

As War Rages, Why Are Israelis Searching for God, and Even Considering Jesus?

Every year, tens of thousands of Christians visit the Garden Tomb – that is, the empty tomb – in Jerusalem to reflect on the life, death, and miraculous resurrection of Jesus.

But this year, with Israel engaged in brutal war against Hamas in Gaza for almost six months, more and more Israeli Jews than ever before are wrestling with existential questions.

They're asking about life and death and life after death – and even whether Jesus of Nazareth might, in fact, be the Jewish Messiah.

And that's the focus of this week's Easter Special Edition of THE ROSENBERG REPORT on TBN.

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Joel C. Rosenberg, the program's anchor and editor-in-chief of ALL ISRAEL NEWS, discusses the central question on the hearts of so many in Israel's darkest hour.

"Is there any way to know God personally and be sure that we're going to be safe, that we're really going to be in heaven forever and ever when we leave this world?"

Walking through the grounds of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, including going inside the empty tomb of Jesus, Rosenberg interviews Victor Kalisher, a prominent Messianic Jewish leader in Israel and the head of the Israeli Bible Society.

Kalisher – the son of a Holocaust survivor and born into one of the most prominent and influential Messianic Jewish

families in all of Israel – gives a fascinating explanation of why many Jews don't believe that Jesus is the Messiah but also why more Jews than ever do believe.

And why more Jews than ever are asking honest and hard questions about God, the Bible, and the true identity of Jesus.

Kalisher told Rosenberg that the resurrection of Jesus is the central claim of the New Testament.

He also noted that the Apostle Paul wrote that if Jesus did not rise from the dead then the faith of Christians and Messianic Jews is in vain.

"It is written that He appeared at one time before 500 people and He appeared on different occasions to make sure that the fact of the resurrection will be known [widely], that it will be [known as] a historic fact.," he told Rosenberg.

Kalisher added that he asks himself today: "How can I be a true witness of Jesus' resurrection?"

While Kalisher's father was a Holocaust survivor from Poland, his mother was a Jewish woman who fled Iran.

His family, he noted, radically came to faith in Jesus as Messiah under very special circumstances.

Kalisher also shared with Rosenberg that at a young age, he once dreamt that God handed him the Bible and told him to share it with others.

Back then, he didn't realize the full meaning of the dream.

"God called me to give all Israelis the opportunity to read God's Word," Kalisher said.

"I am part of the first generation in 2,000 years of Israeli Jews who believe in Jesus," he said, and is passionate about

giving every Israeli a chance to have their own Bible; to read it for themselves; to be able to decide whether to receive or reject Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Messiah.

In 1948, the year that the State of Israel was established, only 23 Israeli Jews in the nation believed that Jesus is the Messiah.

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Worldwide in 1948, fewer than 2,000 Jews believed that Jesus is the Messiah.

Today, studies show that between 15,000 and 30,000 Israeli Jews follow Jesus.

Across the world, almost one million Jews are followers of Jesus.

Why do so many more Jews believe in Jesus than ever before?

Both Rosenberg and Kalisher have noticed that there has been an increasing openness about Jesus in Israel in recent years.

More Israelis seem to be open to asking questions about Jesus and who He really is.

"I think that there is much greater openness and seeking [in recent decades], especially now in this time of war," Kalisher said.

"You see much more people quoting scriptures, trying to go to spiritual things... They seek for spirituality... They search and seek for divine intervention."

Kalisher explained in some detail why Jews are more open to discussing Jesus – and even following Jesus – than at any time in 2,000 years.

Don't miss this week's Easter Special and the intriguing interview with Victor Kalisher.

THE ROSENBERG REPORT airs Thursday nights at 9 p.m. EST and Saturday nights at 9:30 p.m. EST on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), the most-watched Christian television network in the United States.

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