

**Close Reading Questions for High School Students on
Sefer Shmuel Bet: Perakim Aleph - Gimmel
by Zvi Grumet**

פרק א

1. Where was דוד while שאול was getting killed?
2. In what ways is the story of the messenger who came to tell דוד about the battle different from the way it is told in the previous פרק?
3. In what way could the identity of the messenger as being from עמלק play a role in his actions and in דוד's response?
4. The messenger reports doing two things – killing שאול and bringing the crown to דוד. In what way are they connected? In what way do they represent very different things?
5. In the introduction to his poem, דוד identifies it as יהודה קשת. To what do you think he is referring?
6. In דוד's poem, there are sections devoted to שאול alone, to יונתן alone, and to the two of them together. What are each of those messages?

פרק ב

1. דוד's first query of 'ה reminds us of the very beginning of ספר שופטים. In what ways are they very different?
2. Notice that דוד *again* asks 'ה for direction. What does he ask this time?
3. Notice how דוד's reception by the people of יהודה has changed dramatically since his wanderings there!
4. Why did דוד, in his first recorded act as king, choose to send a special message to the people of יבש גלעד? Was it for his benefit or theirs?
5. Who was the power behind the throne in שאול's family after שאול's death? Note the name of the new king and the fact that he has never been mentioned until this point!
6. Note: מחנים is on the other side of the Jordan River, just as יבש גלעד is. Why is this information significant?
7. The battle in גבעון was supposed to be a symbolic one involving twenty-four people, twelve from each side. How did it spiral out of control to the point that nearly four hundred men – including עשהאל's brother, יואב – were killed?
8. What was the significance of גבעון that both אבנר and יואב chose it as the place for a showdown with דוד's men (hint: see פרק ט-י)? For more on the significance of גבעון see דברי הימים א ט:לה-ל and דברי הימים א כא:כט.
9. What makes the death of עשהאל especially tragic?
10. Who "won" the battle at גבעון?
11. This פרק describes two different possible paths for the relationship between דוד and the northern tribes – one was the path of דוד, while the other was the path of יואב. What is the key difference between these two?

פרק ג

1. Notice the names of the sons of דוד born in חברון (three of the four will later be involved in attempts to take the throne from דוד).
2. What was the source of the conflict between אבנר and איש בשת? Compare this to מלכים א ב:יג-כה and בראשית לה:כב.
3. Why does the conflict between himself and איש בשת convince him to bring down the reign of שאול's family?
4. In what way is דוד's reception of אבנר surprising? In what way does it make a lot of sense?
5. Why does יואב refuse to accept דוד's reception of אבנר? What are the implications of אבנר's killing of יואב?
6. This פרק has the second use of the word ויקון in שמואל in ויקון. Can you remember the first time it was used? What do they have in common? What is דוד trying to accomplish?
7. In what way is דוד's request for מיכל related to אבנר's offer to unite the kingdom?
8. The last line of this פרק is quite revealing. What is the nature of דוד's relationship with his cousins, the sons of צרויה? (Aside from יואב, who are the other sons of צרויה that he might be referring to?)