



## In His Dust – 8. The Explosive Power of the Kingdom

### His power in gentleness

July 20, 2023; revised September 5, 2024

*The verse, the context, the interpretation, the application, a prayer, and discussion questions.*

As we look at the parables of Yeshua (Jesus), we see what the kingdom of God is like, and we know how to advance as the darkness increases. Our advance will not be like the armies of the world but will come explosively and powerfully in unassuming ways.

### Matthew 11:11-15

Yeshua said, “Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Immerser (Baptist). Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

**From the days of John the Immerser until now, the kingdom of heaven *suffers violence* [NLT – *has been forcefully advancing*], and violent men take it by force.**

For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” (NASB)

Let’s dive into the extremely exciting meaning of these verses beginning with a bit of the Jewish context.

### The Jewish Teaching Method of Hinting

Jewish men (and some women) memorized large portions of Scripture from the time they were 5 or 6 years old. Therefore, a teacher of the Law could speak just one verse of Scripture, and their disciples would immediately know the entire passage surrounding it because they had memorized it. There was no reason for the rabbi to state the entire passage. One verse would represent the entire passage. Also, the verse would *hint* (*remez*) or *connect* to other portions of Scripture.

The Rabbi Yeshua was an absolute Master at using this familiar method of *hinting*. (After all, He was God incarnate and full of the Holy Spirit!) So, when He said, “From the days of John the Immerser until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force,” the people immediately remembered Micah 2:12-13:

I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob,  
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.  
I will put them together like sheep in the fold;  
Like a flock in the midst of its pasture  
They will be noisy with men.  
The breaker goes up before them;  
They break out, pass through the gate, and go out by it.  
So, their king goes on before them,  
And the Lord at their head.

Let’s picture this explanatory context:

Shepherds lead their sheep during the day, but at night they are protected in a fold of stones or in a cave. (We saw these caves near Bethlehem.) The Prophet Micah tells us that God is gathering and protecting the remnant of His people like a shepherd gathers his sheep into a fold.

In the morning, the sheep are noisy, bleating, and very excited to get out of the fold. They are frolicking with joy as they anticipate their release! The “breaker” is the person responsible for removing the stones of the gate that keep them locked in for the night. After the breaker removes the stones of the entrance, the sheep pass through. As they break out into the pasture, the shepherd goes before them to lead them to green pastures and still waters. (See Psalm 23.)

The Jewish people knew these verses in Micah well. Every year at the Passover meal, they place(d) a prominent empty chair at the end of the table for Elijah, symbolizing the Messiah Who would come – this Shepherd King Who would set them free! As they listened to Yeshua speak the words of Matthew 11:12, they knew He was declaring the fulfillment of Micah 2:12-13!

## The Translation and Interpretation

From the days of John the Immerser until now [from John until My coming],  
the kingdom of heaven *suffers violence* [The kingdom of heaven has broken loose! It is exploding  
forth, breaking loose, and advancing with power!]  
and violent [explosive] men [seek to] take it by force.

**John the Immerser was the breaker** preparing the way! He created a breach in the stone wall of the fold to release the sheep. With his appearance, he made the path straight for the kingdom of God to explode in power and release the captives! (See Isaiah 40:3-11)

**Yeshua is the Good Shepherd** who goes before the sheep and who has an intimate relationship with Adonai, the Father. “Like a Shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs, and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.” (Isaiah 40:11)

## The Application

Yeshua’s words in Matthew 11:12 do not mean we get aggressive and violent with God or demand from Him using loud, repetitive voices to claim what we want. Rather, Yeshua taught us to receive His kingdom as a child. Although Yeshua was often stern and bold, He was not violent. He was gentle. Although the kingdom of God is volcanic in its explosive, conquering power, it comes with joy and gentleness to the hungry and the lost. As His ambassadors, **our gentleness yields explosive power**. For it is “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.” (Zechariah 4:5-7)

## A Prayer

Oh, Father, I praise You! Your kingdom continues to advance in power in ways we often do not see, but we believe! The gates of hell will never overpower Your Kingdom of love and gentleness!

Your Kingdom has broken through! The stone has been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb that couldn’t hold You back! The stone has been rolled away from the entrance to our tomb! The night-time is over, and the morning has come. We have exploded into the pasture to share the joyful news of Your Kingdom! The valleys of the shadow of death through which we walk are increasing, but You are Faithful, our Perfect Shepherd Who goes before us, guiding with Your staff and leading with Your voice!

You said, “I have other sheep who are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice...” (John 10:16) Guide us to these sheep so we may welcome them into Your fold.

You call us each by name! We will keep our eyes on You and listen for Your voice as You lead us forth!  
In the Name of Yeshua Messiah, Amen!

## Questions for discussion

- How is Yeshua's (Jesus) gentleness explosive in power?
- How do we live in gentleness and power?
- How does God work explosively through our gentleness?
- What are words that describe gentleness? For example: humility, valuing, listening, etc.
- Are there other Scripture references that speak about the release of God's power or freedom of to the captives?
- Do you know someone whose gentleness has given you encouragement, boldness, or freedom?
- How do you relate to the noisy, bleating sheep breaking free?

