

# Nahum 3:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are.

## Analysis

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Nahum uses locust imagery: 'Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are' (minzarayik katarbeh vetiphsarayik kegov govay hachonim bagederoth beyom qarah shemesh zarachah venodad velo-noda meqomo ayyam). Assyrian officials and military leaders, numerous as locusts, will disappear when judgment arrives like morning sun dispersing insects. Locusts gather in huge swarms but scatter and vanish quickly when conditions change. Similarly, Nineveh's apparently mighty forces will dissolve and flee when conquest comes. The simile emphasizes both temporary nature of power and cowardly flight of those who seemed strong. Those who terrorized others will themselves flee in panic. This demonstrates that human glory is transient, easily dispersed when God acts. What appears formidable—vast armies, numerous officials, impressive organization—proves ephemeral when divine judgment strikes.

## Historical Context

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Locusts were dreaded in the ancient Near East, capable of devastating crops in hours. Their swarms darkened the sky, yet they could vanish as quickly as they arrived. Nahum uses this familiar image to describe Assyrian leadership and

military forces. When Nineveh fell in 612 BC, historical accounts describe exactly this phenomenon—defenders and officials fleeing in panic, leadership dissolving, what seemed like overwhelming force simply evaporating. The Assyrian Empire, which had dominated for over two centuries, collapsed so completely and rapidly that within a generation its very language was dying out. The locust imagery proved prophetically accurate—Nineveh's might scattered and vanished, its place no longer known. Archaeological rediscovery in the 1840s confirmed how thoroughly the city had been forgotten, buried under centuries of sand.

## Related Passages

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

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

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does the locust imagery warn against trusting in numerical superiority, impressive organization, or apparent strength?
2. What does this passage teach about the transient nature of human glory and power compared to God's eternal kingdom?
3. How should Christians maintain eternal perspective when earthly powers seem overwhelming or permanent?

## Interlinear Text

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מִנְזָב יֶרֶךְ	כְּאַרְבֵּה הַ	וְטַפְסֹב יֶרֶךְ	גִּבּוֹר יֶ		
Thy crowned	are as the locusts	and thy captains	as the great grasshoppers		
H4502	H697	H2951	H1462		
גִּבּוֹר יֶ	הָחוֹנִי יָם	בְּגִדְרוֹת	בֵּי יוֹם	קָרָה הַ	
as the great grasshoppers	which camp	in the hedges	day	in the cold	
H1462	H2583	H1448	H3117	H7135	
שֶׁ מָשׁ	זָרְחָה	וְנוֹדַד	וְלֹא	נוֹדַד עַ	מְקוֹמָם וְ
but when the sun	arisseth	they flee away	H3808	is not known	and their place
H8121	H2224	H5074		H3045	H4725
אֵם:					
where					
H335					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 9:7** (Parallel theme): And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

**Jeremiah 51:27** (Parallel theme): Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers.