

Notes: March 4, 2017

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tov
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Understanding Matthew 11:12 Then and Today

Last week I started my sermon with Matthew 11:28

Mat 11:28 "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.

And asked you are you struggling?

Today, I am going to start with another verse from Matthew 11. A verse that is often misunderstood, or just not understood at all. It is a verse that when I am done, I hope you will have a better understanding.

The KJV reads as follows:

Mat 11:12 *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

The CJB reads as follows:

Mat 11:12 From the time of Yochanan the Immerser until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been suffering violence; yes, violent ones are trying to snatch it away.

What does this verse mean?

It is conveyed by Yeshua in the context of Him sending Yochanan's disciples back to him with a message...

Mat 11:4 Yeshua answered, "Go and tell Yochanan what you are hearing and seeing —
Mat 11:5 the blind are seeing again, the lame are walking, people with tzara`at are being cleansed, the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised, the Good News is being told to the poor —
Mat 11:6 and how blessed is anyone not offended by me!"

This message, in code, is to convey to Yochanan that Yeshua is the Messiah, for whom he spoke...

Joh 1:15 Yochanan witnessed concerning him when he cried out, "This is the man I was talking about when I said, 'The one coming after me has come to rank ahead of me, because he existed before me.' "

Yet, upon sending Yochanan's disciples to the prison where Yochanan was, there was a crowd that remained,

Mat 11:7 As they were leaving, Yeshua began speaking about Yochanan to the crowds: "What did you go out to the desert to see? Reeds swaying in the breeze?

likely having heard Yeshua's words

What did you come here to see?

Mat 11:8 No? then what did you go out to see? Someone who was well dressed? Well-dressed people live in kings' palaces.

Mat 11:9 Nu, so why did you go out? To see a prophet! Yes! and I tell you he's much more than a prophet.

What did you go in the desert to see, when you heard Yochanan was there? You heard about him. Could he be the Messiah, you may have wondered? Yet when you went out, and asked...

Joh 1:22 So they said to him, "Who are you? — so that we can give an answer to the people who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?"

Joh 1:23 He answered in the words of Yesha`yahu the prophet, "I am The voice of someone crying out: 'In the desert make the way of Adonai straight!' "

Joh 1:24 Some of those who had been sent were P'rushim.

Joh 1:25 They asked him, "If you are neither the Messiah nor Eliyahu nor 'the prophet,' then why are you immersing people?"

Joh 1:26 To them Yochanan replied, "I am immersing people in water, but among you is standing someone whom you don't know.

Joh 1:27 He is the one coming after me — I'm not good enough even to untie his sandal!"

That during Yeshua's testimony regarding Yochanan, He confirms what Yochanan had conveyed before Yeshua...

Mat 11:10 This is the one about whom the Tanakh says, 'See, I am sending out my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.'

Mat 11:11 Yes! I tell you that among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than Yochanan the Immerser! Yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he!

And then appears to pivot in that verse 12 seems out of place...

Mat 11:12 From the time of Yochanan the Immerser until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been suffering violence; yes, violent ones are trying to snatch it away.

Yet in the context of Yeshua's statement regarding Yochanan, He conveys this reality to the crowd that is still there.

One such meaning that is taught is as follows:

1. **One understanding, "... the Kingdom of Heaven has been advancing forcefully; and forceful people are seizing hold of it," yet seems inconsistent with [Mat 11:25-30](#).**

Mat 11:25 It was at that time that Yeshua said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you concealed these things from the sophisticated and educated and revealed them to ordinary folks.

Mat 11:26 Yes, Father, I thank you that it pleased you to do this.

Mat 11:27 "My Father has handed over everything to me. Indeed, no one fully knows the Son except the Father, and no one fully knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.

Mat 11:28 "Come to me, all of you who are struggling and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The verses I had conveyed last Shabbat.

If the Kingdom is forcefully advancing then why would Yeshua convey these words to the crowd?

We are moving forward, we are progressing, there is no time to rest.

Quite the contrary – all you who are struggling and burdened, I will give you rest.

Quite the contrast.

I believe a more accurate understanding of Matthew 11:12 is...

2. Violent ones (demons and their human vehicles) are trying to keep God from carrying out his plan through Yeshua, hence the reality Yeshua was just stating, that through Herod's having put Yochanan in prison, is the violence attempting to obstruct the Kingdom of God from moving forward.

Yeshua is referencing a time between Yochanan and what will become His time for execution

Mat 11:12 From the time of Yochanan the Immerser until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been suffering violence; yes, violent ones are trying to snatch it away.

Violent ones are trying to prevent Yeshua from establishing the Kingdom.

Yet not understanding what they are doing, they, the violent ones think they have succeeded. Fortunate for us, their understanding was different than the reality Yeshua was conveying.

Matthew 11:12 gets used quite frequently.

I believe it was used in the context of the first reference to justify the Crusades and of the Inquisitions, whereby the intent was to expand the Kingdom.

Ask any Jewish person during this time about the Kingdom of God, whereby, they were given the option - "convert or die" I believe they would have said "If this is the Kingdom of God, I don't want any part of it – this is not the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov that Torah speaks of.

Yet, what the Kingdom of God was experiencing at the time of Yeshua and even today, are "violent ones" attempting to keep Adonai from continuing to carry out His plan, even today.

When we look at the world, we as believers are confronted with a constant barrage of fiery arrows...

There is a concerted effort to remove every last aspect of God from our nation and from our lives.

The Bible was taught in our public schools; prayers were said in most of our public schools every day; God was and is in our Pledge of Allegiance; "In God We Trust" was and is on our currency; we said and sang "God Bless America"; the Scriptures were written on the walls of many of our government buildings in Washington, DC, and around the country; the Ten Commandments were posted on many government walls; and God was welcome in every area of American life.

Sadly, our nation has been moving away from God in every aspect of life; and since many have rejected God as our moral authority, this has led our nation to a crisis point. America's only hope is to turn to God — and that

includes our leaders, especially those who profess to be Christians, because we have a crisis in leadership and in our nation.

Source – William Koenig

In every aspect, since the election you have witnessed push back, resistance and even violence.

The Kingdom is faced with attacks from what is identified as Secular Humanism:

Secular humanism is a philosophy that upholds reason, ethics and justice and specifically rejects the supernatural and the spiritual as foundations of moral reflection and decision-making. Like other types of humanism, secular humanism is a life stance focusing on the way human beings can lead good and happy lives. (*Harvard Magazine*, December 2005, p. 33)

As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith.

Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.

New statements should be developed to supersede this, but for today it is our conviction that humanism offers an alternative that can serve present-day needs and guide humankind toward the future.

Source - Humanist Manifesto II, Paul Kurtz and Edwin H. Wilson (1973)

Yet this mindset is not new or exclusive to this age and generation. Humanism goes back as far as Genesis, with Genesis 11, being the best example...

Gen 11:4 Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city with a tower that has its top reaching up into heaven, so that we can make a name for ourselves and not be scattered all over the earth."

And the legacy for which exists in America today...

- **The “me” obsession (The Obsession of “me”)**

- What is in it for me?
- Excess pride, ego and narcissism
- Belief that man influences the earth's temperatures
- Whatever feels good — do it
- An obsession with the rights of one person despite the effect on the population at large
- Excess wants and desires lead to materialism
- Idolatry — worshiping earthly gods

- Image obsession
- A belief that man can solve all the world's ills (they will never acknowledge man's sin nature)

- **Morality**

- Liberal college and university professors shaping minds
- No absolute truths/moral relativism
- Moral drift due to belief there are no absolutes
- Establishment of laws when one's 'no-absolutes' behavior gets out of control and infringes on others
- No absolute beliefs lead to a loss of common sense

- **LGBTQ**

- The Obama Administration forced the LGBTQ agenda as a civil rights issue instead of recognizing the fact that it is immoral and sinful
- This agenda has affected every area of life
- It has been very difficult for Christians in the workplace and the military that have been forced to take sensitivity training
- Obama had 250 LGBT activists in high-levels of every Cabinet position to facilitate
- Homosexual activists continue to aggressively force their acceptance on schools, companies, the military and the public
- Homosexuals call others intolerant, but they aren't tolerant of those who oppose their lifestyle
- Obama's two Supreme Court appointees Kagan and Sotomayor were the votes necessary that forced same-sex marriage on America
- Obama imaged rainbow colors on the White House in celebration of the Supreme Court decisions

- **Leaders**

- Washington's partisanship is due to extreme beliefs and turf protection
- Special interests have more say than the American public
- Lack of civility

- Creation of dependence on the government
- Socioeconomic and ethnic division due to a dependent mentality
- Excess federal government regulation and taxes oppress people

- **Universal god**

- Unity of religions
- Unity to bring earthly peace
- Belief that there are many paths to a universal god
- Oprah Winfrey's very popular New Age movement focused on man's deity and spirituality
- The introduction of witchcraft to the youth of America through the Harry Potter books
- 70 percent of Americans participate in Halloween
- A belief that evil is a state of mind that can be changed with the right influence — not an internal battle between good and evil

- **An entertainment addiction**

- Nationwide gambling explosion
- Greed at all levels of life in America
- Ever-growing perversity on TV, movies, advertisements and the Internet

- **Abortion**

- Favor abortion — which is violence in the womb
- Pets have more rights than preborn children in their mother's wombs

- **Family**

- One of two marriages end in divorce
- Many mothers have chosen to enter the workplace, so children can go to good schools and live in safe neighborhoods
- [CNS](#) reported “of the 3,977,745 babies born in the United States of America in 2015, 1,600,208

of them—or 40.2 percent—were born to unmarried mothers, [according to data released this month by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#). That makes 2015 the eighth straight year that 40 percent or more of the babies born in the United States were born to unmarried mothers, according to CDC data.”

- 20 percent of children don't graduate from high school
- A very violent society
- Others besides parents are raising many children
- Record consumer debt
- National feeding frenzy on Americans' wallets

- **Despair**

- Epidemic of people turning to drugs and alcohol to cope with life and its struggles
- Confusion, disruption and division in our homes, schools, communities and governments
- Many living lives of despair, hopelessness and desperation
- Lack of civility, honor and integrity

Today, more and more of the Christian community are being lured away from the Word of God, to wit:

- Rick Warren, a member of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) and board member of Blair Faith (Tony Blair's new foundation designed to unite Christians, Jews and Muslims) focused on the “purpose-driven” church and the P.E.A.C.E. plan
- Brian McLaren's emerging church movement (a universalist)
- Radical Reverend Jim Wallis — one of Obama’s close friends
- Liberalism infiltrating even some of the most conservative U.S. seminaries
- The Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the World Evangelical Association, all pursuing relationships with Muslims yet not sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

Source – William Koenig

Very few of these individuals or movements are aware of the biblical significance of what is happening in Israel and the Middle East or know the significance of what is happening in Jerusalem — God's time clock.

We are living in the most significant time in biblical history, yet we have never before had so little interest in Bible

prophecy because of movements and agendas.

We have 100 million church attendees who have never studied Bible prophecy. Churches that are not premillennial tend to be into covenant theology and/or preterism (the belief that all prophecy was fulfilled by 70 A.D.) and the belief that man is responsible to establish God's Kingdom on earth.

They sponsor worldwide Christian, Muslim and Jewish gatherings for the sake of unity and peace. They believe man is responsible for bringing earthly peace: they are not aware that we will not have lasting peace until the "Prince of Peace," Jesus Christ, returns to the New Jerusalem.

Christians who believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God from Genesis to Revelation constitute a very small majority, and we are blessed to be part of that group. Let's pray that others in the church become part of our group.

Man's plan to save earth

Al Gore, Barack Obama, Tony Blair, Chuck Schumer, Nancy Pelosi and many others liberals believe and think they can solve global warming and bring Christians, Jews and Muslims together for the sake of world peace. They don't talk about the problem of sin — only about people getting along.

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), whose 2,000-plus members have enormous influence on the policies of the U.S. government, espouse man's worldview of how the world should work, not a biblical worldview, which would fully explain the reason for the world's most pressing issues and tell us where our world is headed.

Source – William Koenig

So, even though we may have a moment to rejoice in our nation, not further spiraling downward in terms of this secular humanistic ideology of globalism, I heard a commentator make the following statement:

“They will not willingly surrender the country back”

As we have seen over the last four months since the election, there is an increased vocal discord expressing:

intolerance, yet expecting tolerance

An increased threat from within the government of undermining the new administration through every tactic possible, false stories, leaked intelligence information and a barrage of attacks to the very character of those in the administration.

So, I have given you many aspects regarding the Kingdom of Adonai, being under constant attack by the adversary and his associates, whether it is in the form of ideology or spiritual warfare, but want to bring this back to you being in this congregation, in that you are experiencing your own aspect of violence in the form of confrontation by other believers, loved ones and friends, concerned for your spiritual condition. Concerned that you are in a cult, going back under the law, converted from Christianity to Judaism.

The attacks come in the form of concern yet are doing in essence what Rabbi Gamaliel warned in Acts 5...

Act 5:34 But one of the members of the Sanhedrin rose to his feet, a Parush named Gamli'el, a teacher of the Torah highly respected by all the people. He ordered the men put outside for a little while

Act 5:35 and then addressed the court: "Men of Isra'el, take care what you do to these people.

Act 5:36 Some time ago, there was a rebellion under Todah, who claimed to be somebody special; and a number of men, maybe four hundred, rallied behind him. But upon his being put to death, his whole following was broken up and came to nothing.

Act 5:37 After this, Y'hudah HaG'lili led another uprising, back at the time of the enrollment for the Roman tax; and he got some people to defect to him. But he was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

Act 5:38 So in the present case, my advice to you is not to interfere with these people, but to leave them alone. For if this idea or this movement has a human origin, it will collapse.

Act 5:39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them; you might even find yourselves fighting God!" They heeded his advice.

I have been asked on various occasions, "How do I describe our Congregation?"

Let me give you some definitions:

Definition 1:

A biblically based movement of people who as committed Jews believe in Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah of Israel, for whom the Tenach spoke.

Definition 2:

A movement of Jewish congregations, committed to Yeshua the Messiah, that embraces the covenantal responsibility of a Jewish lifestyle and identity rooted in Torah, expressed in tradition, renewed and applied in the context of the New Covenant.

Definition 3:

A term used to define Jewish people in Yeshua. Maintaining a lifestyle and form of worship that identifies Jewish customs and traditions while believing Yeshua is the promised Messiah of scriptures. Part of the universal body of Messiah that expresses itself in relation to a Jewish heritage.

Definition 4:

Not a new movement, but a resurgence / rebirth of an old movement. The first movement was of the apostles / talmadim and comprised a community of Jewish and non-Jewish believers during the first three centuries of this age, after Yeshua's resurrection. The latest stage of the development of authentic biblical Judaism is the same biblical Judaism that was followed by Moses, David, the Prophets and brought to fulfillment by Yeshua.

For the majority of you in the congregation, Definition 4 is the broadest and most comprehensive, in that it comprises elements of the other three definitions.

I had mentioned previously, 70% of Christians are not familiar with Prophecy. While those that are, have been improperly taught and therefore fail to comprehend what we as a congregation are all about.

The challenge for you, ultimately is to transform their understanding of Prophecy, meaning you first must understand it yourself.

Starting with one of these definitions as a foundation for your response is a good place to start. From there you will want to expand upon it, conveying aspects from Scripture such as:

Deuteronomy 30

Romans 11

Ephesians 2&3

Jeremiah 31

Ezekiel 36

Isaiah 42 and 49

The Sermon on the Mount

I can go on, but hopefully you get the picture. Everything in Scripture supports the vision of this congregation. To state otherwise is coming from a place of ignorance – a lack of information, and I will go a step further, a lack of correct information.