

Regime Change

Recent events in Iran have stunned the world. Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been removed from office, marking a dramatic shift in leadership after decades of centralized religious and political authority. The circumstances surrounding his removal have created uncertainty within the region and across the global community. Whenever such sweeping political change occurs, it reminds us that no ruler's position is ultimately secure.

For Christians, moments like this invite reflection on a foundational biblical truth: **God is sovereign over all earthly rulers.** Scripture declares: ***“He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings.”*** Daniel 2:21. The Bible provides multiple examples of what might rightly be called **“regime change”** in moments when God Himself removed rulers from power for moral and spiritual reasons.

King Saul: Removed for disobedience – Israel's first king, Saul, lost his kingdom because he rejected God's commands. He unlawfully offered sacrifice, 1 Samuel 13, and later spared King Agag and the Amalekite spoil contrary to God's clear instruction, 1 Samuel 15. The prophet Samuel delivered the verdict. ***“Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.”*** 1 Samuel 15:23. Though Saul remained on the throne for a time, God had withdrawn His approval and chose David to replace him as King of Israel. Disobedience led to Saul's removal.

Nebuchadnezzar: Humbled for pride – Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, ruled a vast empire. Yet pride overtook him. As he boasted of his greatness, a voice from heaven declared, ***“the kingdom has departed from you!”*** Daniel 4:31. God struck him with madness, and he lived like an animal until he acknowledged God's sovereignty. Only after humbling himself was his kingdom restored. Daniel 4:34-36. Pride brought his removal and humility restored him.

Rehoboam: Authority Reduced Through Folly – Rehoboam, Solomon's son, rejected wise counsel and answered the people harshly. His arrogance led ten tribes to rebel. Scripture explains, ***“for the turn of events was from the LORD...”*** 1 Kings 12:15. Though he remained king of Judah, much of his authority was taken away. Foolish leadership resulted in a divided kingdom.

Jehoiachin and Zedekiah: Judgement for Rebellion - The later kings of Judah provide sobering lessons. Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon after only three months on the throne. 2 Kings 24:8-15. Zedekiah rebelled against God's warnings delivered through Jeremiah, leading to Jerusalem's destruction. He was captured, blinded, and carried away. 2 Kings 25:1-7. Their removal was not random. It was divine judgement upon persistent national and personal unfaithfulness.

Belshazzar: Sudden Judgement – Belshazzar's end was swift. During a feast, he profaned sacred vessels taken from God's temple. A mysterious hand wrote his sentence on

the wall. **“God has numbered your kingdom and finished it.”** Daniel 5:26. That very night he was slain, and his kingdom fell. Arrogance and irreverence brought immediate regime change.

Lessons from Scripture – From these examples we see consistent biblical reasons for removal of national leaders for disobedience to God’s word, pride and self-exaltation, foolish and harsh leadership, persistent rebellion, and disrespect for what is holy. In every case, the decisive factor was not military power or political strategy, but it was God’s sovereign will. As Daniel proclaimed, **“the Most High rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He chooses.”** Daniel 4:17.

Providence in the Present? The recent removal of Iran’s Supreme Leader reminds us that leadership can change suddenly. Governments appear powerful and permanent, yet Scripture teaches otherwise. No ruler governs beyond the oversight of Almighty God. Christians are not called to speculate on every political development, but we are called to trust in divine providence. God’s purposes move forward even through turmoil. National leaders rise and fall, but **“the LORD is King forever and ever.”** Psalm 10:16. Our confidence does not rest in political systems or personalities. It rests in the unchanging sovereignty of God. As we witness shifting powers in our world, may we remember that history unfolds under His authority, and may we continue to pray for peace, righteousness, and hearts that acknowledge His rule.

~Ron Josselet