



THE
UNSHAKEN
BOOK
OF
DANIEL

Week 7: July 27-July 31

Theme: Dream (Chapter 7)

Weekly Memory Verse

“He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

– Daniel 7:14

Day 1: Point of View

Prayer of Illumination

God, You never lie. You alone know the true nature of all things. We ask You to reveal to us the truth -- of Your Scripture, of Your world, of our lives. As You gave the truth to Daniel in dreams, give us the truth as well. We trust You for the truth. Amen.

Reading

Read Chapter 7 entirely, then focus on Daniel 7:1-8.

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 7:1-8?

What do these verses say about God’s character?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

The Book of Daniel has two movements: a series of vignettes in Daniel’s career (chapters 1-6) and a series of prophetic visions (chapters 7-12). Let’s be honest, many of us who have been following the reading plan have been waiting for this second movement.

Today, we get the first installment of Daniel’s prophecies: four creatures coming out of the sea. In the Ancient Near East, the birth of bizarre animals -- like a calf with two heads -- was often thought to be a sign of some kind. The ancient reader would have known that these especially

bizarre animals must mean a great deal. We have to wait for verse 15 for the interpretation, but we can certainly tell that the Lord is giving Daniel a point of view he could not get on his own. From God's position, these four kingdoms (sorry for the spoiler) look like four gnarly beasts.

Often we think that what makes prophecy *prophecy* is that it predicts the future. But this is not really true in the Bible. After all, the first two beasts are known personally to Daniel. In the Bible, what makes prophecy *prophecy* is that it gives God's read on history. It's God's interpretation of events. That is as true for Daniel as it is for Agabus in Acts or the prophets of 1st Corinthians or those of us in the NCC family. Prophecy is about getting God's point of view.

In times of great tumult, the Church needs God's perspective to know what to do. Oftentimes, this comes from the Bible itself. But, it may also come from the willingness to hear God speak directly to us. This always needs to happen in concert with Scripture. But surely, in a year like 2020, the Church is better off if we set aside time to ask the Lord for a divine point of view.

Reflection

Do you make space to learn God's point of view?

How can we learn to hear God's voice?

Where else in the Bible can we learn from the example of prophecy?

Day 2: Awe

Prayer of Illumination

Lord God, in the midst of chaos, confusion, and challenges, train us to fix our eyes upon You. May we never lose sight of the Almighty One, seated on His throne in power and might. Amen!

Reading

Read Chapter 7 entirely, then focus on Daniel 7:9-11.

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 7:9-11?

What do these verses say about the human condition?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

Have you ever tried to tell a story where you couldn't find the right words to explain it? Eventually you give up, shrugging, "You just had to be there." Here in Daniel 7:9-11 we find one of those moments. The author is explicitly attempting to describe in finite human words something that can never be captured to its entirety -- the appearance of God Himself. The appearance of God is His very essence. Any attempts to capture His glory in adjectives of any language will appear lacking, so try not to take this description literally.

Close your eyes, and allow your imagination to picture the throne room of God. Imagine the colors, the light, the magnificence of the scene. Here in the throne room of the Almighty God, you recognize how small you are, yet how omnipotent your God is. The world and its problems fade into perspective as the Ancient of Days takes His place. He is in control. Allow yourself to meditate on the grandness of God, His beauty, His might, and His power.

From our human perspective, we see the beasts and accusers of the world rising up. We see chaos and calamity. We crave justice, and we don't always see it on this side of eternity. But today's passage reminds us that God's justice is promised to come. As in Revelation 20:12, the books will be opened and justice will be served. So while we seek to bring the Kingdom to earth, let's also fix our eyes on the One seated on the throne.

Reflection

How does the reality of God on the throne influence your daily life?

What area(s) of your life do you need to recognize that God is in control over?

Day 3: Human

Prayer of Illumination

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in Your will discover peace; through Christ our Lord, Amen

Reading

Read Chapter 7 entirely, then focus on Daniel 7:13-14

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 7:13-14?

What do these verses say about God's character?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

The vision that left Daniel anxious and alarmed ends with an image very different from the rest. What looked like a human is welcomed into the presence of the Ancient of Days. And he is given authority, glory, and sovereign power.

We often see how these two verses point forward towards the coming Messiah; however, these Scriptures also point backward towards the Creation Story. On the sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:26-31), we see God creating living creatures of all kinds. Yet, before he completes the day, God creates humans in His own image. To this creature, mankind, he gives dominion and authority to rule over the beasts in the sea, sky, and land.

As we return to Daniel's vision in chapter 7 with fresh revelation from Genesis, we can see how God is proposing his intent to restore order back to his creation. Kingdoms led by a beast will not stand; however, a kingdom led by image bearers of the Most High, will never be destroyed. It will be everlasting!

Reflection

Read Genesis 1:26-31- What does it mean to be human?

What does it mean to be an image bearer of God?

Day 4: Perspective

Prayer of Illumination

Jesus Christ, You are the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by you, in heaven and on earth. Open my eyes both to the visible and the invisible today, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities (Colossians 1:15-16). Amen.

Reading

Read Chapter 7 entirely, then focus on Daniel 7:15-28.

Meditation

What is the Lord revealing to you today through Daniel 7:15-28?

What do these verses say about God's character?

How does this apply to us today?

Contemplation

Upon waking from his vision, Daniel's spirit within him was anxious. He was deeply distressed. He was alarmed and terrified. Daniel's dream, as well as its interpretation, was the stuff of nightmares. Could you imagine? What would it have felt like to be awakened after such a dream? The four beasts, the stirring of the great sea, the devouring and trampling and crushing; it's enough to cause a cold sweat and inspire dread for the nights ahead.

And yet, in our anxiety we are told not to worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7). In our distress, we can be sure that God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Jesus Christ, and through Him to reconcile everything to Himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:19-20).

Daniel didn't have the book of Philippians. He didn't have Jesus, or His death and resurrection. But Daniel had prayer. Daniel had thanksgiving. Daniel had the faithfulness of his God. Through even terrifying visions, Daniel had the end of the story, and so do we. We worship a God who created the universe, is sustaining it day by day, and has already written the very last chapter, page, and verse:

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with everyone. Amen (Revelation 22:21).

Reflection

What is causing you anxiety and distress today?

How might your perspective change if you took every cause of anxiety or distress and viewed it as if you were looking back from the end of the story?

Day 5: Pause & Reflect

Ask the Lord, journal, and pray through the following questions ...

God, what are some of the takeaways from Chapter 7 that you want to highlight in my life?

Spend time today posturing yourself to listen and reflect on each day's theme:

- Point of View
- Awe
- Human
- Perspective

What is one thing you are going to do in response to this week's message and reading plan, and who is going to hold you accountable?

Write down one takeaway and one action step in a journal to commit to it.

Weekly Memory Verse

"He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed."

– Daniel 7:14