

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

**פרק כ"א**

1. For a background on who the גבעונים are, see יהושע פרק ט. Note: There is no mention earlier that שאול killed גבעונים or an explanation of why he did so. Many explain that it was somehow linked to the slaughter of the כהנים in (נב) and גבעון are often mentioned together).
2. Why was it so important for ה' to avenge the death of גבעונים? Why did ה' not avenge their death during שאול's days, leaving it to דוד personally hand over שאול's descendants to be killed?
3. Notice that דוד does not kill שאול's descendants, but that he hands them over to the גבעונים. In what way is this similar to the previous פרק?
4. In פסוק ו, the word והוקענום is the same root as the word ה' uses when He instructs משה to react to the incident of בעל פעור. What similarity can you find between the two situations that could explain the use of this word?
5. Why does דוד combine burying the seven sons of שאול with the re-burying of the bones of שאול and יונתן?
6. Notice that in this פרק there are two separate פסוקים which have a פרשה break splitting each in half.
7. Two פרקים earlier, דוד judged מפיבשת harshly. Did this story happen before or after that one? Do you think that דוד's approach to מפיבשת changed, or are these different circumstances?
8. Do you think that the story of the גבעונים and the famine happened toward the end of דוד's life or earlier? Why do you think so?
9. This incident occurs in the spring (תחילת קציר שעורים) after three years of famine. Why is the timing relevant? The phrase תחילת קציר שעורים appears only twice in תנ"ך, here and in the first פרק of רות, describing when רות and נעמי return to לחם. Can you find a connection between those two stories?
10. When did it start to rain again (that is, when did the famine end)? When would you have expected that it would start to rain again?
11. דוד, in this פרק, is stuck between conflicting moral and religious commitments. It seems like there is no right way to deal with the dilemma he faces. Identify the different parts of this dilemma and how he satisfies (or doesn't!) the different needs.
12. What two historical wrongs does דוד right in this פרק?
13. The end of this פרק deals with the deaths of four פלשתי giants. Who slew them? What is the point of telling us about them? What personal challenge did דוד experience in the context of this battle? What does that tell us about דוד?
14. In one of the battles described, גת kills גלית from אלחנן. Didn't דוד kill him much earlier? See also דברי הימים א' כ"ה.
15. Why are the battles against the four giants so significant? See יהושע יא:כא-כב and (במדבר יג:כח, יג:לב-לג).

## פרק כ"ב

1. Most of the פסוקים in this song consist of simple פסוקים with two phrases. There are a few exceptions in which a פסוק has either three or four phrases. Can you find them?
2. Based on פסוקים כא-כה, do you think that this was written before or after the incident with שבע?
3. There are seven sections in this song: א, ב-ז, ח-טז, יז-כ, כא-כה, כו-לא, לב-מו, נז-נא. Try to find the main idea in each section.
4. In what way is the last section (נא) very different from the first (א)?
5. The third section (ח-טז) describes דוד's involvement in saving דוד. The third to last section (לב-מו) describes a completely different kind of involvement. In what way are these two descriptions almost opposite of each other?

## פרק כ"ג

1. The opening of this פרק contains a final reflection by דוד. While some of the language is very difficult, the general theme reflects some of the ideas of the previous פרק – דוד's anointed one, righteous leaders bring blessing while wicked ones bring pain and destruction. In what ways is this poem similar to the משל of יותם?
2. When דוד alludes to the idea that he himself was a ג (פסוק ג), does that mean that he was without flaw, or does it have a different implication?
3. This פרק contains a detailed list of דוד's elite warriors. There are two groups – the super-elite, which included only 3, and the elite, which numbered 37. In which group was יואב's brother?
4. Most of the names in the list of warriors are not familiar, but some are. They include אוריה החתי (whom דוד had killed in battle) and אבנר בן נר - יואב's younger brother, killed by דוד. What do these names tell us about when this list was from?
5. Most of the names in the list are associated with places. Some of the places are not well-known, but others are, for example, גבעת בני בנימין, נטפה, תקוע, חרד, בית לחם. Try to find these places on a map. Why are their hometowns significant?
6. One of the battle stories told in this פרק involves בית לחם. What happened there and why is that important?
7. In the rebellion of דוד, אבשלום's top advisor, אחיתפל, switched sides to join אבשלום. Notice that his son was one of דוד's top warriors (פסוק לד)!
8. Notice who is curiously missing from this list!