

Joshua 11:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

Analysis

Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire—The verb **houghed** (הִקָּוּ, *iqqer*, hamstrung) means cutting the leg tendons, permanently disabling war horses. This radical act of faith destroyed valuable military assets worth a fortune, obeying God's command against trusting in horses (Deuteronomy 17:16).

Burning the **chariots** (רֶכֶב, *rekhev*) eliminated the temptation to adopt Canaanite military methods. God required total dependence on Him, not human weaponry. This obedience cost Israel strategic military advantage but gained spiritual purity. As Zechariah later prophesied: 'I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem... and he shall speak peace unto the heathen' (Zechariah 9:10). True victory comes through dependence on God, not superior armaments.

Historical Context

Hamstringing captured horses was extremely rare in ancient warfare—enemy chariots were highly prized spoils. A single chariot represented months of a craftsman's wages; a trained war horse, even more. Joshua's obedience demonstrated that covenant faithfulness trumped military pragmatism. This decision shaped Israel's military culture for centuries, distinguishing them from chariot-based empires.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'chariots'—symbols of worldly power and security—is God calling you to destroy?
2. How does obedient sacrifice of valuable resources demonstrate faith in God's provision?
3. When has trusting in human methods compromised your dependence on God?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַשׂ	לָהֶם	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	כָּאָשׁ	אָמַר	לֹ	יְהוָה
did	H0	And Joshua	H834	bade	H0	unto them as the LORD
H6213		H3091		H559		H3068
אֶת	קוֹסִיָּהֶם	עָקָה	וְאֶת	מִרְכָּבֹתֵיהֶם	שָׂרַף	בָּאֵשׁ:
H853	their horses	him he houghed	H853	their chariots	and burnt	with fire
	H5483	H6131		H4818	H8313	H784

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 11:6 (References Lord): And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for to morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.