



Empowering People to Change the World

Ominous Times & the Power of Prayer

Part 4

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Violent Worship and Prayer

Holy Violence: Matthew 11:12

Another translation reads, *“From the moment John stepped onto the scene until now, the realm of heaven’s kingdom is bursting forth, and passionate people have taken hold of its power.”*

- After 400 years of silence in Israel, John comes upon the scene.
- John suddenly comes preaching righteousness and repentance.
- Jesus follows, preaching the Kingdom of God. See verses 3-5.

Noah Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines “violence” as “urged or driven with force. As of a violent wind or violent stream. Forceful. Extreme.”

PP: The Greek word for “violence,” *biastis*, means “energetic, forceful”. It is of the same root word as the “mighty wind” ascribed to the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:2.

- Jesus is saying that the Kingdom of God is forcefully moving forward, creating opposition and “suffers violence.”
 - Jesus is our prime model in defining true Manhood.
 - Jesus is our prime example of a man of “holy violence.”
 - Jesus was violent with evil, demons, and religious people.
 - Jesus is constantly casting out demons.

Ex. A pastor called me last week about his son and something rose up in me and I began to battle for his son in prayer. It was nothing less than violent prayers!

- Thomas Watson was a highly esteemed 17th century, nonconformist Puritan preacher and author, and his book Heaven Taken by Storm published in 1669 has been used powerfully in my life. Watson’s book is based on this verse.

Acts 16:25-34

- Worship and prayer reached the 4th dimension that impacts our three dimensional world
- Notice that Paul and Silas's prayers and worship open "all the doors and everyone's chains were loosed."

Luke 4:18-19

Ex. Several years ago, I heard of a man in our church who was literally on his death bed and his daughter called me to tell me he would probably die that night. Something welled up inside me and I came into this sanctuary and cried out, screamed out to God, and loudly clapped my hands...he suddenly got better and is still alive to this day, over a year later.

While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the One who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God. (Hebrews 5:7)

Joshua marching around the city of Jericho, a 7th time "when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!" So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. (Joshua 6)

Psalm 100: Shout to the Lord!

The word for violence is fierce. Fierce worship; fierce praise.

- Now, all of us shout. If we have voices, we've all shouted many times, and for numerous reasons. We've shouted in the overflow of great joy. We've shouted in the exultation of victory. We've shouted in the tension of competition. We've shouted in the chaos of battle. We've shouted in the tumult of controversy and argument. We've shouted in

moments of great danger. We've shouted in the explosion of hot anger. Certain strong emotions prompt us, any of us, to shout.

- Ex. I'm a shouter when I watch Georgia football.
- If you think about it, we rarely shout alone. We do it best in groups, right?
- Shouting to the Lord is mentioned 52x in the Bible.
- There is this decorum in worship that we have and I wonder if God is not calling us to a deeper experience of his love, redemption, grace, and mercy that might require us to break out of our tradition into an exuberance and fierceness that might call us to shout?
 - Might it be that we are not connecting deeply enough with the heart of God?
 - Might it be that there is actually a breakthrough within in our spirit that needs to happen?
- Shouting is commended and commanded in the Bible, like singing, because there are dimensions of joy in God that are only experienced when we express ourselves in this way — particularly when we express ourselves this way *together*.

Let's stand and worship. Shout to the Lord.