

# Ecclesiastes 10:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

## Analysis

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**I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth**—a vivid description of social disorder where status hierarchies are inverted. The Hebrew avadim (עבדים, servants/slaves) mounted on horses (symbols of nobility and military power) contrasts sharply with sarim (שרים, princes/rulers) reduced to walking like commoners. This isn't merely observing class mobility but lamenting wisdom's absence in social organization.

Such reversals occur when folly prevails over wisdom in governance (v. 5-6). The verse echoes Proverbs 19:10 and 30:21-23, which list social inversions among things that make earth tremble. While God sometimes elevates the humble (1 Samuel 2:7-8; Luke 1:52), this passage describes chaotic disorder resulting from foolish rulers promoting the unqualified while demoting the competent—a pattern still observed when merit yields to favoritism.

## Historical Context

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Solomon witnessed court politics firsthand—the elevation of incompetent favorites and sidelining of capable advisors. Ancient Near Eastern monarchies were particularly vulnerable to such disorder, as royal whim could instantly reverse fortunes. Israel's later history confirmed this pattern: wicked kings surrounded themselves with yes-men while persecuting prophets and wise counselors. The New Testament church faced similar dynamics—James warned against showing partiality based on wealth rather than wisdom (James 2:1-9). Throughout church

history, ecclesiastical politics often mirrored this dysfunction, with qualified leaders marginalized while incompetent but well-connected individuals gained authority.

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. What modern examples of inverted social order—where the unqualified are elevated and the competent marginalized—do you observe, and how should wisdom respond?
2. How does this verse challenge both rigid class systems that prevent legitimate advancement and chaotic systems that reward favoritism over competence?

## Interlinear Text

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בָּאִיתִי	בָּאִיתִי	עַל	כִּנְבָּדִים	עַל	כִּנְבָּדִים	וְשַׁרְיָם	סִוסְיָם	הַלְּכִים	כִּנְבָּדִים	בָּאִיתִי
I have seen	as servants	H5921	upon horses	and princes		walking				as servants
H7200	H5650		H5483	H8269		H1980				H5650

עַל      בָּאָרֶץ:  
H5921      upon the earth  
                  H776

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 19:10** (Parallel theme): Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes.

**Proverbs 30:22** (Kingdom): For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

**Esther 6:8** (Kingdom): Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

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