

# Daniel 5:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

## Analysis

---

Daniel describes the extent of Nebuchadnezzar's God-given authority: all peoples feared him; he had absolute power of life and death ('whom he would he slew, whom he would he kept alive, whom he would he set up, whom he would he put down'). This depicts complete sovereignty—the marks of ultimate earthly authority. Yet this power came as gift ('for the majesty that he gave him'), not inherent right. The comprehensive scope ('all people, nations, and languages') emphasizes universal dominion. This historical review serves multiple purposes: reminding Belshazzar of God's sovereignty over kingdoms, establishing that even the mightiest rulers rule by divine permission, and preparing for the contrast between Nebuchadnezzar's eventual humbling/restoration and Belshazzar's coming judgment without restoration.

## Historical Context

---

Ancient Near Eastern kings wielded absolute power—no constitutional limitations, democratic checks, or judicial appeals constrained royal authority. Nebuchadnezzar's historical record confirms this: he executed Zedekiah's sons before his eyes (2 Kings 25:7), destroyed Jerusalem and temple, exiled populations, and built empire through military might. Yet Daniel's interpretation reframes even this absolute power as delegated authority—'the majesty that he gave him.' This

theological reading of history affirms God's sovereignty over even tyrannical rulers (Romans 13:1). For oppressed people, this provides both comfort (tyrants rule only by God's permission and only temporarily) and challenge (resisting tyranny doesn't mean denying God's sovereign purposes).

## Related Passages

---

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

---

1. What does God's granting absolute power to Nebuchadnezzar teach about divine sovereignty over even tyrannical rulers?
2. How should recognizing that rulers' authority comes as divine delegation affect our response to governmental power?
3. Why does Daniel emphasize that even life-and-death authority was delegated rather than inherent?

## Interlinear Text

עָמִּים אֶלְעָמִּים מִן	רְבוּתָא	דֵּי יְפָב	לֵה כָּל	כָּל כָּל	אַמְּרִים
And for the <b>majesty</b>	H1768	<b>that he gave</b>	H0	<b>him all</b>	<b>people</b>
H4481	H7238	H3052		H3606	H5972
and languages	he <b>set up</b>	H2112	<b>and feared</b>	<b>And for</b>	<b>him</b>
H3961	H1934		H1763	H4481	H6925
he <b>set up</b>	H6634	<b>he set up</b>	H6992	<b>he set up</b>	<b>he set up</b>
H1934		H1934	H1768	H1934	H1934
מִשְׁפָּלָה בְּנֵי אָ	מִשְׁפָּלָה בְּנֵי אָ	מִשְׁפָּלָה בְּנֵי אָ	מִשְׁפָּלָה בְּנֵי אָ	מִשְׁפָּלָה בְּנֵי אָ	מִשְׁפָּלָה בְּנֵי אָ
H2418	H1768	<b>he set up</b>	H6634	<b>he set up</b>	<b>he set up</b>
		H1934		H1934	H1934

## Additional Cross-References

**Daniel 3:6** (Parallel theme): And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

**Daniel 3:4** (Parallel theme): Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org