

nothing”?

4. What did they expect to “bring forth”?
5. How will the “dead” live?
6. What is the “indignation”?
7. What is the message about God’s justice here?

D. JOINING OF JUDAH AND GENTILES, CHAPTER 27

1. JOINED BY DIVINE PROTECTION

TEXT: 27:1-6

- 1 In that day Jehovah with this hard and great and strong sword will punish leviathan the swift serpent, and leviathan the crooked serpent; and he will slay the monster that is in the sea.
- 2 In that day: A vineyard of wine, sing ye unto it.
- 3 I Jehovah am its keeper; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.
- 4 Wrath is not in me: would that the briers and thorns were against me in battle! I would march upon them, I would burn them together.
- 5 Or else let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; yea, let him make peace with me.
- 6 In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud; and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit.

QUERIES

- a. What is a “leviathan”?
- b. Who is to “take hold of” Jehovah’s “strength”?

PARAPHRASE

In that day when Jehovah makes a feast and removes the covering spread over all nations and swallows up death forever, He will take His hard, great and strong sword and will bring judgment upon the monster, the swift, serpent-like one and upon the monster, the winding, serpent-like one. He will slay the monster that is in the sea. In that specific day, the Lord will have a delightful vineyard. O sing of it! I, Jehovah, am its Sustainer. My concern for it is constant and I will refresh it and protect it every day against those who would harm it. I, the Lord, harbor no spiteful resentment against My remnant. If enemies, like thorns and briars, stubbornly set themselves against My remnant, I will come upon them and destroy them. However, if these enemies cast themselves upon My mercy and make effort to come to terms of peace with Me and Mine, then they shall have My strength. Indeed, I invite all My enemies to make peace with Me and Mine. The day is coming when the true Israel of God will be established and it will certainly prosper. This true Israel of God will fill the earth with its offspring.

COMMENTS

v. 1 MONSTER DEFEATED: Two Hebrew words in this verse may be translated *monster*; they are *liveyathan* and *thaniyn*. *Liveyathan* is translated *crocodile* in Job 40:25 (RSV) and *thaniyn* is translated *serpent* in most uses. In Ezek. 29:3; 32:2, *thaniyn* is translated *dragon*, referring to Egypt. Some commentators have concluded that the first leviathan, since it is swift, symbolizes Nineveh (Assyria) built upon the swift, serpent-like Tigris River, while the second, winding, crooked, leviathan symbolizes Babylon built upon the winding, serpent-like Euphrates River, and the monster that is in the sea symbolizes Egypt.

It is evident from the context (chapters 24-27) the prophet

is speaking of *that day* of the Messianic fulfillment (the first coming of Christ and the establishment of the church). Then what is the leviathan to be punished or slain? Obviously it refers to all the enemies of God and His people who were defeated at the first coming of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; I Jn. 3:8; Jn. 12:31; 16:11; Mt. 12:29; Lk. 10:18, etc.) In the book of Revelation the Roman empire is referred to as the beast, false prophet and harlot, who is allied with Satan (called the great dragon). (cf. Rev. 13 through 20) But the beast, false prophet, and harlot are defeated and cast into the lake of fire. The dragon (Satan) is bound for a thousand years, then loosed for a short time and finally cast into the lake of fire forever with the beast. Daniel chapters 7 and 8 refer to the enemies of God as various beasts. Wherever the spirit of opposition to God has appeared, in whatever kingdom it may be, Satan is the author of it. He is the motivating spirit in all the forces that oppose God's rule in the universe. Perhaps in one area he assumes one characteristic, while in another he assumes still another characteristic. In Isaiah's day great world empires (Assyria, Babylon and Egypt) were the leviathans standing opposed to God's rule in creation (cf. Ezek. 29:3; 32:2; Jer. 51:34; Isa. 51:9; with Dan. ch. 7 & 8). The leviathan's (monster, serpent, dragon) strongest and most potent weapon against God and His people is deception. Isaiah points, in this section, to *that day* when the feast will be made, the veil is removed from all nations, and death is swallowed up forever. Leviathan, with all his power to deceive and hold man in bondage to the fear of death will be "cast out, judged and triumphed over," when the Messiah brings "life and immortality to light through the gospel."

v. 2-6 MERCY DISPENSED: At the same time, on the same day, Jehovah defeats the "monster" He dispenses mercy to *all* men. God's vineyard (the covenant people) in *that day* (the church) will be producing according to His wishes. It will produce "wine" not "sour grapes" like the vineyard of Isaiah, chapter 5. Its fruitfulness and pleasantness will motivate a response of rejoicing. The Hebrew word *ahnu*

means literally, "to answer, respond to by singing." Songs of praise, honor and rejoicing for God's church are appropriate human responses for the mercy God has provided through His new covenant relationship.

Jehovah Himself is the *notsrah* (keeper) which has the connotation of *preserver*. He will refresh it constantly. He protects it constantly (cf. Psa. 121:4). The Lord watches over this new vineyard (the church) in such a manner that even the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. There are many enemies ready to destroy the church but not one shall succeed. God's new vineyard will be invincible. Whatever wrath Jehovah once held for His rebellious vineyard (Isa. 5), He does not hold for His new vineyard. God's wrath against His covenant people is removed and punished in Christ. His wrath is still abiding on those who do not believe (cf. Jn. 3:18, 36), but those who believe are made "branches" in the "Vine" (cf. Jn. 15:1-11) and God cherishes them, prunes them, they produce much fruit and have much joy. Since this vineyard is symbolic of the Messianic kingdom it is a prediction of *that* day when *all* nations (Isa. 26:5ff) are part of it. It is a prediction of the joining (grafting, cf. Rom. 11) of the Gentiles with the Hebrews.

If briars and thorns attempt to choke out the vineyard, God will step upon them and crush them, then burn them. There is the challenge of the sovereign God here to His enemies. Nothing foreign to His vineyard can enter and take His vineyard. He will protect and purify it. Destruction is inevitable to the enemies of His vineyard.

There is one alternative open to His enemies. They may "take hold of His strength." God bids His enemies take refuge in His *maozyi*, or His *fortress, refuge* or *stronghold*. If the enemy comes into God's fortress (the church) he does so only after he has made peace with God. The Hebrew word translated *make* is the most fundamental Hebrew word for *make, ashah*, and therefore indicates a significant part of the peace between man and God is action initiated by man in *making* peace with Him. That action is belief, repentance and

obedience. When an enemy of God believes, repents and obeys, he is no longer an enemy but has come into God's stronghold (the new vineyard, the new covenant, the church). The repetition of the phrase, "let him make peace with me," serves to emphasize God's merciful grace in offering the invitation to His enemies to come to peace lest they be crushed and burned like weeds (cf. Psa. 2:1-11; Lk. 3:7-9; Jn. 15:6, Jer. 12:10ff, etc.)

In days future to Isaiah, Israel will take root. How many days in the future this promise is we are left to surmise from the context. It is obviously speaking of *that* day of Isaiah 25:6, 9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, in other words, the day of the Messiah. The Messiah is to be the "shoot" and "branch" out of the stump of Jesse (cf. Isa. 11:1ff). The Messianic people will take root, flourish, produce fruit and fill all the earth with its fruit (cf. Hosea 14:4ff). In the missionary proclamation of the gospel this passage finds its fulfillment, the Israel of God (cf. Gal. 6:14-18).

So, as before in these chapters (24-27), we see the focus of God's purging, chastening judgments on Judah is the preparation of a remnant through which He may accomplish His Messianic redemption of all mankind. Jews and Gentiles, all enemies of God, will be given opportunity to come into His stronghold (the church) when they have made peace with Him. God's judgment on Judah in her captivity was not capricious nor malicious but loving and purposeful—God aimed it all at calling to Himself a people zealous of good works.

QUIZ

1. What do "leviathan" and "monster" symbolize?
2. Where is God's vineyard mentioned elsewhere in the Bible?
3. When is all this going to take place?
4. Why is God's wrath no longer upon the vineyard?
5. How do God's enemies make peace with Him?
6. When is "Jacob" to take root and fill the earth with fruit?

2. JOINED BY DIVINE PURGING

TEXT: 27:7-13

- 7 Hath he smitten them as he smote those that smote them? or are they slain according to the slaughter of them that were slain by them?
- 8 In measure, when thou sendest them away, thou dost contend with them; he hath removed them with his rough blast in the day of the east wind.
- 9 Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be forgiven, and this is all the fruit of taking away his sin: that he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, so that the Asherim and the sun-images shall rise no more.
- 10 For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.
- 11 When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women shall come, and set them on fire; for it is a people of no understanding: therefore he that made them will not have compassion upon them, and he that formed them will show them no favor.
- 12 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah will beat off his fruit from the flood of the River unto the brook of Egypt; and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.
- 13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

QUERIES

- a. How does "taking them away" forgive the sin of Jacob?

- b. Why does Jehovah not have compassion on them?
- c. What is the "trumpet" that is to be blown?

PARAPHRASE

Has Jehovah stricken His own people as severely as He has stricken their oppressors? Have His people known death as those who killed them have known it? No! He has dealt with His own people by driving them from their land and dispersing them. He has driven them by His fierce blast, it is true; like the scorching wind from the desert He has come upon them. Yet only in this purging shall the guilt of His people be removed. Only in this way can the people's forgiveness be accomplished—if they smash their pagan altars into pounded chalk, and leave no idols standing. Look at most of the fortified cities of Israel to the north; they are desolate like a deserted house and as forsaken as the desert. Calves graze there; animals make them their habitations and feeding grounds. The limbs of the trees of these cities wither, dry up and break off and women come and use them for firewood. These northern neighbors of yours are foolish, stupid and rebellious people. This is the reason their Creator cannot have pity upon them or show them His favor—they do not want it. In that day when Jehovah begins to make His feast and remove the covering spread over all nations and swallows up death forever, He will gather His chosen together one by one like hand-picked grain, selecting them from the far reaches of the world—from Mesopotamia and from Egypt. In that same day a great beckoning shall be made like a trumpet blast and those who were lost in the far reaches of the world will come and worship the Lord in Zion.

COMMENTS

v. 7-11 CALL TO REPENTANCE: In view of *that day* (Isa. 25:6-9, etc.) and all Jehovah proposes to do with His people,

the Lord now calls Judah, through Isaiah, to repent. First the Lord reminds His people that He has dealt with them mercifully. God has not smitten His own people as He has others. It is true He has handled them roughly, but this was for their good, that they might repent. Others (like the Canaanites and Amalekites) were extinguished as a race by the sovereign permission of God working through secondary agents. But He would not allow the covenant people to suffer extinction. He purposed to bring redemption to the whole world through them. However, He cannot work through any people unless they are willing. His firm, often severe, chastening hand rested upon them and will again rest upon them in exile to bring them to repentance. The Hebrew word for *measure* is *saah* which means *a third part of an ephah*. This enforces the idea that God does not *extinguish* Judah but only carries them away into exile, purifying for Himself a remnant through which He will yet work His redemption.

Verse 9 shows that the *effect* of the exile will be the expiation of Judah's sin. The captivity was the *means* by which the nation was brought to repentance—not the grounds of their forgiveness. There was no merit in their suffering. The suffering was a means to bring them to repentance. Only when they repented and turned to God could they be forgiven. The fruit worthy of repentance in their case was to be the breaking asunder of their idols and pagan altars and grinding them into chalky obliteration.

Secondly, the Lord directs the attention of Judah to most of the now desolate and ruined cities of Israel, the northern kingdom. The Assyrians have overrun and destroyed most of Israel—only the capital Samaria is left, and it is under siege. Assyrian armies now appear headed for Judah. To refer to a future desolate Jerusalem would have little impact on Isaiah's audience. But to point to most of Israel already lying in desolate ruins where dead trees and grazing animals are the only inhabitants of its cities would serve as a graphic warning. The accusation that the "people" of these "deserted" cities are "without understanding" fits very well the description

of the people of the northern kingdom as Hosea pictured them (Hosea 4:1-6, etc.).

v. 12-13 CALL TO RESTORATION: The predicted exile will have its effect in producing repentance and turning from idolatry back to Jehovah—at least in a faithful remnant. Out of, and through, that remnant restored to Palestine in the days of Ezra, Nehemiah and Zerubbabel will come the fulfillment of the Messianic order idealized and symbolized in this section. *That day* of verses 12 and 13 are obviously still integral parts of the whole context of this section (ch. 24-27) and refer directly back to *the day* when the feast is made, the covering is removed and death is swallowed up forever.

Jehovah will have *fruit* (Hebrew, *parah*; *produce, offspring*) from the far reaches of the world as a result of the exiled penitent, restored remnant. The Hebrew word translated gathered is *lakat* which means literally, *collect, pick up*, the same word as is used in Exodus 16:5, 16, 26, 27, to describe the Israelites *collecting* manna and quail. He will collect His own one by one, selectively. As Leupold says, "The point is, God's fatherly care for His own will appear in this that the scattered ones will be most faithfully gathered and made a unit again. Their unity however will express itself in their united worship at the sanctuary . . ."

If our interpretation is correct and *that day* refers back to the messianic program predicted in chapter 25, then "the great trumpet" to be sounded on *that day* must be the gospel proclamation which gathered (and is still gathering, collecting, picking) the true Israel of God from the far reaches of the world and uniting them in the worship of Jehovah in Zion, the real and abiding Zion (the church), not the earthly and passing Jerusalem, (see our comments on Isaiah 19:16-25, Volume I, College Press).

Thus closes a very significant section of Isaiah's message. It is a message to the last, remaining segment of the covenant nation. They are to be judged for their sin and idolatry. But it is the judgment of a merciful and sovereign Lord. He is

judging for a purpose. That purpose is to purge the covenant people of their sin in order that they may progress toward the goal Jehovah has for them. That goal is the redemption of all mankind through their Messiah and through them as a messianic people.

QUIZ

1. Why ask if He has smitten his own people as He has others?
2. How does their removal relate to their being forgiven?
3. What does the "fortified city" have to do with their forgiveness?
4. What day is referred to in verses 12 and 13?
5. How is God going to gather them?
6. Where are they going to worship?
7. Summarize this entire section.

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS TWENTY-FOUR THROUGH TWENTY-SEVEN

DEFINITION

(Define the following words or phrases as they were discussed in the comments.)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. <i>lofty</i> people | 10. <i>perfect</i> peace |
| 2. <i>new</i> wine | 11. mind is <i>stayed</i> |
| 3. isles of the <i>sea</i> | 12. <i>Trust</i> ye in Jehovah |
| 4. <i>punish</i> the host of the high ones | 13. <i>everlasting</i> rock |
| 5. I will <i>praise</i> thy name | 14. <i>uprightness</i> |
| 6. stronghold to the <i>poor</i> | 15. thy <i>chastening</i> |
| 7. feast of <i>fat things</i> | 16. <i>indignation</i> |
| 8. over <i>all nations</i> | 17. <i>leviathan</i> |
| 9. keepeth <i>faith</i> | 18. <i>gathered</i> one by one |

MEMORIZATION

“And in this _____ will Jehovah of hosts make unto all _____ a feast of _____, a feast of wine on the _____, of _____ full of marrow, of wines on the _____ well refined. And he will destroy in this _____ the face of the _____ that _____ all peoples, and the _____ that is spread over all _____. He hath _____ up _____ for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away _____ from off all faces; and the reproach of his people he will take away from of all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it.” Isa. 25:6-8

“Thou wilt keep him in _____ whose _____ is _____ on thee; because he _____ in thee. Trust ye in Jehovah for ever; for in Jehovah, even Jehovah, is an _____.” Isa. 26:3-4

EXPLANATION

1. Explain how the Lord will punish the “host of heaven” and the “moon is confounded” and the “sun ashamed” when He manifests His glory before his elders. Isa. 24:21-23
2. Explain how God keeps men in “perfect peace.” Isa. 26:3-4
3. Explain how “Jacob’s sin was expiated” in the captivity. Isa. 27:7-9

APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author’s intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer’s life?)

1. How does transgression of God’s laws and breaking His covenant relate to pollution of the earth? Isa. 24:4-6
2. How does Isaiah’s prediction that God will make a feast on Mt. Zion apply to the Christian’s experience? Isa. 25:6-9
3. How does the yearning of the prophet in 26:7-12 for God’s just judgment apply to the Christian character?