

Close Reading Questions for High School Students on
Sefer Shmuel: Perakim Chaf Gimmel - Chaf Dalet
by Zvi Grumet

פרק כ"ג

1. קעילה is a town in the foothills of יהודה (see map). What is happening to שאול's kingdom as he obsesses with killing דוד?



2. Notice the profound difference in decision-making between שאול in the previous פרק and דוד in this פרק (see also יד'יח-כ).
3. What new role does דוד take on in this פרק? Ironically, that was supposed to be שאול's job!
4. How can you explain the loyalty of the people of קעילה to שאול after what דוד did for them?
5. Notice that in the battle with שאול, עמלק listens to the people and becomes his downfall. In דוד, קעילה leads his people even though they did not initially want to go.
6. In the previous פרק, דוד had 400 followers. How many does he have by the time he leaves קעילה?
7. דוד gets a surprise visitor in this פרק. What is so ironic about the visit?
8. דוד finds few allies in his native areas in יהודה. The people in מעון and זיף are prepared to hand him over to שאול, even though those are in the heartland of יהודה (near חברון). Why?
9. Throughout this פרק, David repeatedly hides in מצדות. What are they?
10. דוד asks ה' four times in this פרק. In what ways are the second two different from the first two?
11. דוד nearly gets caught at the end of this פרק. Who, ironically, saves him?
12. Notice that the essential problems facing שאול's kingdom are getting progressively worse as he chases דוד!

פרק כ"ד

1. The previous פרק ended with שאול breaking off his pursuit of דוד in order to fight the פלשתים. Why are we not given any indication of what happened in his battle against the פלשתים?
2. שאול hunts down דוד in the area of עין גדי with an army of 3,000 men. In the context of this ספר and in light of the size of דוד's entourage, is שאול's force to be considered a large one or a small one? (See also יג:א-ב, and יא:ח)
3. The ספר records two different responses to what דוד's men encouraged him to do. What are those two responses? Do you think that they are recorded in the correct order? Explain!
4. What does דוד risk by restraining his men in the cave? Why is this so important to him?
5. What part of the scene in the cave is difficult to imagine?
6. Notice that דוד's depiction of what happened in the cave serves two purposes – one to let שאול know that דוד has no bad intentions and the other possibly a hint at rebuke for what שאול did to the כהנים in נוב. Who do you think is the audience that דוד is trying to convince with his words?
7. What does this encounter tell us about שאול? What do you think was its effect on שאול's army? What do you think was its effect on דוד's men?
8. Compare כב-כב with כג:טז-יח.
9. דוד resisted the temptation to kill שאול when he had the opportunity. In the end, what did he gain from it?