

# Ecclesiastes 2:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me:

## Analysis

**I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house**—the Hebrew 'avadim' (עבדים, servants) and 'shefachot' (שְׁפָחוֹת, maidens) describe a large household staff. The phrase 'servants born in my house' (bene bayit, בְּנֵי-בַּיִת, literally 'sons of the house') refers to slaves born into household servitude, indicating multi-generational employment. This represented significant wealth and power—one's household size demonstrated social status.

Solomon then adds: **I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me.** The Hebrew 'mirqneh' (מִקְנֶה, cattle/livestock) includes both 'baqar' (בָּקָר, large cattle/oxen) and 'tso'n' (צָאן, small cattle/sheep and goats). Surpassing 'all that were in Jerusalem before me' means exceeding even King David's substantial holdings. First Kings 4:22-23 records Solomon's daily provisions requiring vast herds. Yet despite commanding unprecedented human and animal resources, none of this produced lasting satisfaction. Jesus later warned: 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (Luke 12:15).

## Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern monarchs measured greatness by household size and livestock holdings. Abraham's 318 trained servants (Genesis 14:14) demonstrated his wealth. Job's pre-trial prosperity included 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke

of oxen, and 500 female donkeys (Job 1:3). First Kings 4:26 records Solomon maintained 40,000 stalls for horses—though 1 Kings 10:26 gives 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, suggesting the 40,000 may be a textual variant or include trading stock. Regardless, Solomon's holdings vastly exceeded his contemporaries. Yet Deuteronomy 17:16-17 explicitly warned against kings multiplying horses, wives, and wealth—prohibitions Solomon violated, leading to spiritual compromise (1 Kings 11:1-13). Ecclesiastes reveals the futility of such accumulation.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

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

## Study Questions

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1. What possessions, positions, or people under your influence have you accumulated hoping they would provide significance or security?
2. How does Solomon's verdict challenge the assumption that expanding your resources, influence, or household will bring fulfillment?

## Interlinear Text

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בָּיִת יְהוָה בָּיִת קָנָה וְבָנִים וְשָׁפָחָה וְתַּעֲבָד יְמִינָה קָנָה יְתִי

I got me servants and maidens and had servants born in my house H1961

H7069 H5650 H8198 H1121 H1004

לְכָל גַּם אֲנַצְעָמָה בְּקָר מִקְנָה גַּם לְכָל

possessions of great and small cattle also I had great H1961 H0

H4735 H1241 H6629 H7235

בֵּירֹשֶׁתֶלְםָן שָׁבֵן לְפָנֵי

before above all that were in Jerusalem

H3605 H1961 H6440 H3389

