

# Nahum 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the pransing horses, and of the jumping chariots.

## Analysis

**The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels** (qol shot veqol ra'ash ophan, קול שוט וקול רעש אופן)—Nahum creates an auditory assault depicting Nineveh's invasion. The crack of the shot (שוט, whip) driving horses forward, and the ra'ash (רעש, rattling/rumbling) of ophan (אופן, wheel) creates chaotic soundscape of battle.

**And of the pransing horses, and of the jumping chariots** (vesus dohehr vemerkhavah meraqqedah)—galloping horses (sus dohehr, סוס דהר) and bounding chariots (merkhavah meraqqedah, מִרְכָּבָה מְרַקְדָּה). The verb raqad (רָקַד) means to skip, leap, or dance—chariots bouncing violently over rough terrain. This staccato series of sounds—whip crack, wheel rumble, hoof thunder, chariot crash—creates sensory overload depicting the terror of assault. Ironically, Assyria had perfected these terror tactics against others; now they experience them. The verse demonstrates poetic justice: the sounds that once heralded Assyrian conquest now announce Nineveh's destruction.

## Historical Context

Ancient warfare was as much psychological as physical. The sounds of approaching armies—drums, trumpets, hoof beats, chariot wheels—were designed to terrify defenders before combat even began. Assyria had mastered this psychological warfare, using sounds and sights to break enemy morale. Their own

annals describe how the approach of Assyrian forces caused cities to surrender without fighting. Now in 612 BC, Nineveh heard these same terrifying sounds as Babylonian and Median forces attacked. The cacophony of battle—whips, wheels, hooves, and chariots—announced their doom. Archaeological evidence shows the violence of Nineveh's fall matched Nahum's vivid description.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does the sensory detail (focusing on sounds) make God's judgment against Nineveh more vivid and real?
2. What does it mean that Assyria experienced the same terror tactics they had used against others?
3. How should believers understand the principle that violence and terror eventually return upon those who practice them?

## Interlinear Text

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|                            |                  |                           |                        |                      |               |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| וְקוֹל                     | שׁוֹט            | וְקוֹל                    | בַּעֲשׂ                | אוֹפֵן               | וּסוּסִים     |
| <b>The noise</b>           | <b>of a whip</b> | <b>The noise</b>          | <b>of the rattling</b> | <b>of the wheels</b> | <b>horses</b> |
| H6963                      | H7752            | H6963                     | H7494                  | H212                 | H5483         |
| וְדָהָר                    | וּמִרְכָּבָה     | מִקְדָּה:                 |                        |                      |               |
| <b>and of the prancing</b> | <b>chariots</b>  | <b>and of the jumping</b> |                        |                      |               |
| H1725                      | H4818            | H7540                     |                        |                      |               |

## Additional Cross-References

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**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;

**Judges 5:22** (Sin): Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

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