

“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been **subjected to violence** (*biazo*), and **violent people** (*biastes*) have been raiding it.” Matt. 11:12 - NIV (2011)

“From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been **forcefully advancing** (*biazo*), and **forceful men** (*biastes*) lay hold of it.” Matt. 11:12 - NIV (1984)

1. **Matthew 11: 1-15** – is focused on John the Baptist.

- The context of Matt. 11:1-15 is Jesus explaining that John the Baptist is the “Elijah who was to come” (v. 14), insinuating that he, Jesus, is the coming Messiah.
- John and Jesus are communicating in Rabbinic code using biblical references.
- Verse 12 – therefore – must be connected to John and Elijah and Jesus as the Messiah.
- Verse 12 is a **veiled reference** to an Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah and the one who would lead the way. In this case, it is John.
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2. **John’s question** – “am I going to get out of prison?”

- Jesus’ answer is deeply embedded in scripture and is a type of “code” answer for John

Jesus Response	Hebrew Bible
- the blind see	- Isaiah 29:18/35:5
- the lame walk	- Isaiah 35:6/61:1
- the lepers cleansed	- Isaiah 61:1
- the deaf hear	- Isaiah 29:18/35:5
- the dead are raised	- Isaiah 11:1-2 (??) – shoot out of a stump that looked dead?
- the Good News is preached to the poor	- Isaiah 61:1

- proclaim freedom for the captives	- Isaiah 61:1
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- Jesus’ answer to John’s question? “Yes, I am the Messiah. But my mission is different than you think. You are not going to get out of jail.”

3. **Matt. 11:12** –

- The difficulty lies with the Greek word *biazo* – “suffered violence” can be translated one of two ways:

(1) middle voice	- I use force or advance forcefully / positive force - assertiveness
(2) passive	- I am treated with force or ‘suffer violence.’

- Also, the Greek word *biaste* – translated “violent men.”
 - **Positive assertiveness:** regarding one’s faith, that you would act assertively or with force to grasp the kingdom of heaven.¹

¹ *Biaste* - <https://biblehub.com/greek/973.htm>

4. **Biazo** in the Greek translation of the Old Testament - Septuagint:

Hebrew	Greek
<i>Paratʒ</i>	<i>biaʒo</i>

- Hebrew *Paratʒ* – means to break forth, to break out (see Genesis 38:29 – Tamar’s son named *Peretʒ*)

5. **Micah 2:12-13:**

- A Messianic prophecy.
- One who “breaks forth”
- Those who follow
- The King who leads them

6. **Imagery of God the Shepherd corralling his sheep into a pen:**

- “The one who breaks open” – *ba-poretʒ* – “breaks open” a breach in the wall of the sheep pen.
- The sheep then “break through” the opening, further expanding it by knocking down the walls of the sheep pen.
- Their King – leads the way

“From the days of John the Baptist [breaker] until now, the kingdom of heaven has been **breaking forth** (*biaʒo*), and **those breaking forth** (*biastes*) pursue it with assertiveness.” Author’s paraphrase

7. John is “Elijah to come” v. Rabbinic interpretation of Micah 2:13:

“When the Holy One, blessed be He, redeems Israel. Three days before the Messiah comes, **Elijah** will come and stand upon the mountains of Israel...In that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, will show his glory and his kingdom to all the inhabitants of the world: He will redeem Israel and He will appear at the head of them, as is said: he who opens the breach [the breaker; Elijah] will go up before them; they will break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king [Messiah] will pass on before them, the LORD at their head (Micah 2:13).

Pesiqta Rabbati 35:8-9

Commenting on well-known interpretation of Micah 2:13 –

“The one who opens the breach” is Elijah and “their King” is the scion of David.”

Rabbi David Kimchi (RaDaK) – 1160 – 1235
 Commentary on Micah 2:13