

Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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YOM KIPPUR - THE LORD IS YOUR ATONEMENT

In Israel, people are preparing for the feast of Rosh Hashanah followed by the greatest holy day of all, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. This is the only holy day people fear. Thirty days beforehand, they begin to pray day and night for forgiveness.

Recently some people came to me and said, "We want you to forget about your strange ways and come with us to pray." When I asked who had sent them, they replied, "No one sent us; we have come on our own."

"No," I responded, "you did not come on your own, but God sent you so I could tell you that He has already forgiven my sins."

"Oh yes," they agreed, "He forgives us every year at the time of the great fast."

"That is not what I mean," I countered. "I came to God only once. I put my faith in Him, and He forgave my sins. He can forgive your sins also, once forever."

They were not interested in anything I said. "If you will do as we ask," one told me, "you will have no more trouble with us."

I told them, "I am not afraid of you. I fear only God."

"How can you fear God when you do not believe in Him, but in Jesus?"

another asked.

I replied, “The Lord said, ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams’ (Isa. 1:11). I believe in only one offering, and that is the offering of the Lord Himself, who gave Himself for us.”

“From what book did you take that?” one asked. Quickly I turned to Isaiah 53. Then I told them, “He is the one in whom I have trusted, and He has given me peace. I know that when I leave this world, I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. You have come to tell me I may experience trouble from you, but I am not afraid anymore.”

“Not even about your life?” one demanded.

“No,” I answered, “because I know to whom I belong.”

At this point someone said, “If you are not afraid of us, then let us make a cease-fire and speak together as good friends.”

“That is what I have been waiting for,” I replied. “I do not hate you. You are my dear friends, and you are welcome to visit me anytime.”

All of them said, “We cannot believe this!”

Then my children played their instruments for them, and they ate with my family. I could feel the Spirit of the Lord working. After we had eaten, I asked, “May I read to you from the New Testament and tell you why I am so happy?” They agreed, and I read Romans 12:9–21.

After I finished, one man asked, “These things are nice to hear, but if Jesus loved His enemies, then why did the Germans, who are Christians, persecute the Jewish people so badly?”

I replied, "I am sure that they were not true believers. Now many in Germany are sorry for what they did and are again calling on the Lord. But they are not really clean within. They only hope they are clean, just as you hope when you pray at Yom Kippur. I am finished with vain prayers and sacrifices. I received the Savior's love, grace, and mercy. On the Day of Atonement, you will not be sure if the Lord has forgiven your sins. But I know He has forgiven mine!

"My friends, why do you continue to live in fear? The Lord is your atonement. He will receive you into His family and forgive your sins. You came hatefully to warn me, but the love of the Lord has been with us. We should thank the Lord that He is with us."

These people left my home feeling differently than when they came. They left with love in their hearts and smiles on their faces. Praise the Lord!