

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

פרק י"א

1. For background on נחש העמוני's claims, see שופטים פרק יא.
2. For background on יבש גלעד, see שופטים כא:א-יב. Why does שאול feel particularly indebted to help the town of יבש גלעד? Why was everyone else hesitant to help them?
3. In what way does נחש העמוני intend to disgrace all of עם ישראל?
4. What was שאול doing before the battle for יבש גלעד? Is that surprising?
5. Notice again the root צלח regarding Shaul (פסוק ו).
6. In what way does שאול's first act as king distinguish him from all of the שופטים?
7. What did שאול do to get everyone else to join in the battle? Notice that this is not the first time this technique was used to rally בני ישראל to work together! (See שופטים יט:כו-ל)
8. What military tactic did שאול use for the battle? Do you recall anywhere earlier in תנ"ך where a similar tactic was used?
9. What is unusual about the description of the army שאול assembled (פסוק ח)? What does that description tell us?
10. We've already seen that שאול was anointed twice. At the end of this פרק, we see that שמואל arranges for another one. Why is that necessary? In what ways is this third one more successful than the previous ones?

פרק י"ב

1. Why does שמואל make the people acknowledge his honesty? Compare this with במדבר טז:טו.
2. Why does שמואל mention his sons in פסוק ב?
3. שמואל provides a historical background as part of the ceremony. What is the focus of his speech? How does it connect with the anointing ceremony?
4. Notice that saviors שמואל mentions and the kings from whom בני ישראל were saved don't match up!
5. In what season does this ceremony take place? Why is that important?
6. What sign does שמואל invoke from ה'? What was its meaning (beyond being a way to impress and scare the people)?
7. What final message does שמואל leave for the people?
8. Compare the sign that שמואל arranges with דברים יא:יג.
9. By the end of this פרק, do you anticipate that שמואל will play an active role in the future, or is he going into "retirement" from public life?
10. There are several difficult-to-understand phrases in this פרק. See פסוקים יד, כא.

11. Notice that שמואל invokes טל ומטר on the one hand and the model of שופטים-מצילים on the other. The former is the vehicle described in ספר דברים for 'ה communicating pleasure/displeasure with בני ישראל, the second is the model from ספר שופטים for accomplishing the same thing. Abrogating one through the choice of king does not hamper 'ה's ability to employ the second! Notice פן תספו in the final פסוק – be swept up in the storm!