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me’ [Ps. 51:11]. The Holy Spirit was very important to David. David uttered all these words, not because he was a great poet, but because he was a great sinner. Use David’s words as an example of his simplicity and humility before God.”

The rabbi asked, “How do believers in Jesus pray?”

I replied, “We pray what is on our hearts at any given time, in any given situation. This ability comes through the Holy Spirit of God as people place their faith in the Lord Jesus. Hannah prayed silently in the Temple at Shiloh, but her petition came from deep within her heart. God heard her prayer and gave her the desire of her heart, and the result was the birth of Samuel.

“We come before God with open hearts, and He answers our prayers according to His will. This is what God wants from His children. He said in Ezekiel 36:26, ‘I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take [your] heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.’”

The rabbi was surprised I read from the Bible because he was sure believers in Jesus did not use the Bible. He said, “I have learned much today, but the distance between us is still very great.”

I said, “You must not try to bridge the distance between you and me, but between yourself and God. As it is written in Isaiah 53, He was bruised for

our sins and crushed for our iniquities, and because of all He has done for us, we must come to Him in the way He has directed in His Word.”

The rabbi and I parted on a very friendly basis that day. I trust the Lord to do a work in this man’s heart.