# Topic

God's enabling

# Theme

God faithfully works through His people to accomplish His will.

# Desired Learner Response

Divide and Conquer

**Scripture Focus** Joshua 10; 11 **Summary**

God called on Israel to fight a tremendously difficult series of battles against

the southern and northern kings of Canaan. They trusted God for theenabling to fight and for the victory.

The learner will rely on

God to work through him to accomplish His will.

Materials

* Resources 1, 2, and 11
* Small trashcan
* Scratch paper

**Outline**

1. **Victory in Southern Canaan (10)**
   1. Five kings feared (10:1-4)
   2. Five kings fought (10:5-10)
   3. Five kings fled (10:11-15)
   4. Five kings are found (10:16-21)
   5. Five kings are finished (10:22-43)
2. **Victory** in **Northern Canaan (11:1-15)**
   1. Northern kings came together (11:1-5)
   2. Northern kings are conquered (11:6-15)

**Ill. Victory in All of Canaan (11:16-23)**

Memory Verse *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in myabsence,work out your own salvation*

*with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12,13).*

### 73

**Big Hail**

Hail usually varies from pea-sized to marble-sized. But bigger thunderstorms can produce bigger hail. On June 23, 2010, the largest hailstone recovered in the United States fell in Vivian, South Dakota. It had a diameter of eight inches and a circumference of over eighteen inches. It weighed just under two pounds. Most likely that hailstone would have been deadly if someone had been standing where it fell.

**ASK:** What is the biggest hailstone you have ever seen? (Ql)

**ASK:** What is the biggest hailstone that has ever it you? (Q2)

Getting caught in a hailstorm can be scary. When that happens, it can seem as if someone is throwing the hailstones at you. God used hailstones as a precision weapon in our lesson for today. We will learn why He throw the hailstones and what happened as a result.

### Precision Test

Set up a small trashcan or similar container at the front of the room. Give each learner a piece of scratch paper to crumple up into a ball. Have the learners try to throw their crumpled up ball into the trashcan from about ten feet away. Comment on their precision. Give them a couple of turns. Make note of anyone who acci­ dently gets in the way of someone else's wad of paper.

**ASK:** How confident were you in your ability to control your wad of paper?



*Adoni-Zedek* means *righteousness.* However, Adoni-Zedek was any­ thing but righteous.

**ASK:** How many shots do you think you could make in a row?

Precise is a good word to describe God's accuracy in the lesson for today. Ex­ cept He threw ice instead of harmless wads of paper. We will learn why God hurled ice and what the consequences were.

To conquer Canaan, Joshua and Israel would have to cut the land in two by defeating alliances in the south before conquering alliances in the north.

**MAP:** Display resource 2 as needed to show the cities mentioned in this lesson.

### Victory in Southern Canaan (to)

* 1. **Five kings feared (10:1-4)**

As Joshua 9:1 and 2 first pointed out, the major kings of southern Canaan formed an alliance. Their leader was Adoni-Zedek, the king of Jerusalem (10:1). Adoni-Zedek and his alliance feared Israel because it had entered a coalition with

Gibeon. Gibeon was bigger than either Jericho or Ai, and the Gibeonites were cou­ rageous fighters (10:2). He may have felt threatened, too, because Gibeon, which had fallen into Israel's hands, was close to Jerusalem; or Gibeon may have been under his political authority, and he viewed the Gibeonites' alliance with Israel as an act of rebellion.

**READ:** Joshua 10:4. **ASK:** What was Adoni-Zedek's plan? (03) *To forceJoshua's hand by making war with Gibeon, the city Israel had promised to protect.*

Adoni-Zedek arranged for four other Amorite kings in the south to join him in an all-out military assault on Gibeon (10:3, 4). Four against one seems like good odds. Certainly Adoni-Zedek was confident in his plan and his partnerships. In his eyes, his coalition would be invincible. Subduing Gibeon before Joshua could mobilize his forces would better his chances of defeating Israel. His plan seemed solid, for Joshua and his army were twenty-five miles away when the five kings mobilized for an attack on Gibeon.

* 1. **Five kings fought (10:5-10)**

The southern alliance's assault on Gibeon tested Joshua's treaty with the Gibeonites. No doubt it was tempting for Joshua to let Gibeon be defeated. His army was so far away that mobilizing to defend Gibeon was not practical. So would he let Gibeon fall to the southern alliance? He would not. The men of Gibeon appealed to Joshua for immediate help (10:6), and Joshua responded to their request in honor of his treaty with them. He marshaled his forces and marched from Gilgal toward Gibeon (10:7). Joshua's battle with the southern

alliance was a most crucial battle. A loss there would mean a serious setback to Is­ rael's conquest of the land. It would not constitute complete disaster, but it would be extremely costly. However, the Lord encouraged Joshua not to fear (10:8).

**READ:** Joshua 10:8. **ASK:** What reason did the Lord give to Joshua for not fearing? (Q4) *God said He had already delivered the armies into Joshua's hand.*

God did not tell Joshua that He would tal<e care of the coalition all by Himself.

God expected action on Joshua's part. The Israelites had to be ready for battle. They had to strap on any armor they had and carry with them their sharpest swords as well as sustenance for the way. God promised victory, but His promise was only as good as the actions Joshua and His army were willing to take.

**READ:** Joshua 10:9. **ASK:** Describe the effort Joshua and his army were will­ ing to give to defend Gibeon and move forward with conquering the Prom­ ised Land? (QS) *They did an overnight march so they could surprise thecoalition of five kings in the morning.*

As mentioned, Gilgal was about twenty-five miles away from Gibeon. That is a good distance to cover in daylight. To do it in the dark, even with torches, would be much more difficult. To mal<e matters even more difficult, the route is a steady climb. Ancient Gilgal was a few hundred feet below sea level while Gibeon was about three thousand feet or so above sea level. That means over the course of the night hours Israel climbed at least the equivalent of a three hundred story build-

The Arnorites occupied Canaan's southern hill country. Even in Abra­ ham's time, the Arnorites were known for their wick­ edness (Gen.14:13-16).

ing. Most people are out of breath after climbing stairs for just ten stories. Israel's infantry made the climb while holding their weapons and wearing their armor. Yet they engaged the enemy as soon as they arrived on the battlefield; they took no break.

**ASK:** What would you say to someone who asked you to make such a climb?

(06)

God must have been fueling Joshua and his men with extra energy to make the trip. Certainly they would have collapsed from exhaustion or fallen in the dark as they traversed the rocky terrain without God's enabling. Even the best infantry­ men would need to at least rest for a few hours before engaging in hand-to-hand combat.

**ASK:** What must Israel's soldiers have realized as they made the trek without feeling the need to rest or delay the battle?(07) *That God was helping them and that Hewould fight for them and through them towin the battle.*

Perhaps it was still dark when the battle began. The Amorites panicked and fled westward to a valley, but Joshua followed them in hot pursuit, killing many of them (10:9, 10).

### Five kings fled (to:11-15)

**READ:** Joshua 10:11. **ASK:** What did the Lord do to facilitate victory as the five kings and their armies fled? (08) *Hecast down deadly hailstones at the them as they retreated, killing them as they ran.*

The Lord's hailstones killed more Amorites than Joshua and his men cut down with their swords. What an encouragement for the army of Israel. They could actually see God at work for them. Their partnership with God was evident to them and to the fleeing army. How terrified Adoni-Zedek's coalition must have been.

They were running from the God of all creation, Who controlled the physical forc­ es around them. And God was firing the hailstones from the sky with sniper-like precision. The Amorites literally had nowhere to run.

During the battle Joshua requested that the Lord extend the daylight so he could complete the slaughter of the enemy. It is amazing to think that God left enough of the enemy alive that Joshua was running out of daylight in his battle with them.

**ASK:** Why would God not kill all of the enemy soldiers with the hailstones?

(09) *To emphasize the responsibilities the Israelites had to fight and do their part and to teach them that God would work through them to accomplish His will.*

Joshua commanded the midday sun and the moon on the western horizon to stand still. Both complied, as the Lord granted Joshua's request (10:12-14). God is unlimited in His ability to help. That the sun stood still while Joshua fought to de­ stroy the enemy seems farfetched, especially when we consider the possible side effects. However, the God Who created and sustains everything would have no

trouble safely stopping the gears of the universe for a few hours. The Lord prevent­ ed whatever disastrous effects might have arisen as a result of changing the earth's rotation during that long day.

The *Book oflasher* recorded the incident, noting that *there was no day like that before it or after it* (10:14). That commentary on the day seems appropriate not only because of the miracle but also because of the importance of the battle. Historians consider Israel's battle with the five kings of southern Canaan as one of the most important battles in the history of the world. If Israel had lost the battle, they probably would have never conquered Canaan. How different history would have been if the children of Israel didn't take the land and establish themselves as a nation. Of course we know that God was ultimately directing the outcome of the fight. Israel could not lose the battle. Accordingly, the battle went extremely well

for Joshua. The five enemy kings cowardly fled to a cave and hid, choosing life over dying with dignity.

* 1. **Five kings are found (10:16-21)**

Joshua learned where the five kings were hidden and ordered a stone rolled in front of the cave until he had an opportunity to deal with them. The Israelites then pursued the enemy until they had destroyed all those who had not fled into fortified cities (10:15-20).

**READ:**Joshua 10:17. **ASK:** What four words would you use to describe the kings as they hid in a cave? (Q10) *Perhaps cowardly, pathetic, selfish, and desperate.*

Israel decisively defeated Adoni-Zedekand the kings of the southern alliance. As a result, great fear fell upon all the land of Canaan. No one of Canaan *moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel,* meaning none spoke against the Israel­ ites (10:21). There was a stark difference between Egypt's ridicule of Israel and the Canaanites' fear and reverence for them.

* 1. **Five kings are finished (10:22-43)**

After the sound defeat of the southern armies, Joshua returned his attention to the coalition kings trapped in the cave at Makkedah. Joshua brought the kings from the cave and ordered the captains of the men of war to put their feet on the necks of the kings (10:22-24).

**READ:** Joshua 10:25. **ASK:**Which enemies did Joshua say the Lord would defeat for the captains of the Israelites' army?(Q11) *All of them.*

Joshua 10:28-41 mentions the specific cities that fell to Joshua and his army as their campaign continued. The conquest of southern Canaan was thorough. Verses 41 and 42 indicate that the territory from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and the area from Goshen to Gibeon fell into Israel's hands. Kadesh Barnea to Gaza marks the west­ ern boundaries of southwestern Canaan, whereas Goshen (the Negev) to Gibeon marks the eastern boundaries of southern Canaan.

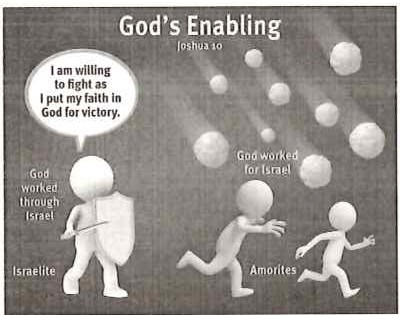
**READ:** Joshua 10:42. **ASK:** Why was Joshua able to defeat the enemy and claim southern Canaan? (Ql 2) *Because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.*

The *Book of Jasher* has never been found. It was

* probably a collection of ancient Hebrew poetry praising Israel's heroes and their battles. The book of Joshua quotes it to provide further evi­ dence that God actually stopped the sun in Israel's battle with the Amorites. The reference to Joshua returning to Gilgal in Joshua 10:15 ismost likely a continuation of the quote from the Book of Jasher. For Joshua did not go back to Gilgal until the war with the kings of the south was over.

After the mopping up of southern Canaan, Joshua returned to Gilgal, Israel's base camp (10:43). Gilgal was the site of Israel's renewing circumcision, the sign of the nation's covenantal relationship with the Lord, and of its observance of the Passover. Dedication and worship were integral to the nation's success in Canaan.

Overall, the southern campaign made clear that God would both fight for and through Israel. There was no stopping Israel because God was on their side.

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 11 to summarize God's work through and for Israel. Emphasize it took faith in God to join the fight.

1. **Victory in Northern Canaan (11:1-15)**

Joshua turned his attention to the northern half of Canaan where he would face his biggest challenge yet.

* 1. **Northern kings came together (11:1-5)**

When Jabin, the King of Hazor, heard about Israel's victories in the south, he gathered together an impressive array of kings in a northern confederacy to oppose Joshua and the army of Israel. A great multitude, with many horses and chariots, assembled at the waters of Merom to crush Israel (Josh. 11:1-5). Jabin's powerful, mobile striking force was by far the most fearsome alliance Israel had faced; and possibly her most crucial battle was at hand.

* 1. **Northern kings are conquered (11:6-15)**

Joshua did not wait at Gilgal for Jabin's confederacy to attack. The Lord told him how to defeat that massive enemy, and He promised Joshua a clear victory. So Joshua launched a surprise offensive and followed the Lord's battle plan (11:6-9). He routed the enemy, hamstrung their horses, and burned their chariots.

**READ:** Psalm 20:7. **ASK:** Why would God ask the Israelites to kill the horses and burn the chariots when they offered them a tremendous military advan­ tage from that time on? (Ql 3) *Because God wanted Israel to continue to trust* in

*1--/im for victory rather than the advantagesthat come with horses andchariots.*

**ASK:** What would Israel's enemies think when they learned God's people had destroyed the horses and chariots instead of keeping them for battle?

{Ql 4) *That their God was so powerful and involved in Israel'sbattlesthat they didn't*

*need such implements of war.*

God did not want Israel to have horses and chariots. They would be a tempta­ tion to Israel to trust in their own strength and abilities if they accumulated them. Later in Israel's history Isaiah pronounced a woe on those who look to the strength of horses and chariots instead of God for their victory.

**READ:** Isaiah 31:1-3. **ASK:** What would happen to those who trust in chari­ ots instead of God?(Ql 5) *They would perish.*

King Solomon, Israel's third king, accumulated a large number of horses and chariots. In doingso he violated God's instructions for kings (Deut. 17:14-17). Not

surprisingly, his heart eventually turned from God (1 Kings 10:26-11:4).

#### Joshua continued the campaign in the north by attacking Hazor, Canaan's largest city. He killed its king and inhabitants and burned the city to the ground (Josh. 11:10-13). Hazor was the only city Joshua burned. Perhaps he destroyed Hazor because it stood on a prominent trade route. Traders would easily see that Israel had won a decisive victory. He may have spared other cities for later use by Israel. Verse 14 indicates that Israel smote all the inhabitants of these cities but took the spoil and cattle *for a prey unto themselves.*

**READ:** Joshua 11:15. **ASK:** How thorough was Joshua in his obedience to God? (Ql 6) *He fully obeyed the Lord's instructions.*

1. **Victory in All of Canaan (11:16-23)**

#### The rest of Joshua 11 summarizes Israel's battles in Canaan. Joshua had effectively driven a dagger through the heart of Canaan, dividing the south from the north and then claiming both as Israel's possession. The Conquest lasted a long time, according to verse 18, but the gods of the Canaanites were no match for Israel's God.

**READ:** Joshua 11:20. **ASK:** In what sense were the kings in Canaan com­ pelled to fight against Israel?(Ql 7) *God hardened their hearts to want to try to destroy Joshua and God's people.*

#### Included in the record of Joshua's victory is his defeat of the *Anakim,* the people the ten of the original spies greatly feared and one of the reasons they counseled Israel not tostart the conquest (11:21, 22; Num.13:22, 28, 33). The plain account of Joshua's victory over the *giants* in the land shows how silly it was for Israel to fear them and to decide to not invade the Promised Land so many years earlier.

In the final analysis, the battle was the Lord's, and He prevailed. Joshua accomplished all that God intended for him to accomplish, though there was still land to conquer even after Joshua was off the scene (Josh.11:23).



**Step up**

#### God accomplishes His much of His work in this world through people. That means He wants us to step up byfaith and serve Him with our best effort. As we do, He will accomplish His will through us.

**READ:** Philippians 2:12, 13. **ASK:** Do you recognize God's desire to work His will through your life?Explain. (Ql 8)

**ASK:** Describe the effort you think God wants you ta put forth in light of His desire to work through you. (Ql 9)

## Attitude Check

**READ:** Ephesians 5:15-18. **ASK:** What is wrong with an I-can't-do-anything­ right-for-God attitude?(020) *God empowers us to serve Him through His Spirit and offers us the wisdom to serve Him well*

**ASK:** Write a statement about God's desire to use you to accomplish His will. (021)

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## Summary and Memory Verses

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 1. Add the following statement about God's faithfulness: God faithfully works through His people.

Encourage learners to memorize Philippians 2:12 and 13. Give theman oppor­ tunity tosay the verses in class next week.