

# **LET INCENSE ARISE**

## **SHAPING HISTORY THROUGH INTERCESSION – COREY STARK**

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### **I. THE VITAL ROLE OF INTERCESSION IN SHAPING HISTORY**

A. There is no higher governmental authority in the created order than the eternal Sovereign seated upon His throne in heaven (Ps. 2:4; Dan. 7:9-10; Rev. 4) and the intercessors that are in agreement with His will. One intercessor in agreement with God is the majority every time. History belongs to the intercessors!

B. The primary way God releases His governmental power is through the *simplicity of agreement* with His will. As we release *faith-filled words of agreement* to God, He responds by releasing His power in the earth.

***1 Jn. 5:14 This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if... He hears us... we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.***

1. History *began* through prayer (Gen. 1). Jesus' prayers uphold creation (Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:3).

***Gen. 1:2 The Spirit of God was hovering... 3 Then [Jesus] said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.***

2. History *progresses* through prayer (Mt. 9:36-38; Lk. 18:7-8). Jesus intercedes forever (Rom. 8:34; Jn. 17; Heb. 7:25). God is setting intercessors to agree with Him (Isa. 62:6-7; Ez. 22:30; Joel 2:12-17, 28-32).

***Mt. 9:37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."***

***Isa. 62:6 I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent, 7 and give Him no rest till He establishes [His plans] and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Ezek. 22:30)***

3. History *culminates* at the end of the age through prayer (Lk. 18:7-8). His master restoration plan is released through corporate intercession (Ps. 149:6-9; Rev. 5:8-10; 8:3-6; 15:1-8). Jesus doesn't return in a vacuum, but in response to the global unified prayers of His covenant people (1 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 22:17).

***Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!"***

C. Since all Scripture is given by God's inspiration, a prayer or promise in the bible ensures agreement with His will (2 Tim. 3:16). Biblical prayers are like co-signing a check on earth that God has already endorsed in heaven! "God's word in our mouths is as powerful as God's Word in His mouth" – Reinhard Bonnke

D. Some trust the sovereignty of God in a non-biblical way by trusting God to do the role He entrusted to us. God *will not* do our part and we *cannot* do His part. If we do not do our part in intercession, then some of the sovereignly ordained blessing that He joyfully longs to give is withheld (Isa. 30:18-19; Jas. 4:2-3).

***Jas. 4:2 You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss [disagreement with His will], that you may spend it on your pleasures.***

E. The Church are the only ones in the earth that have the authority to contend with the powers of darkness.

***Mt. 16:18 On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys [authority] of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."***

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### II. UNDERSTANDING THE ESCALATING GLOBAL CRISIS AND VITAL ROLE OF INTERCESSION

A. In Psalm 2 David prophesied that world leaders would rage in defiance against Jesus' leadership, causing a global crisis that would crescendo in the generation of the LORD's return. They would not only oppose Jesus as the only way of salvation, but His rightful leadership, will, ways (moral standards), as seen in His Word.

1. *Kings' opposition*: Seeking to remove the influence of God's Word in culture and society (2:1-3)
2. *Father's declaration*: Exalting Jesus as King and confronting the rebellion against Him (2:4-6)
3. *Jesus' intercession*: Interceding in agreement with the Father's decrees about Him (2:7-9)
4. *Holy Spirit's exhortation*: Calling people to engage with God in reverent joy (2:10-12)

B. ACT I: David prophesied that the kings (heads of state) and rulers (leaders in society) would rise up in defiance of Jesus' leadership (2:1-3), seeking to completely remove the influence of His Word from culture and society, including the sanctity of life, marriage and sexuality (2:3). They see God's Word, as "*bonds*" enslaving them to ancient ways and "*cords*" hindering their personal freedom and human potential.

***Ps. 2:1 Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth [heads of state] set themselves, and the rulers [leaders in society] take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us."***

C. The rage in society against Jesus will escalate far beyond people merely *voicing negative opinions* against God's people and truth to kings and leaders of society using their authority and state resources to *war against God, His plans and His people* via hate crimes, prison, and even death (Rev. 11:7; 12:17; 13:7; 17:14; 19:19).

***Mt. 24:9 They will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations...***

D. ACT II: The Father's responds by declaring His purpose to exalt Jesus as King over the nations (v. 6) and distress the kings with judgment (v. 5). The Father is raising up faithful witnesses and will shake the nations (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 12:25-29). At the seventh trumpet, loud voices declare Jesus global dominion (Rev. 11:15).

***Ps. 2:4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh... 5 He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King [Jesus] on My holy hill of Zion."***

***Hag. 2:6 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations...' (Heb. 12:25-29)***

E. ACT III: Jesus responds to the escalating crisis by *simply agreeing* with the Father's will in intercession (2:7-9). The eternal intercessor contends for the Father's will to be openly manifest on earth (Mt. 6:10).

***Ps. 2:7 "I will declare the decree: The Lord [Father] has said to Me, 'You are My Son... 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession."***

F. ACT IV: Holy Spirit exhorts all to gratefully engage with God in reverent joy that flows from affection not just duty (vs. 10-12). In context this includes *speaking His message* (vs. 5-6) and *engaging in prayer* (v. 8).

***Ps. 2:10 Therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice [gratitude] with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way...***

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### III. THE PSALM 2 CRISIS, REQUIRES A JOEL 2 RESPONSE, RELEASING AN ACTS 2 OUTPOURING!

A. God is calling the Church to understand the *escalating crisis, coming shaking and promised victory* in this hour, so we can respond in the way Scripture teaches. Whether God's active resistance or passive restraint, the book of Joel was graciously given by the Holy Spirit to teach God's people how to respond to Him in *national crisis* (when there is no human solution), so that He will intervene with great power, mercy and deliverance.

B. Due to His merciful nature, God's progressively shakes a nation, as He gives them time to respond to Him in voluntary agreement (Ps. 107). If they refuse, the pressure escalates (Lev. 26:14-45). Since the purpose is to awaken hearts, while removing disagreement with His will, shaking need not occur where there's agreement.

***Lev. 26:27 'After all this, if you... walk contrary to Me, 28 then I... will chastise you seven times more...***

C. Joel 1 begins with unprecedented *natural disaster* (v. 2) and God releasing four waves of *locust* that devour the land (vs. 4-6), followed by *drought* (vs. 8-12), *famine* (vs. 16-18), *economic crisis* and finally *wildfires* that burn up Israel's agricultural reserves (vs. 19-20). Joel attributed this crisis to the LORD (v. 15) and calls Israel to gather before Him in the house of prayer. Why? Because of His earlier promise (2 Chr. 7:13-14).

***Joel 1:14 Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.***

***2 Chr. 7:13 When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or... devour the land [natural disaster], or send pestilence... 14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land.***

D. Due to Israel's inability to discern God's involvement and lack of wholehearted response, what began as *natural disaster* (Joel 1) escalates to *military invasion* (Joel 2) in His desire to get their full attention (vs 1-11).

***Joel 2:1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble... 2 A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will ever be...***

E. God shows us how to *confidently respond* to Him during a *national crisis* (with no human remedy) so that He will intervene with great power, mercy and deliverance. We are to *turn to Him* with all of our heart (2:12-17) and pray for a *great outpouring* of the Holy Spirit (2:28-31), while asking Him to *relent in mercy* (v. 13).

***Joel 2:12 "Therefore," says the Lord, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. 14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing... 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; 16 gather the people... the congregation... the elders, gather the children and nursing babes...***

F. The result of our wholehearted gatherings (vs. 12-17) is God's zealous intervention to *restore the land* (vs. 21-24), the *wasted time* (vs. 25-27) and *promised outpouring* of the Holy Spirit (vs. 28-32), as seen in Acts 2.

***Joel 2:28 "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions... 30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth... 31 Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. 32 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."***

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### IV. THE MERCIFUL GOD WHO RELENTS FROM HARM AND RELEASES A BLESSING

A. The message of Joel is clear: when God shakes a nation to awaken love there is only *one response* He is looking for; wholehearted gatherings of agreement in prayer, called “*sacred assemblies*” (Joel 2:12-17). “Who knows” if He will *turn and relent* (lit. change His mind) or *change the outcome* based upon our wholehearted response of agreement. His response to us is determined by our response to Him (1 Sam. 14:6; 2 Sam. 16:12; Joel 2:14; Zeph. 2:3; Am. 5:15; Jon. 1:6; 3:9; Jer. 51:8; Dan. 4:27; Hab. 3:16).

***Joel 2:14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him...***

B. Due to the agreement of God’s people there will be “pockets of mercy” where people, cities and geographic regions will be “*hidden*” (i.e. protected) in the coming shaking (Zeph. 2:3; cf. Ezek. 9:4-5; Amos 4:7).

***Zeph. 2:1 Gather yourselves together [sacred assembly]... 2 before the decree [of shaking] is issued... 3 Seek the LORD... Seek righteousness... it may be that you will be hidden in the day of the Lord’s anger.***

C. A prophetic foreshadow of this reality was seen in the LORD’s protection of the nation of Israel from His judgment of ten plagues, while in the land of Egypt (Ex. 7-12). This is the “Goshen principle” (Am. 4:7).

***Ex. 8:22 In that day [of shaking] I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell... in order that you may know that I am the Lord... 23 I will make a difference between My people and your people.***

### V. THE VITAL ROLE OF INTERCESSION IN SHAPING HISTORY

A. A national crisis can be minimized, delayed until future evaluation, reversed or averted altogether in response to the prayers of God’s people. He is looking to intervene in crisis and restore the people, the land and even the years that were wasted (Gen. 18:22-32; Ex. 32: 9-14; 2 Chr. 7:14, 34:22-28; Isa. 38:1-8; Jer. 18:7-10; 51:6-8; Ezek. 18:21-28; 33:10-14; Dan. 4:29; Amos 5:14-15; 7:1-6; Jon. 3:4-10; Mal. 3:16-4:6).

***2 Ch. 7:14 if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land.***

1. Amos appealed to God’s mercy and averted the judgment of locusts and fire in Israel (Am. 7:1-6).

***Amos 7:1 GOD showed me: He formed locust swarms... 2 I said: “O Lord GOD, forgive, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!” 3 So the LORD relented... “It shall not be,” said the LORD. 4 GOD showed me: GOD called for conflict by fire, and it... devoured the territory. 5 Then I said: “O Lord GOD, cease, I pray! Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!” 6 So the LORD relented...***

2. Moses stood in the gap multiple times for Israel (Ex. 32:7-14; Num. 16:1-41; 16:41-50; Ps. 106:21-23).

***Ex. 32:10 “Let Me alone, that... I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.” 11 Then Moses pleaded... “Why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people...? 12 Why should the Egyptians... say, ‘He brought them out to harm them...’? Turn from Your fierce wrath... 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel... to whom You swore by Your self... ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven...’” 14 So the LORD relented from the harm He said He would do to His people.***

B. The Lord is raising up a generation with a heart like Jacob (Gen. 32:24-30; Ps. 24:6) who seek His face and will stand in the gap, contending for His will to be done on earth, as it is in heaven (Mt. 6:10; Lk. 18:7-8).