

Isaiah 11:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Analysis

This famous verse depicts the messianic kingdom's perfect peace, where natural enmities cease and predator-prey relationships are transformed. 'The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb'—mortal enemies living harmoniously. The wolf (zeev, זָאֵב) represents danger and predation (Genesis 49:27); the lamb (keves, קָבֵשׁ) represents vulnerability and innocence. 'The leopard shall lie down with the kid' (young goat) continues the theme—the leopard's hunting nature supernaturally reversed. 'The calf and the young lion and the fatling together' places prey and predator, domestic and wild, in peaceful coexistence. Most remarkable: 'a little child shall lead them' (na'ar qatan yinhagem). Children, most vulnerable to predators, will safely guide these once-dangerous animals. This isn't mere metaphor but describes literal transformation when Christ's kingdom fully comes. The curse of Genesis 3 (enmity in nature) will be reversed, restoring Eden-like harmony. Romans 8:19-22 explains creation groans awaiting this liberation from corruption.

Historical Context

Isaiah 11 describes Messiah's reign, beginning with 'a rod out of the stem of Jesse' (David's father)—the royal lineage. Verses 1-5 describe Messiah's character and righteous judgment; verses 6-9 describe the resulting peace in nature. Ancient readers understood this as future hope beyond current experience. Jewish apocalyptic literature developed these themes (Testament of Levi, 1 Enoch).

Christians recognize Christ's first coming inaugurated the kingdom spiritually (peace with God through the gospel, natural enemies reconciled in the church—Jew and Gentile, slave and free), while the second coming will consummate it physically (renewed creation, literal peace in nature). This vision has inspired Christian hope through persecutions and trials—ultimate peace is certain.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this vision of perfect peace in Messiah's kingdom give you hope amid current brokenness and conflict?
2. What 'natural enemies' has Christ reconciled in your life or community through the gospel?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה	צָבָא	עַמְּךָ	בְּשָׂרֶב	רְאֵתֶם	עַמְּךָ	בְּדִין
also shall dwell	The wolf	H5973	with the lamb	and the leopard	H5973	with the kid
H1481	H2061		H3532	H5246		H1423
יְשִׁיבֶת	בְּלָבֶד	בְּלָבֶד	בְּלָבֶד	וּמְרִיא	בְּלָבֶד	בְּלָבֶד
shall lie down	and the calf	and the young lion	and the fatling	together	child	
H7257	H5695	H3715	H4806	H3162	H5288	
וְאַתָּה	נְהַגֵּת	בְּמִזְבֵּחַ				
and a little	shall lead	H0				
H6996	H5090					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 65:25 (Parallel theme): The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Hosea 2:18 (Parallel theme): And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

Ezekiel 34:25 (Parallel theme): And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods.

Romans 14:17 (Parallel theme): For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

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