



Pastor's Update September 8, 2024

By Rev. Francis Williams

"Children Playing in the Streets"

This morning around 7:40 I heard the familiar sounds of children playing in the streets as they waited excitedly for the yellow school bus to arrive. For some of them, this is the first day of the new school year. We remember the thrill that comes at the beginning of the new school year: new school uniform, new books, new teachers, new friends and maybe a new haircut! On the street where we reside, the yellow bus arrives every morning of the school week to transport about twenty-five elementary kids to their place of learning. The sounds I heard this morning returned after a long summer break.

As I listened to the sounds of the children on my street this morning, I was reminded of the children in many other countries who cannot wait on their streets for buses to take them to school. In places such as Kyiv and Tel Aviv and Gaza and Tehran and Kabul and Khartoum and numerous cities across the world, instead of waiting in shelters for buses to take them to school, innocent kids are sheltering from bombs and bullets.

This awful situation reminds us of the chaos that characterizes this present age in which we live. But it also reminds us of the hope promised in the Bible of a new earth free of the pollution of humanity's rebellion. We read in Isaiah 11:6-9 that "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:6-9).

In its immediate context, Isaiah 11:6-9 refers figuratively to the restoration of the Judahites from Babylonian captivity to their homeland where they will be harassed by their enemy nations. Isaiah says that this promise would be fulfilled when "the nations will resort to root of Jesse" (Isa. 11:10). The title "root of Jesse" is a reference to a descendant, for Jesse is the Father of David (see Ruth 4:17, 22; 1 Sam. 16:18; 17:17). The New Testament identifies this descendant of David as Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 1:1-16; Luke 3:32-24). Whether or not we take this promise literally or figuratively, what is certain is that the Lord has promise that there will be a time in the future when all of creation, both animate and inanimate, will live together in harmony.

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This promise will be ultimately fulfilled with the coming of Jesus the Messiah. He will usher in the kingdom of peace which the Lord promised His people of old (Isa. 9:6). Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has defeated the spiritual forces of evil that wreak havoc in every place. And although it seems as if evil continues to dominate the world, we know that the day is coming when all weapons of warfare shall be shattered, and children will play in the streets of the city of the New Jerusalem without fear of bombs and bullets. For this Holy City will be filled with the glory of God and free of all sin and sinners as the Spirit showed John the Revelator: "and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27). May the Lord help us to share this hope with all the children in the world.

By God's Grace and for His glory,

Pr. Francis