

# Reforming Our Thinking about Jesus' Plans: Our Role in God's Call to Arms

## by Chaplain Frank William Nagy

### **Stop Church!**

Stop falling into the same error we've watched you stumbling in for the last 39 years! In the early 1970's I even heard a minister say, "Jesus is coming back so soon, we'll just leave the world to the devil to go fly away with Jesus." It's almost 4 decades later and He still hasn't showed up, immediately, as most of you expected.

Now before anyone strings me up as a heretic, let me clearly say, I believe in the physical return of Jesus Christ of Nazareth with all the bells and whistles the various millennialists offer. He will come in power for the whole world to see He as The Judge of Heaven and Earth, but isn't it also clear that Jesus is coming today and tomorrow for anyone who dies? So, I have a problem with those, who keep their hands in their pockets waiting for Jesus.

Need we concern ourselves with the timing of Jesus' coming in glory? I agree we need to take some time to reflect on this, but not to the level of introspection that has risen! Clearly it is much more important to do all we can to ready men to meet Jesus, whether He take them quietly in death or with a rapture's final sky-high flair.

I cannot see Jesus taking this "leave the world to rot in the mean time" stance. Did Jesus say we were just to watch for him and do nothing? No, in contrast, Jesus said, "**Occupy until I come!**"

"But what you have, hold fast until I come. 26 To those who overcome and keep My works to the end, to him I will give power over the nations. 27 He will rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels *of a potter*, they will be broken to pieces, even as I received from My Father. 28 I will give him the Morning Star. 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev 2:25-29 ).

This doesn't sound at all like the wimp-out many advocate today.

### **Jesus commanded, "Occupy until I come!"**

But we don't see the church acting like Jesus' occupying army. Most Christians don't possess the gutsy warrior-mentality to occupy enemy territory as required. What has happened to the onward looking of today's Christian Soldiers? Do we even have an inkling, evangelistically speaking, how we are to possess the gates of the enemy? Do we know what Jesus meant when He said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church, so we can still effectively free those still Satan's captives?

Jesus said, “Hasten my coming by preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the world.” By the way, the Gospel of the Kingdom Jesus is a message accompanied with Satan-confronting power. This power evangelism is something sorely lacking in most Christian witness.

### **The Manifestation of the Sons of God**

Paul said something even more astounding. Listen carefully now to really hear what was said in this word of scripture: Paul said, “The whole of creation groans as it waits for the manifestation of the **Sons** of God (Romans 8:19).” Creation does not wait for Jesus to be shown as the Son of God. That has already occurred. Creation waits for the **Sons** of God! It awaits us! We are meant to become manifest. The power God has given us is meant to become visible to us and to the world.

Let’s take a few steps back to see what the men of God expected to see in their first century flocks to get us a further feel for what we should be seeing in our midst here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **As He Is**

See what John wrote a letter to his people in 1 John. “As He [Jesus] is, so are we in this world.” Are we acting in Jesus’ place, like John wrote his people in 1 John? “As He [Jesus] is, so are we in this world.” Can most Christians of today honestly say they are acting as Jesus is in this world?

### **Peter and Paul**

Most can’t even think of taking a fallback position of acting like Peter or Paul. There was even a song along this line. I’m sure it was meant to be encouraging, but has had a lasting debilitating effect on the church. The song went something like this:

If you can’t pray like Peter,  
If you can’t preach like Paul,  
You can tell the little children  
He died for all.

Praise God at least singer encouraged us we could do *some little something* in the gospel arena.

### **“If you can’t pray like Peter...”**

Peter wasn’t the pray-er some think today. Yes, he prayed, but even he didn’t believe his prayer had been answered when the angel came to release him from prison. He thought it was a dream. Peter acted more the man of God after Pentecost, but he was still the multi-foibled Peter, who told God, “No” twice, when God gave him a vision in Acts 10. God had to repeat the same vision to him three times to get him going. Even with this great vision and his personal experience of seeing the Gentiles baptized in the Spirit as had happened to him at Pentecost, he was not certain enough of God’s work in this arena. When challenged by the circumcision party, he waffled just as badly as he had sinking in the waters he had earlier walked on with Jesus.

### **“If you can’t preach like Paul...”**

What about Paul? Isn’t he as unassailable a man of God as Peter is rife for our potshots?

Paul knew he was a sinner saved by grace. In this attitude, he calls each of us to imitate him. He said we should each call ourselves, “the chief of sinners.” Paul said he was weak, coming with fear and trembling in his preaching.

So much for that well-meaning, but wrong children’s song.

One day one of my hearers asked, “Why all this Peter and Paul, Peter and Paul?”

His question, almost illogical, was so unusual I hadn’t thought about it. It hadn’t seemed need of an answer, before. Rather than dismiss the question out-of-hand, I turned to God for His answer. I share what God gave me here, believing you will find it helpful to you, as much or more than it was to the one who first asked.

I found myself telling the questioner, “Few of us would admit we do or say the kind of extremely dumb things the Bible reveals Peter doing and saying. Again, few would claim they were as wise or spiritual as Paul in his actions and exploits. So if we look on these men as bookends of the Christian life, all of us should be encouraged to see we most certainly fit somewhere in-between.”

Today many feel they are just being humble when they say they can’t be like Peter or Paul. In trying to be humble, they... **we** make a bad confession. This cuts across God’s plans to use them and us. No the truth is that God desires to mightily release His Power in and through us.

### **Those of the First Century Church Had the Same Problem**

The writer of the Book of James had a similar problem. James’ people had Bible examples they thought could not live up to, as well. They said, “I can’t be like Elijah!” People of his day thought themselves unable to imitate the example of this Prophet. James had to share how they could loose the same powerful life as this Old Testament saint. James had to tell them Elijah was a man of like nature to them, just as I have taken the time to show every Christian fits with Peter and Paul:

James 5:17-18 says, “Elijah was a man of like nature as we are. He prayed earnestly *so it* would not rain, and it did not rain for the three years and six months. 18 He prayed again. Then the heaven gave rain, and the earth caused its fruit to sprout.”

Sound familiar? Oh church, how long will we fall for the same tricks of the enemy?

The plan has never changed. God didn’t change His Mind. Century after century, the people of God have tried to duck their part of the program, but God is not about to let them, or us, get away with it. But if we continue to dawdle, God’s plan may be delayed a little while longer as His will is left to be done by someone other than us. Though many

have been called, few have chosen to follow through with obedience. We think we can't do as God commands, so we never try.

Jesus has more on his agenda than we have admitted. Part of that includes the perfecting of the Bride of Christ while she still resides on earth. And it's pretty clear, there are no shortcuts to heavenly glory.

So how long are you going to leave the creation groaning as it waits for you, **Sons of God?**

## **Crossing Out Any Wrong Thinking To Line Up with Jesus' Plans by Chaplain Frank William Nagy**

**Those of the First Century Church Had the Same Problem as Many do Today**  
Jesus had to set his apostles and closest disciples straight on their roles:

Those coming together asked Him, "Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel, at this time?"

7 He answered them, "It's not for you to know the times or the seasons, the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Then, you shall be witnesses to Me, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and even to *the* end of the earth (Acts 1:6-8)."

All the while they asked Jesus when He was going to restore Israel as its own sovereign nation, Jesus was telling them He was about to raise them up to do their own glorious work for him!

Even then, Jesus' apostles and closest disciples were more ready to become sky-watchers than men of power, who would take the world by storm in their century.

Jesus had just commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which would release the Holy Spirit's anointing power to make them effective witnesses to the end of the earth. Then what happened almost scuttled Jesus' plans for them:

After Jesus said these things, while they were beholding Him, He was lifted up, and a cloud withdrew Him from their eyes. 10 They looked intently into heaven, while He was going.

Then two men in white clothes stood along side them. 11 The angels asked, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in

like manner as you saw Him going into heaven."

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet near Jerusalem (Acts 1: 9-12).

These men and women of God were near Jerusalem, but not close enough. They had to have a revelation from angels to get them back on track where God wanted them. Is it any wonder we have the same temptation to watch for Jesus' return, rather than do what He told us to do in the meantime?

Since we've been recently so focused on the return of Christ, let's get a better grasp of His time-line and replace the faulty one we have been beating to death for centuries.

Yes, we have been confused on important details of God's end-time, time-line for centuries. Well meaning church fathers of the first centuries of the church attempted to interpret Daniel in the light they had. After all, hadn't Peter said they were in the last days as early as his sermon at Pentecost? Surely they could apply themselves to Daniel to unseal the words that were shut up and sealed in that book until the time of the end.

Daniel had been told by God, "But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end. **Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased....**" In verse 8 it says, he heard, but did not understand and asked, "Oh my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" Then God replied (in verse 9), "Go, Daniel! ***For the words are closed up and sealed until the end-time*** (Daniel 12:4, 8-9)."

We still have that "little problem" left over from those early Church Fathers. Thinking they were in the last of the last days, they charted some of what they perceived Daniel's prophecy meant. However, at that time Daniel's words were still sealed of God. Try as they might, they could not have the right interpretation. Even the modern church has yet to discard their misunderstandings.

Now that world travel and even orbiting the earth have become commonplace, we also see knowledge has exploded to the point where all of the world's information is doubling every couple of years.

The words of Daniel are more likely to be open in this time than in those first centuries. These, once sealed prophecies, should at least begin to make sense to his servants, the prophets of this day and age.

Daniel's dreams spoke of some nations that still did not even exist as of the early church fathers' day. Some nations that now exist fit the bill better than those of Daniel's day and the eras of the early church:

In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head on his bed. He wrote the dream and gave the sum of the matters. 2 Daniel said, "In my vision by night I was looking. See, the four winds of heaven stirred up the Great Sea. 3 Four great beasts came up from the sea. Each one was different from the others. 4 The first was like a lion with eagle's wings. I

watched until its wings were plucked. Lifted up from the earth, it was made to stand on its feet like a man and a man's heart was given to it (Dan 7:1-4).”

One of those nations Daniel saw in his vision seems clearly to refer to the Eagle’s wings of the United States of America being clipped from its lion’s source. For wasn’t America taken out of the Lion of Great Britain and set up in greater power to stand like a man, ever since acting with a free man’s heart’s desires?

Jesus, speaking of some last-days signs, said, “Nation will rise against nation, and *kingdom against kingdom*.” Matthew 24:7

We’ve all heard this passage quoted, but I have yet to hear any preacher other than those of my acquaintance or myself share the Old Testament passage Jesus was quoting when He said this!

“Nation will rise against nation, and *kingdom against kingdom*.” How do the speakers refer to this passage? They speak in terms of the two world wars and the multitude of conflicts that have characterized the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century right on to today.

I’ve never heard the preachers do a word study on the Greek word “nation or kingdom,” identifying how it was used to speak of pagan tribes and families.

Have you ever heard anyone bring up Isaiah 19:2 in the context of Matthew 24?

Isaiah 19:2 I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight each man against his brother, and each against his neighbor; city against city, *kingdom against kingdom*.

Have we been thinking this referred to the two world wars and the many conflicts around the world? All the time we’ve been missing the fact, that Jesus was quoting Isaiah’s prophecy about Egypt.

It would seem the entire area of prophetic end-time study requires significant new research considering new interpretations of what we had thought was unquestionable.

Just these two factors mentioned here should force us to reconsider our last day’s time-line with the eye to revamping long-held theories Bible scholars had considered almost as sacrosanct, as Scripture itself.

# Let God Reform Our Thinking About His Times and Seasons

## by Chaplain Frank William Nagy

Just because Daniel had been told by God he had to, “shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end (Daniel 12:4),” doesn’t mean no one will ever understand these words. The good news in this statement can be seen in that some nearing the time of the end will indeed understand these words.

Just because Jesus answered the disciples of the first century, “It’s not for you to know the times or the seasons, the Father has put in His own authority,” in Acts 1:7, doesn’t mean no one will ever know the times and seasons.

The very question his disciples asked Jesus about has been clearly answered in the late 1940’s and confirmed through the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century though to this day in the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Jesus’ men and women of his time asked the resurrected Christ about the restoration of Israel, which they thought was going to happen right away in their day:

Those coming together asked Him, “Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel, at this time?”

7 He answered them, “It’s not for you to know the times or the seasons, the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Then, you shall be witnesses to Me, in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and even to *the* end of the earth (Acts 1:6-8).”

Jesus had to set his apostles and closest disciples straight on their roles in their time.

All the while they asked Jesus when He was going to restore Israel, Jesus was telling them He was about to raise them up to do their own glorious work!

Jesus was doing for them as Amos 3:7 promises, “The Lord will do nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).”

So as Amos 3:7 promises and 1 Chronicles 12:32 says, we can expect that God will give understanding to his faithful prophets and wisely watchful sons, like he did the sons of Issachar. They were said to understand the times, and knew what Israel ought to do.

God will continue to give his people a heads-up in time for us to act wisely in any new situation as it arises. Some of this will come in our timely understanding of God’s revelation already found in scripture. Other times we will get a word of clarification in

line with scripture, even when it is not to be found spelled out in so many words in His Book.

We can expect Daniel's sealed word will become as open a vision as the last century's restoration of nationhood, which occurred for Israel.

That sealed word, will become an open book, as the times of the end it describes draw ever nearer.

# More Prophetic Seed To Consider for the Future

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It looks like Israel has a while to exist as a nation, for Jesus said:

"They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 Then He will send His angels. They will gather together His elect from the four winds, from the extremities of earth to the extremities of heaven.

28 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also you, when you see these things coming to pass, know that it is near--at the doors! 30 Amen, amen I say to you, by no means will **this generation** pass away until all these things have taken place. 31 Heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

32 "But concerning that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father. 33 Take heed, stay awake and pray; for you do not know when the time is (Mark 13:26-33)."

The Greek word Mark used, which is translated **generation** implicates "an age (the period or the persons) generation, **nation**, and/or time."

For all the obsessing of the Church over the formation of Israel as a modern nation as part of the fulfillment of this word of the Lord, we have never even considered that the word meaning we have settled on ("generation") might be better translated as "nation."

We have had Jesus say, "**This generation** will not pass away until all these things have taken place." Jesus more likely was saying, "**This nation** will not pass away until all these things have taken place." We have always believed when he said this that he was very clearly referring to the nation of Israel. But doesn't it make more sense that the nation God has finally formed will not pass away until all these things have taken place, rather than one short generation pass.

This interpretation fits better than to think that the generation that saw the formation of Israel as a nation would not pass away before Jesus would return. Especially in the light of Isaiah 19 and Ezekiel 29's description of a 40-year exile of Egypt (not yet begun as of 1999 when non-humble Egyptians were still shooting tourists).

The generation of individuals living at the start of Israel's restoration as a nation has all but passed away. To add the prophets' 40 years ( which, by the way, I've been preaching about for nearly 40 years —since 1970— ) adds too much time to this failing generation of human beings started during the late 1940's. However, even Isaiah's prophecy which segues into Ezekiel's prophecy of 40 years together do no violence to the understanding that the nation of Israel will remain until the fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies regarding all that will happen up to and including his return.

Israeli Christians should take this as great encouragement in the days of trouble Israel now finds itself.

