

March 26 Answers

- 1) The Gibeonite deception, Joshua's military campaigns in southern and northern Canaan, and the final conquest of the promised land. The Gibeonites (**Hivites** of Gibeon) lived about **seven** miles southwest of Ai, and word of the destruction of Jericho and Ai reached them quickly. Instead of marching out to battle, they decided that **deception** was the better part of valor. They came to Joshua and asked to make a covenant with Israel. Their tactic has much to teach us about how to avoid being deceived: (1) We should beware of those who **flatter** us or appeal to our sense of vanity (Josh 9:8); (2) We should not **assume** that everyone who sounds spiritual or professes godliness is genuine (Josh 9:9); (3) We should guard against our tendency to trust what we can **see** and touch (Josh 9:12–13). Joshua and the other leaders **examined** their provisions, "but did not ask **counsel** from the LORD" (Josh 9:14). Joshua and the other leaders didn't feel the need or think to ask for God's direction! This teaches us that we will face decisions where we can examine the facts, carefully consider our options, consult godly friends, search the Scriptures (cf. Deut 20:10–15), and yet make a tragic mistake unless we **specifically** ask God for guidance. Such decisions are intended to **test** our commitment to put God first in all things. Joshua waged war for **years** against the kings of the land, and God **hardened** the Canaanites' hearts so they would fight Joshua rather than surrender (Josh 11:20). This was in keeping with God's decision to wipe them out, for they had not repented and their sin was now **complete** (cf. Gen 15:16). This also suggests that the Hivites of Gibeon, one of the ethnic groups chosen for destruction (Deut 20:16–17), were *not* hardened, leaving them free to seek peace, even if through deception (Josh 11:19). This shows that God is **merciful**, often sparing sinners until there is no hope of repentance.