

Review

As we finished up chapter 26 in our study of Isaiah, we saw that God has promised to hide his people during the tribulation period, until the final time, when "indignation runs its course" (Isa. 26:20). It is that very time which Isaiah still speaks of as he begins chapter 27...

27:1 In That Day

In that day, at the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus is returning to earth. As Isaiah has just told us,

Is. 26:21 For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; And the earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer cover her slain.

Revelation 19 describes this day:

Rev. 19:11-16 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The second coming of Christ. In that day, the Lord will punish the serpent.

The Serpent

The serpent is one of the first characters to show up in the Bible.

God had just created all things, and brought Adam and Eve into the garden of Eden.

Gen. 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made...

He goes on to deceive the woman, instigating sin, and bringing about a curse on creation. And of course, we know that this is the devil.

What is interesting to me is that we always equate the serpent with a snake. In fact, there are several Hebrew words for snakes and serpents. Some of those include: "**Ef-EH**," which is a viper. "**PEH-then**," which is a venomous serpent, probably a cobra. A "**shaf-ee-FONE**" is an adder or horned snake. And a "**saw-RAWF**" is a fiery (poisonous) serpent.

But this word used for the devil is "**naw-KHAWSH**." In the Bible, it is used interchangeably with "**tan-NEEN**" (here, and compare Exo. 7:10 with Exo. 7:15), which means "dragon, serpent, or sea monster." Could the serpent be less like a snake and more like a dinosaur or dragon? Certainly, the book of Revelation calls him...

Rev. 20:2 ...the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan

So maybe we shouldn't be thinking of a snake so much as some other creepy reptile. That would explain Isaiah's use of the word "Leviathan" to describe him.

Leviathan

The devil is called "the Leviathan," which was an actual creature in ancient times. The Lord described the creature in detail in the entirety of Job chapter 41: It was a swimming creature, impervious to being caught with hooks, harpoons, clubs, arrows, slings, or spears because of protective double-armored scales that had no gaps. Its teeth were terrifying, and its belly was covered with sharp edges. It had a strong neck and was able to raise itself up higher than the trees.

This creature also breathed fire. Now, before you start thinking, "Yeah, right," remember that it is anatomically possible, according to chambers found in the skulls of several dinosaur species. Chemical reactions that produce combustion are entirely possible, and even likely,

since most civilizations from all over the world have ancient legends of fire-breathing dragons.

Whatever sort of dinosaur-like serpentine creature the Leviathan was, Isaiah used its name to describe the devil.

But the devil is not the Levithan. Isaiah calls him "Leviathan the twisted serpent." That word means "crooked" or "perverted." Peter said,

1Pet. 5:8 ...Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Of course, we don't think that the devil is a lion, but like a lion. In the same way, the Leviathan was an actual creature, and Isaiah compared the devil to that creature.

In The Sea

It is interesting to me that part of that parallel is that the devil is "the dragon who lives in the sea." For years, I have been fascinated with some of the inferences the Bible makes towards the sea.

Remember that Jesus and His disciples once came into the country of the Gadarenes, and encountered demons that were possessing two men. The demons cried out to Jesus,

Matt. 8:29-32 ...“What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

Luke 8:31 They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

Instead, they begged to be sent into a nearby herd of swine. They entered the swine, and then the whole herd rushed down a steep bank into the sea, where they drowned.

Now, why was it preferable for the demons to end up in the sea, rather than the abyss? They seem to be two distinct destinations, for we read in Revelation of the final judgment:

Rev. 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

There are dead in death and Hades, and there are dead in the sea. And there seems to be an evil connotation with the sea as well. The antichrist will arise out of the sea (Rev. 13:1), and Isaiah wrote that

Is. 57:20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud.

Jude said that apostates are...

Jude 1:13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam...

Once, when Jesus was sleeping in a boat while crossing the sea with the disciples, a great storm arose.

Matt. 8:26 ...Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and it became perfectly calm.

Jesus actually rebuked the sea!

And lastly, when the old heavens and earth pass away, God will create new ones. But they will not be the same as before. When the apostle John saw them, he wrote,

Rev. 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

So, what the devil has to do with the sea, I don't know beyond those subtle inferences, but it is intriguing nonetheless.

Punishment

When Christ returns to earth, He is going to punish the serpent. How? He will be put in jail for a good, long time.

Rev. 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.

Sentenced to a thousand years in the abyss. But then he will be

freed.

Death

Satan will be freed to give mankind a choice: be ruled by God, or rebel against God. But once the devil has used up his usefulness, he will die. But his death will not be like what most people think of death. It will be the second death: eternal torment.

Rev. 20:7-10 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Finally, after seven thousand years of human history, the devil will be gone forever.

The Sword Of The Lord

I like how Isaiah mentions the method by which the devil will be defeated: with the Lord's "fierce and great and mighty sword."

This sword is the Word of God. Paul spoke of it in Ephesians,
Eph. 6:17 ...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And Jesus is shown with it proceeding from His mouth when He speaks:

Rev. 1:16 ...and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword...

The sword has two edges, just as the writer of Hebrews described it:
Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper

than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

This sword pierces or judges, kills or heals, delivers or destroys. This sword, which will deal the death blow to the devil, can distribute life to those who hear and obey it.

May we be those who hear.