

# Nahum 2:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet: the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken.

## Analysis

Nahum's vision of Nineveh's attackers is vivid and terrifying: 'The shield of his mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet' (magen gibborav me'adam anshei chayil metullai'im). Shields painted or covered in red leather, warriors clothed in scarlet—either literal military attire or imagery of bloodshed—create a picture of overwhelming force. 'The chariots shall be with flaming torches' (barishei esh harekev) depicts either literal torches attached to chariots (to terrify defenders) or the gleam of metal in sunlight appearing like fire. The cedar spears 'shall be terribly shaken' (haberoshim horah'alu) suggests cypress or fir wood spears brandished menacingly. This overwhelming military display demonstrates that God uses real human armies, with actual weapons and tactics, to accomplish His purposes. He doesn't need to supernaturally destroy Nineveh; He ordains the Babylonian-Median coalition to be His instrument of judgment. This shows divine sovereignty working through human agency—God's purposes accomplished through historical events and human decisions, yet without compromising human responsibility or freedom.

## Historical Context

Historical accounts confirm Nahum's prophetic accuracy. The Babylonian Chronicle describes the coalition forces besieging Nineveh in 612 BC. Archaeological evidence reveals the city's massive destruction—palace complexes burned, walls breached, and evidence of intense combat. The Median cavalry was

particularly feared, and Babylonian infantry was renowned for discipline and effectiveness. Together, these forces overwhelmed Nineveh despite its legendary defenses. The prophecy's detailed fulfillment demonstrates God's sovereign control over historical events. What appeared to be merely political-military conflict was actually divine judgment executed through human armies. This pattern appears throughout Scripture and history: God raises up and brings down empires according to His purposes.

## Related Passages

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

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's use of human armies to accomplish His purposes demonstrate His sovereignty over history without violating human agency?
2. What does this passage teach about God's relationship to warfare and violence—using it for His purposes while not approving cruelty or injustice?
3. How should Christians understand modern geopolitical conflicts in light of God's sovereignty over nations and history?

## Interlinear Text

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מַתְלָעַ יְמִינֵלִים אֲנַשִׁים מִאָדָם גָּבָר יְהוָה מַגֵּן  
The shield of his mighty men is made red      H376      the valiant are in scarlet  
H4043      H1368      H119      H2428      H8529

בְּאֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה כְּבָשָׂר פָּלָד תִּהְיֶה בְּיַמִּים כְּכִינָה  
shall be with flaming torches the chariots in the day of his preparation  
H784      H6393      H7393      H3117      H3559

בְּרַעֲלָם וּבְבָרְשָׁם יְמִינֵלִים  
and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken  
H1265      H7477

