

Isaiah 27:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. This apocalyptic vision depicts God's final triumph over evil using ancient Near Eastern mythological imagery. The Hebrew livyatan (לִיָּתָן) appears elsewhere in Job 41 and Psalm 74:14, representing chaos monsters God subdued at creation. The threefold description—**piercing serpent** (nachash bariach, נָחָשׁ בָּרִיחַ), **crooked serpent** (nachash 'aqallaton, נָחָשׁ עֲקָלְטוֹן), and **dragon in the sea** (tannin asher bayam, תַּנִּין אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם)—uses Canaanite mythological language to describe God's enemies. Ugaritic texts speak of Lotan, the seven-headed serpent, which Israel's prophets reinterpreted as symbols of hostile nations and spiritual powers opposing God.

His sore and great and strong sword (cherev haqashah vehagdolah vehachazaqah) emphasizes God's absolute power to judge. The triple adjectives (harsh, great, strong) underscore certainty of victory. **In that day** (bayom hahu) points eschatologically to the Day of the LORD when God finally vanquishes all rebellion. Revelation 12-13 and 20 use similar dragon imagery for Satan and antichrist, showing Isaiah's vision extends beyond historical enemies (Assyria, Babylon, Egypt) to ultimate spiritual warfare. The serpent of Genesis 3 who introduced sin will be finally destroyed by the sword of the LORD.

Historical Context

Written during Assyria's dominance (late 8th century BC), when empires seemed invincible. Ancient Near Eastern creation myths featured gods battling chaos monsters (Babylonian Marduk vs. Tiamat, Canaanite Baal vs. Yam/Lotan). Isaiah appropriates this imagery to show Yahweh's supremacy—He alone defeats chaos powers. For exiled Israel, this promised that empires oppressing them (symbolized as sea monsters) would be judged. The early church saw ultimate fulfillment in Christ's victory over Satan (Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise to destroy 'leviathan' encourage believers facing overwhelming evil or powerful opposition?
2. What do the serpent/dragon images teach about spiritual warfare and Satan's ultimate defeat?
3. How should 'in that day' shape our perspective on current injustices and God's timing for final judgment?

Interlinear Text

הַקָּשׁ הַ	בְּחֶרֶב וְ	יְהוָה	יִפְקֹד	הָהּ וְאֵל	בֵּי יוֹם
with his sore	sword	the LORD	shall punish	H1931	In that day
H7186	H2719	H3068	H6485		H3117
וְעַל	בֶּרֶחַ	נָחָשׁ	לִיָּתָן	עַל	וְהַגְדוֹלָהּ
H5921	the piercing	serpent	even leviathan	H5921	and great
H1281	H5175	H3882		H2389	H1419
אֲשֶׁר	הַתַּנִּין	אֶת	וְהִכָּה	עֲקָלָתוֹן	נָחָשׁ
H834	the dragon	H853	and he shall slay	H6129	serpent
H8577			H2026		H5175
					לִיָּתָן
					even leviathan
					H3882
					בָּם:
					that is in the sea
					H3220

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 29:3 (References Lord): Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.

Isaiah 66:16 (Word): For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

Isaiah 51:9 (References Lord): Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

Job 26:13 (Parallel theme): By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

Psalms 104:26 (Parallel theme): There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

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

Revelation 19:21 (Word): And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Job 40:19 (Word): He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

Revelation 16:13 (Parallel theme): And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Revelation 13:11 (Parallel theme): And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

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