

Daniel 5
Stand Strong Series
March 24/25, 2018

Main Idea:

What God has written, God will accomplish.

Discovery Questions

1. Has there ever been a time when you felt as though the “writing was on the wall” in a situation in your life? What was the situation and how did it turn out?

This week, we continue our series through the book of Daniel. Today we come across a story that has a lot of similarities with the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar we saw last week, but with some important and key differences. Because of the similar themes, question #2 will look very similar to last week’s second question, but the subsequent questions will move in a different direction.

2. Read Daniel 5:1-6, 17-31.

- a. How do you see reminders of the dangers of pride and the sovereignty of God in this passage?
- b. For those of you who did last week’s study, what similarities do you see between this week and last week’s story? What differences exist?

This past weekend, we used this passage to talk about why our sovereign God tolerates evil and that one day he will put an end to it. We learned that God tolerates evil for two reasons: 1) to give people an opportunity to repent of their evil and to come to faith in Him (2 Peter 3:9), and 2) to allow people to suffer the natural consequences of their evil (Romans 1:18-28). It’s with that in mind that we consider the following questions.

3. Have you ever seen the problem of God and evil become a sticking point for someone in their faith? What have you said (or would you say) when someone says they can’t believe in God because of the amount of evil we see in this world?

4. a. Have you ever personally struggled with belief in God in the midst of the evil that we see in this world? How have you dealt with that struggle? What, if anything, has brought you comfort and clarity in the struggle?
- b. What do you think our response should be as Christians when we see evil in this world? How do we respond to people who do evil things?
- c. We learned this weekend that a day is coming when God will bring an end to all the evil of this world—and if God has written it, God will accomplish it. How can we be reminded of this truth more regularly? How does that truth both challenge you and comfort you?

5. Though our God is a God of second chances (as we see in Belshazzar’s life and throughout the Bible), a time is coming when God will no longer give people second chances. Until that day comes, we have a responsibility to reach out to people so they can meet Jesus. Easter is

next weekend, and it's an easy opportunity to invite someone to our church to hear the gospel message. Who is someone God is nudging you to reach out to? What would get in the way of you asking that person to an Easter service? Talk about that person with the group, and pray for them as you close.

Leader Guide Starts on Next Page

Leader Guide

1. Has there ever been a time when you felt as though the “writing was on the wall” in a situation in your life? What was the situation and how did it turn out?

This is a “lighter” question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.

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2. Read Daniel 5:1-6, 17-31.

- a. **How do you see reminders of the dangers of pride and the sovereignty of God in this passage?**
- b. **For those of you who did last week’s study, what similarities do you see between this week and last week’s story? What differences exist?**

For part “a,” Belshazzar’s evil act in this passage—his decision to use the goblets from the temple for the purposes of getting drunk and toasting his own gods—is ultimately an act of pride; Daniel says as much in 5:22. Belshazzar is making the same mistake as King Nebuchadnezzar did in chapter 4. God shows the dangers of pride by taking Belshazzar’s life “that very night” (v. 30). Just like last week, we see how once again God does not let pride go unpunished (Proverbs 16:5). God reveals His sovereignty by showing that all life is in His hands, and that He is the one in sovereign control over all the nations of the earth and so can interject His own will and judgment at any time.

For part “b,” one of the key differences is that Belshazzar is seemingly not given a “warning” or a “second chance” like Nebuchadnezzar was. But Daniel points out that he actually did—in 5:22, Daniel tells Belshazzar that Nebuchadnezzar’s life should have been Belshazzar’s warning. Seeing how his “father” was humbled should have been a warning enough about the dangers of pride.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question.

This past weekend, we used this passage to talk about why our sovereign God tolerates evil and that one day he will put an end to it. We learned that God tolerates evil for two reasons: 1) to give people an opportunity to repent of their evil and to come to faith in Him (2 Peter 3:9), and 2) to allow people to suffer the natural consequences of their evil (Romans 1:18-28). It’s with that in mind that we consider the following questions.

3. Have you ever seen the problem of God and evil become a sticking point for someone in

their faith? What have you said (or would you say) when someone says they can't believe in God because of the amount of evil we see in this world?

The reality of evil really can be a problem that prevents some people from coming to faith in God. The question usually goes, "How can a good God allow such evil?" The Bible gives some explanations for this (see paragraph above question #3), but ultimately we also have to admit that there is some mystery in how God decides to deal with evil. His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8)

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.

4. a. **Have you ever personally struggled with belief in God in the midst of the evil that we see in this world? How have you dealt with that struggle? What, if anything, has brought you comfort and clarity in the struggle?**
- b. **What do you think our response should be as Christians when we see evil in this world? How do we respond to people who do evil things?**
- c. **We learned this weekend that a day is coming when God will bring an end to all the evil of this world—and if God has written it, God will accomplish it. How can we be reminded of this truth more regularly? How does that truth both challenge you and comfort you?**

For part "b," we remember Jesus' words on the cross to those who were doing evil and wicked things—"Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). We are to forgive those who do evil, and we are to try to be forces for good in this world, speaking out against evil and eradicating evil when we can. For part "c," reminding ourselves of the temporariness of the things of this world, and therefore not being too invested in the things of this world, is one way that we can remember what everything is coming to. Memorizing Scripture that speaks about the end of the world is another way.

Spend about 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.

5. Though our God is a God of second chances (as we see in Belshazzar's life and throughout the Bible), a time is coming when God will no longer give people second chances. Until that day comes, we have a responsibility to reach out to people so they can meet Jesus. Easter is next weekend, and it's an easy opportunity to invite someone to our church to hear the gospel message. Who is someone God is nudging you to reach out to? What would get in the way of you asking that person to an Easter service? Talk about that person with the group, and pray for them as you close.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question.