

Is. 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

“In that day” – Continuing in context, this is referencing the time of God’s indignation, the time he comes to punish the earth. Now Isaiah is speaking of a specific judgment on specific beings—leviathan the serpent and the dragon in the sea. I believe the scripture identifies these beings as Satan and the antichrist.

Genesis 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, **The serpent** beguiled me, and I did eat.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, **that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth** the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on **the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,** and bound him a thousand years...

Revelation 13:1-2 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw **a beast rise up out of the sea**, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: **and the dragon gave him his power,** and his seat, and great authority.

What is the great and strong sword that will **punish** leviathan and **slay** the dragon from the sea? The word of God.

Revelation 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Why does God use the leviathan to describe Satan/ antichrist? After being challenged by Arthur Pink (*The Antichrist*), I did a review of Job 41 to see what insights could be gleaned from the description of leviathan there. Among the characteristics that stood out were:

- one to be feared
- can’t be tamed
- not bound by promises
- not vulnerable to attack
- unfeeling, merciless
- unmatched in PRIDE, arrogance, confidence

I think the question is answered. (See Topical Study, “Leviathan and Antichrist.”)

The word for “piercing” indicates one who is fleeing, a fugitive. When I look at the word “crooked,” I can’t help but compare it to the word “upright” which references being straight and even. In a sense, Satan is already fleeing from God; but when he is kicked out of heaven for good during the tribulation, he will definitely be on the run for his life. He is crooked in his character—changeable according to the purposes of the moment. God is *upright* and unchangeable in His character. He is faithful and consistent in His dealings with man. These notes from my recent study of Psalm 25 apply here.

Psalm 25:8 Good and upright is the LORD:

David continues to acknowledge the character of God. To the character trait of *goodness*, David now adds *uprightness*. The Hebrew for that word indicates “straight or even.” It’s another word picture of the character of God that illustrates the fact that He never changes; He never moves to the right or the left.

Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.
[end excerpt]

Is. 27:2 In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

Is. 27:3 I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest *any* hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

“In that day” – same as above including the thought of Israel as a vineyard of red wine. (Israel was established as God’s vineyard in chapter 5.) If it is a vineyard of red wine, it is producing grapes in abundance; it is prosperous and flourishing. Isaiah is speaking of a time when the nation is flourishing under the protection and care of the Lord. He is tending to every need of the people without rest—day and night. Instead of removing the hedge of protection around his vineyard because of their rebellion against Him, the Lord is the hedge of protection around the restored nation of Israel—a nation that is in submission to and in love with her God.

Is. 27:4 Fury is not in me: who would set the briers *and* thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

Is. 27:5 Or let him take hold of my strength, *that* he may make peace with me; *and* he shall make peace with me.

God does not get angry without cause. He loves His vineyard, Israel. When Israel is restored to fellowship with God, He will not allow “briers and thorns,” enemies to that fellowship, to survive. Those enemies will immediately be destroyed. The vineyard will be strengthened through its dependence on God. The word for *peace* includes safety and prosperity. God is saying that He desires to provide that *peace* to those who *desire* fellowship with Him. I think that truth is also expressed in the letter from Jesus to the church at Laodicea:

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Is. 27:6 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

This is a promise that the descendants of Jacob, the people of Israel, will again possess their land. When they do, the land will produce a great harvest—to the point that it will “fill the face of the world with fruit.”

When Israel became a nation in 1948, the land was not fruitful. The Israeli's worked hard to plant trees, establish irrigation systems, etc., to restore the land to productivity. Interestingly enough, citrus fruits are now (2004) Israel's largest export crop.

(source: Israelmybeloved.com)

Is. 27:7 Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?

Two questions seem to be presented:

- 1) Has God punished Israel in the same way that He has punished her enemies?
- 2) Has God killed/destroyed the people of Israel in the same way that He has destroyed her enemies?

The implied answer seems to be “no.” God has been very severe in His dealings with His rebellious people, but He has never completely destroyed them; He's always left a remnant. His punishments for Israel have been temporary; she will one day be fully restored. Can that be said of all her enemies? No.

Is. 27:8 In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind.

Using the different translations really helped with this verse. It seems to be saying that when God punishes Israel by sending it into exile (shooteth forth), the punishment has been measured (its length predetermined--not permanent). The word for *debate* includes “contend, plead, rebuke” among others. This seems to be giving the reason for the exile/punishment. God is rebuking His people and pleading with them to repent and return to Him.

According to Eerdman's Dictionary, the east wind, known as the sirocco, has winds up to 60+ mph and can increase the temperature as much as 40 degrees. It can destroy crops in a single day. This wind was considered an instrument of God's judgment. So the last phrase seems to be saying that in the judgment God sends upon Israel, God removes the wind of judgment before it can completely destroy His people.

Is. 27:9 By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

Again, the different translations are helpful. God's judgment on Israel is always intended to purge the people of their sin—to make atonement. When Israel responds in repentance and obedience, the proof can be seen in her actions. She will destroy the altars to false gods and break them into small pieces. The word "groves" refers to Asherah poles used in the worship of Ashtoreth, the moon goddess. Another sign of Israel's renewed commitment to God is the destruction of these *groves* and all other images/idols.

This is a principle hammered home in the book of James; our works prove our faith.

James 2:20-22 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Is. 27:10 Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

Is. 27:11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off: the women come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

The fact that Israel will one day be prosperous and flourishing in fellowship with the Lord doesn't negate the fact that they are in need of judgment. Judgment will come. During that time of judgment God will show no mercy. He knows that the judgment is necessary to purge them of sin and restore them to fellowship.

Parents would do well to make note. It's so tempting to listen to the pleas of your children and want to give in and not punish appropriately. We often think their tears reflect that the purpose of punishment has been accomplished. When we give in, we are sending them the wrong message concerning the consequences of sin. Sin has consequences. Yes, God will forgive us our sins just as we should forgive our children and keep on loving them; but part of that love is teaching them that sin has painful consequences.

Is. 27:12 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

Isaiah is reiterating that just as the judgment on Israel is sure, so is their restoration. God is going to gather His people one by one and bring them into the “promised land”—the borders of which stretch from the Euphrates to the Nile. The phrase “beat off” is a term associated with threshing, which is the process of separating out the good grain. In that future day of restoration we know that ALL Israel will be saved (will be good grain); the time of threshing is the 70th week of Daniel that leads up to that time, the tribulation.

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved...

Is. 27:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

The restoration of Israel will involve the gathering of those still dispersed in foreign lands, the lands of her enemies as represented by Assyria and Egypt. When they are restored, they will worship the Lord on the temple mount in Jerusalem.