

Life-giving Chastisement

Isaiah 27:1-13

Halifax: 27 December 2009

Introduction

Today in our Isaiah sermon series, we come to chapter 27.

- You who have been with us know that Isaiah prophesied in a day when God's covenant people had broken His covenant.
 - As a consequence, the LORD raised up Assyria to chasten them and also to humble many of the nations Israel had trusted in and sometimes imitated in their worship.

When we looked at chapters 13-23 in Isaiah's prophecies,

- we saw how the prophet spoke of what was to come upon each nation individually.
- And then, when we got to chapter 24, we saw that he began to speak of God's visitation of judgement in a more broad and general way.
 - He told of the great judgements that would fall upon the entire earth,
 - but He also told us what the outcome of it all would be!
 - In 24:23, He said that the LORD Himself will at last reign on Mount Zion in Jerusalem,
 - and that the kingdom He establishes will be so glorious that the sun and the moon will be ashamed!
 - This, of course, speaks of the reign of Christ whose kingdom will encompass the whole world.
 - The reign of which He speaks is the reign that began when Jesus became flesh, offered Himself up for our sins, and then was raised to sit at God's right hand until all His enemies are brought under His feet!
 - At the culmination of it all, His elect will be raised up to serve Him in righteousness and holiness forever and ever!
 - In chapter 25, Isaiah himself gave praise to God for this glorious kingdom that He was going to bring about out of the ruins of this fallen world...
 - It was a marvellous work that only God could do.
 - And then in chapter 26, he told us of the joy and peace we will have when the LORD completes His work if we are His people...
 - but He advised us in the meantime to hide ourselves in the place of safety that God has provided for us (as the people did at the Passover in Egypt) until the indignation is past...
 - our lives are to be hidden with Christ in God...
 - until the glorious day at last springs forth to our great delight and joy!

- And now today, with chapter 27, we come to the end of this section in Isaiah that speaks of God’s dealings with the entire earth...
 - It speaks of the day (or the period) of the Messiah’s will reign.
 - It is the day that began with His first coming and will be completed at His return.
 - If you glance over the passage, you will notice that four times it refers to “in that day.”
 - You can see it in verse 1, verse 2, verse 12 and verse 13.
 - And again, this day, is the day of the Messiah.
 - As we have seen all along in these chapters, it refers to the return of Israel from exile—indeed it does...
 - but the language goes beyond that to speak of the ultimate deliverance that comes through Jesus Christ in *His day*,
 - the day in which we now live when He is reigning until all His enemies are subdued.

TRANS> So as we begin in chapter 27, I want you to see that in that day:

I. The LORD will destroy Leviathan and once again defend His church.

A. Leviathan’s destruction is spoken of in verse 1.

- Isaiah 27:1: In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.
1. Leviathan is most likely a dinosaur—a dragon-like creature.
 - a. I realise that the prevailing foolishness in much of the scientific community is that dinosaurs and humans did not co-exist...
 - but this, of course, is the result of views you come to if you rule out the possibility of divine creation.
 - Historical accounts of ancient peoples all have accounts of men’s struggles with such creatures,
 - and some of the descriptions are no doubt exaggerated, but many of them very much describe the creatures whose bones we have dug up in our day.
 - b. But whatever Leviathan is, the material point is that he represents Satan, that old dragon, the serpent of old, who deceived the whole world and led us into rebellion against God.

- He is mighty, he is deceitful, he is unstoppable by human agency.
 - He has his agents all over the world who carry out his bidding—
 - who oppose the kingdom of God and seek to destroy it...
 - He is in Pharaoh, he is in Assyria, he is in Babylon...
2. But here in Isaiah 27, we are told that the LORD is going to punish him and at last slay him.
- a. He will do it with His severe sword, great and strong.
 - The prophets, including John in Revelation, speak of Him as coming with a sharp two-edged sword from His mouth...
 - even the word that is so powerful it called the world into existence.
 - That word will seize him and bring him to punishment!
 - b. There is a sense in which this has already been done many times...
 - It was done when Egypt was nearly destroyed despite his every effort to prevent God's people from going out to worship the LORD.
 - It was done when the power of Babylon was broken and God's people were delivered from there to return to the land...

TRANS> And as I have already said, the slaying of Babylon is no doubt in view here,

- c. But Isaiah refers to a greater defeat of Leviathan...
 - He refers to that defeat that came when Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8),
 - and saw him fall like lightning from heaven.
 - Jesus' work as a whole can be described as his coming to destroy Satan.
 - As it also says in Hebrews 2:14,
 - Jesus came and partook of our flesh...
 - "that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."
 - Jesus' work is described in these terms because it is Satan who tore us away from God...
 - and it is from his deception and the consequences of it that the LORD comes to deliver us.
 - When Jesus came, a great restraint was put upon Satan.

- For the first time in history, the kingdom of God began to spread to all nations.
 - Leviathan is unable to prevent those from every tribe, tongue and nation from turning to the Lord.
 - And the day is coming when Jesus completes His work in the earth that he will be brought to the Lake of Fire where he and all his agents will spend eternity.
- B. In doing this great work (destroying Leviathan), the LORD takes His place as the guardian and protector of His people once again!
1. In verse 2, there is a call to sing to the Lord's vineyard—because it is a fruitful vineyard—a vineyard of red wine—the language describing its pleasantness.
 - This does not seem to be the best translation—the word translated “sing” is usually translated by the word *afflict* in the sense of *afflict to humble...*
 - but either translation amounts to the same thing because the main point is that God is now protecting His vineyard in a way that He had not protected it before.
 - If the word means *afflict*, it is a taunt to the enemies to go ahead and just try to mess with God's people now that He is looking after them!
 - You can picture Pharaoh trying to detain them when God has called them to come to and serve him!
 - It is totally futile!
 - If the word does indeed mean sing, then the song arises for the same reason,
 - because the LORD has come to protect His people once again.
 - In either case, it tells of the restoration of God's protection.
 2. You see how His protective care of His vineyard is described in verses 3-5.
 - a. First, He says that he will keep it or preserve it...
 - He Himself is our watchman and our guard.
 - He watches over His people night and day so that no one can hurt us.
 - He waters us, sending His word to us to keep us.
 - When we are in glory, He will not let our enemies come near.
 - b. Secondly, He says that He will destroy our enemies!
 - Look at verse 4...
 - Isa 27:4: Who would set briars and thorns against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.
- 1) The briars and thorns represent enemies from within the covenant people!

- They grow up with the vineyard and attempt to take it over...
- But the LORD says “who will attempt to set briars and thorns against me?”
 - Who would think of doing such a thing!
 - What kind of foolishness is this?
- He says, “I will go through them and burn them!”

2) Ah, you see His zeal!

- He yearns to protect His vineyard—
 - He invites these enemies to come forth so that He may have an occasion to destroy them!
 - He will not allow our enemies to keep us from serving Him because he loves us so much!
 - How blessed you are to have a protector whose zeal for God’s house eats Him up!
 - There is nothing He will not do to keep us as His own!
 - Christian, take heart!

3) But alas, His zeal must not be misunderstood...

- He has no pleasure in destroying our enemies except inasmuch as they are our enemies...
 - In other words, He destroys them because of His zeal for our salvation and protection.
- But how much better if they would repent and turn to Him!
 - How pleased He would be if they would hear His invitation and turn!
 - See how He stretches out His hand in mercy to these briars and thorns in verse 5:
 - Isa 27:5: “Or let him take hold of My strength, That he may make peace with Me; And he shall make peace with Me.”
 - Let them come to Him as their strength or their refuge...
 - Let them come to Christ, the one in whose saving strength we find pardon and deliverance—
 - and they will know sweet peace!
- Oh my friends, are there any here who trying to fight against the LORD?
 - This call is for you!

- He calls you to make peace with Him...
 - If you do, you will have peace.
 - See how eager He is to receive you!
 - What a great God we have—
 - Oh that you would hear His voice!
 - If you come to Him, He will not cast you out!
3. Now you may wonder why I keep saying that He will come to protect His people once again?
- a. When did He ever stop?
- Does God not protect His people continually?
 - Indeed He does keep His elect...
 - But do you remember Isaiah 5?
 - In that chapter God said that He was going to turn His vineyard over to destruction—that He would break down their walls of protection and abandon them...
 - How else do you think the Assyrians and then the Babylonians were able to give them so much grief?
 - And the result was that all the people went into captivity.
 - Yes, He kept the elect by the power of His grace during that time—
 - but their enemies were all around them and destroyed Jerusalem and brought much trouble to them.
 - They had peace within, but they did not have peace in that they were troubled on every side.
- b. And you must look at what is promised in the day of the LORD...
- It is not peace in the midst of tribulation...when surrounded by raging enemies...
 - But the peace promised here involves a destruction of Leviathan.
 - Our enemies are kept from harming us now—and this is wonderful...
 - Oh my brothers and sisters, do you know His power and grace to keep you?
 - I hope you are not a stranger to this!
 - It is a marvellous thing to be kept by the power of God through faith!

- Nothing can harm you.
 - He gives you the grace and strength to say no to ungodliness and to worldly lusts that roar against the soul.
 - If you do not know the power of His grace in your life,
 - it is time to get on your knees and plead for it.
 - He will not reject you
 - even though you have miserably failed Him.
- But the day is coming when He will keep them from bothering us—
 - The day will come when the war is ended and we will not have to continue in this relentless battle!
- c. Understand that the peace here described will not fully come until the end of this age...
 - when Jesus has put all things under His feet...
 - but understand also that this day has already come to some extent when Jesus conquered Satan and began to send His word out into all the earth.
 - When Israel went into captivity, God abandoned His vineyard for a time...
 - They did not bear fruit for Him at that time as a people as a whole, but were rather a reproach—they brought shame to His name...
 - But when He comes to deliver them and to destroy Leviathan,
 - the outcome of that is described in verse 6!
 - Isaiah 27:6: Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, And fill the face of the world with fruit.
 - The barren vineyard that brought forth worthless grapes now fills the world with fruit!
 - This has begun right before our eyes!
 - Here we are, in the west, worshipping the God of Jacob!
 - And the day is coming when there will be nothing but fruit in the earth!
 - When Jesus' kingdom of perfect righteousness will be the only kingdom.

TRANS> But of course until that kingdom is fully come, we will have various degrees of affliction.

- This was especially the case when Isaiah wrote these words...
 - For Israel was yet to go into exile in Babylon...
 - The vineyard was first to be abandoned, as in chapter 5...
 - It was not to be restored until the day of the LORD...
 - In a lesser way when He came to deliver them from Babylon...
 - In a greater way when Jesus comes...
 - And in completeness when Jesus returns at the end of the age.
- Isaiah speaks about this present affliction in verses 7-11...
 - And as the kingdom of glory is still not perfected for us, we very much need to hear this also, for we too must suffer affliction...
 - especially as we are in a land that has largely forsaken the Lord.
 - There is little reason to think that chastisement will not come upon us.
 - Isaiah explains that:

II. Our present affliction as God's people is carefully measured out for us.

- This is very important to know when we are called to suffer with the entire church.
- A. Sometimes it looks to us as if our suffering as God's people is no different than that of those who are entirely cut off from God's covenant.
1. When Israel went into captivity, there was very little difference in their situation and that of the nations around them that also went into exile.
 - The temptation would be to question if there really is any difference.
 - That is the question raised in verse 7...
 - Isaiah 27:7: Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him? Or has He been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him?
 - If our lot is the same as that of wicked, what use is it to be His people?
 2. But you can see here that it is not at all the same.
 - a. Verse 8 shows us that the affliction of God's people is measured out to them...
 - It is affliction with a design and a purpose.
 - He does not give them too much so as to destroy them, but just what they need to restore them to His way.
 - They had been desperately wicked and rebellious to His gracious covenant, and He had borne with them for centuries,
 - but now radical measures had to be taken to humble them.

- God would send His wind upon them to blow them off into exile, but He would measure it so that it would be restorative rather than annihilating.
- b. If you are to continue in God's grace—perhaps through a whole life-time of such affliction,
- you must know that the affliction He sends is gracious—sent for your good.
 - Remember what we read in Hebrews 12?
 - Heb 12:5-11: And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.
 - You must know that He has carefully portioned it out for you,
 - and as this speaks more of corporate affliction of the whole church than it does personal affliction,
 - you must joyfully endure the trial that God has portioned out to His church for our correction.

B. Look at the good results that come from the affliction!

1. First, it says that the iniquity of Jacob will be covered (or atoned for) by the coming affliction.
 - a. Many of you may be familiar with the words of Isaiah 40 in which the LORD speaks comfort to His people after their exile, saying,
 - Isa 40:1-2: "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD'S hand double for all her sins."
 - b. But how can this be so?
 - How can it be that we can be said to have paid double for all our sins?
 - This can only be understood if we realise that Jesus is our covenant head who represents us.

- It is the LORD Jesus who comes into the world to take away His people's sins.
 - It is by His stripes that we are healed.
 - He makes, as it were, a double payment—a complete payment.
 - True comfort comes from knowing that Jesus paid it all as our covenant head.
 - As our High Priest, He went before the LORD with the only sacrifice that can truly atone—the sacrifice of Himself...
 - and now we are comforted because the LORD has accepted His offering and raised Him from the dead.
 - That means we can be certain that we are destined for the peace that is spoken of here.
- But at the same time, you must understand that the covenant connection with Jesus works the other way too...
 - such that when we suffer, we enter into the sufferings of Christ,
 - and by our association with Him,
 - our suffering is accepted because God is our father who chastens us to correct us and the time comes when He says,
 - “It is enough.”
 - Not that we have actually paid for our sins before His eternal throne,
 - but rather that He has dealt with us sufficiently to teach us what we need to learn...
 - so that we may then have peace.

c. Perhaps I can illustrate it like this...

- We, as God's people, owe a sin debt of a billion dollars...
 - Jesus comes and pays that debt so that we are reconciled to God and brought into His household and made his sons and daughters.
- But now as His child, He sees that we need a lot of correction...
 - so He sends chastisements upon us and we experience His frown even though He is busy loving us and restoring us...
 - but once these chastisements are completed, then we experience His smile again.
 - And then we experience His fatherly forgiveness as those who have been restored after chastisement...

- and He says, “It is enough, your sin is covered.”

TRANS> So the first good result is that through suffering, we are brought into His favour.

- And then what is the second result?
2. The second result is that our behaviour is changed—we become more holy through God’s chastisement.
 - a. He uses it to change us and to make us more holy—to bring forth what Hebrews 12 calls “the peaceable fruit of righteousness.”
 - He makes us partakers of His holiness through sufferings of all sorts.
 - That is why you ought not to be discouraged when you are chastened.
 - He knows just what He is doing and portions out every trial so that it will be sanctified to His people.

TRANS> Isaiah is encouraging the people before they go into exile that peace will come at the end of it all.

- b. Isaiah 27:9 describes the fruit that comes about from the exile...
 - namely, that Israel will make all the stones of the altar like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, wooden images and incense altars shall not stand.
 - The language here refers to the idolatry that had become so rampant in Israel in Isaiah’s day.
 - But you see here that the chastisement of the exile was aimed at purging them—removing the idolatry from them.
 - And it did—
 - Israel as a nation did not worship idols any more after the exile.
 - There was a huge change.

TRANS> So you see that there were some very good results from the affliction—there always are in the elect...

C. But note well that the judgement upon the covenant people, though measured, may be very severe!

- Do not be surprised by the severity of it!
1. Verse 10 and 11 describe the severity of it.
 - Isa 27:10-11: Yet the fortified city will be desolate, The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; There the calf will feed, and there it will lie down And consume its branches. When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; The women come and set them on fire. For it is a people of no understanding; Therefore He who made

- a. This speaks of the complete destruction of Jerusalem that came about 100 years after Isaiah wrote these words.
 - It was a condition in which the city was turned into a virtual wilderness.
 - Where once there had been houses and a palace and a glorious temple,
 - the only thing that would be worth finding there would be branches for fire-wood!
- b. But that is still not the worst of it!
 - Isaiah also says that God, who made the people into a people, will have no mercy on them and show them no favour!
 - From the city as a whole, both His mercy and grace would be cut off.
 - Nothing worse can be said than this!
 - To be cut off from God's mercy and grace and to be cut off from all hope of anything good.
 - It is to be shut up to destruction forever!

TRANS> But don't misunderstand—he would be with His elect.

- The mercy and grace that keeps them in the midst of troubles would never be cut off from them.
 - But there would no mercy and grace outwardly.
 - Destruction would be complete.
2. Many people did not believe that God's chastisement could reach such a terrible pitch.
 - They insisted that God would never destroy Jerusalem or let His temple be flattened...
 - But that is exactly what is prophesied here, and that is exactly what happened when Nebuchadnezzar came to take the city.
 3. And so I say, don't be taken by surprise at the severity of God's chastisements!
 - Many times He has brought His church into very difficult times such that they were cut down to the ground, as it were.
 - And of course the greatest judgement of all was exhibited upon our dear and faithful head, King Jesus...
 - when as the representative of the whole church, He was cut off and cursed.

- The people were very dull before the exile...
 - They did not believe their sin could possibly provoke God enough to destroy His city and the temple...
 - This is because, as verse 11 says,
 - they had no true understanding of their God.
 - They did not understand how displeased He was with their conduct.
 - And then even after that lesson was taught,
 - They were still dull because they did not believe that their sin could provoke God enough to cut off the Messiah without mercy...
 - It was inconceivable to them that such measures should be necessary.
 - But now that this has been done,
 - let us bow humbly before God and let us thank our LORD Jesus for bearing so great a burden for us...
 - And let us not be surprised when suffering comes—severe suffering of any kind!
 - Sin is severe.
 - Therefore severe measures are necessary.
 - Your Father is doing it for your own good.
 - Jesus told us that we would have tribulation in this world.
 - And now, in our day, the church has again lost sight of the severity of our sin.
 - Even though the cross is before us as memorial for all time of what our sin demanded...
 - the contemporary church has lost sight of this...
 - we have not understanding of our God...
 - Most people in the church don't think they really need an atoning sacrifice from the Son of God.
 - They figure that God must be pretty well pleased with them and that Jesus is just an example of faithful guy who came to show them the way.
 - And so as a result, we are ripe for judgement—for chastisement—

- We need to be dealt with severely so that we will be humbled and see our need of Christ lest we get what we really deserve!

TRANS> But my friends, there is always a happy ending for the elect!

III. Just look at how our gracious God brings forth life out of the ruins in the day of Christ!

A. In verse 12, He is seen going forth to thresh from Egypt to Assyria!

- Isa 27:12: And it shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will thresh, From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel.

1. Do you know what threshing is?

- Threshing is when the farmer breaks the grain in order to separate it from the chaff.
 - It is painful, but profitable.
 - And that is what chastisements do...
 - they separate the elect from those who are merely taking up space in the church.
 - The suffering brings out the true character that is in each one and shows what they really are.

2. The territory described here represents the places to which Israel was scattered...

- some were taken to Babylon which is referred to as the channel of the river—the river Euphrates,
 - and some went down to Egypt during these dark days...
 - but wherever they may have been, the LORD was going to separate His elect out from the chaff.
- He would gather them out of the ruins one by one so that not one would be left.
 - His chastisements scatter us, but only with the intention of gathering a more purified church back together again.
 - Some of you have had to go through hard things in the church,
 - but you must never become bitter toward the church.
 - It is still the church that Christ redeemed and He will deal with it to purify it and thresh it and to separate the chaff from the grain.
 - And once He has done this,
 - He will gather the grain in piece by piece.

3. The question is,
- Are you among those who have come to Him?
 - Have you died to this world and to self?
 - Have you been crucified with Christ so that you now live in Him?
 - Have you learned your need of Him and are you trusting in Him for salvation?

B. In verse 13, the LORD is seen blowing His trumpet to gather His elect out of the lands to which they had been driven.

- Isa 27:13: So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.
1. This happened after the exile, when the exiles were brought back to Jerusalem with joy, but this points to something greater...
- This is surely the trumpet of the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ (gospel means good news).
 - In the day of Christ, after He is lifted up, this trumpet is sounded forth into all the world—in every nation.
 - The gospel is what brings us to Christ and when we come to Christ, we are brought to the Father and are gathered together as His sons and daughters.
 - I will remind you again of Isaiah 11 where the branch that comes from the root of Jesus, the one branch who is anointed with the Spirit,
 - is lifted up as a banner to draw all the nations to Himself.
 - Yes, the remnant of Israel comes to the LORD, but they bring the nations with them when they do!
 - All through the Day of Christ the Gentiles come in response to the trumpet call!
2. And notice where they come—to worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem!
- In Isaiah 2, we saw the nations streaming up to Jerusalem to be taught of the Lord.
 - :Come, and He will teach us His ways,” they said.
 - And at the end of chapter 24, we saw that the LORD would, after the judgement of the earth, at last reign gloriously upon Mount Zion!
 - And here He is again, being worshipped on the holy mount at Jerusalem!

- There would be a literal fulfillment of this in the return to the exiles,
 - but once again, it points to the coming of Jesus at Jerusalem where He is revealed as crucified and lifted up and declared to all nations through the preaching of the gospel!
 - All through the ages, He was revealed at Jerusalem until at last He came in the flesh to be crucified there...
 - And now the gospel goes forth from the cross where He was lifted up and draws all men to Him.

- 3. Do you see who comes?
 - It is “they who were about to perish!”
 - They who had been brought to door of death by God’s chastisements are now brought into His glorious kingdom and filled with life as His worshippers!

 - Do you see the glory of it all?
 - The Lord brings us into death in order that He might bring us into life.
 - You might even say, He shows us that we are death through our trials and through the death of Christ that in Christ we may live.
 - The apostle Paul gloried in the fact that he died daily...
 - He died in order that he might be filled with the life of God.

Life-giving Destruction

Isaiah 27:1-13

Halifax: 27 December 2009

Psalm 89, 107, 121, 44-B, 38-A, 71-D, 74-A&B, Psalm 107-B, C

Gathering Music	Hymn 610: "Take Up Your Cross," the Saviour Said
Song of Praise	Psalm 33-A
Song of Promise	Psalm 89-F
Song of Restoration	Psalm 74-A & B
OT Reading	Isaiah 27:1-13
NT Reading	2 Cor 1, Hebrews 12:1-29
Summary Love	Psalm 97-C, 18-A

Introduction

MOTYER> The LORD's plans for his people lie at the centre of his cosmic, eschatological work.

ALEX OUTLINE>

- 1-5: The destruction of the sea monster is contrasted with God's care of His people even while afflicting them.
- 6-7: Hereafter, Israel shall flourish, and even in the mean-time his afflictions are far less than those of his oppressors
- 8-9: The former is visited with moderation for a time, and that with the happiest effect.
- 10-11: The later is finally and totally destroyed
- 12-13: This shall be followed by the restoration of the scattered Jews.

ALEX sees the entire prophecy as specific and referring to Babylon.

CAL sees the prophecy as general and referring to the overthrow of Satan.

MOTYER OUTLINE>

- A central passage: 7-11 dealing with:
 - past forbearance (7-8)
 - coming atonement (9)
 - and ultimate overthrow (10-11)
- On each side of it there are two "in that day" sections:
 - The Lord's victory in the heavenlies (v.1 matching verse 13)
 - The Vineyard people (v. 2-6 matching verse 12)
 - The Harvested people (12)
 - The LORD's jubilee on earth (13)

1 ¶ In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong, Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; And He will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

ביום ההוא יפקד יהוה בחרבו הקשה והגדולה והחזקה על לויתן נחש ברח ועל לויתן נחש עקלתון והרג את־התנין אשר בים:

MOTYER> Leviathan refers to a creature with immense power that is supernatural.

CAL sees the enemy as Satan.

- NOTE that he will not be destroyed until “that day” which means that we must take up courage to fight with Him now.

ALEX> All interpreters agree that this describes powers hostile to God’s people. Just who the powers are and whether one or three is much disputed.

LONG> The succession adjectives describing the sword speak of its effectiveness.

YOUNG> That Leviathan is in the sea adds to the aura of the mystery that adheres to the declaration. The sea is a region far removed from man’s rule and power and even from his knowledge. Yet, he is not hidden from the sword of the LORD.

YOUNG> Some identify these enemies with three nations or one nation, or two. But more than likely, it simply refers to all enemies in the heights and in the depths.

2 In that day sing to her, "A vineyard of red wine!"

ביום ההוא כרם חמד ענב־לה:

CAL> Satan’s attack promotes the salvation of the church which the LORD has under His constant guardianship and protection.

sing to her

- JRS> The word ordinarily means “to afflict” in the sense of humbling—a forced submission.
- YOUNG/ALEX both argue for the ordinary meaning of the word (to afflict) rather than the “traditional” meaning.
 - YOUNG> The idea is that God, who is the speaker, is commanding the enemies of God’s people to go ahead and do their worst! He is looking after them and will keep them!

MOTYER> This matches the Vineyard song back in chapter 5:1-7, only there it was on what the people do (their unfaithfulness), here it is what the Lord does with them (His faithfulness).

LONG> One might expect the parable to take the same twist as in chapter 5, but instead, it speaks of fruitfulness!

red wine חמד

- pure, red wine, desirable, pleasant.

3 I, the LORD, keep it, I water it every moment; Lest any hurt it, I keep it night and day.

אני יהוה נצרה לרגעים אשקנה פן יפקד עליה לילה ויום אצרנה:

CAL> We must infer that our condition will be ruined as soon as the LORD has departed from us; and if He assist, everything will go well.

JRS> Notice His complete care of it! He keeps it, waters it, protects it.

- MOTYER> Conserves its excellence, protects it, guards it, and does so continually day and night.

water it without ceasing...

- YOUNG> In chapter 5, he commanded the clouds to cease. Streams of grace flow forth from Him to His people without ceasing.

- LONG> *watering* suggests his sending of the prophets, one after another, to speak to His people.

YOUNG> Before the walls were broken down and enemies came in, now the Lord keeps it. Before he had delegated authority, now he Himself watches over them.

LONG> See the LORD's constant vigilance.

CAL> It is important to note that this is a song for the future—that we might not be discouraged along the way when it is as in Isaiah 5 for the church. He still has plans for us.

4 Fury is not in Me. Who would set briers and thorns Against Me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.

חמה אין לי מי־יתנני שמיר שית במלחמה אפשעה בה אציתנה יחד:

MOTYER> The LORD is at peace with them...

- but just let a weed appear—and you will see His zeal!

JRS> It is a good thing when the Lord is zealous to destroy what is evil.

CAL> Here is the incredible warmth of love the LORD has for his people even though they are of a wicked and rebellious disposition.

CAL> He separates His elect in love so that they are a vineyard and not briars and thorns.

fury is not in Me

- LONG> This is not with reference to Israel in Isaiah's day, but *in that day* of verse 2. The day is coming when His anger will be turned away.
- CAL> What consolation is here! If we know that God has called us, we know that He is not angry toward us!
 - It is indeed certain that at that time God hated many persons who belonged to that nation; but, with respect to their adoption, he declares that he loved them.
- YOUNG> Most people would like to believe that this is true of them, but how wonderful it is when God declares it to be so!

briars and thorns

- ALEX> He invites the enemies to come and do their worst that he might have occasion to destroy them.
- YOUNG translates: "Oh! that I might meet the briars and thorns in war."
 - LIT it is "Who will give me briars and thorns..."
 - These are the godless and dangerous enemies of the nation.
- In chapter 5, God actually set the briars and thorns in the vineyard because of its unfruitfulness. These are internal enemies.
- LONG> Here you see the LORD OF BATTLES going through with his torch to set all the undergrowth afire.

I would go through them...

- YOUNG TRANS> "In battle I shall step forward against them." Throughout this verse is the note of ringing challenge.

5 Or let him take hold of My strength, That he may make peace with Me; And he shall make peace with Me."

או יחזק במעוזי יעשה שלום לי שלום יעשה-לי:

YOUNG> Perhaps a reference to laying hold of the altar as Adonijah did in 1 Kings 1:50.

- “If anyone should take hold that place of refuge or asylum...”

YOUNG> The first word may also be translated “except.”

CAL> See how earnest God is to be reconciled to us! He repeats it!

LONG> Here is an offer of mercy to the briars and thorns! His action to destroy them is for the blessing of His people and His kingdom, but if they will make peace, He is ready.

MOTYER> The LORD invites the hypothetical weeds to come to Him and promises to show mercy to them also!

ALEX> If the thorns and briars of verse 4 are part of the church (internal enemies), then the call is for their restoration.

JRS> None who come to Him will be cast out! He stretches out His hand to the rebellious.

6 Those who come He shall cause to take root in Jacob; Israel shall blossom and bud, And fill the face of the world with fruit.

הבאים יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵעֻבְדוּ וְיִצְיָץ וְפָרַח יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִלְאוּ פְנֵי-תֵבֶל תְּנוּבָה:

Jacob, Israel

- LONG> This is significant—he has the whole people (not just Judah) in view.
- LONG> This also points to Christ, the true Israel, in whom all the fruit-bearing branches take root.

MOTYER> The LORD promises that the fruit of His vineyard will fill the earth!

JRS> Babylon wanted to organise the whole world without God, but our LORD Jesus brings us all together to live under Him.

YOUNG> Israel will influence the entire earth. She will grow, and the whole earth will bring forth fruit!

CAL> Even though he reduce his church for a time, he shall restore it to its flourishing condition in time. He never allows the root to die!

CAL> The filling of the earth with fruit was accomplished with the coming of Christ.

7 ¶ Has He struck Israel as He struck those who struck him? Or has He been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him?

הכמכת מכהו הכהו אם־כהרג הרגיו הרג:

CAL> When God punishes his own, He has in view their restoration, but the wicked, only their destruction.

JRS> This is difficult to translate and interpret, but the idea seems to be that God is showing by a question that although He dealt very severely with His people, it was always remedial because it was measured and it ended (v. 8)

LONG> This is an objection raised to what has just been said about the fruitful vineyard when God is actually sending them to exile and making them barren.

- But the point is, there is a great difference in the way God treats Israel, for he is bringing them to repentance (v. 9).

YOUNG> It is well that we learn to interpret the visitations of God. Upon the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, they bring destruction; upon my son, my first born, they show the faithfulness of God to His promise, and His mercy in not destroying men for their sins.

8 In measure, by sending it away, You contended with it. He removes *it* by His rough wind In the day of the east wind.

בסאסאה בשלחה תריבנה הגה ברוחו הקשה ביום קדים:

YOUNG> This verse is much disputed as to its interpretation, but suggests that “it” should be translated “her,” suggesting the sending of Israel into captivity.

- *in measure*

- The idea here is of visitation that is measured out so as not to destroy, but to strengthen. (1 Cor 10:14).

MOTYER> It was a fierce blast (for God’s chastisement is always this), but even in the exile itself, there was the promise of return.

LONG> The LORD is attempted to reason with Israel by sending her away with a measured wind.

east wind...hard wind

- It is a sirocco.

9 Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered; And this *is* all the fruit of taking away his sin: When he makes all the stones of the altar Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust, Wooden images and incense altars shall not stand.

לכן בזאת יכפר עון־יעקב וזה כל־פרי הסר חטאתו בשומו כל־אבני מזבח כאבני־גר מנפצות לא־יקמו א־שרים וחמנים:

YOUNG> The destruction of Jerusalem becomes the occasion and cause of blessing.

be covered

- ALEX> The purpose is to purge them from the foul stain of idolatry.
- CAL says the expiation comes about because the chastisements lead us to repentance which repentance leads us to God's remedy.
- JRS> I am inclined toward a more literal interpretation, and to the idea that God's chastisements actually do bring about atonement, for this is what fell upon us in Jesus Christ when He bore our sins on the cross. And we also participate in His sufferings when we bear His reproach.
- YOUNG> expiated. (*kaw-far'*)
 - By means of the exile there was a purification.

the fruit

- YOUNG> signifying the intended purpose.

JRS> But how is iniquity removed by exile?

- Well, it is through suffering and being cast out that atonement is made, but at last that atonement must be that made by the true Israel Himself.
 - LONG> The occasion of their atonement was the humiliation of them by the exile that led them back to God to His provision.

MOTYER> Even though his people deserved death, the LORD always acted with restraint—and this is the reason—because of the atonement to cover their sins.

MOTYER> When the atonement comes, two things will be removed:

- The legitimate altar (the stones will be like chalkstones beaten to dust) which will no longer be needed!
- The illegitimate altars (wooden images and incense altars—the word for the illegitimate ones is used).

10 Yet the fortified city *will be* desolate, The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; There the calf will feed, and there it will lie down And consume its branches.

כי עיר בצורה בדרך נוח משלח ונעזב כמדבר שם ירעה עגל ושם ירפץ וכלה סעפיה:

YOUNG> The idea here is this, “The punishment meted out to Judah will not be total; it will be mingled with mercy. Yet Jerusalem will become desolate.

CAL> God has an abundance of methods for the purification of His church—one of these being the destruction of Jerusalem. One of these is the destruction of Jerusalem.

ALEX suggests that this refers to Babylon to make the comparison complete, even though there are good reasons to say that it refers to Jerusalem.

MOTYER> The fortified city is the world city that is destined to fall. It is the fall mentioned in 25:1-5.

MOTYER> The coming atonement will be the occasion for the fall.

11 When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off; The women come *and* set them on fire. For it is a people of no understanding; Therefore He who made them will not have mercy on them, And He who formed them will show them no favor.

ביבש קצירה תשברנה נשים באות מאירות אותה כי לא עם־בינות הוא על־כן לא־ירחמנו עשהו ויצרו לא יחננו:

YOUNG> The city still produces something, dead wood to be used for burning. In a land where there were few forests, firewood was difficult to come by. 1 Kings 17:10 finds the widow of Zaraphath gathering sticks.

people of no understanding

- CAL> They were without the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom. Those who despise God and obey the wicked passions of their flesh are justly condemned by the Spirit of God as blind and mad.
- MOTYER> a lack of understanding has led to a forfeiture of divine compassion and favour.
- YOUNG> No matter how much insight this people might seem to possess in certain respects, in that which was of supreme importance it was deficient. The description agrees with what Isaiah had earlier stated (Isa 1:3).
- JRS> *Understanding* is plural for emphasis. These have no discernment.

mercy רחמ

- This speaks of tender affection and compassion like that of a mother.

no favour

- The verb *hanan* depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need.
- CAL> Even though the remnant was preserved, God does not cease to rage against the multitude at large.

YOUNG> There will be no mercy for the city of Jerusalem, because Judah did not recognise that God was its maker and former. Instead, it made and formed idols which were its undoing.

12 And it shall come to pass in that day That the LORD will thresh, From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt; And you will be gathered one by one, O you children of Israel.

והיה ביום ההוא יחבט יהוה משבלת הנהר עד־נחל מצרים ואתם תלקטו לאחד אחד בני ישראל:

LONG> These verses bring the great eschatological-apocalyptic section of the book to a wonderful conclusion.

ALEX points out that “one by one” is perhaps not the best interpretation because it suggests a gradual process—it is perhaps better in English to say “one to one” in the sense of all together or all without exception.

LONG> God’s judgement begins at the land of His people.

MOTYER> God gathers every true member of His people, one by one.

YOUNG> Each person is important as God gathers them.

ALEX> The *threshing* in view here is more specifically the beating of the olive tree.

13 So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול ובאו האבדים בארץ אשור והנדחים בארץ מצרים והשתחוו ליהוה בהר הקדש בירושלם:

ALEX> What was gathered by the beating of the olive tree is now represented by the gathering of men by the blowing of a trumpet.

- See Isa 11:12

YOUNG> Both the trumpet as well as the gathering is here figurative. It is a coming together of the people of God in Christ.

- Here is a new beginning for the nation (in Christ).

YOUNG> Egypt and Assyria are mentioned as the two great powers that held the people captive, away from the land of promise.

CAL> This was accomplished under Darius, but the prophet intends much more.

and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount...

- YOUNG> The purpose of this gathering is not to form a political state, but rather to bring the people to worship the LORD.

Eph 1:10 “that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.” (Eph 1:10 NKJV)

CAL> This denotes the true worship of God and harmony in true religion and godliness.

MOTYER> The Jubilee trumpet was sounded on the Day of Atonement (Lv 25:9) linking with the atonement in verse 9.

- Great trumpet:

- “Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.” (Le 25:9 NKJV)
- “Then the LORD will be seen over them, And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet, And go with whirlwinds from the south.” (Zec 9:14)
- “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1Co 15:52 NKJV)
- “And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Mt 24:31 “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” (1Th 4:16)

Life-giving Chastisement

Isaiah 27:1-13

Halifax: 27 December 2009

Introduction:

- Review:
 - In Isaiah 13-23, Isaiah foretold how God was going to deal with Judah and with each of her neighbours in the time of Assyrian and Babylonian domination.
 - He deals with each one individually...
 - In Isaiah 24-27, Isaiah speaks in more general terms of the judgement of the entire earth out of which will come the glorious reign of Christ over His elect people.
- In Isaiah 27, we are told what will come about for God's people when Christ reigns.

I. The LORD will destroy Leviathan and once again defend His church.

A. Leviathan's destruction is spoken of in verse 1.

1. Leviathan is most likely a dinosaur—a dragon like creature.
 - a. I realise that the prevailing foolishness in much of the scientific community is that dinosaurs and humans did not co-exist...
 - b. Whatever Leviathan is, he represents Satan and those who are in league with him.
2. But here in Isa. 27, we are told that the LORD is going to punish him and at last slay him.
 - a. He will do it with His severe sword, great and strong.
 - b. Already this has been done many times (by degrees)...
 - c. But Isaiah refers to a greater defeat... (1 John 3:8, Heb 2:14)

B. In doing this great work, the LORD again becomes the guardian and protector of His people!

1. The LORD's vineyard will be fruitful (v. 2)
 - The word *sing* it probably better translated *afflict*.
2. You see how His protective care of His vineyard is described in verses 3-5.
 - a. First, He says that he will keep it or preserve it...
 - b. Secondly, He says that He will destroy our enemies! (v. 4)
 - 1) The briars and thorns represent enemies from within the covenant people!
 - 2) Ah, you see His zeal for His vineyard that causes Him to destroy the enemies!
 - 3) But alas, His zeal must not be misunderstood...He is ready to make peace.
3. Now you may wonder why I say that He will protect His people *once again*?
 - a. God was said to abandon His vineyard in Isaiah 5.
 - b. And you see, what is promised in the day of the LORD is a day in which He comes to protect His people by destroying their enemies.
 - c. Understand that this day of the LORD will not fully come until the end of this age...when Jesus has put all things under His feet...but understand also that this day has already come to some extent when Jesus conquered Satan and began to send His word out into all the earth.

TRANS> But of course until that kingdom is fully come, we will have various degrees of affliction.

II. Our present affliction as God's people is carefully measured out for us (v. 7-11).

- A. Sometimes it looks to us as if our suffering as God's people is no different than
1. When Israel went into captivity, there was very little difference in their situation and that of the nations around them that also went into exile.
 2. But you can see here that it is not at all the same.
 - a. Verse 8 shows us that their affliction is measured out to them...for good.
 - b. You must understand this is you are if you are to continue in the LORD (Heb 12:5-11)
- B. Look at the good results that come from the affliction!
1. First, affliction atones for our sin.
 - a. Isaiah 40 speaks of "receiving double" for all their sins this.
 - b. But how can this be so?
 - c. An illustration:
 2. Second, affliction changes the behaviour of the elect. It makes them more holy.
 - a. to bring forth what Hebrews 12 calls the peaceable fruit of righteousness.
 - b. Isaiah 27:9 refers describes what fruit comes about from the exile...

TRANS> So you see that there were some very good results.

- C. But the judgement upon the covenant people, though measured, may be very severe!
1. Do not be surprised by its severity. Verse 10-11 describe the severity of it.
 - a. Here is the complete destruction of Jerusalem
 - b. But the worst is God's mercy and grace are withheld.
 2. Many people did not believe that God's chastisement could reach such a terrible pitch.
 3. And so I say, don't be taken by surprise at the severity of God's chastisements!

III. Look at how our God brings forth life out of the ruins in the day of Christ!

- A. In verse 12, He is seen going forth to thresh from Egypt to Assyria!
1. Threshing is when the farmer beats the grain in order to separate it from the chaff.
 2. The territory described here represents the places to which Israel was scattered...
 3. The question is, are you among those who have come to Him?
- B. The LORD's trumpet blows to gather His elect out of the lands. (v. 13)
1. This happened after the exile, but points to something greater
 2. They come to worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Isa 2, 24:23)!
 3. Do you see who comes?
 - It is "they who were about to perish!"
 - The Lord brings us into death in order that He might bring us into life.