

# Proverbs 22:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

## Analysis

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The person who wanders from understanding's path will dwell 'in the congregation of the dead.' Understanding means practical wisdom that fears God and follows His ways. Departing from this path leads to spiritual death and ultimately eternal separation from God. The 'congregation of the dead' depicts the realm of departed spirits—those who died in sin. This isn't annihilation but conscious existence in death's domain. The verse warns solemnly: persist in folly and you join the damned. Remain in understanding and you have life. There are only two paths and two destinations: wisdom leads to life; folly leads to death. Choose this day whom you will serve.

## Historical Context

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Hebrew thought understood Sheol as the realm of the dead. While Old Testament eschatology was less developed than New Testament teaching, the reality of post-mortem existence and judgment was affirmed.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. Are you walking in the way of understanding or drifting toward the congregation of the dead?
2. What specific choices reveal whether you're on wisdom's path or folly's road?

## Interlinear Text

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עֹשֶׂה	לְ	לְהַרְבֵּה	וְ	לְ	נָתַן
He that oppresseth	the poor	to increase	H0	his riches and he that giveth	
H6231	H1800	H7235		H5414	
לְ	אֶל	לְמַחְסֹר:			
to the rich	H389	shall surely come to want			
H6223		H4270			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 12:5** (Parallel theme): For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

**James 2:13** (Parallel theme): For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

**Proverbs 28:3** (Parallel theme): A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food.

**Proverbs 14:31** (Parallel theme): He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.