

General Church Education



# The Northern Conquest

Joshua 11

## Lesson 13

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

# The Northern Conquest

## Joshua 11

### Teacher Background

After taking the south of Canaan, the land in the north was all that stood in the way of Israel controlling the entire land. As the children of Israel rested at Gilgal, northern kings from the mountains and lowlands, having heard of their victories, massed at the waters of Merom, the lake north of the Sea of Galilee, to fight against Israel. Lowlanders from the plains brought horses and chariots, the most powerful and feared weapons in existence, for attacking the foot soldiers. With the Lord's assurance of victory, Joshua and his warriors attacked suddenly and defeated these enemies. As the Lord directed, Joshua hamstringed the horses, burned the chariots and killed the king of Hazor. The war dragged on for years, until finally the Anakim, descendants of the evil Nephilim giants, were killed. And Israel had peace.

Gaining control of the south and the north of Canaan pictures a person's lifetime struggle to overcome selfish affections (south) and thoughts (north). The enemy chariots that were burned and the horses that were hamstrung picture false ways of thinking that must be completely destroyed for a person to become heavenly. Harnessing truths from the Word to a true doctrinal framework gives a person great power to overcome selfish loves and thoughts. Joshua 14:6-15 has led scholars to believe that the conquest of Canaan took five to seven years.

### Key Ideas

- It takes a lifetime of fighting selfishness to become a heavenly person.
- The southern part of the land represents our loves, the northern part, our thoughts.
- The horses and chariots of Israel's enemies picture false ideas that must be destroyed for us to love and follow the Lord.

### From the Writings

“The north’ stands for people in obscurity as regards truth.” *Arcana Coelestia* 3708

‘Horse and chariot’, mean intellectual concepts and matters of doctrine regarding what is good and true. In a contrary sense ‘chariots’ mean matters of doctrine maintaining what is evil and false, and factual knowledge used to support these. The horses and chariots with which the Egyptians pursued the children of Israel mean concepts, matters of doctrine, and known facts which maintain what is false. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5321.

Picture a community made up of people who all love themselves, not caring about others unless they are allies. You will see that their love is no different from that of thieves for each other. To the extent that they are acting in concert, they call each other friends; but once they stop cooperating, once anyone resists their control, they attack each other. See *Heaven and Hell* 560.

Descendants of the [Nephilim] were called Anakim and Rephaim. ‘The Nephilim’ means those who, persuaded of their own prominence and superiority, treated everything holy and true as being worthless. See *Arcana Coelestia* 581.

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## Joshua 11

### Vocabulary

**hamstring**—cut a tendon in a horse’s leg, making the horse useless

**spoils**—prize possessions taken in war

**booty**—a prize seized in war

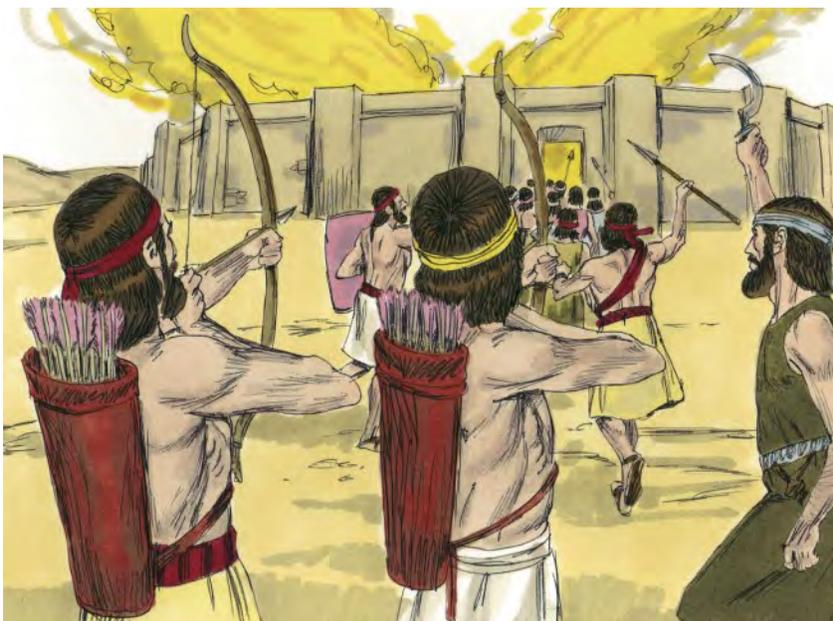
After the children of Israel conquered their enemies in the southern part of Canaan, they returned to their camp in Gilgal. There was now peace in the south, but not in the north of the land.

### The Kings of the North Gather Together

Jabin, king of the northern city of Hazor, heard that all the cities in the south had been conquered. So he called together people from many cities to form a great army. He sent word of his plan to kings from the high mountains in the far north, and all the lowland areas in the north as well. They were to gather at Lake Merom.

Read Joshua 11:1-5.

Jabin’s message brought so many people to Lake Merom that the Word says there were as many people as “the sand that is on the seashore in multitude”. There were so many people it would have been impossible to count them, just as it is impossible to count grains of sand on a beach. All of them had the same goal: to attack and destroy the children of Israel and to protect their cities.

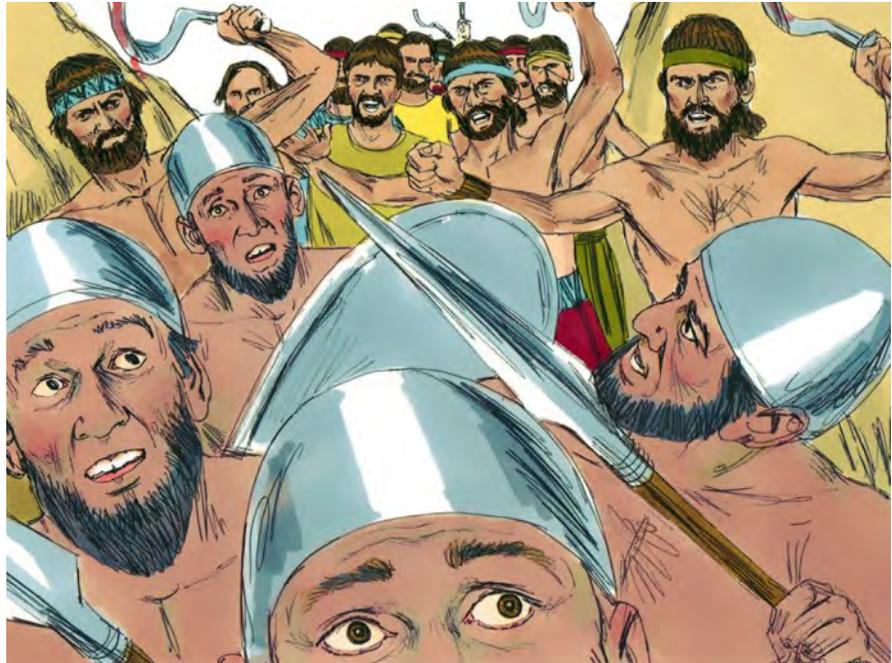


Soldiers from the lowlands brought their powerful horses and chariots.

How might Joshua have felt, knowing many people and excellent equipment were gathering to fight his army? Would this army be strong enough to defeat the battle-weary Israelite army?

Joshua’s army had trained and fought together under his courageous leadership for about forty years. They trusted one another and knew each other’s strength and courage.

They could trust their fellow soldiers, and most importantly, they trusted the Lord. The armies that gathered to fight against them did not know each other. They came from many cities and nations. They had no idea how to trust one another, and above all, they did not trust in the one God of heaven and earth. New Church teachings tell us that people who love evil may appear to love each other, but they actually hate each other. Imagine being in a difficult situation in battle and finding your fellow soldier has run away to protect themselves instead of helping to overcome the enemy.



### **The Lord Promised Victory**

The Lord encouraged Joshua not to be afraid and promised He would give Israel victory the following day. He also gave Joshua a battle strategy and promised to give him the victory.

Read Joshua 11:6-15.

To “hamstring” a horse means to cut the tendon in the leg that joins the heel to the leg. This cruel custom quickly took horses out of action. Without horses, chariots were useless. The chariots were made of wood and would have burned quickly when set on fire. Psalm 46 also talks about burning chariots to end wars.

Come, behold the works of the Lord....  
 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
 He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two;  
 He burns the chariot in the fire. (Psalm 46:8,9)

The Lord’s promise made the soldiers of Israel feel very brave. They attacked so suddenly that the surprise and force of the attack confused their enemies. Soon the first battle was over.

### **Long Years of Fighting**

This first battle was the start of a long war. The army of Israel marched from city to city. Conquering of the northern part of the land took between five and seven years. Why do you think it would have taken so long? Perhaps it was because the Israelites could not fight all the time. During the rainy season the mud roads would become wet and slippery. Travel for soldiers, horses and chariots would be very difficult. Another reason it may have taken so long is that the country had many mountains and caves where their enemies could hide. And their enemies knew the rough, hilly

country better than the Israelites, so they could move more quickly. But at last the land was conquered, and Israel rested from war. Read Joshua 11:16-23.

Did you notice that some of the Anakim were not completely destroyed? The Anakim were giants descended from the ancient Nephilim. These were the same giants that had terrified the twelve men who spied out the land many years before, so that the children of Israel did not go right into Canaan but wandered in the wilderness for forty years. The next few chapters of Joshua tell us about other enemies who were not completely destroyed as well.

### Discussion Questions

- Who gathered the kings of the north to attack Israel? What was his goal?
- Where did the kings of the north gather to fight against the children of Israel? Hint: this body of water is shown on maps of Canaan. It is north of the Sea of Galilee.
- What strategy did the Lord give Joshua for winning the battle?
- What do you need to do to work with the Lord? What is your part in the battle?
- Why might Joshua have been afraid?
- Why was it so important for the children of Israel to make the enemy's horses useless and burn their chariots?
- New Church teachings tell us that the enemy's horses and chariots represent false ideas. Can you think of a false idea? One example of a false idea might be that you know better than a parent or teacher. The Lord's order to completely destroy the horses and chariots tells us that we must completely destroy false ways of thinking in order to become a heavenly person.
- What kinds of struggles do you have that feel like a battle?
- Joshua did not wipe out all of Israel's enemies living in Canaan. This chapter mentions that he left giants living in several areas. What might this lead to?
- Can you think of a story from later in the Word when a giant attacked the children of Israel? Hint: the story also involves a boy (see I Samuel 17). This giant was a descendant of the giants Joshua did not destroy.
- In what order did Joshua conquer the land of Canaan?
- What do you think Joshua will do with all the land he has conquered?

# Activity Overview | The Northern Conquest

## Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness,  
The world and those who dwell therein. Psalm 24:1

## Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Make a Vessel that Opens up to the Lord
- Utterly Destroy the Cities Rip-off
- Picture to color—Joshua Destroys the Chariots (Joshua 11)

## Additional Activity Ideas

- Talk about what it might mean to take refuge. A refuge is a place of safety. We use this word for many different ways of finding protection.

We might take refuge in a storm.

We might take refuge if it's too noisy around us.

We might take refuge if there's something is making us feel uncomfortable.

Can you think of other ways people might find refuge?

- Follow a map of the northern conquest of Canaan. Fill in blanks to show events that happened along the way. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-map-of-the-northern-conquest-of-canaan-joshua11.pdf>.
- Read Joshua 11 to fill in blanks and answer questions about the story. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-the-northern-conquest-review-questions-joshua11.pdf>.

## Activity 1 | Make a Vessel that Opens up to the Lord

The Lord commanded the children of Israel to remove their enemies from the land of Canaan. He asks us to do the same. Our enemies are false ideas and selfish feelings that prevent us from receiving the Lord's love. For example, a false thought might be thinking it's okay to lie to avoid getting into trouble. Or deserving something more than a friend does, and taking it for ourselves. In order to enter heaven we must get rid of or destroy these selfish thoughts and feelings and allow the Lord to flow into us with His love.

### Let the Lord in

The Lord constantly loves everyone. We are "vessels" that receive as much or as little of His love as we are willing to.

- When we choose to be selfish we *cut ourselves off* from receiving the Lord's love. We become like vessels with a narrow opening at the top that shuts out the Lord.
- When we are willing to admit false thoughts and selfish feelings we open ourselves up to receive the Lord and become like vessels with a wide opening at the top, like bowls.

Angels let the Lord into their lives by getting rid of selfish thoughts and feelings. They live closest to the Lord and receive the Lord's love most fully.

### Make a Vessel

Make a vessel with an opening at the top. Experiment with making a larger and a smaller opening. Think about the kind of vessel you would like to be. How can you be an open vessel that the Lord can fill with His love?

### Materials Needed

any kind of clay or play dough that holds its shape

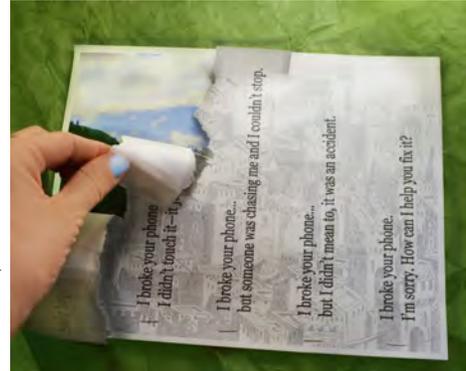
### Directions

1. Make a pot using any method, e.g. coil pot, pinch pot.
2. Change the shape of the pot to have a wider or narrower opening.
3. Discuss ways we can open ourselves up to the Lord, and ways we can close ourselves off from Him.
4. We change the shape of our vessel throughout our lives. The Lord gives us the choice to do this at every moment. Think about what kind of vessel you would like to be.



## Activity 2 | Utterly Destroy the Cities Rip-off

The Lord commanded the children of Israel to utterly destroy the cities where their enemies lived. This may seem harsh but remember, stories in the Word have a hidden inner meaning. Enemy cities picture false ways of thinking we must completely destroy to inherit the kingdom of heaven. For example, thinking we are apologizing for something we've done, but really making excuses or blaming others. In this activity you will read ways you could apologize for breaking a friend's phone. Rip off each statement that is a false apology to discover a picture of heaven.



### Materials

- copy of the “*I broke your phone*” apology rip-off page
- copy of “*Heaven*”
- stapler

### Directions

1. What should we do if we make a mistake and break something that is not ours?
2. There are many ways to apologize. Which of these is a good apology? “I’m sorry, but it wasn’t my fault” or “I’m so sorry. How can I help you fix this?”
3. A true apology might say something like:
  - “I’m sorry”
  - This is what happened
  - I want to make amends
  - I’ll try not to do it again
4. A false apology may include something that sounds like an apology but doesn’t say what really happened, look to making amends, or trying not to do it again. False apologies are like the bad cities we must get rid of to enter heaven.
5. Start by setting up the activity. Place the “*I broke your phone*” rip-off page on top of the “*Heaven*” page. Staple the pages together together along one side.
6. Read each statement on the “*I broke your phone*” rip-off page. Every statement admits that someone broke a friend’s phone—but which also offers an apology. Rip off the statements that are not true apologies. Are there any left?
7. Were any parts hard to tear off? Which ones? Why?
8. The Lord created each of us to live to eternity in heaven. In order to live there we must get rid of false ways of thinking—just as we ripped the statements off the “*Heaven*” page.



I broke your phone...  
but it's YOUR fault—you left it in a stupid place!

I broke your phone...  
I didn't touch it—it just fell and broke!

I broke your phone...  
but someone was chasing me and I couldn't stop.

I broke your phone...  
but I didn't mean to, it was an accident.

I broke your phone.  
I'm sorry. How can I help you fix it?



