



“THIS IS A BOOKLET FROM DON FINTO THAT WILL BE PRINTED AND OFFERED TO ALL WHO ARE COMING TO THE CALL AND ANY OTHERS MAKING THEIR FIRST TRIP TO ISRAEL”

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As a non-Jewish believer who has come to some understanding of the purposes of God for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people in this end-time generation, let me encourage you to consider several things as you look forward to your upcoming visit to Jerusalem.

Come humbly to Israel, humbly to Jerusalem. This is the Land of your inheritance. Here Jesus was born. Here, at 40 days old, according to the Law, He was dedicated at the Temple and heard the prophetic words of Simeon and Anna. Here, as a young 12-year-old, He taught on those Temple grounds. Here the blind were healed, the lame walked, and the dead were raised. Here He was hailed as Messiah and crucified as a criminal. Here He rose from the dead on the third day. Here He walked through locked doors to enter a room with His fearful disciples and pronounced eternal “peace” over them. Here, on the Mount of Olives, He ascended to the Father, being taken up in a cloud, and it is here, on this same spot, where He will return as “King of Jews” (the words from the cross) and as King/Emperor/Supreme Ruler over all the nations in a future world empire of peace (see Acts 1:11 and Zech.14:9).

Israel is the only nation of the world whose *Land deed was signed by the Almighty Himself*. Look at His words to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joshua in Genesis 15:18-21; 26:3; 35:12 and Joshua 1:4, and His words through the Psalmist in Psalm 105:8-11. The Land belongs to Abraham’s descendants through Isaac and Jacob (Israel) in perpetuity, even though she will not have full possession until she is walking in the commandments of God.

Control of the Land is related to faithfulness to God. Moses clearly warned of a scattering among the nations if she did not remain faithful (see Deut. 28:15, 36, 41, 63). Jesus predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed and “taken as prisoners to all the nations” (Luke 21:24). Ezekiel (37:1-11) describes Israel as dry bones that would be resurrected and into whom the breath of God would enter. Jeremiah called the return of

Israel—“out of all the countries where He had banished them”—a greater miracle than the Exodus from Egypt (23:7-8).

God sees Jerusalem as “the center of the nations, with countries all around her,” the Lord told Ezekiel (5:5). “Whoever touches you [Jerusalem] touches the apple of [God’s] eye” (Zech. 2:8). Even the boundaries of the nations somehow relate to the tribes of Israel. “When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He divided all mankind, He set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel” (Deut. 32:8).

Believers in our day are learning to honor the host nations on every continent. Israel is the *host nation of all nations*. Of no other city does the Lord say, “I have posted watchmen on your walls... they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give yourselves no rest, and give Him no rest till He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth” (Isa. 62:6-7). No other city has a divine injunction to be remembered in prayer (see Ps. 122:6).

You, as a believer in Jesus, are grafted in to the Jewish olive tree (see Rom. 11:17). The Church has not replaced Israel, but we are “grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root. Do not boast over those branches,” Paul tells the Romans (v.18). As one of my friends says, “Israel’s ‘family journal’ has now become our sacred Scripture.” It is her Promised Messiah that is now not only the Messiah of Israel and the Jewish people, but the Redeemer/Savior of every nation. This is our family of faith. Even Jewish people who have not yet come to faith in their Messiah are a part of our yet-to-be-redeemed family.

Enjoy the diversity of Abraham’s sons and daughters who have been returned from 2000 years of exile from over 100 nations and languages. Listen as people speak the language of Moses and the prophets. *Enjoy especially the fellowship with your Jewish brothers and sisters whose eyes and hearts have been opened to their own Messiah.* We are the ones of whom Simeon spoke on the day of Jesus’ dedication in the Temple when he said that Jesus would be a “light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:32).

Go to be blessed, but also go to bless others. Walk in the blessing God spoke to Abraham. “I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:3). Israel was created as a blessing to all nations, but you have now become a part of that heritage, so that you are both to receive and carry the blessing wherever you go.

Those of us who have learned to love Israel and the Jewish people must, however, never forget her blood cousins, the Arab nations, the sons and daughters of Ishmael and other related peoples. Ishmael was not Abraham’s son of the covenant, and was sent away from his family home at an early age, but Abraham also blessed him and his descendants. “*As for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him*

fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation” (Gen. 17:20).

The surrounding Arab nations also have a destiny in God. Egyptians and Assyrians (which would represent today’s Iraq, Syria and other nations adjacent to Israel) are also a people of destiny. They, along with Israel, will be a blessing to the whole earth. “In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. ***In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing on the earth.*** The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, ‘Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance’” (Isaiah 19:23-25). As you traverse the Land, be alert to both Jewish and Arab believers who are united in their common Redeemer, many of whom are risking their lives to see that their people learn of the Redeemer. Only in Jesus/Yeshua do enemies become friends and brothers.

Yes, ours is a ***unique day in history***, the day predicted by Jesus, the day for which the prophets and apostles yearned. Take another look ***at some of the things that have never before happened in history and how these historic events affect us.***

- 1. Israel returned from centuries of exile, established as a nation.** The return from Egypt was only from the south. The return from Babylonian exile was from the east. But this one from the nations is from every direction. “I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west (think America and other Western nations). I will say to the north, ‘Give them up (think Russian Jews)!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back (think Ethiopian Jews and others from Africa).’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth” (Isa. 43:5-6).

Israel entered into exile as two distinct nations: the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. But the prophets knew they would come back united as one. Jeremiah, Hosea and Ezekiel all foresaw our day when she would return as one people:

“In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance” (Jer. 3:18).

“The people of Judah and the people of Israel will be reunited” (Hos. 1:11).

“I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms” (Ezek. 37:20-22).

Eighty percent of those who have returned from the nations are secular Jews, often with very little faith and little knowledge of their own God. Some may wonder why Israel has come back in our day, since so many of the Jewish people are no longer committed to the words of God. Ezekiel made it clear that Israel's return from exile would not be because she had become righteous, rather "for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone... Then the nations will know that I am the LORD... when I show myself holy through you before their eyes" (Ezek. 36:22-23).

Jeremiah knew Israel's return would not be a time of peace. "Cries of fear are heard – terror, not peace," was his description. "Why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, every face turned deathly pale?" (30:5-6).

This return from the nations is often described in great detail. Jeremiah spoke of the "women in labor" (31:8) who would be among the returnees, a reference to both Ethiopian and Yemenite Jews who gave birth en route. Isaiah foresaw airplanes bringing back the "captives." "Who are these that fly along like clouds, like doves to their nests?" (60:8). But he also speaks of ships "bringing your sons from afar" (v. 9), another apt description of the many ships that were used in the return.

- 2. In the Six Day War of 1967, Israel took sovereign control of the city of Jerusalem.** "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until..." (Luke 21:24) were Jesus' words that day on the Mount of Olives. In other words, the Gentiles would dominate the city for a season, but the Jews would be back. That coming back has happened in our day.
- 3. For the first time since the first century, tens of thousands of Jewish eyes are opening to the gospel of Yeshua/Jesus, just as Isaiah, Hosea, Ezekiel, Paul, and even Jesus predicted:**

Isaiah's prophecy is being fulfilled in our day!

When given the assignment to tell his people that their eyes would be closed, their ears dull, their hearts calloused—"otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed"—Isaiah cried out, "For how long, O LORD?" (6:10-11). The answer describes our day: Not "until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted, and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the Lord has sent everyone far away, and the land is utterly forsaken" (vv. 11-12). Then and only then would Israeli eyes and hearts begin to open.

Isaiah is describing our day, a day when hundreds of thousands of Jews in the West, in the former Soviet Union, in Israel and in the nations have come to faith in Yeshua. Congregations/synagogues of Jewish believers have sprung up all over the world, with over 100 groups inside Israel. Some are house groups, others are congregations of several hundred!

Hosea's prophecy is being fulfilled in our day!

Hosea foresaw that Israel would be without a king “many days” (she has not had a king since the last King Zedekiah was taken to Babylon around 586 B.C.), “many days” without a sacrifice (all animal sacrifices ceased when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in A. D. 70), but that “afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God...trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days” (3:4-5). We are seeing these prophetic words fulfilled in our day. Some of the Jewish believers have literally experienced the trembling as they were being drawn to faith in Yeshua.

Ezekiel's prophecy is being fulfilled in our day!

“Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it’, declares the Lord” (Ezek. 37:13).

Paul's prophecy is being fulfilled in our day...and will be completed in a future day!

He says to the Romans that God has not forsaken Israel (see 11:1, 11), but that she has “experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved” (vv. 25-26).

Jesus' prophecy will be fulfilled in a time to come!

When Jesus was speaking to the Jewish leaders, He says, “You will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’” (Matt. 23:39), indicating that at a future time—at the time of His return—Jewish leaders will recognize Him.

4. **There is an amazing awakening of faith among nations that have long been held in a spiritual ice age.** Both Paul and Ezekiel connect this international awakening to the return of the Jewish people, and Jesus specifically says that every nation (ethnos – ethnic group) of the world must hear the gospel of the kingdom before the end.

Paul speaks to the Romans...and to us:

“If their [the Jewish people’s] transgression means riches for the world and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!”(Rom. 11:12). Greater riches for the world when the Jewish people return to the Land and to the Lord!

“If their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead” (v. 15). The world awakened to new life when the Jewish people turn back to accept their Messiah!

Ezekiel speaks from the distant past:

The prophet foresaw our day when Israel would return from the nations, but he also saw this return prophetically affecting the nations. “Then the nations will know that I am the LORD,” declares the Sovereign Lord, ‘when I show myself holy through you before their eyes’” (36:23).

Jesus speaks to us today:

“This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt.24:14).

As we ponder world evangelism, we would do well to remember the words of the first century’s most prominent evangelist. “First to the Jew,” Paul reminded the Romans (1:16). Though Paul was called to the Gentiles, he went first to the Jewish synagogues to witness to his own people before turning to the Gentiles in that very city. I am convinced that all of our worldwide evangelism will prosper if we will place the Jewish people in the proper priority in our ministry and in our witness.

5. **The universal Church has developed a growing awareness of her relationship to the Jewish people – that she is grafted in to their olive tree and has become a part of their family.** For centuries the Church loudly proclaimed that Jewish people must give up their Jewish-ness to become “Christians.” Believers in the nations assumed the Lord had severed relationship to the nation of Israel. But in recent years the Church has come to see that she has become a part of Israel rather than replacing her. As a result churches all over the world are looking again at the biblical feasts and restoring the Jewish roots of our faith.

“Grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root,” Paul declared to the Romans (11:17).

“Formerly you who are Gentiles by birth... were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise,” Paul spoke to the Ephesians. But now we “have “been brought

near through the blood of Christ [and are] no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people" (2:12-13, 19).

6. **Gradually the resurrected community of Jewish believers in Jesus and the church from the nations are becoming one.** This is "the mystery which for ages past was kept hidden" (Eph. 3:9) that now "through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus (v. 6). *Heirs together*, not heirs instead of! *Members together! Sharers together!* Israel is now the family into which we from the nations have been adopted.

"I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen [not Jewish]. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and *there shall be one flock and one shepherd*," Jesus said to His disciples (John 10:16), as He looked forward to the time when Gentiles would join the family of Israel.

"It is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish," said Caiaphas the high priest (John 11:50). Then, concerning that statement, the apostle John comments, "He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, *to bring them together and make them one*" (vv. 51-52).

"He Himself is our peace *who has made the two one*," Paul declared (Eph. 2:14).

Perhaps we should even take a closer look at Jesus' description of the nations gathered before the throne of God. "Whatever you did for one of the least of *these brothers of mine*, you did for me," Jesus said (Matt. 25:40). "Brothers of mine?" Jesus said so. The sons of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob are the closest blood family that Jesus had when He walked among us as a son of Adam.

As you look forward to your time in Israel, let me encourage you to re-think the way in which you relate to the Jewish people and offer some suggestions for expressing your faith while walking among them.

- *The Jewish people are the "parents of our faith."*

When Malachi spoke of the *hearts of the fathers being turned to the children, and the children to their fathers* "or else I will come and strike the land with a curse" (4:6), he was obviously referring to family relationship. But there is another sense in which these words refer to us from the nations as we relate to the "parents of our faith," the Jewish people.

- ***The Jewish nation has kept faith in the One True God alive.***

Perhaps we have been accustomed to thinking of Jewish “converts” to the faith. Though this is true—in the sense that “convert” means “to turn,” and that all of us who have come to Jesus have turned [from sin]—there is another sense in which Jewish people do not “convert” when they come to faith. They are simply ***returning to the God of their fathers***. It is those of us from the nations who have “converted.” We would still be worshipping sticks, stones, the sun and the stars were it not for the Jewish nation who has kept faith in the One True God alive through the centuries, even sometimes amidst unbelief.

- ***Jewish believers prefer to use the word congregation or synagogue rather than church.***

The whole Christian world speaks freely of “the Church,” but this Greek word for *church* (*ekklesia*) can also easily be translated “congregation.” To the Jewish ear, the word *church* evokes scenes of *the* Crusades, when Jewish people were locked in their synagogues and burned to their death; pogroms, when Jewish people were required to reside only in certain areas and were subjected to repeated persecution; the Inquisition, when “Christian” rulers of Spain led the charge to confiscate Jewish wealth and drive the Jews from their country; and the holocaust, spawned and executed in “Christian” Germany, Austria and Poland.

Think, therefore, in terms of **“congregations” of Jewish believers, even “synagogues” rather than “churches.”** Just a matter of terminology, but it shows love and respect for our centuries-long persecuted Jewish family.

- ***“Christ” is the transliteration of the Greek christos, meaning “Anointed One.” In speaking of Jesus, Jewish believers prefer to use the Hebrew equivalent, Messiah.***

Even the name “Christ” brings up memories of persecution and horror to the Jewish mind. ***“Christ-killers” was a derogatory term spoken over countless Jewish people through the centuries.*** “Die in the name of Christ!” was often scrawled across the death chambers of Europe during the years of the Nazi reign of terror. Jesus, however, made it clear that it was not only the Jewish leaders who would be responsible for His death, but that the Son of Man would be “handed over to the Gentiles” who would “mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him” (Luke 18:32).

“Messiah” is so Jewish! And scriptural! “Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God,” the high priest asked Jesus. “Yes, it is as you say” was Jesus’ response (Matt. 26:63-64). In deference to the soul of the Jewish nation, who has suffered so much at the hands of “Christians,” I choose to refer to Jesus as “Messiah.”

- **Most of the Jewish believers I know do not refer to themselves as “Christians.”**

I even prefer to speak of myself as a “believer” rather than a “Christian.” The term “Christian” has little meaning in today’s world. It may simply imply that one was born into a family that has been nominally “Christian” for generations. In other words, we have “Christian atheists” or “Christian skeptics” who have no faith at all in God, in His Word, or in His Son. In the New Covenant Scripture, the name “Christian” only appears three times and in each of those incidents, it was a name that others applied to the believers of the day (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).

- ***“Christian Zionism”—the belief that Israel has a right to be in the Land of her inheritance—is a growing phenomenon in our day.***

Believers from the nations are beginning to bless Israel. But even among Christian Zionists, there is great diversity, with sometimes totally unbiblical teaching. For example,

1. Some would have us believe that the Jewish people do not need their own Messiah – that God has a different plan for them. This would be hard for the apostle Paul to accept, who said, ***“I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Messiah for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel... they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge”*** (Rom. 9:3; 10:1).
2. Others believe that the Jewish people will come to faith one day, but that this is not their day. No need to tell them about Yeshua, since all Israel will eventually be saved. Jesus did not intend to be the Messiah of Israel the first time He came. That event awaits future fulfillment. The apostle Peter, however, would have differed. ***“God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah,”*** he told the gathered people from the nations on that first Shavuot (Pentecost) after the resurrection (Acts 2:36).
3. ***Christian Zionists have wonderfully sown millions of dollars into the Land of Israel,*** bringing in millions of believers from around the world and establishing great storehouses of humanitarian aid. This is right and good. Paul said that since we have received spiritual blessings from the Jewish people, we “owe it” to them “to share with them” our material blessings (Rom. 15:27). But Paul also adds, in speaking to the Galatians, that we should always especially ***remember “those who belong to the family of believers*** (6:10).” Not only are you related to Israel and the Jewish people, but you are doubly connected to those in the family of faith.

We are living in another transition time of the history of God’s people Israel and the Church.

- ***In the early centuries of our faith, only Jewish people (and Jewish proselytes) were a part of the family of faith.*** The early apostles, the 120, the 3000 on Pentecost, the 5000 mentioned later in Acts (4:4)—all Jewish. Not until Peter’s housetop experience and his visit to Cornelius did the door open for those from the nations.
- ***The conversion of Cornelius brought about a blended family of Jews and Gentiles together.*** Antioch became the center of this cross-cultural family and the origin of mission trips to the nations.
- ***Soon, however, the Church entered “the time of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24).*** Filled with those from the nations, many did not understand their origin of faith. When Jerusalem was destroyed in A. D. 70, the Church began to believe that God was finished with Israel. All Jewish expressions of faith soon ceased, were forbidden, even among the Jewish believers.
- ***When the nation of Israel was born in 1948, we entered another time of transition when Jewish and Gentile believers were to become one blended family.*** And when Jerusalem came under the control of the new nation in 1967, a switch was flipped in heaven. Jewish eyes began to open supernaturally and Jewish people began to recognize their Messiah Yeshua. Congregations/ synagogues of believers began to spring up.
- ***This present time will end when the words of Zechariah find their fulfillment.*** Every nation will turn against Jerusalem (see 14:2; 12:3). At the same time, believers in the nations will turn their hearts to Israel and the Jewish people (see 2:11-13; 8:20-23). ***The Lord*** will go forth to fight for His people and ***will return as “King over the whole earth”*** (14:9) in an unprecedented era of peace.

As all of this transpires, be aware of the ***growing confrontation between light and darkness***. The darkness will get deeper, and the light of the glory of God through the believers will shine brighter. Jesus spoke of the “wheat and tares,” of righteousness and wickedness that would “grow together” to the harvest (see Matthew 13:30). Isaiah spoke of “thick darkness” over the people, but the glory of the Lord would rise upon us (see Isaiah 60), speaking of Israel and the believers from the nations. Daniel described that time as a time “of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then” (12:1), but also as a time when “those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever” (12:3).

As you travel the Land, listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Speak when He calls you to speak, and be silent when He calls you to be silent. Plant seeds of salvation, water the seeds already sown, and yes, be ready to reap the harvest. Remember that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to draw people to Himself. We are simply His instruments to do His bidding in the process.

Come to Israel! Come humbly!

Come under the blessing! Be a blessing! (Gen. 12:1-3)

Obey the biblical injunction regarding prayer for Israel! (Ps. 122:6; Isa. 62:8)

Pray for the eyes of the Jewish people to be open to their Messiah! (Isa. 6:8-13)

Include also the Arab family in your prayers! (Gen. 17:20; Isa. 19:19-25)

Don't forget the special connect to "those in the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10)

***Walk forth in the "mystery revealed"—Jew and Gentile together in Messiah Yeshua/Jesus!
(Eph. 3:6)***

Pray to be a light that shines in the darkness! (2 Cor. 4:6)

For more information about Don Finto or to order one of his books *Your People will be My People*, or *God's Promise and the Future of Israel*, go to www.calebcompany.com.