

What Can Happen to Evil Leaders

International Bible Lesson

Daniel 8:1, 15-26

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“And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand” (Daniel 8:25—KJV).

“Because he is cunning, he will succeed in his deceitful ways. He will be proud of himself and destroy many people without warning. He will even defy the greatest King of all, but he will be destroyed without the use of any human power” (Daniel 8:25—GNB).

“By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall be great. Without warning he shall destroy many and shall even rise up against the Prince of princes. But he shall be broken, and not by human hands” (Daniel 8:25—NRSV).

Though the leader described by the angel Gabriel, when he interpreted Daniel’s vision to him, referred to a king that would “cause fearful destruction,” “succeed in what he does,” and rule prior to the coming of the Messiah, too many leaders in business, government, and religion behave in ways that God deplores (Daniel 8:24). Under some leaders deceit and lying seems to prosper, and it appears impossible for truth to prevail over their falsehoods. Some leaders mistakenly think they are great; and therefore, deserve the adoration and absolute obedience of others. Some leaders destroy many, even their own citizens or subjects. Evil leaders in government can destroy employers and employees. Avaricious employers can destroy employees and selfish employees can destroy their employers. False prophets, cult leaders, and unfaithful teachers have destroyed their followers and those who trusted them. All of these evil leaders reject God and His laws, and they will fight to minimize or destroy the influence of Jesus from encouraging and strengthening His followers. However, when all seems hopeless, God always intervenes at the right time. Historians have recorded many situations when leaders have been “broken, and not by human hands.” The Bible reports that after King Herod began persecuting the church that “because he had not given the glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God continued to advance and gain adherents” (Acts 12:23, 24).

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Thinking Further

1. In what way does this Book of Daniel lesson show the need for Bible teachers?

2. What did Daniel do when the angel came to him? What would you do if the angel Gabriel came to you?

3. Why do the angels who appear to God’s children in the Bible tell them to stand up and sometimes even help them stand up?

4. What is one reason God will intervene and bring an end to a kingdom or nation?

5. How can the words “he shall be broken and not by human hands” serve as both an encouragement and as a warning.

Read the verse by verse commentary on this lesson at the BibleLessonForum.com. See the recommended study and worship resources at SmallChurchResources.com.