

# Proverbs 28:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people.

## Analysis

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**As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear** (ארינהם וدب שואק, ari-nohem vedov shoqeq)—ארי (ari, 'lion') that נחם (naham, 'roars, growls') and דב (dov, 'bear') that שואק (shaqaq, 'ranges, rushes, seeks prey') are apex predators, feared throughout Scripture. The roaring lion signals the kill (Psalm 22:13); the charging bear, proverbial ferocity (2 Samuel 17:8; Hosea 13:8).

**So is a wicked ruler over the poor people** (מלך רשע על עם־dal), moshel rasha al am-dal)—the רשע (rasha, 'wicked, guilty, criminal') המלך (moshel, 'ruler, governor') preys upon העם־dal (am-dal, 'poor people, weak folk'). This isn't governance but predation. Scripture consistently champions justice for the poor (Psalm 82:3-4); tyrants who exploit the vulnerable face divine judgment (Ezekiel 34:1-10). Rome's tyranny exemplified this in Jesus's era; Revelation depicts imperial power as a beast (Revelation 13).

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern kings frequently portrayed themselves as lions—symbols of power. But Proverbs subverts this: the wicked ruler is not majestic but predatory, terrorizing the vulnerable. Israel experienced such rulers (1 Kings 12:1-19, Rehoboam's oppression), and the prophets thundered against those who devoured God's people (Ezekiel 22:25-29).

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

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

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How should Christians respond to governing authorities who act as 'roaring lions' toward the vulnerable?
2. Where do you see exploitation of the weak—and what is your responsibility to intervene?
3. If you hold authority over others, how can you ensure you're shepherding rather than predating?

## Interlinear Text

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אָרִי	מִם	נִהְמָדָה	בְּ	יָד	שׁוֹקֵךְ	לְ	מָוֵשׁ	רְשָׁעָה	לְ	עַמּ
lion	As a roaring			bear	and a ranging		ruler	so is a wicked		people
H738	H5098			H1677	H8264		H4910	H7563		H5921

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over the poor

H1800

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 2:16** (Parallel theme): Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

**Proverbs 20:2** (Parallel theme): The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

**Proverbs 19:12** (Parallel theme): The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.

**1 Peter 5:8** (Evil): Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: