

## ISAIAH 27

## GOD IS THE KEEPER OF HIS VINEYARD

Here we find the same delightful subject continued from the last two chapters – namely, the Lord’s care for His Church, and the destruction of His enemies. In the first verse of this chapter, the prophet begins with the same theme (although not the same words) as the Psalmist does in one of his Psalms, when he says, “I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing!” (Ps. 101:1). For here we read of the Lord’s mercy toward His Church, and His judgment toward His enemies. Isaiah uses figurative language to represent the enemies of God’s people; he describes them under the image of leviathan or a dragon. (Many commentators believe that leviathan was a kind of whale, but it is interesting to note that leviathan is here referred to as being on the same scale with some sort of sea-dragon!) The Church has many enemies; but in every age, she commonly has one in particular that is more formidable than the rest. Sennacherib was that great leviathan in the time of Hezekiah, Nebuchadnezzar took the form of the dragon at a later date, and Antiochus Epiphanes was the particular manifestation of the “crooked serpent” in the era between the Old and New Testaments. In Moses’ days, Pharaoh was the main oppressor of God’s people; and he is expressly referred to as “leviathan” and the “dragon” (chapter 51:9; Ps. 74:14; Ezek. 29:3). Throughout the Word of God, the devil himself is known as the dragon and the old serpent (Rev. 20:2); and he is the mastermind behind all the persons and organizations that seek to destroy the Church. She is very frequently represented under the picture of a vineyard and a garden, as in verse 2 of this chapter. And even today, Christ’s people on earth have their leviathans and dragons that are “ready to devour” them (Rev. 12:3). But what a sweet promise is given here of the Lord’s keeping of His vineyard! How gracious, how constant, and how unceasing is His watchfulness over His Church! Observe that the Lord not only keeps His vineyard, but He also waters it; He not only defends it from the outside, but He also blesses it from the inside. The Lord Jesus – with His strong sword, the virtue of His death, and the preaching of His Gospel – has destroyed the devil, who had the power of death!

Here is a summary of the doctrine of the Gospel, with which the Church is to be watered every moment. Ever since sin entered the world, there has been a quarrel between God and man – a righteous quarrel on God’s part, but unrighteous on man’s. Nevertheless, here is a gracious invitation given! Pardoning mercy is called the strength of our Lord (verse 5); let us grasp at that! Christ cru-

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ The Lord assures His people that they will be cared for as His vineyard, and that their oppressors will be dealt with – verses 1-5
- ❖ He promises mercies to His people, and speaks harsh words concerning those who willfully rebel; but He closes with an assurance of His people’s restoration – verses 6-13



cified is the power of God. Let us, by faith, take hold upon His strength; for He is strength indeed to the needy and powerless! There is no other name by which we must be saved! Jesus is the only way – and the sure and certain way – to be saved, and the Lord is willing to be reconciled to us through Him. The words in verse 5 are a direction to every poor sinner in any condi-

tion – enjoining us to take hold of Christ our strength, and to rest upon Him by faith in a firm dependence upon His salvation; for He makes peace between us and the Lord. O what a precious promise, founded upon a precious Savior!

Verses 6-10 contain many different expressions that serve to show how the Lord's mercy to His people is all of grace, and not given to them because of their own merits. The Lord watches over us for good, but it is for the exaltation of His own free grace. Since our souls are continually watered and kept, it causes the Church in general to abound in the fruits of the Spirit – in all goodness, righteousness, and truth (verse 6). It is true that winds of affliction and oppression may blow around her; but be they ever so rough or ever so high, God can say to them, "Peace, be still!" (verse 8) And although He afflicts His people, yet He will make their afflictions work for the good of their souls. The purpose of their afflictions is to make a separation between them and their sin (verse 9), just as the Jews of old were sent into captivity in order that they would learn to abhor idolatry. Jerusalem was defended by grace and Divine protection; but when she withdrew from her God, she was left like a wilderness. Rebellious sinners flatter themselves they shall not be dealt with severely, because God is merciful. But concerning such persons, the Scripture says (verse 11) that "he that made them" and "formed them will shew them no favor" – for they reject Christ, Who is the mercy of God and the only way of salvation from sin.

Despite these sober thoughts, the chapter closes most graciously! There was a day promised to the children of Israel, when they would be gathered out of captivity and return to their own land. And in the same way, when the Jubilee-trumpet of Gospel-proclamation is blown, the saving effects shall be made known! Poor sinners who are ready to perish shall be gathered from all the countries of the earth. They shall come forth as outcasts and captives from the spiritual Assyria and the spiritual Egypt; and all the Lord's people shall be united together in one Church, under the one and only Good Shepherd!

*Thank You, Lord Jesus, for being our Keeper, Who is always watching tenderly and carefully over us – hindering the growth of sin, restoring our souls, and encouraging our growth in that spiritual life which is true bliss and rest! Amen.*