

# **NEW LIFE CHURCH – IN PURSUIT OF HIM**

## **THE VITAL ROLE OF INTERCESSORS IN CHANGING HISTORY – COREY STARK**

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### I. PREPARATION FOR THE FATHER’S COMING: YOUR WILL ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

A. In the opening verses of the book of Revelation we see the Father’s future coming to the earth (Rev. 1:4).

**Rev. 1:4 Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come and... 5 Jesus Christ...**

B. God’s desire has always been to dwell in unhindered *face-to-face* communion with His people in a Garden of Eden paradise on the earth forever (Rev. 21:3; 22:4)! In the beginning both realms of heaven and earth operated together in perfect unison, while God interacted openly with Adam and Eve (Gen. 1-3).

**Gen. 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...**

C. After Adam sinned in disobedience to God’s will a “*veil of separation*” divided the heavens and the earth, physically distancing God from His people (Isa. 24:18; 25:7; 34:4; Rev. 6:14). The centerpiece of His eternal plan is for Jesus to unify both realms again at His return, as in the beginning (Eph. 1:9-10; Col. 1:19-20).

**Eph. 1:10 In the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth – in Him (Col. 1:19-20)**

D. At Jesus return, His *primary mandate* in the Millennium is to *prepare the earth* for the Father’s permanent descent to the planet when His perfect will in Heaven and eternal state in the heavenly Temple (Rev. 4:1-11) will be openly manifest upon the New Earth forever (Rev. 7:15-17; 21-22)!

**Rev. 21:3 Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men [on the earth], and He [the Father] will dwell with them... God will be with them and be their God... 22:4 They shall see His face... 5 forever!**

E. This necessitates Jesus bringing the nations into *voluntary agreement* that’s tested and mature (Rev. 20:3).

**1 Cor. 15:24 Then comes the end [of the Millennium], when He [Jesus] delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power [in disagreement]. 25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.**

F. In mercy, God will create the “perfect storm” to shake the nations in preparation for Jesus’ return (Hag. 2:6-9; Heb. 12:25-29). He will shake everything that can be shaken, while magnifying the beauty of Jesus (Isa. 4:2) to bring in the *great harvest of souls* (Am. 9:12; Acts 15:17), including the nation of Israel (Rom. 11:26), bring forth a *mature bride* in unprecedented unity, purity and power (Eph. 4:13; 5:27), and bring down *every kingdom in disagreement* with His will to establish an unshakable Kingdom on earth (Mt. 6:10).

**Hag. 2:6 “For 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...” says the Lord of hosts.**

**Heb. 12:26 He has promised... “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this... indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us... serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.**

G. Today, the Holy Spirit is establishing the most powerful *worship* (Isa. 42:10-13), *prayer* (Lk. 18:7-8; Rev. 22:17) and *missions* movement (Mt. 24:14) in human history, unified by *agreement* with God. Worship is agreement with who God is. Prayer is agreement with what God does. Missions is an invitation into both.

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### II. THE CURRENT GLOBAL CRISIS: ESCALATING RAGE AGAINST JESUS' LEADERSHIP (PS. 2)

A. David prophesied that world leaders would rage against the leadership of Jesus, causing a global crisis that would reach its height 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 and ways (i.e. moral standards) as revealed in His Word.

B. Psalm 2 has four parts:

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

C. David prophesied that 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 will see God's Word in a negative light, as "bonds" enslaving them to ancient ways and "cords" hindering their 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 set themselves, and the rulers 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."***

D. 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).

E. The Father's response to the rebellious kings is to declare His purposes to magnify Jesus as King over the nations (v. 6) and distress the kings with judgment (v. 5). Jesus was enthroned in heavenly Zion at the resurrection and will be enthroned in earthly Zion (i.e. Jerusalem) when He returns (Jer. 3:17).

***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."***

F. Jesus responds to this conflict by simply agreeing with the Father's will in intercession (2:7-9).

***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.'"***

***Rev. 11:15 The 7<sup>th</sup> [trumpet] sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"***

G. Jesus revealed Himself as the Great Intercessor who prays in agreement with the Father's will to be openly manifest on earth (Mt. 6:10). Prayer is the primary way God releases His governmental power through Jesus and His people, now and forever (Heb. 7:25). There is no higher governmental authority than the One seated upon the Throne in heaven and the intercessors connected to Him through *simple agreement* (1 Jn. 5:14-15).

***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.***

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

A. The Holy Spirit is calling the Church to understand the *escalating crisis* and *promised victory*, so that we can respond in the way that Scripture teaches. The book of Joel was graciously given by the Spirit to teach us how to respond to God in national crisis (when there is no human solution) so that He intervenes with mercy.

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

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

C. Joel chapter one begins with unprecedented *natural disaster* (v. 2) and God intervening with four waves of *locust* that devour the land (vs. 4-6), followed by *drought* (vs. 8-12), *famine* (vs. 16-18) *economic crisis* and *wildfires* that burn up Israel's agricultural reserves (vs. 19-20). Joel attributed this crisis to the LORD (v. 15) and called Israel to gather before Him in the house of prayer. Why? Because of His 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* in Joel 1 escalates to *military invasion* in Joel 2 in His desire to get their 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. The Lord tells His people how to respond to Him with confidence in a *national crisis* (when there is no human remedy) in a way that results in Him intervening with great power, mercy, and deliverance. God requires the response outlined in the book of Joel. 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 of prayer (vs. 12-17) is the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit (vs. 28-32). In Acts 2:15-21 Peter responded to the accusation of drunkenness by pointing to Joel 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 when God “*shakes*” to awaken love there is only *one response* He is looking for: wholehearted gatherings of prayer with fasting, called *sacred assemblies* (Joel 2:12-17). “Who knows” if God will *turn and relent* or change His decree of judgment and send a blessing instead? The responsibility is upon us (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. I marvel that God has it in His heart to reason with men (Isa. 1:18; Joel 2:17), even “changing His mind” or changing the outcome based upon our wholehearted response of agreement with His will and ways. There are two stages in God’s judgments: 1. A decree of judgment is established in His heavenly court. 2. It is issued in fullness, as God releases angels to execute the judgment (Ezek. 9), or it can be minimized, delayed (2 Chr. 34:27-28) or reversed altogether (i.e. averted or canceled; Jer. 18:7-8).

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

C. Due to the intercession of God’s people, there will be “pockets of mercy” where people and/or geographic regions are “*hidden*” or protected in the time of God’s judgment (Zeph. 2:3; cf. Ezek. 9:4-5; Amos 4:7).

D. The Lord searches for intercessors who will pray for His judgments to be withheld (Ezek. 22:30).

***Ezek. 22:30 So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.***

E. A national disaster can be stopped in response to the prayers of God’s people. God is looking to intervene in crisis and change the disaster that would have occurred (Gen. 18:22-32; Ex. 32: 9-14; 2 Chr. 34:22-28; 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).

***Jer. 18:7 The instant I speak concerning a nation... to destroy it, 8 if that nation... turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.***

1. Amos appealed to God’s mercy and averted the judgment of locusts and fire in Israel (Am. 7:1-6).
2. Abraham “reasoned” with God on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:20-33).
3. Moses stood in the gap multiple times for Israel (Ex. 32:7-14; Num. 16:1-41; 16:41-50; Ps. 106:21-23).
4. God relented from Nineveh’s judgment due to their response (Jon. 3:1-10; Mt. 12:41; Lk. 11:32).

***Jonah 3:5 Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast... from the greatest to the least of them... 9 Who can tell if God will turn and relent? 10 Then God saw their works and... relented from the disaster...***

F. We are to “blow the trumpet” in times of crisis by boldly proclaiming the necessity of a sacred assembly in accessing the restoration that is available through our wholehearted response. These assemblies are sacred to the LORD, as we set aside times for the people of God to gather in corporate prayer with fasting and turn to the Lord in repentance for all compromise. Fasting positions us for more grace and deepens our heart-connect.