

Quarter Two: Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy

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Lesson 13—Images of the End

Monday: A Work of Repentance

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- **Last Week:** “Precursors”
 - Comparison of the image on the Plain of Dura to Rev 13
 - Comparison of the early Christian Church & that persecution to end-time events
- **This Week:** “Images of the End”
 - Comparisons of the prophet Jonah, the fall of Babylon & the rise of Cyrus, and end-time events
 - Look at the broad picture & perspective & principles
 - Don’t try to compare every little detail

Memory Text: “So he said to them, ‘I am a Hebrew; and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land’” (Jonah 1:9, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** The Reluctant Prophet (Daniel)
 - Comparison between Jonah & Jesus; comparison between Jonah & the 1st angels’ message of Rev 14; comparison of Jonah being reluctant to witness & 2nd angels’ message to come out of her, My people
- 2. **Monday:** A Work of Repentance (Jill)
 - Conditional vs non-conditional prophecies; Jonah’s call to repentance & our end-time call to repentance
- 3. **Tuesday:** Belshazzar’s Feast (SQ)
 - Nebuchadnezzar repented & followed God; his grandson, Belshazzar, did not; he had opportunity to know truth, but he refused to repent; same with people in the last days
- 4. **Wednesday:** The Drying of the Euphrates (John D)
 - Comparison between the drying of the Euphrates (fall of Babylon) & last plagues & coming of Christ
- 5. **Thursday:** Cyrus, the Anointed (James)
 - Comparison between Cyrus and the coming of Christ

Monday: A Work of Repentance

Jonah 3:1 – 10; Rev 14:12; Rev 18:4; Jer 18:7 - 10

- Jonah 3:1 – “Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying,”
 - **Takeaway #1: God gives us second chances**
 - Jonah failed the first time
 - God called him; and he went the other way (to Tarshish)
 - He refused to be obedient
 - God didn’t give up on Jonah – He called him again

- Jonah 3:2 – “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message **that I tell you.**”
 - **Takeaway #2: God gives the message**
 - It's not ours to create nor decide: it's God's Word & God's message
 - Sometimes, we try to present tradition / fables
 - Our own theories or opinions
 - 1 Tim 1:3, 4 – “...remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, (4) nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.”
 - Sometimes, we worry about what to say:
 - Matt 10:19, 20 – “But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; (20) for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”
 - **Preach the Word:** 2 Tim 4:2 – “Preach the Word! Be ready (instant) in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching”
- Jonah 3:3 – “So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.”
 - **Takeaway #3: Walk in obedience, when God calls**
 - Jonah obeyed (went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord)
 - Did he obey with a righteous, submissive heart? (chapt 4)
 - 1 Sam 3:10 – “Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, ‘Samuel, Samuel!’ And Samuel answered, ‘Speak, for Your servant hears.’”
 - Listen when God calls
 - Heb 11:8 – “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”
 - Go forward when God calls
- Jonah 3:4 – “And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’”
 - **Takeaway #4: Deliver the warning message**
 - Speak the message – message of warning, impending destruction
 - Rev 18:2, 4 – “And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, ‘Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons... (4) And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.’”
 - Speak the warning message to come “out of her”
 - Mark 1:4 – “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ... (14) Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, (15) and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’”
 - Speak the message of repentance & urgency of the times

- Eze 3:17, 18 – “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: (18) When I say to the wicked, “You shall surely die,” and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.”
 - Speak, deliver the message, when God calls
 - The consequences if Jonah failed to deliver that message were high
 - Same with us: failure to deliver the message God asks us to share can cost someone’s salvation
 - #4: Deliver the warning message
- Jonah 3:5 – “So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.”
 - **Takeaway #5: Transformation (change) is possible**
 - Eze 36:25, 26 – “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. (26) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”
 - God can forgive us & cover us – the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin
 - God can transform our hearts – give us a new heart & spirit (Heb, disposition)
 - Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian empire
 - They worshiped other gods
 - Practiced temple prostitution
 - Child sacrifice
 - Abortion / infanticide
 - They treated others cruelly
 - Removed noses & ears of their prisoners to maim them for life
 - Immorality, idol worship, murder, incest – they practiced wickedness
 - Yet, they knew what was right and wrong – because they chose repentance
- Jonah 3:6 – “Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes.”
 - **Takeaway #6: Change can start with the laity**
 - The word of the people’s repentance spread to the king (from Vs 5)
 - Change started with the “bottom up” – not the “top down”
 - Sometimes, it starts with leadership: sometimes with laity
 - If you are a leader, set an example of following God
 - 2 Chron 12:1 – “Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel along with him.”
 - If you are laity, set an example of following God
 - Eph 4 – called to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called”
 - Spiritual gifts for the edifying of the body of Christ

- Matt 28 – all are called to Go & teach, preach, disciple
 - If you are a young person, set an example for God
 - 1 Tim 4:12 – let no one despise your youth
- Jonah 3:7 – 9 – “And he (the king) caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, ‘Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. (8) But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. (9) Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?’”
 - **Takeaway #7: Personal repentance precedes ministry**
 - The king repented himself (Vs 6 – repented in sackcloth & ashes)
 - **Then**, he urged others to repent
- Jonah 3:10 – “Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.”
 - Conditional vs non-conditional prophecies:
 - Conditional: prophecy is based on the people’s response
 - If / then statements
 - If the nation repents, God won’t bring the judgment
 - If the nation becomes evil, God won’t send the “good”
 - **If** you obey & keep My covenant **then** you will be a special people / treasure
 - **If** Abraham (you) obey My voice & keep My charge, My commandments, My statutes & My laws, **then**
 - I will multiply your descendants
 - I will give land to them
 - I will bless the entire earth through your seed (promise of Messiah)
 - Jer 18:7 – 10 – “The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, (8) if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. (9) And the instant I speak concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, (10) if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.”
 - In this case, God would destroy Nineveh, **if** the people didn’t repent
 - Non-conditional prophecies:
 - Christ’s first and second coming (happening regardless of the human response)
 - Outpouring of the 7 last plagues
 - End-time persecution
 - All happens regardless of the human response
- **Takeaway #8: Our God is merciful**
 - 2 Pet 3: 9 – God is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance

8 Takeaways from Jonah 3

- 1: God gives us second chances
- 2: God gives the message
- 3: Walk in obedience, when God calls
- 4: Deliver the warning message
- 5: Transformation (change) is possible
- 6: Change can start with the laity
- 7: Personal repentance precedes ministry
- 8: Our God is merciful