

December 2007 – A word from Don Finto

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Blessings to all of you in this season of remembering the miraculous events surrounding the birth of Yeshua... in this time when the contrast between light and darkness escalates!

At the close of this year, I need to call to your attention a major prayer need that has become evident in the last days.



Many of you will have heard of John Hagee's newly published book: *In Defense of Israel*.

I had not read the book, but received a disturbing email from Calev Myers, on November 26. Calev, our lawyer/pastor/Jewish brother in Jerusalem, stated that John Hagee teaches that the Jewish

people of the first century did not reject Jesus as Messiah, but that Jesus had refused to be their Messiah – that He choose rather to be the Savior of the Gentiles, that this was His total intention.

This was hard for me to believe, though I had no cause ever to doubt Calev's integrity or ability to understand clearly written statements.

Three days later, on November 29, I received an email from Russ Resnick, General Secretary for the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC) and a good friend of Eitan Shishkoff, about the Hagee book, with a letter from the

UMJC stating that Hagee's "teachings contradict biblical doctrine, undermine the testimony of Jewish followers of Jesus, and weaken the cause of Christian supporters of the Jewish people," that "Hagee argues that Jesus is not the Messiah of the Jews, but rather the Savior of the World."

Even though I knew that our brother John had little or no connection to Jewish believers in Yeshua, it was difficult for me to believe that he would make statements that were so radically erroneous.

So I ordered the book to read it for myself. What I found was more appalling than I could have imagined. Just so you will not have to order it (and support the sale of the book), I will give you some of the quotes and their page numbers below. I, along I am sure with numerous other fellow believers among both Jews and non-Jews, am writing to our brother, urging him to reconsider the clear teaching of the Word. There are several reasons to be concerned regarding the book:

1. There are those who will read the book without much discernment and, accept its teaching as true because John Hagee wrote it.
2. If people can accept this book as biblical, it shows how easily the Western Christian can be deceived, an ominous foreboding for the future.
3. This discourages Christians from forming relationships with the hundreds of thousands of Jewish people who have miraculously been brought to faith in our day.
4. There is no encouragement to share the gospel with the Jewish people who are still in need of their own Messiah.

The troubling chapter in the Hagee book is Chapter 10, entitled, "Answering Christian Critics."

On page 132, he poses four questions with the obvious intention of answering them negatively.

1. Did the Jews reject Jesus as Messiah, or did Jesus refuse to be their Messiah?
2. Did the words of Jesus or his actions convey the message that he wanted to be Messiah?
3. Did the Jews want Jesus to be their Messiah?
4. What does the biblical text say was the sovereign plan of God for the life of Jesus Christ?

To prove that Jesus came as Savior of the world, not as Messiah of Israel, Hagee refers to the Simeon moment in the Temple with the infant Jesus. I quote from page 132:

“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for mine eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, *a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles*, and the glory of Your people Israel.” Luke 2:27-32, emphasis added.

“The Holy Spirit of God announced through a Jewish prophet, Simeon, that the sovereign purpose for Jesus’ life was to be *a light to the Gentiles* (compare Isaiah 42:6)”

Our brother ignores completely the last part of that statement – “and the glory of Your people Israel.”

To make this point stronger, that Jesus’ message was to go from Israel, but was not to Israel, he says on page 134, and I quote:

“That’s why the Great Commission commanded, “Go ye [Jews] into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature...” Gentiles were considered creatures. Jesus even

referred to the Gentiles as dogs. The message of the gospel was from Israel, not to Israel!”

These are his exact words! The message of the gospel was not to Israel! This is a bizarre and horrible twisting of Scripture!

On page 135, he says “ Had Jesus not gone to the cross, not one Gentile would have ever come to redemption.”

True of course, but no less true of Israel. This is clear dual covenant theology – that the Jewish people did not/do not need Yeshua.

On pages 135-136, Hagee says that

“Five major points must now be made that are crucial to understanding that the Jews did not reject Jesus as Messiah.

1. Jesus had to live to be the Messiah.
2. If it was God’s will for Jesus to die from the beginning...
3. If it was Jesus intention to be obedient unto death...
4. If there is not one verse of Scripture in the New Testament that says Jesus came to be the Messiah... “
5. And if Jesus refused by his words or actions to claim to be the Messiah of the Jews, then *how can the Jews be blamed for rejecting what was never offered?*”

What happened to Matthew 16:16 where Jesus praises Peter, the Jew, for calling him the Messiah, the Son of the living God? What about Peter’s statement to the Jewish crowd at Pentecost that “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah”? Acts 2:36

On pages 137 and 138, Hagee states:

“If God intended for Jesus to be the Messiah of Israel, why didn’t he authorize Jesus to use supernatural signs to prove he was God’s Messiah, just as Moses had done? The Jews, knowing of Moses’s signs to Israel, asked for a supernatural sign that Jesus was indeed their Messiah. Jesus answered:

“No sign will be given...except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.  
Matthew 12:39-40

“Jesus refused to give a sign. He only compared himself to the prophet Jonah, who carried the message of repentance from God to the Gentiles of Nineveh. Jesus was again saying, ‘I have come to carry a message from God to the Gentiles and will be in my grave for three days and nights as Jonah was in the whale’s belly for three days and nights.’

“Jesus gave Peter, sometimes called Simon Peter (or just Simon), a commission to the Gentiles with the words, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah” (Matthew 16:17). He was not referring to Simon’s father but to the prophet Jonah, who, as a Jew, reluctantly carried God’s message to the Ninevites, who were Gentiles.

“Peter was the Jewish messenger who would, as Jonah, carry the gospel message to the Gentiles.....”

Jesus did not prove He was Messiah through signs and miracles? “At least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves,” he said. (John 14:11) What about Jesus’ response to John the Baptist’s disciples who were questioning whether He was “the One?” Jesus sent them

back to John to report on the many signs and miracles.  
(Matthew 11:2-6)

The sign of Jonah only an example of a Jew bringing salvation to Gentiles? What about the sign of the resurrection to both Jew and Gentile. Yes, Peter was the first to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, but he is later called “the apostle to the Jews.” Galatians 2:8

One final reference to twisting Scripture – on pages 142-143, Hagee mentions Jesus’ resurrection morning conversation with the two men on the road to Emmaus. Here is the quote, picking up in the middle of the conversation:

“About Jesus of Nazareth,’ they replied. ‘He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; *but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel*

Luke 24:17-21, NIV emphasis added

“The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had not rejected Jesus as Messiah; their hopes were dashed!

“It was not until Jesus entered their house for fellowship, as it was late in the evening, that they recognized him. When he sat at their table, lifting his hands to bless and break the bread, they saw the scars on his hands and recognized Jesus. He instantly disappeared (Luke 24:30-35). He refused to be their Messiah, choosing instead to be the Savior of the world.”

Refused to be their Messiah? Chose instead to be Savior of the world? They recognized him because of the scars on His hands? My Bible says, “Then their eyes were opened and

they recognized him.” Luke 24:31 No reference to seeing the scars.

Please pray with me for our brother, that his own eyes will be opened to the warping of Scripture and repent before a watching world.

Yet in all this, I still believe there are good days ahead! Days of light! Righteousness! Miracles! Jewish people coming to faith! Awakening of the nations! Even in the midst of great darkness and deception. May the Lord help us to be diligent in Spirit and in Word!

Blessings to you, my dear brothers and sisters, in the world’s Most Powerful Name, the Name of Yeshua – Messiah of both Israel and the nations!