

ISAIAH 27 | *Sword and Shofar*

Leviathan Punished

1 In that day Yahweh with his hard, great, and strong sword (חֶרֶב) will punish (פָּקַד) Leviathan (לִיָּתָן) [Satan] the fleeing serpent (נָחָשׁ), Leviathan the twisting serpent (נָחָשׁ), and he will slay the dragon (תַּנִּינִךְ) that is in the sea.

Pleasant Vineyard

2 In that day! A pleasant vineyard (כַּרְם)! Sing of it! 3 I, Yahweh, am its keeper. Every moment I water it. Lest anyone punish (פָּקַד) it, I keep it night and day. 4 I have no wrath/rage (חֶמָה). Would that I had thorns and briers to battle! I would march against them, I would burn them up together. 5 Or let them lay hold of my protection. Let them make peace (שָׁלוֹם) with me. Let them make peace (שָׁלוֹם) with me.

World Fruit-Fillers

6 In days to come Jacob will take root. Israel will blossom, put forth shoots, and fill the whole world (תְּבַל) with fruit.

Yahweh's Contention with Israel

7 Has he [Yahweh] struck them [Israel] as he struck those [nations] who struck them [Israel]? Or have they [Israel] been slain as their slayers were slain? 8 Measure by measure, by exile you [Yahweh] contended with them [Israel]. He removed them [from the land of Israel] with his fierce breath in the day of the east wind. 9 Therefore by this the guilt (עוֹן) of Jacob will be atoned (כִּפֶּר) for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin. When he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing. 10 For the fortified city [Jerusalem] is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken like the wilderness. There the calf grazes. There it lies down and strips its branches. 11 When its boughs are dry, they are broken. Women come and make a fire of them. For this [Israel] is a people without understanding (בִּינָה, pl.). Therefore he [Yahweh] who made them will not have compassion (רַחֵם) on them. He who formed them will show them no grace (חֲנּוּן).

Great Shofar

12 In that day, from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt, Yahweh will beat off the olives, and you will be collected one by one, sons of Israel (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). 13 And in that day a great trumpet (שׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל) will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship Yahweh on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

Commentary

1. Overview.

- a. This chapter concludes Isaiah's "little apocalypse" (Is 24-27). It is structured upon five "in that days." It begins with a great sword and ends with a great trumpet.
- b. The following segment (Is 28-33) is a series of woes upon Israel and Judah.

2. Leviathan Punished (Is 27:1).

- a. **Is 27:1** 1 In that day Yahweh with his hard, great, and strong sword (חֶרֶב) will punish (פָּקַד) Leviathan (לִיָּתָן) [Satan] the fleeing serpent (שֶׁפָּן), Leviathan the twisting serpent (שֶׁפָּן), and he will slay the dragon (תַּנִּינִךְ) that is in the sea.
- b. In the end times, Yahweh will punish Satan (v. 1).
 - (1) Sometimes in the Bible, Leviathan is just a large sea creature.
 - (a) **Ge 1:21** 21 God created the great sea creatures (תַּנִּינִיךְ).
 - (b) **Job 41:1** 1 Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook or press down his tongue with a cord?
 - (c) **Ps 74:13-14** 13 You divided the sea by your might. You broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan. You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.
 - (d) **Ps 104:26** 26 There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.
 - (2) But here, Leviathan represents Satan, similar to:
 - (a) **Ge 3:1** 1 Now the serpent (שֶׁפָּן) was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord Yahweh had made.
 - (b) **Re 12:3-4** 3 Behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born.
 - (c) **Re 12:9** 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.
 - (3) The myth of a struggle between a high god and a sea/chaos monster was widespread in the ancient Near East. In Ugaritic literature reference is made to a seven-headed creature called Leviathan.¹ Isaiah does not believe this ancient Semitic myth. He refers to Leviathan to make a point. When God finally defeats Satan, it will be like the slaying of the chaotic dragon Leviathan.²
- c. Yahweh will use a sword, his word, to punish Satan (v. 1).
 - (1) **Re 19:15** 15 From [Jesus'] mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations....
 - (2) **Re 19:21** 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of [Jesus] who was sitting on the horse....
 - (3) **Re 20:10** 10 ...And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹ J. N. Oswalt, *NICOT*, 490.

² J. A. Martin, *BKC*, 1:1075-1076.

- d. Satan is at work in the air (fleeing serpent), on the ground (twisting serpent), and in the sea (dragon in the sea)(v. 1), signalling his invasion of all of creation.³
(1) So in the end times God will totally rid the domains of air, land, and sea of Satan’s presence and influence.

3. Pleasant Vineyard (Is 27:2-5).

- a. **Is 27:2-5** 2 In that day! A pleasant vineyard (פֶּרֶז) [Israel]! Sing of it! 3 I, Yahweh, am its keeper. Every moment I water it. Lest anyone punish (פִּקֵּד) it [Israel], I keep it night and day. 4 I have no wrath/rage (חֶמָה). Would that I had thorns and briars to battle! I would march against them, I would burn them up together. 5 Or let them lay hold of my protection. Let them make peace (שָׁלוֹם) with me. Let them make peace (שָׁלוֹם) with me.
- b. In the end times, Yahweh will keep his pleasant vineyard, Israel (v. 2).
(1) This paragraph contrasts with Is 5:1-7.

Isaiah 5	Isaiah 27
Vineyard on a very fertile hill (1)	Pleasant (2)
Land dug, cleared, and planted with choice vines (2)	God is its keeper (3)
Watchtower built (2)	Watered every moment (3)
Wine vat hewed out (2)	No one able to punish (3)
Yielded wild grapes (2)	Kept night and day (3)
Did everything for the vineyard (4)	No wrath (4)
Hedge removed (5)	No thorns and briars to battle (4)
Devoured (5)	Israel takes root, blossoms, puts forth shoots (6)
Wall broken down (5)	Fills world with fruit (6)
Trampled (5)	Full fruit (9)
Made a waste (6)	
Not pruned or hoed (6)	
Briars and thorns (6)	
No rain (6)	
Israel and Judah (7)	
No justice or righteousness (7)	

- (2) Asaph begged God to have regard for his vine, Israel, through “the Son of Man.”
(a) **Ps 80:8-18** 8 You brought a vine out of Egypt. You drove out the nations and planted it. 9 You cleared the ground for it. It took deep root and filled the land. 10 The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. 11 It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River. 12 Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? 13 The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it. 14 Turn again, God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see. Have regard for this vine, 15 the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself. 16 They have burned it with fire. They have cut it down. May they perish at the rebuke of your face! 17 But let your hand be on the man [Jesus] of your right hand, the Son of Man [Jesus] whom you have made strong for yourself! 18 Then we will not turn back from you. Give us life, and we will call upon your name!
- (3) Jesus confronted the Jewish leaders of his day for Israel’s failure to produce fruit.

³ J. A. Motyer, *Isaiah*, 222.

- (a) **Mt 21:33-43** 33 Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers [Jewish leaders] and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants [prophets] to the vinedressers [Jewish leaders], that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son [Jesus] to them saying, They will respect my son. 38 But when the vinedressers [Jewish leaders] saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance. 39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers? 41 They said to him, He will destroy those wicked men [Jewish leaders] miserably and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers [the apostles] who will render to him the fruits [the church] in their seasons. 42 Jesus said to them, Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes? 43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you [Jewish leaders] and given to a nation [the church] producing the fruits of it.
- c. Until final judgment, God's enemies are always free to make peace with him (v. 4).
- (1) God invites the wicked to turn from his way and live.
 - (a) **Eze 33:11** 11 As I live, declares Lord Yahweh, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.
 - (2) God desires all humanity to be saved.
 - (a) **1 Ti 2:4** 4 [God] desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - (3) Evangelism is inviting thorns and briars to become part of the pleasant vineyard.

4. World Fruit-Fillers (Is 27:6).

- a. **Is 27:6** 6 In days to come Jacob will take root. Israel will blossom, put forth shoots, and fill the whole world (תְּבַל) with fruit.
- b. In the end times, Israel will fill the whole world with spiritual fruit (v. 6).
- (1) The "Edenification" of the earth will finally happen through her.
 - (a) **Ge 1:28** 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it....
 - (2) This was promised in God's covenant with Abram.
 - (a) **Ge 12:3** 3 ...In you [Abram] all the families of the earth will be blessed.
 - (3) Israel will plant vineyards and drink their wine.
 - (a) **Am 9:14** 14 I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they will make gardens and eat their fruit.
 - (4) Israel will blossom like the vine.
 - (a) **Hos 14:5-7** 5 I [Yahweh] will be like the dew to Israel. He shall blossom like the lily. He shall take root like the trees of Lebanon. 6 His shoots will spread out. His beauty will be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon. 7 They

will return and dwell beneath my shadow. They will flourish like the grain.

They will blossom like the vine. Their fame will be like the wine of Lebanon.

(5) The remnant of Israel will take root downward and bear fruit upward.

(a) **Is 37:31** 31 The remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and produce fruit upward.

c. Similarly, God saves us that we may produce fruit.

(1) **Jn 15:1-8** 1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ...4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine. You are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers. And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ...8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

(2) **Ga 5:22-23** 22 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

5. Yahweh's Contention with Israel (Is 27:7-11).

a. **Is 27:7-11** 7 Has he [Yahweh] struck them [Israel] as he struck those [nations, like Babylon] who struck them [Israel]? Or have they [Israel] been slain as their slayers were slain? 8 Measure by measure, by exile you [Yahweh] contended with them [Israel]. He removed them [from the land of Israel] with his fierce breath in the day of the east wind. 9 Therefore by this the guilt (עֲוֹן) of Jacob will be atoned (כִּפֶּר) for, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin. When he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or incense altars will remain standing. 10 For the fortified city [Babylon] is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken like the wilderness. There the calf grazes. There it lies down and strips its branches. 11 When its boughs are dry, they are broken. Women come and make a fire of them. For this [the Babylonians] is a people without understanding (בְּיִנְיָהּ, pl.). Therefore he [Yahweh] who made them will not have compassion (רַחֵם) on them. He who formed them will show them no grace (חֲנֹן).

b. Yahweh has justly contended with Israel by means of exile (vv. 7-8).

(1) As divine discipline, God scattered Israel all over the earth.

(a) **Dt 28:64** 64 Yahweh will scatter you [Israel] among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other....

(2) God has disciplined Israel, but not to the extent he will punish her adversaries.

(a) **Is 40:1-2** 1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from his hand double for all her sins.

c. Idol-smashing will be the full fruit of Israel's atonement (v. 9).

(1) Atonement for sin is gained only through the substitutionary death of Jesus (Is 53). We are not justified by smashing idols but by faith in Jesus' person and finished work (Ro 3:24-25).

(2) However, the full result of that atonement is idol-smashing leading to sole worship of and loyalty to our Creator.

- d. The fortified city (Babylon/the city of man) will become a wilderness (vv. 10-11).
 - (1) The land of Israel will be fruitful, but the land of Babylon will be a wilderness. Jerusalem is a strong city. Babylon is not.
 - (2) **Is 13:19-22** 20 [Babylon] will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations. No Arab will pitch his tent there. No shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. 21 But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures. There ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. 22 Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces.
 - (3) **Is 14:23** 23 I will make [Babylon] a possession of the hedgehog and pools of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction, declares Yahweh of hosts.
- e. The fatal flaw of the inhabitants of the fortified city is their lack understanding (v. 11).
 - (1) **Ro 1:18** 18 The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
- f. Ultimately, Yahweh will show no grace to the inhabitants of the city of man (v. 11).

6. Great Shofar (Is 27:12-13).

- a. **Is 27:12-13** 12 In that day, from the river Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt, Yahweh will beat off the olives, and you will be collected one by one, sons of Israel (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). 13 And in that day a great shofar (שׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל) will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship Yahweh on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.
- b. In the end times, Yahweh will collect the remnant of Israel (v. 12).
 - (1) Olive harvesting, not wheat harvesting, is in view (“one by one”).
- c. A great shofar will be blown (v. 13).
 - (1) The jubilee rules of Le 25 foreshadow of this event.
 - (a) **Le 25:9-10** 9 Then you will sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the day of atonement you will sound the trumpet throughout all your land. 10 And you will consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It will be a jubilee for you, when each of you will return to his property and each of you will return to his clan.
 - (2) God will sound the trumpet.
 - (a) **Zec 9:14-17** 14 Yahweh will appear over [Israel], and his arrow will go forth like lightning. Lord Yahweh will sound the trumpet and will march forth in the whirlwinds of the south. ... 16 On that day Yahweh their God will save them as the flock of his people. For like the jewels of a crown they shall shine on his land. 17 For how great is his goodness, and how great his beauty! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the young women.
 - (3) At his second coming, Jesus will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call.
 - (a) **Mt 24:29-31** 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and

they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

(4) Don't confuse the rapture shofar (for the church) before the tribulation with the revelation shofar (for the remnant of Israel) at the end of the tribulation.

(a) **1 Co 15:51-52** 51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We [church age believers] will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [of the church age]. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

(b) **1 Th 4:16-17** 16 The Lord [Jesus] himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Messiah [church age believers] will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord [Jesus] in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord [Jesus].

d. Together the remnant of Israel will worship Yahweh at Jerusalem (v. 13).

(1) **Re 5:11-14** 11 Then I [John] looked, and I heard around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing! 13 And I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, in the sea, and all that is in them saying, To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing, honor, glory, and might forever and ever! 14 And the four living creatures said, Amen! and the elders fell down and worshiped.

7. Application.

- a. Thank God that he will punish Satan with his great sword (v. 1).
- b. Believe God will bless the nations through Israel (v. 6).
- c. As a believer whose sin is atoned for, crush the idols in your life in order to be fully fruitful in Messiah (v. 9).
- d. Rejoice at what God will do for the remnant of Israel (vv. 12-13).