

# Jeremiah 50:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon.

## Analysis

**They shall hold the bow and the lance** (קֶשֶׁת וְכִידֹן יַחַזִּיקוּ, qeshet v'khidon yachaziq)—Persian warriors' weapons are specified: composite bow (Persian archers were legendary) and javelin. These were Persia's signature armaments, distinct from Babylonian equipment. **They are cruel, and will not shew mercy** (אֲחֲזָרִי הֶמָּה וְלֹא יִרְחֲמוּ, akhzari hemmah v'lo y'rachemu)—The conquerors will be merciless, giving Babylon a taste of their own brutality. Yet historically, Cyrus was relatively humane—the Cyrus Cylinder boasts of his leniency. This apparent contradiction resolves when we see 'cruelty' as righteous severity toward evil; from Babylon's perspective, any judgment feels cruel.

**Their voice shall roar like the sea** (קוֹלָם כַּיָּאָם יִהְיֶה, qolam kayyam yehemeh)—The attacking army's war cry is deafening, overwhelming. **And they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle**—disciplined military formation, not chaotic mob. Persia's organized warfare contrasts with Babylon's coming disarray. The hunter becomes hunted; the terrorizer, terrorized.

## Historical Context

Persian military organization under Cyrus was sophisticated: the 'Immortals' (elite 10,000), cavalry units, siege engineers. Their discipline and tactics overwhelmed

Babylonian defenses. The relatively bloodless conquest (Babylon's gates opened to Cyrus) fulfilled 'no mercy' spiritually while Cyrus showed physical restraint—divine irony.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's use of 'cruel' conquerors against Babylon demonstrate measure-for-measure justice?
2. What does the 'voice like the sea' metaphor communicate about the overwhelming nature of divine judgment?
3. In what ways can conquerors be 'cruel' in executing judgment while still being more merciful than those they judge?

## Interlinear Text

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קֶשֶׁת	וְכִידָן	יָחֹז יָקוֹ	אֲכֹזֵר י	הִיא מְה	וְלֹא א
the bow	and the lance	They shall hold	they are cruel	H1992	H3808
H7198	H3591	H2388	H394		
וְיִרְהוּ מוֹ	קוֹלָם	כִּי מִ	יִהְיֶה ה	וְעַל	סוֹסֵי יִם
and will not shew mercy	their voice	like the sea	shall roar	H5921	upon horses
H7355	H6963	H3220	H1993		H5483
וְיִרְכּוּ בּוֹ	עַר וְכָל	כְּאִישׁ	לְמַלְחָמָה ה	עַל יִרְ	
and they shall ride	every one put in array	like a man	to the battle	H5921	
H7392	H6186	H376	H4421		
בַּת	בָּבֶל:				
against thee O daughter	of Babylon				
H1323	H894				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 5:30** (Parallel theme): And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

**Isaiah 47:6** (Grace): I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

**Jeremiah 8:16** (Parallel theme): The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein.

**Jeremiah 47:3** (Parallel theme): At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands;

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