

**Close Reading Questions for High School Students on
Sefer Shoftim: Perakim Zayin - Het
by Zvi Grumet**

פרק ז

1. Why did 'ה want גדעון to reduce the size of his army? What did he want גדעון to say to help people decide to leave on their own? (Compare this to דברים כ:ה-ח)
2. 'ה asks גדעון to do a further test, which reduces the army down to only 300! Can you figure out why that specific test was chosen?
3. 'ה provides גדעון with another sign the night before the battle. What is that sign? Why does גדעון need so many signs?
4. There were lots of private signs and miracles to גדעון prior to the battle. What miracles were there during the battle?
5. How did גדעון manage to defeat his numerically overwhelming enemy?
6. What did גדעון's soldiers have in their right hands? In their left hands? What was missing?!!
7. Would you categorize גדעון as a religious leader, a political leader, or a military leader?

פרק ח

1. At the end of the previous פרק we hear about the capture and execution of two Midianite leaders. Which two still remain at large at the beginning of this פרק?
2. Why was שבט אפרים upset? Why is this especially striking in the context of ספר שופטים?
3. Which two cities stand in stark contrast to the approach taken by אפרים? For the first mention of these two cities in תנ"ך, see בראשית לב:ל-לא and לג:ז. From which שבט were those two cities? (See the end of לב במדבר)
4. There is a strange conversation between גדעון and the two Midianite chieftains in פסוקים יח-כא, referring to some incident that had apparently happened earlier but about which we never heard.
5. Note the parallel between the killing of צלמונע & זבח and the killing of אגג.
6. In גדעון's response to the people of פנואל and סוכות, is the ספר trying to describe him positively or negatively as a leader? Compare this with the way דוד reacts to those who refuse to accept his leadership.
7. At the end of this פרק, we hear a request that בני ישראל make of גדעון. In light of the entire גדעון story, why does that request make sense? Why does גדעון turn down their request?!
8. What does גדעון ask of the people? What does he do with it? What does the description of this event remind you of? What message do you think the ספר is trying to send?
9. Notice that גדעון gathers significant wealth and wives, much like שלמה does.
10. Find the two places that the word ויזנו is used at the end of this פרק.
11. Notice the contrast between the description of the eldest son of גדעון found in כ to פסוק כ to the son of his concubine (פסוק לא)! What does that son's name mean?!