

# Proverbs 30:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

## Analysis

---

**For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat.** The first two intolerable inversions: eved (עָבֶד, servant/slave) when he yimlokh (ימלָך, reigns), and naval (נוּבָל, fool) when yisba lachem (ישַׁבַּע לְקָם, filled with bread). The servant lacks governing experience, wisdom, or perspective; sudden authority without formation produces tyranny. History confirms: those who suffered oppression often become oppressors when power shifts (revolutionaries-turned-dictators).

The naval is not intellectually deficient but morally deficient—the biblical fool rejects God's wisdom (Psalm 14:1). When such a person gains abundance, prosperity amplifies folly. Lacking self-control or wisdom, the fool's wealth enables wickedness on larger scale. Proverbs 19:10 declares: "Delight is not seemly for a fool; much less for a servant to have rule over princes." Both scenarios violate propriety—not because servants or fools are intrinsically worthless but because they lack preparation for these roles.

## Historical Context

---

Old Testament examples abound. Jeroboam, Solomon's servant, received kingdom through divine judgment but led Israel into systematic idolatry, making golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:25-33). His lack of spiritual maturity produced generational disaster. Nabal (whose name means "fool") demonstrated how abundance in foolish hands breeds arrogance (1 Samuel 25). Only Abigail's

intervention prevented disaster. The principle appears in Jesus's parables: the servant elevated prematurely beats fellow servants (Matthew 24:48-51); the rich fool builds bigger barns without wisdom (Luke 12:16-21). Prosperity requires character; authority requires wisdom; both require preparation.

## Related Passages

---

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

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

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

## Study Questions

---

1. How can you pursue character formation and wisdom now so that if God grants increased responsibility or resources, you're prepared to steward them well?
2. In what ways does consumer culture create a generation of 'fools filled with meat'—materially prosperous but spiritually impoverished?
3. How does Christ's teaching on servant leadership (Mark 10:42-45) provide the solution to tyrannical leadership and foolish abundance?

## Interlinear Text

---

תִּפְנִית	לְבָד	כִּי	עַבְדָּוֹן	וְמַלְאָכָה	לְ	כִּי	וְנָבָעַ
H8478	H5650	H3588	H4427	H5036	H3588	H7646	
For a servant			when he reigneth	and a fool		when he is filled	

לְבָדָם  
with meat

H3899

## Additional Cross-References

---

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

**Ecclesiastes 10:7** (Kingdom): I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)