

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

**פרק ט"ו**

1. What argument did אבשלום use to get people to join his rebellion? Was אבשלום correct in his accusation against דוד?
2. אבשלום uses an excuse to return to his birthplace, חברון. It is from there that he will launch his rebellion. Who, earlier, had used the excuse that he wanted to return to *his* family for a celebration, which the ruler (mistakenly) understood was an act of rebellion?! Did דוד understand the connection?
3. Why did אבשלום base his rebellion in חברון?
4. Notice that the people אבשלום surrounds himself with are all from שבט יהודה, while דוד's advisors and close allies come from a very broad range of tribal and national affiliations! What is the significance of this?
5. What is דוד's first reaction when he hears of אבשלום's rebellion? What alternative options does he have? Why does he not choose any of those?
6. Why do you think that דוד had so many supporters from גת, a פלשתי city?
7. Look carefully at פסוק כה-כו and notice how extraordinary a statement this is! Notice also the similarity to פסוק ח.
8. Who does דוד send back to ירושלים to be with אבשלום? Why does he send them back?
9. Why does דוד send the ארון and the כהנים back to ירושלים? What earlier involvement did דוד have with the ארון that ended in disaster? What statement about ירושלים is דוד making by insisting that the ארון remain there?

**פרק ט"ז**

1. What do we learn about ציבא from his encounter with דוד? What do we learn about דוד through his encounter with ציבא? Which of those do you think the text is more interested in conveying? What is surprising about דוד's behavior in this incident?
2. The text seems to be contrasting two encounters דוד has, one with ציבא and the other with שמעי בן גרא. What do they have in common? In what way are they dramatically different?
3. The place called בחורים appears in three contexts in this ספר. First, in ג'טו, second, in פרק, and third, in the next פרק. What is the text trying to tell us about this place?
4. What pattern of behavior by the sons of צרויה is reinforced in this פרק? How does דוד consistently relate to that behavior? What tension is the text trying to share about the relationship between דוד and his nephews, the sons of צרויה.
5. How does חושי הארכי attempt to build אבשלום's trust? Does it work?

6. What does אחיתפל advise אבשלום to do? What is the logic behind his advice? In what way does remind you of בראשית לה:כב? What does the תורה say about this (ויקרא יח:ח)?

## פרק י"ז

1. תנ"ך is the first double agent in חושי הארכי. In the previous פרק we saw how he gained אבשלום's confidence. How do we see in this פרק that his efforts paid off?
2. Why do you think that אבשלום preferred חושי's suggestion to that of אחיתפל? Notice the difference between *why* each of them offers their advice!
3. In what way is the story of יהונתן and אחימעץ similar to that of the two spies that יהושע sent to יריחו? In what ways are those incidents different?
4. This פרק describes the second time in דוד's life that he is on the run from someone seeking to kill him. In what ways are these two stories of fleeing very different?
5. In the previous פרק we saw that בחורים was a place of deep opposition to דוד. What different side to בחורים do we see in this פרק?
6. חושי compares דוד and his men to two animals – a lion and a bear. See also שמואל א' יז:לד-לו.
7. What happens to אחיתופל at the end of this story? Can you explain why?
8. שבי בן נחש, along with two other very prominent people, comes to help דוד. Notice how different his approach is from that of his brother, חנון (see פרק י'). Remember what דוד did to (עמון) (יב:כו-לא)?
9. מכיר בן עמיאל, from לא דבר, appeared earlier (ט:ד). What is the irony in the two places he appears? How can you explain his seemingly inconsistent behavior?
10. דוד feeds ברזלי הגלעדי and his men. Based on כא:ח, why is this so extraordinary?
11. Who is in charge of אבשלום's army? What is his family relationship with יואב?
12. דוד settles into מחנים. Where is that? (see בראשית לב:ג). See also שמואל א' כו:יט.