

Divine Lasik (Luke 11:29-36)

There is a literary interplay of generation, sign, light, lamp, eye, body, and darkness. Five categories are identified in response to God's varied revelation, including God's gracious provision of light (revelation) and man's responsibility to respond to that light:

Category #1: The Wicked Generation (v.29)

- Jesus categorizes the generation that lived during Jesus' time as "evil."
- What makes them evil? (1) They accused Jesus of exorcising demons in the power of Satan (v.15). (2) They demanded more signs (v.15-16).
- The demand for signs points the reader to the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness: Satan demanded a miracle and sign from Jesus (4:3-12). This generation is as wicked as Satan.
- The precondition for additional signs is symptomatic of a heart that has been given over to wickedness, building on the theme of the previous account of "sweeping the house clean." A sign is unnecessary for a heart that has already been transformed (v.24-26).
- The request did not indicate their willingness to believe if only adequate evidence was provided but a rationalization of their unwillingness to believe the perfectly adequate evidence they already had. Asking for a miraculous sign is not an indication of faith but a lack of it. The crowds, Pharisees, and Scribes want everything but Jesus.

Category #2: The Ninevites (v.30-32)

The only sign they will be given is the *sign of Jonah*. Two possible interpretations:

- A. This is a typological metaphor for Jesus' burial, resurrection, and ascension. As Jonah died (presumably) and was resurrected, so Jesus will die and be resurrected.
- B. Jonah's ministry of preaching judgment and repentance.

*If Luke adopts the same theme as Matthew (Matt. 12:38-40), Jesus would refer to His death, burial, and resurrection. Contextually, however, the issue is not the resurrection but proclamation, judgment, and repentance.

How did the king of Nineveh and the citizens respond (Jonah 3)?

- He "arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself in sackcloth, and sat in ashes." He also proclaimed and issued a city-wide fast (food and water) and repentance (in dress, verbal outcry, and behavior). The people likewise turned from sin and put on sackcloth and ashes (symbol of repentance and lowliness of heart) from the least to the greatest (Jon. 3:5).

What are the contrasts between Jesus' and Jonah's desire for repentance for an evil generation and the wicked people's response in light of revelation?

- Jonah's message was one of judgment, hoping they wouldn't repent. He was depressed when they did (3:4; 4:1). Jesus wept over Jerusalem and desired to welcome them (Lk. 13:34-35).
- Jonah preached a message given to him as a minor prophet. Jesus is the incarnate YHWH and incarnate Word.
- Jonah was sinful, foolish, disobedient, and selfish. Jesus was sinless and obeyed the Father (Jon. 1:3; 4:1-3, 9b; Jn. 8:46; 1 Cor. 1:22).
- Jonah performed no miracles nor signs before Nineveh. Jesus performed many signs and miracles. The Ninevites received less revelation and repented of their sin, yet the generation during Jesus' day received the most revelation and accused Jesus of having a demon.

Category #3: The Queen of the South (v.31)

- The queen of the South is the queen of Sheba (modern-day Yemen) who traveled great distances to inquire of Solomon's wisdom and witness the grandeur of Solomon's kingdom he inherited from the grace of God (1 Kg. 10:1-13; 2 Chron. 9:1-12).
- She received less revelation than the generation during Jesus' day, as she "heard" of Solomon and YHWH (his God), walked in faith to meet him, and offered tokens of honor to him and his God. She sought wisdom and found it.

Jesus mentions "the judgment" (v.31):

- Both the queen of the South and the Ninevites will "rise" (v.31, 32) at "the" judgment and condemn it. Whether literal or symbolic of *rising*, the judgment is literal, which is the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), when the unbelieving will receive their due punishment.
- The queen of the South and Solomon represent wisdom, while the Ninevites and Jonah represent repentance. Privilege and responsibility go hand in hand.
- The demand for a sign was prevalent among the Jews (23:8; Jn. 2:18; 4:48; 1 Cor. 1:22) and was a rejection of God's revelation of Christ. Signs do not produce faith.
- The Ninevites and the queen of the South received exponentially less revelation than Jesus' generation.

What do we learn from all three categories (the evil generation, the Ninevites, and the queen)?

- A. The Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba were both Gentiles, which is a theme in Luke.
- B. Duplicity and internal corruption are the antithesis of single-mindedness and commitment to God. Seekers of signs, including the Pharisees, Scribes, and the crowds, are evil (v.4; 13; 26; 29). It signifies willful and deliberate evil. Since they have no inner light, they demand signs.
- C. Jesus is of a different class, kind, and category than Solomon and Jonah: "something" not "someone" greater is here (v.31-32).

Category #4: The Healthy Body and Healthy Eyes (v.32-34)

If the body is healthy, the eyes are healthy, and if the eyes are healthy, the body is healthy:

- The physiology in Greco-Roman antiquity taught that the eye did not function to let light in but is the conduit through which the body's light is broadcasted.
- It is called *the extramission theory of vision*: the eyes did not function as the way in but as the way out. The eyes broadcast the inner constitution and composition. The eye is the lamp of the body, yet it is passive.
- Jesus is light and the light (Jn. 1:1-10; 8:12; 1 Jn. 1:5-10).
 - The eye does not create light or transform the object. The object is always there. Light is a receiver and reflector of outward objects. It is a channel through which visible things are revealed.
- When the "eye" is sound (healthy/good), it can make sense of the light. There is discernment, joy, hope, and trust with no duplicity. If the eye is good, the heart is good. If the heart is good, and the eyes are good, the whole body is good.
- Jesus is concerned with the inside → out, not the outside → in.

Category #5: Darkness of Body and Darkness of Eyes (v.34-35)

- A person's willingness and ability to receive and walk in the light (God's truth) reveals the health or sickness of the whole person. Jesus uses a physical example to point to a spiritual truth.
- The choices, direction, concern, submission, and treasuring of divine truth will be evident:
 - The internal evil or bad (v.29, 34) will reject the light and walk in chaos and disorder. If that remains, there will be eternal judgment.

Jesus uses a first-class conditional statement (v.36), which assumes what is about to be said is true:

"If your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."

- This is a call for self-examination. The body encompasses the whole person (Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:28; Phil. 1:20). The entering in (v.33) is the same expression used to describe those who enter the kingdom of God (8:16; 18:24).
- All claiming to know the light, belong in God's kingdom, and walk in the light will be a luminary. When a man walks in the light, God's light shines through him impacting all areas of his life.
- There is a dynamic interplay of longings, desires, and the will that is reflective (model), symptomatic (result), reactive (responsive), proactive (furthering and advancing), and substantive (detailed) on light and darkness.