

Nahum 2:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.

Analysis

The chaos of Nineveh's fall continues: 'The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways' (ba'avaqim yithholelu harekev yishtakkekun barechovoth). Chariots racing madly through city streets, crashing into each other in panicked confusion—this depicts total breakdown of military order. What should be disciplined defense becomes chaotic disaster. 'They shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings' (kelapidim mare'ehen kaberaqim yarotzotzu) uses similes of fire and lightning to capture the speed and terror of the assault. This verse emphasizes the totality of Nineveh's collapse. Despite legendary military might and supposedly impregnable defenses, the city falls into chaos and confusion when God's judgment strikes. No human wisdom or strength can maintain order when God decrees destruction. This serves as warning to all who trust in military might, strategic planning, or human ingenuity apart from God. Only those who trust in the Lord will find true security.

Historical Context

Ancient siege warfare was brutal and terrifying. When walls were breached, attackers poured into the city, meeting desperate defenders in close combat. Nahum prophesies that Nineveh's defenses won't just fail—they'll collapse into chaos. Historical accounts describe exactly this: once the walls were breached (possibly due to flooding weakening foundations), Nineveh's defenses crumbled rapidly. What should have been organized resistance became panicked flight and

confusion. The city that had inspired fear throughout the known world fell in disgrace and chaos. This fulfilled Nahum's prophecy precisely and demonstrated that God's word proves true regardless of apparent circumstances.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between Nineveh's supposed invincibility and its chaotic collapse illustrate the futility of trusting in human strength apart from God?
2. What modern equivalents of Nineveh's walls and chariots—sources of false security—might believers trust instead of God?
3. How does this passage encourage believers facing overwhelming opposition to trust in God's power rather than circumstances?

Interlinear Text

בְּחוּצוֹת	יִתְהוֹלֵל וְ	הָרֶכֶב	יִשְׁתַּקְּשֵׁק אֶחָד	
in the streets	shall rage	The chariots	they shall jostle one against another	
H2351	H1984	H7393	H8264	
בְּרָחֹב וְ	מֵרְאִיָּה	כְּלִפְיֵי יָם	כְּבָרְקֵי יָם	יִרְצְצוּ:
in the broad ways	they shall seem	like torches	like the lightnings	they shall run
H7339	H4758	H3940	H1300	H7323

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:13 (Parallel theme): Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.

Isaiah 66:15 (Parallel theme): For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

Ezekiel 26:10 (Parallel theme): By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach.

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