

# 1 SAMUEL 4

## 1 Samuel 4:1–22

## The Philistines Take the Ark of God in Battle

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**Introduction:** Most exegetes group 1Sam. 4:1b–7:1 (or v. 2) as a teaching unit. This is because these three chapters follow the movement of the Ark of God, which is afterwards, until the time of David, rarely mentioned (actually, it is not mentioned again—but that requires some explanation, which will occur later). As you will recall, I placed 1Sam. 4:1a with the previous chapter, and I will add 7:1–2 to the end of 1Sam. 6—when I exegeted the chapters, apart from ever looking at another exegetes work, these seemed to be the most natural bookends.

Before we launch further into the introduction, I should stop and mentioned a few things. As you may or may not realize, there are those who view the Old Testament as primarily the compilation of 4 or 5 individuals and/or groups of people; pretty much, their approach is *anyone but the stated author written at any time frame other than what is generally assigned to the book*. However, even though there are some false theories out there, this does not mean that this book in particular does not have several difference sources (as the book of Genesis, for instance). However, these theorists suggest that there are multiple authors in this section is because the *Ark of God* is given several different names (*the Ark of God, the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah, the Ark of Jehovah, the Ark of the God of Israel*). Now, it may seem silly to you to base doctrines with such great theological significance upon the occasional change of terms, and that is simply because it is silly. I personally use all of those designations for the *Ark of God*, primarily to vary my vocabulary. That an author of the ancient world chose to do the same is no big deal. However, and this is significant, there is a strong likelihood that all of 1Sam. 5 and much of 6 was written by a Philistine believer. We will discuss this in chapter 5; and the reasons are more substantial than a different title for the *Ark of God* (although, interestingly enough, it is referred to as the *Ark of the God of Israel* exclusively in

1Sam. 5). The various names applied to the Ark very likely have more significance than a simple variance of vocabulary; but such things do not require several authors.

We are still at the end of the time of the judges. Israel is still in a state of great degeneracy. Eli, who is an okay judge and priest, has raised two worthless sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who assumed the duties of the priesthood, but who are both unbelievers, despite the fact that they function as priests. In the cycles of the book of Judges, you will recall that we would have a cycle of deliverance, a period of degeneracy, followed by a calling to God, followed by a deliverance. *Where is this cycle?*, you may ask. 1Sam. 4 restores that cycle. Certainly, we have the marvelous woman, Hannah, and her husband, Elkanah, and they dedicated their first son to God, and this first son was Samuel, who would be a great man. However, he is in a state of growth. Israel, as a whole, is still in a state of degeneracy. The practices of the Tent of God are still not in keeping with those found in Scripture. So, what we have in this chapter, is Israel on the discipline cycle. Their deliverer is among them, but they have nothing to be delivered from. God puts them in the position of needing Him, and simultaneously destroys the scum of Israel in battle.

We are reintroduced to the Philistines in this chapter. Recall that Joshua conquered most of the Land of Promise, but there remained several pockets of resistance, the Philistines making up the largest and most powerful group of heathen living *within* Israel along what today is the Gaza Strip. In Joshua 13:2–3, God ominously warns Joshua of the unconquered Philistines: “**This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and all the land of the Geshurites; from Shihor, which is east of Egypt, even as far as the border of Ekron to the north (it is counted as Canaanite); the five lords of the Philistines: the Gadite, the Ashdodite, the Ashkelonite, the Gittite, the Ekronite; and the Avvite.**” And, of all the tribes, Judah and Simeon were the most circumspect when it came to securing their land, being the only tribes to continue with their campaign against the resident heathen. They in fact took portions of the Philistine territory in Judges 1:18, capturing Gaza, Ashkelon and Ekron (this would have been circa 1400–1350 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> However, the Philistines maintained a strong foothold in the valley, along with one city near the sea (Ashdod), and eventually took their territory back. In fact, by 1100 B.C., the Philistines were in control of various portions of Israel and Israel was under Philistine control.<sup>2</sup> All of this would make perfect sense, as Israel, upon entering and conquering the land, was vigorous and strong, and spiritually stable. However, after the passing of two centuries, they had become weak, indolent and spiritually fickle. We would therefore expect a people as tenacious as the Philistines to eventually come back as a serious force, which began in Judges 13 and continues until this time.

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<sup>1</sup> The short view of Israel history puts this between 1230–1210 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> The *short chronology* places this around 1070 B.C. The long chronologies begin the 40 year reign of Philistia anywhere from 1114 B.C. (Reese) to 1076 B.C. (Klassen).

The Time Frame of 1Sam. 4

What we know:

Judges 13:1	● We know that God gave Israel into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.
Judges 13:2–23	● Now, in chapter 13, we first have mentioned the rule of the Philistines and then we have the prophecy of the birth of Samson.
Judges 14:4	● Now, exactly what Philistine control entailed is unclear, but apparently not only did the Philistines have a strong foothold in Israeli land (which they had for hundreds of years), but Israel was apparently under the rule of the Philistines.
Judges 14:4–5	● This would reasonably mean occupation by Philistines and that Israel would pay them tribute. This was during the time when Samson was a young man and still hanging with his parents. This did not mean that the Philistines ruled over all of Israel, but they certainly ruled over a significant portion (more than likely the southern mid-section and possibly the south as well).
Judges 15:20	● We also know that Samson ruled over Israel 20 years and that Eli was a judge for 40 years. Also, they were judges over the same general portion of Israel—the central and south central portion of Israel.
1Sam. 4:18	
1Sam. 4:9	● Finally, it appears as though Israel’s slavery to Egypt is in the past.

What we conclude:

- Samson and Eli were probably not coterminous judges, as they judged over the same area. Therefore, we have at least 60 years of rule, first by Samson and then by Eli.
- If Samson was born around the time of Philistine domination, and if he dies after judging for 20 years, we would guess that Samson was a young judge (beginning around age 20), and that he died after 20 years of judging (at age 40).
- When Samson died, he took several thousand Philistines with him—mostly Philistine royalty (Judges 16:28–31).
- Therefore, Samson’s last act probably ended Philistine rule.
- When we return to this time frame in the book of Samuel, it does not appear as though the Philistines are ruling over Israel, but that they are back to land skirmishes again. When the Philistines discuss the problem of the Ark being brought into the camp of Israel, one in authority remarks, “Take courage and be men, O Philistines, so that you do not become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you. Therefore, be men and fight!” (1Sam. 4:9).
- Therefore, the forty years of Eli’s reign would be marked by Philistine aggression and a back and forth control over certain border portions of Israel, but it does not appear as though the Philistines ruled over Israel during this time period.

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**Other theories (Barnes):**

- Barnes notes that the Israeli servitude to the Philistines lasted for forty years (Judges 13:1) and that it seems to have terminated during the 20<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (1Sam. 7:2, 13–14).
- Philistine rule seems to have begun before the birth of Samson (Judges 13:5).
- Since Samson's judgeship lasted for 20 years (Judges 15:20), then Barnes concludes that the latter portion of the judgeship of Eli and the early portion of Samuel's judgeship should have been coterminous with the life of Samson.<sup>3</sup>
- Now, let me take this a little further than Barnes does. What this would mean is that Samson would have been born during the judgeship of Eli, and that the 20 years of Samson's judgeship would be roughly coterminous with the last 20 years of Eli's judgeship.
- This would allow for us to compress the time of Eli, Samson and Samuel by at least 20 years.
- This theory would require there to be two primary judges functioning in the same area without the writings of one ever mentioning the other.
- Let me remind of that Samson was kind of goofy and charismatic only insofar as his great strength and stature. He would not have been my first choice as a judge.
- We know little about Eli's competence as a judge. He raised two crappy children; but he appears to do a good job in guiding Samuel. Bear in mind that, when you raise children, they do have their own volition, and that there is not much you can do about that. That is, you can be the best parent in the world and end up with a loser for a son (or daughter) if they get themselves caught up in negative volition. However, I have seriously digressed from my topic, which is the time line.

**Conclusions:** The time line here really hinges upon when did the Philistines cease ruling over Israel. They ceased being a major thorn in the side of Israel during 1Sam. 7:13–14; this does not necessarily mean *that* is when they stopped ruling over Israel. Their rule over Israel probably concluded much earlier than that, as strongly implied by 1Sam. 4:9.

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Israel will go to war against the Philistines and they will be soundly defeated. They return with the Ark of God as a good luck charm. In all of this, they do not consult God, Eli or Samuel. They just grab the Ark and return to battle, and (1) they lose; (2) the unbelieving, degenerate sons of Eli are killed; and, (3) the Ark is taken by the Philistines in battle, something which shocks and surprises both sides at battle.

We also have, with this chapter, a series of judgements upon the house of Eli. Keil and Delitzsch: *Israel...suffered a still greater defeat, in which Eli's sons fell and the ark was taken by the Philistines (vv. 3–11). The aged Eli, terrified at such a loss, fell from his seat and broke his neck (vv. 12–18); and his daughter-in-law was taken in labour, and died after giving birth to a son (vv. 19–22). With these occurrences the judgment began to burst upon the house of Eli.*<sup>4</sup>

You may recall that the sentence structure and vocabulary in the previous chapter, as well as in chapter 1, has been fairly simple. It is kind of like reading the writings of John in the Greek; chapters 1 and 3 would be good Hebrew primers. Although the sentence structure in this chapter is not complex, it is more complex than that of those other two chapters. The vocabulary has become less repetitive, and there is an introduction of vocabulary not found in previous chapters (the latter of which may be explained because of the subject matter change). However, what would appear to be the case is that there is a new author.

Please allow me a digression at this point.

<sup>3</sup> Barnes' Notes; 1 Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 397.

## Text Altering in the Scriptures

One of the things which I have dealt with on a number of occasions is the accusation that some organization came along and changed the Scriptures to suit their doctrinal perspective. Usually the Catholic Church is blamed for this. These accusations are made by people who do not have any clue about the Scriptures; they have made up their mind that some big organization wants them to think in a certain way or wants to control them, and so, therefore, this big organization must have come in and made widespread changes to the Bible in order to advance their peculiar doctrines. This is such a gross misconception, but it seems to be quite widespread.

1. The book of Samuel, as you have already seen, is one of the books with the greatest number of variant readings. The Greek (which is a translation) and the Hebrew are, at times, radically different.
2. For instance, in **v. 15** of this chapter, Eli is said to be 98 in the Hebrew and Latin, 90 in the Greek, and 78 in the Syriac. The difference in the Greek could be explained by a portion of the manuscript being unreadable; the difference in the Syriac can be explained by a mistaken letter.
3. In **v. 16**, for some reason, a portion of v. 14 is repeated in v. 16 in the LXX (this could be due to the Hebrew manuscript from which they worked had this repetition as well). This repetition actually makes the narrative slightly more clear. Apart from that, the only differences are those which are probably based upon the translation, rather than being real differences.
4. In **v. 17**, a man who brings the news to Shiloh is called a *young man* in the Greek, but *the bringer of news* in the Hebrew.
5. In **v. 18** of this chapter, the Greek has that Eli broke his back and the Hebrew tells us that he broke his neck. The problem is one word which is found nowhere else and has no easy cognates which would help to determine the meaning. Therefore, even though the Latin, Syriac and Hebrew all agree that this word is *neck*; this is not something that we can conclude with 100% accuracy.
6. Now, I am not about to spend several hours dealing with each and every difference between the Hebrew and the most ancient translation of the Bible; however, what should be clear is, all of these differences are minor, many of them can be easily explained, and none of them have any sort of influence of some religious authority attempting to lay down this or that doctrine which was not there before.
7. When dealing with the disputed readings of the Old Testament, this tends to be the case throughout. As you can see, there are 4 verses right in a row in 1Samuel 4 which are problematic. Samuel is one of the most problematic books in the Bible when it comes to determining what the original text should be. However, in no case that I have come across, do we find some verse which may have been altered in order to reflect this or that doctrinal perspective.
8. The KJV had, as its oldest Old Testament manuscripts texts from the tenth century A.D. These are known as the Masoretic texts. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947 (and some in subsequent years), we got to look at texts which could be dated as far back as 100 B.C. (possibly even earlier). We have also a plethora of Greek, Latin and Syriac manuscripts which have been uncovered as well, all of which pre-date the Masoretic text upon which the KJV was based. The result is, there have been a few changes and a few questions have been raised about a number of passages.
9. However, and listen well, there has been no evidence of manuscript tampering where this or that doctrinal perspective was slipped into the text. A huge percentage of the differences can be explained, even if we might still disagree as to which is accurate.
10. But this is key: there is no fundamental doctrine which is affected by any of these manuscript differences. Many English translations make mention of these differences (NASB, NRSV, NKJV), and these differences are well-known to scholars throughout the world. However, no cult or denomination has seized upon this or that difference and based some new or strange doctrine upon it.

## Text Altering in the Scriptures

11. With regards to the New Testament, without going into any great depth: we have over 24,000 New Testament manuscripts (partial or whole), some of which date back as early as 125 A.D. This is unheard of in ancient literature; that is, most of our ancient literature is separated in time from its writing typically by a 1000 years. Furthermore, the number of manuscripts which we have from any ancient literature tends to be a number that you can count on the fingers of one hand. There are three strong exceptions to this. We have 193 copies of the writing of Sophocles (the intervening time period, by the way, is 1400 years); we have 200 copies of a work by Demosthenes (1300 intervening years) and a remarkable 643 copies of Homer's Iliad (which only 500 intervening years). So, we have about a fortieth of the number of manuscripts which we have for the New Testament.
12. Do you grasp what I am telling you here? The New Testament is completely unique when compared to any ancient manuscript.
13. If there was some evil organization which came along and altered New Testament manuscripts in order to reflect this or that doctrinal perspective, when did this occur? The Catholic church did not come on the scene until the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. We know how Jerome translated the Old and New Testaments—we have copies of his Latin work. We also know that he did an outstanding job in this regard. So far, I have come across not a single passage which reflects *Catholic doctrine* as opposed to any other viewpoint in Jerome's translation. Now, the Catholics do have some peculiar doctrines, and they come from two sources: (1) the Catholics recognize the Apocrypha<sup>5</sup> as divine (which it is not) and the pope has the authority to make papal pronouncements which overrule Scripture and/or previous Catholic doctrines. When you have that kind of authority, you do not need to alter Scripture. Furthermore, throughout the Middle Ages, the Catholic church vigorously acted to keep the Bible out of the hands of common men (when common men got their hands on Scripture, what happened was the Reformation—which was a return to Scripture and Scriptural authority).
14. We have far too many New Testament manuscripts from a period of time when there was no ruling body, no large church organization and no large religious organization which would have altered the Scriptures.
15. To get an idea as to what has to be done in order to propagate a particular viewpoint which is not consistent with Scripture, we go to Robert Funk, a theologian who believed that we have a mistaken view of Jesus, and that He was a great religious leader, but not divine; and He certainly did not do anything miraculous. In order for Funk and his followers to come to this incorrect view of Jesus, they must throw out 80% of the gospels. That is, they must disregard 80% of eyewitness testimony in order to promulgate their own distorted beliefs.
16. However, when it comes to disputed readings in the New Testament, we are dealing with 0.5% of the New Testament. By the way, no other example of ancient literature can make that same claim to accuracy.
17. By way of example, one might think that Shakespear, who wrote about 300 years ago, and after the advent of printing, that his writings would be as accurate, if not more so, than the New Testament, since the New Testament was written 2000 years ago, long before the advent of printing. In the New Testament, with the exception of perhaps as many as 20 verses, scholars have come to agree on correct text. However, if we look at Shakespear's 37 plays, there are a 100 readings which are still in dispute, which readings materially affect the meaning of the passages in which they occur.<sup>6</sup> The New Testament is far more accurate in its transmission than one of the most famous writers of our recent history.

The conclusion is, there has never been any organization which has made great hidden changes to the Old or New Testaments in order to promulgate some particular set of doctrines.

<sup>5</sup> These are Jewish writings written in between the Old and New Testaments.

<sup>6</sup> Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Historical Evidences for the Christian Faith, Volume I*; Thomas Nelson Publishers (Nashville). ©1972, 1979 by Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc.; pp. 19–20. He too this from John Lea, *The Greatest Book in the World*; Philadelphia, 1929; p. 15.

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All that is found in the next section is simply repeated from the end of 1Sam. 3.

**And so was a word of Samuel to all Israel.** 1Samuel 4:1a **And thus the word of Samuel came [lit., was] to all Israel.**

**And in this way, the word of Samuel came to all Israel.**

Let's see how others have rendered this:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And the word of Samuel came to pass to all Israel. This is actually the end of 1Sam. 3:21 in the Latin.
Masoretic Text	And so was a word of Samuel to all Israel.
Septuagint	[nothing]

Significant differences:

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Then Samuel would speak to the whole nation of Israel. [given as a part of 1Sam. 3]
REB	Samuel's word had authority throughout Israel.
TEV	And when Samuel spoke, all Israel listened.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	And Samuel spoke to all Israel. [given as a part of 1Sam. 3]
JPS (Tanakh)	...and Samuel's word went forth to all Israel. [given as a part of 1Sam. 3]

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel.
Young's Literal Translation	And the word of Samuel is to all Israel,...

**What is the gist of this verse?** God's teaching went through Samuel; and Samuel's word was taught throughout all of Israel.

### 1Samuel 4:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224



## 1Samuel 4:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAWR]	word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
Sh <sup>e</sup> mûw'êl (שְׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	every, each, all of, all; any of	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Yis <sup>e</sup> râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

**Translation:** *And thus the word of Samuel came* [lit., was] *to all Israel*. As is quite obvious, a great many modern translations append chapter 3 with the first half of v. 1 of the next chapter (this includes, but it not limited to, the CEV, TEV, the JPS, the NRSV, the REB, the NAB, the NJB, the NASB, and God's Word™). What follows is: *Now Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek* (1Sam. 4:1b). As you see, there is little or no connect between v. 1a and 1b. Who made this original separation and why is a mystery. However, they did a pretty sloppy job with the book of Samuel (as we will see in subsequent chapters).

This verse belongs with the previous chapter and was exegeted in great detail there. However, there is an alternate explanation, which is that Samuel incites Israel to go to war with the Philistines, which would place v. 1a with 1b. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that the sense of v. 1 is, *At the word or instigation of Samuel, Israel went out against the Philistines to battle*.<sup>7</sup> As you may recall, Barnes rejects this, saying that such an interpretation does not reflect the natural understanding of these words.<sup>8</sup> A primary reason that I would go along with Barnes is that, Samuel seems to be completely immersed in the plan of God in 1Sam. 3:21 (*And Jehovah appeared again at Shiloh, because Jehovah revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of Jehovah*). V. 4:1a seems to naturally follow this. However, in the war against the Philistines, Israel will lose, lose badly, and then make a critical error of misjudging their next step. In other words, there is nothing in this war with the Philistines which smacks of the Lord except for judgment against Israel. This is incongruous with 1Sam. 3:21. The best we can expect is that Samuel was growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but Israel did not correspondingly advance as a nation.

Now, it is unclear as to how long Samuel ruled over Israel up until this point in time. 1Sam. 3:21–4:1a simply summarizes Samuel's ministry before God. Where we are in this ministry come the next half of the verse is unclear. However, some explanation is necessary in order to understand Israel's behavior.

<sup>7</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 397.

<sup>8</sup> Barnes' *Notes*; *1 Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 14. Edersheim also writes *We regard the first clause of 1Sam. 4:1 as entirely unconnected with the account of Israel's expedition against the Philistines*. Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 418.



Edersheim provides that for us: *Samuel's ministry restored and strengthened belief in the reality of God's presence in His temple, and in His help and power. In short, it would tend to keep alive and increase historical, although not spiritual belief in Israel. Such feelings, when uncombined with repentance, would lead to a revival of religiousness rather than of religion; to confidence in the possession of what, dissociated from their higher bearing, were merely externals; to a confusion of symbols with reality; and to such a reliance on their calling and privileges, as would have converted the wonder-working Presence of Jehovah in the midst of His believing people into a magic power attaching to certain symbols, the religion of Israel into mere externalism, essentially heathen in its character, and the calling of God's people into a warrant for carnal pride of nationality. In truth, however different in manifestation, the sin of Israel was essentially the same as that of Eli's sons. Accordingly it had to be shown in reference to both, that neither high office nor yet the possession of high privileges entitles to the promises attached to them, irrespective of a deeper relationship between God and His servants.*<sup>9</sup> Now, unless you are fairly familiar with the next couple chapters, this quote may not have meant much to you. I will repeat it once we complete this study.

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## Israel is Defeated Before the Philistines

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

And so went out Israel to meet Philistines to the war and so they camped beside the Ebenezer and so Philistines camped in Aphek. 1Samuel 4:1b

[Septuagint: *And it was in those days that Gentiles assembled in order to war against Israel.*] Therefore, Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle; they camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek.

At that time, the Philistines mustered their armies to war with Israel. Therefore, Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle. Israel camped beside Ebenezer and the Philistines camped in Aphek.

First, what others have done:

### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight: and Israel went out to war against the Philistines, and camped by the Stone of help. And the Philistines came to Aphec...
Masoretic Text	And so went out Israel to meet Philistines to the war and so they camped beside the Ebenezer and so Philistines camped in Aphek.
Peshitta	Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and encamped by the Rock of Help; and the Philistines encamped at Aphek.
Septuagint	And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered themselves together against Israel to war; and Israel went out to meet them and encamped at Aben-ezer, and the Philistines encamped in Aphek.

Significant differences: The biggest difference is that which is most obvious: the first sentence of chapter 4 in the LXX and the Vulgate is not found in the MT. The addition of this sentence makes more sense than its absence (which is the reason it is excluded from many translations).

<sup>9</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 418–419.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

NLT	At that time Israel was at war with the Philistines. The Israelite army was camped near Ebenezer, and the Philistines were at Aphek.
REB	The time came when the Philistines mustered for battle against Israel, and the Israelites, marching out to meet them, encamped near Eben-ezer.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

JPS (Tanakh)	Israel marched out to engage the Philistines in battle; they encamped near Ebenezer, while the Philistines encamped at Aphek.
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**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	Now Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek.
NRSV	In those days the Philistines mustered for war against Israel, and Israel went out to battle against them; they encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek.
Young's Updated LT	...and Israel went out to meet the Philistines for battle, and they encamp by Ebenezer, and the Philistines have encamped in Aphek,...

**What is the gist of this verse?** The troubles between the Jews and the Philistines continue; the Philistines gather their troops in Aphek to fight against Israel and the Israelites camp in Ebenezer.

You will note that the Septuagint and the NRSV begins v. 1b differently. They insert: *And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines mustered themselves for battle against Israel...* This is what we find in the Greek and several translations go with the Greek at this point (the NRSV, the REB, the NAB and the NJB are four examples).

Ancient Renderings of 1 Samuel 4:1b		
Massoretic Text and Targum (the Aramaic Paraphrase)	The Greek Septuagint	The Latin Vulgate
And so went out Israel to meet Philistines to the war and so they camped beside the Ebenezer and so Philistines camped in Aphek.	And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered themselves together against Israel to war; and Israel went out to meet them and encamped at Aben-ezer, and the Philistines encamped in Aphek.	And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered themselves together to war; and Israel went out to meet them and encamped at Aben-ezer, and the Philistines encamped in Aphek.

I include this because this verse represents one of the greatest differences in text of the ancient versions. You may wonder, why am I so anal about these differences? In various criticisms of Scripture, particular Old Testament Scripture, often the charge is laid, *how can you be so certain that this is what was in the Bible? It was written thousands of years ago.* It is a verse like this which answers that charge. We have great differences between the ancient versions in several passages like this one, and, although I personally have my preferences, theologians will still disagree about which one is correct (witnessed by that fact that various English translations follow different versions at this point). However, what is most important to note is that, despite all of these differences, the essential meaning of this verse remains unchanged. So, certainly we have a disagreement as to which text is accurate (that is, which text most closely matches the autographs). However, the meaningful difference is minimal.<sup>10</sup> Now, what the Greek does appear to indicate is that the Philistines were the aggressors.

<sup>10</sup> This is by way of the New King James Version, Wide Margin Reference Edition; Thomas Nelson Publishers; ©1994; p 243.

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Since we have some text which is found in the Greek (as well as the Latin), but not in the Hebrew, we examine the Greek text here:

1Samuel 4:1a from the Greek Septuagint			
Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
καί (Καί) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
gínomai ( γίνομαι) [pronounced <i>GIN-oh-mī</i> ]	<i>to become [something it was not before]; to be born; to arise, come about; to be made, to be created; to happen, to take place</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, aorist passive indicative	Strong's #1096
en (ἐν) [pronounced <i>en</i> ]	<i>in, by means of, with</i>	preposition	Strong's #1722
tais (ταῖς) [pronounced <i>taîs</i> ]	<i>to the, for the; in the; by the, by means of the</i>	feminine plural definite article; dative, locative and instrumental cases	Strong's #3588
hêmera (ἡμέρα) [pronounced <i>hay-MEH-raw</i> ]	<i>day, daytime; 24-hour day; period of time</i>	feminine plural noun; dative, locative and instrumental cases	Strong's #2250
ἐκείναις	<i>them, those; to those [them]; in those [them]; by those [them]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural pronoun or remote demonstrative; locative, dative or instrumental case	Strong's #1565

**Translation:** [And it was in those days...](#) This sounds like the beginning of a new chapter or a completely new topic. *Around the time that God spoke to Samuel,* might be a way of paraphrasing this.

1Samuel 4:1b from the Greek Septuagint			
Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
καί (Καί) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
sunathroizô ( συναθροίζω) [pronounced <i>soon-ath-ROID-zoh</i> ]	<i>to gather together with others; to assemble, to convene, to call together; to be gathered together, to come together</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Present middle indicative	Strong's #4867

### 1Samuel 4:1b from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
allophulos (ἄλλόφυλος) [pronounced <i>al-LOW-fu-loss</i> ]	<i>foreign</i> (from a Jewish standpoint), <i>Gentile</i> , <i>heathen</i>	masculine plural noun (or adjective), nominative case	Strong's #246
eis (εἰς) [pronounced <i>ICE</i> ]	<i>to, toward; into; unto, in order to, for, for the purpose of, for the sake of, on account of</i>	directional preposition	Strong's #1519
polemos (πόλεμος) [pronounced <i>POHL-em-oss</i> ]	<i>a war, fight, battle; strife, warfare; dispute, quarrel</i>	masculine singular noun, accusative case	Strong's #4171
ἐπί (ἐπί) [pronounced <i>eh-PEE</i> ]	<i>to, towards; on, upon; at, by, before; over, against; to, across</i>	preposition of superimposition; a relation of motion and direction with accusative case	Strong's #1909
Israêl (Ἰσραήλ) [pronounced <i>is-rah-ALE</i> ]	is transliterated <i>Israel</i>	Proper singular noun; masculine, Indeclinable	Strong's #2474

**Translation:** ...that Gentiles assembled in order to war against Israel. We have foreign troops gathering together to go to war against Israel. That the Jews have constant difficulties in the Land of Promise today should be no surprise to us.

That we have this line here seems to complete this verse and give the topic a true beginning. On the other hand, it could have been inserted for that purpose, and added so that the Philistines are seen as the aggressors here.

### 1Samuel 4:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
Yis'raêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-row-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

## 1Samuel 4:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896
This is a homonym; the other qârâ' means <i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to assemble</i> .			
Pîlishîy (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mil <sup>e</sup> châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced mil-khaw-MAW]	<i>battle, war</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536

**Translation:** *Therefore, Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle;...* It is at this point that I see a connection between v. 1a and 1b—Samuel begins to take a position of authority and begins his ministry, which includes the dissemination of truth. So, as truth from Samuel is in Israel, Israel goes out to battle, away from the truth. It is not that it is wrong for Israel to go to war against the Philistines, it is simply the fact that they do so apart from any spiritual preparation. The word of Samuel has just come to Israel and Israel goes away from it. Just because there are a handful of good men in Israel does not mean that Israel has recovered as a nation. A cancer of villainy has developed in Israel, which cancer must be removed. A callousness toward the revealed Word of God has developed. No one in this chapter asks God, Eli or Samuel for guidance. They simply go to war against the Philistines and at no step along the way do they inquire of God's will. What we find with v. 1a is not so much a verse which must be placed with chapter 3 or with chapter 4 of Samuel, but a verse which is a transition verse. It takes us from God revealing His Word to Samuel in the Tent of God to the moving away of Israel from the Word of God. In a time when a division of chapters meant nothing, we would expect to find transitional statements which take us from one scenario to another, smoothly and simply.

Who they are meeting are the *Philistines*, who have remained Israel's bitter enemies (in the Greek, it simply reads *them*; in the Hebrew, it reads *Philistines*).<sup>11</sup> We last encountered the Philistines in Judges 13–16, which seems like eons ago, but, in terms of time, this was recent or almost simultaneous to the events of these first few chapters of Samuel. Some teach that no interval of time has taken place since the death of Samson. In fact, Barnes even suggests that the birth of Samuel and the events of these first few chapters of 1Samuel could even be simultaneous to the last several years of the life of Samson. Samson was a judge in Dan, whereas Eli was a judge in Ephraim/Benjamin. Now, these were adjacent territories, but this does not mean that Samson and Eli could not have had coterminous and similar authority in their lifetimes. On the other hand, I believe that there is clearly a break in time between Samson's death and the birth of Samuel (during which time period, Eli was a judge and the Philistines did not rule over Israel). My thinking is that, Sampson, for many years, kept the Philistines out of Dan, but, at his death, the movement of the Philistines continued, until even the tribe of Dan was forced to take property in the far northern portion of Israel. But my basic point here is that establishing an exact time line is difficult; however, it is quite clear that Israel continued to be at war with the Philistines. Samson killed a great many

<sup>11</sup> One reason for this difference, is, in the Greek, we have *the Philistines muster for war against Israel*, so the two parties are already introduced. Therefore, the *Philistines* can be then referred to as *them*. In the Hebrew, this first phrase of v. 4:1b is missing; therefore, we must have the identity of the Philistines given.

Philistines at his death, which very likely ended Philistia rule over Israel, but did not end the ongoing Israeli-Philistine conflict. In fact, Israel's only significant military leader, Samson, seemed to be out of the picture altogether now.<sup>12</sup> We covered the **Doctrine of the Philistines** back in Judges 14:4; however, it would not hurt for you to review that doctrine.

We continue this sentence with a lamed preposition, the definite article and the feminine singular noun *battle, war*. This gives us, so far: **And so Israel went out to meet [the] Philistines to the war...**

The Egyptian texts from the time of Rameses III (1198–1167 B.C.) mentions the Philistines, naming them as among the *Sea peoples* of the Mediterranean Sea. What appears to be the case is that the Israelites moved into Palestine slightly before the invasion of the Philistines. The Philistines made several moves along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea to find an area suitable for them. They were rebuffed by the Egyptians, but they were able to chisel a portion of land out of Palestine for themselves along the sea. Robert Gordon: *Since such a limited terrain was incapable of satisfying the territorial ambitions of both incoming groups, conflict was unavoidable.*<sup>13</sup>

### 1Samuel 4:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
chânah (חָנָה) [pronounced khaw-NAW]	<i>to bivouac, to camp, to encamp in [or, against], to set up camp</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2583 BDB #333
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
ʾEben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH <sup>B</sup> -ven]	<i>stone and is transliterated Eben</i>	proper masculine noun with the definite article (meaning that it is not a construct here)	Strong's #68 BDB #6
ʿezer (עֶזֶר) [pronounced GAY-zer]	<i>help and is transliterated Ezer</i>	proper masculine noun with the definite article	Strong's #72 BDB #7

Together, these are transliterated either *Ebenezer* or *Eben-ezer*. The definite articles are ignored in the transliteration.

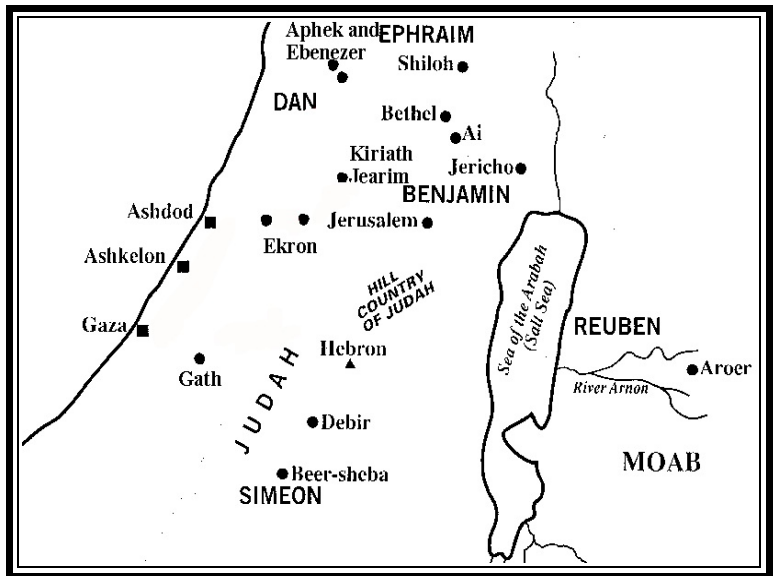
**Translation: ...they camped beside Ebenezer...** In the next portion of v. 1, we have the definite article followed by feminine singular noun ʿe<sup>b</sup>ven (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH<sup>B</sup>-ven] is found over 250 times in the Old Testament and is consistently translated *stone*. Because of the definite article, this word would not be a construct. Then we have the definite article again followed by the masculine singular noun ʿezer (עֶזֶר) [pronounced GAY-zer], which means *help*. This gives us: **...and so they camped beside the stone the help...** Since this cannot be a construct relationship (i.e., *the stone of help*), our other option is that this is a proper noun, which is what this appears to be, and it is transliterated either *Ebenezer* or *Eben-ezer*. This would give us: **...beside the Ebenezer...** instead.

<sup>12</sup> Samson was not a military leader, per se. He operated on his own, but was about as effective as an army of Israelites.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 93.



The site of Ebenezer is only found in this passage. It is obviously near Aphek (mentioned below), probably to the east of it (as the Philistines occupied the land on the west and the Israelites occupied the land to the east). The Open Bible is more dogmatic about this and states that Ebenezer is 20 miles (32 km) west of Shiloh and that Aphek is about 3 miles (5 km) northwest of Ebenezer.<sup>14</sup> Ebenezer was the site of two battles between Israel and the Philistines, both recorded here. The first battle is mentioned in vv. 1–2, and it is actually unclear whether it occurred in Ebenezer, Aphek or somewhere between. 4000 Israelites will die in this battle. The second battle in Ebenezer is found in vv. 10 and it appears as though the Philistines went to the Israelites in Ebenezer, as the Ark which they will capture is said to have been taken from Ebenezer to Ashdod (1Sam. 5:1). Some scholars,



according to ZPEB, believe that the modern site of Ebenezer is Majdel Yaba, which is northeast of Jaffa.<sup>15</sup> Now, we will hear the name *Ebenezer* again in 1Sam. 7:12 when the forces of Israel defeat the Philistines. Samuel takes a stone and sets it there, between Mizpah and Shen, as a memorial to the battle. Since Aphek, mentioned here, and Mizpah mentioned in 1Sam. 7:12, are about 25 miles apart,<sup>16</sup> this would indicate that the two *Ebenezer*'s are different.<sup>17</sup> One *Ebenezer* is a stone which is a memorial; and the other is the site of two battles, both of which saw the sound defeat of Israel. Although I would like them to represent the same place, it just does not seem reasonable without completely rethinking the locations of Aphek or Mizpah. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that Samuel named this camp many years after the battle in this chapter,<sup>18</sup> in 1Sam. 7:12, but that would be illogical from the standpoint of location. Although Keil and Delitzsch often provide excellent insights to the understanding of various passages in the Word of God, they appear to be somewhat off their game so far in this chapter.

### 1Samuel 4:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>h</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
chânah (חָנָה) [pronounced khaw-NAW]	<i>to bivouac, to camp, to encamp in [or, against], to set up camp</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2583 BDB #333

<sup>14</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 370.

<sup>15</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 2, p. 181.

<sup>16</sup> Granted, there are several *Aphek*'s and several *Mizpah*'s in Scripture; furthermore, the exact site of Aphek in Ephraim is unknown. However, in this part of Israel, none of the maps put these two cities closer than 25 miles, which is a great distance in the ancient world.

<sup>17</sup> Aphek is in the northwestern corner of Ephraim. Mizpah is in Benjamin, near its northern border. Mizpah is fairly close to the south central border of Ephraim. Given that the territory of Dan was mostly in the hands of the Philistines, it would be reasonable for them to approach Israel near either of those cities, both of which are only 5–10 miles from the border of Dan.

<sup>18</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 397.

## 1Samuel 4:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בֵּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʾĀphêq (אַפְהֶק) [pronounced uh-FAYK]	<i>to hold, to be strong; transliterated Aphek</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #663 BDB #67

**Translation:** ...while the Philistines camped in Aphek. We covered the **Doctrine of Aphek** back in Joshua 12:18, and came up with two or three different *Aphek*'s from Scripture (and another in the holy land outside of Scripture). This one would have been in the far west portion of Ephraim, next to the territory of Dan, which was controlled by the Philistines. It would make sense for the Philistines to continue to pressure the Israelites for more territory via more military action, and moving in this particular direction also makes perfect sense.

One of the discussions that we had in the introduction is, *Is Israel under Philistine domination at this time?* An answer to this question will help us to put together a time line. Throughout most of Israel's early history, the Philistines occupied the Mediterranean coast of Palestine (the name *Palestine*, by the way, comes from *Philistine*). Early on, the Philistines moved into Dan and Dan went northward (Judges 18). In fact, almost all of Israel was marked by an inability to remove the pagan populations from their territory (Judges 1:21–36). So, in other words, even if some of the indigenous population of Palestine remained and occupied territory, this is not the same as that group ruling over Israel (ala Judges 2:11–23 3:13–14 4:1–3 6:1–7 etc.). So, my point in this is that the Philistines lived side-by-side the Israelites for hundreds of years. They were generally a thorn in the side of the Israelites throughout that time period. However, there was a specific time period, 40 years, during which the Philistines actually dominated Israel (Judges 13:1). When that domination ended is where theologians disagree. One theory (mine), is that it ended when Samson killed thousands of Philistine aristocrats and leaders in Gaza (Judges 16:21–30). Another reasonable theory is that their domination of Israel ended about 20 years into the judgeship of Samuel (1Sam. 7). It is clear that 1Sam. 7 marks an end to serious Philistine aggression against Israel, and it is possible that official ends the 40 years of domination (nowhere previously do we have any language which specifically marks the end of Philistine domination as we do for the other dominations). I bring all of this up because in this passage, the Philistines are in Aphek, which is past the former territory of Dan, which would certainly imply that the Philistines occupied the area of Dan. In 1Sam. 6, Israel will face down the Philistines in Beth-shemesh, which is also on the border of Dan, again, away from the Philistine coastline, which implies that the Philistines controlled the territory of Dan. However, so far, none of these points allow us to unequivocally conclude when the forty years of Philistine domination were completed.

To sum up, we have essentially two possible, but very similar scenarios: (1) The Philistines control a significant portion of Israel, although there are apparently a few Israelites still living in that portion of land (this would be the Mediterranean coastline and the former territory of Dan); and they, the Philistines, are looking to take control of more territory. Or, (2) The Philistines rule over a portion of Israel, meaning that they occupy and control territory which is simultaneously occupied by Israelites and that they collect some sort of tribute from Israel (think *protection money*). What the Philistines are doing is simply expanding both their territory and influence over Israel. There are several factors at play here, some practical and others psychological. As a population increases, it requires more resources and, therefore, more land. The Israelites had no negative appreciable affect on the population growth of the Philistines, so, as they increased in size, they required more land and resources. Secondly, you have the psychological drive of the leaders of the Philistines. People who go into public service often suffer from power lust. Their seemingly altruistic motives of *making a difference* really boils down to the fact that they want power and control. They may rationalize that with their power and control, they will make a difference, but it is often this power and control which are the true motivating factors. The population in general also looks to expand, and again, for the two similar motives. We might not be able to look at the United States now and grasp this—after all, we have no desire to take over any portion of Canada or Mexico. However, at our inception, with a relatively small population,

we sought, mostly as a nation of individuals, to take and dominate the land which is now the United States. Point in fact is that we did not really need all of the territory which we took. Furthermore, we were not driven by politicians to take the land, but by our own lusts (generally, it was for land and wealth which the west promised). To see a more modern-day equivalent of this is to examine the very land of Palestine which we are studying now. If you examine the land of the middle east and that controlled by Arabic nations, you will note that the land occupied by Israel is a mere postage stamp by comparison. However, some groups of Arabs are up in arms over this extremely small Israeli-occupied area and will sacrifice their own lives to take a city block here and a few square miles there away from Israel. Now, much of that motivation is fueled by hatred, which is certainly another factor in our study of the ancient land of Palestine.

**And so prepared Philistines to meet Israel and so permitted [or, *forsook*] the battle; and so was defeated Israel to faces of Philistines and so they struck in the army in the field about four thousand a man.**

1Samuel  
4:2

**Then the Philistines prepared to meet Israel; and the battle spread [out]; and Israel was defeated before the Philistines; and they struck down from the army in the field about 4000 men.**

**The Philistines prepared themselves to meet Israel in battle. As the battle neared an end, Israel was soundly defeated by the Philistines, who had killed about 4000 from Israel's army in the field.**

First, what others have done:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Latin Vulgate	And put their army in array against Israel. And when they had joined battle, Israel turned their backs to the Philistines: and there were slain in that fight, here and there in the fields, about four thousand men.
Masoretic Text	And so prepared Philistines to meet Israel and so permitted [or, <i>forsook</i> ] the battle; and so was defeated Israel to faces of Philistines and so they struck in the army in the field about four thousand a man.
Peshitta	And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel; and when they fought, Israel was defeated before the Philistines; and there were about 4000 men slain on the battlefield.
Septuagint	And the Philistines prepared to fight with Israel, and the battle was turned against them; and the men of Israel fell before the Philistines, and there were struck in the battle in the field four thousand men.

Significant differences: The differences found here might be a result of an attempt to translate from the Hebrew into the Greek. In any case, the differences are not serious. The Latin is also very different, which suggests that there was probably a problem with making sense out of the Hebrew.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

NAB	The Philistines then drew up in battle formation against Israel. After a fierce struggle Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who slew about four thousand men on the battle field.
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#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	The Philistine organized their troops to meet Israel in battle. As the battle spread, [the Philistines defeated Israel and killed about 4,000 soldiers in the field]. [I included their translation of v. 3 here to complete the thought of v. 2].
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JPS (Tanakh) The Philistines arrayed themselves against Israel; and when the battle was fought, Israel was routed by the Philistines, who slew about four thousand men on the field of battle.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Updated *Emphasized Bible* And the Philistines set themselves in array to meet Israel, and <when the battle spread out> then Israel was struck down before the Philistines, —and there were slain of the army in the field about four thousand men.

NASB And the Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield.

NRSV The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle was joined, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle.

NKJV Then the Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men of the army in the field.

*Young's Updated LT* ...and the Philistines set themselves in array to meet Israel, and the battle spread itself, and Israel is smitten [or, *struck*] before the Philistines, and they smite [*strike*] among the ranks in the field about four thousand men.

**What is the gist of this verse?** In the battle, the Philistines strike down about 4000 of the Israelites.

### 1Samuel 4:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿârak <sup>e</sup> (עָרַךְ) [pronounced gaw-RAK]	<i>to prepare, to organize, to set in order, to arrange in order, to set in a row</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6186 BDB #789
Pʿilish <sup>tiy</sup> (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896
This is a homonym; the other qârâ' means <i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to assemble</i> .			
Yis <sup>ra</sup> ʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

**Translation:** *Then the Philistines prepared to meet Israel;...* The idea is that they simply did not all run out to do battle with one another, but there was organization—at least on the part of the Philistines. They were professionals in the realm of the military and they organized their army to do battle against Israel.

### 1Samuel 4:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâṭash (נָטַשׁ) [pronounced naw-TASH]	<i>to allow to; to leave [forsake], to let go of, to let alone in the sense of to disperse, to be spread out, to let run wild</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5203 BDB #643

Owen gives two different readings here: one reading is *thiṭṭôsh* (טִיטֹשׁ) [pronounced *thiht-TOHSH*], which I cannot find, and therefore cannot give any meaning to. The other is what you see above.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of *nâṭash* (נָטַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-TAHSH*], means *to leave, to forsake, to permit*, and is consistently so rendered in Scripture. Gesenius offers the meaning *to spread out, to disperse*, primarily for this passage, and it does appear as though the Niphal stem means *to spread out* in some passages (e.g., Judges 15:9 2Sam. 5:18 Isa. 16:8). Gordon mentions the alternatives of *clashed, fluctuated, deployed*.<sup>19</sup> Strong's #5203 BDB #643. Taking in the subject, this would read: *...and so the battle would leave...* or *...and so the battle would forsake...* This is a problem, as such a translation makes little sense here. It appears as though we have a disputed meaning here, which results in even ancient translations having some disagreement at this point.

This particular Hebrew word, *nâṭash*, is found in Zodhiates, and in the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance (although alternate meaning of the word is also given in the Concordance—to *spread*). My resources do not indicate that there is an alternate reading (apart from that listed by Owen), but, at best, an alternate meaning. Both the NRSV and God's Word™ simply tell us via footnotes that the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Translators recognize that something is wrong here, even if it is not an alternate reading. The NRSV, NKJV and REB tell us that the battle was *joined* (which does not make much sense either, and is the antithesis of the verb found here). Other translations go freestyle at this point, calling it a fierce struggle (e.g., the NAB and the NJB). I cannot find the corresponding Greek word in my Greek lexicons, and Brenton gives the rendering *was turned against* (and it is possible that the Greeks had the same problem that we do at this point). The simplest way out of this problem is to allow for the additional meaning of *nâṭash to spread out*, a meaning which is very likely found in the Niphal, and just less often in the Qal.<sup>20</sup>

All of this goes to explain why there might be some serious disagreement in the ancient translations at this point.

mil'châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced mil-khaw-MAW]	<i>battle, war</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
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**Translation:** *...and the battle spread [out];...* The Septuagint has that *the battle was turned against them*; Young, Owen, the NASB and God's Word™ have the battle *spreading* (those three are fairly good company to be in, so I will go with that rendering, despite what we have in BDB). Although several translations insert the word *when* at

<sup>19</sup> Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 93.

<sup>20</sup> I explored other options here as well—I looked at transposing the letters, and alternate word which might look like *nâṭash*, but allowing the additional meaning appears to be the easiest fix. Given the scholars who took this route, I am in good company here.

this point, there is no *when*. [...and the battle spread...](#) I am thinking that perhaps this was in contrast to the Philistines organizing themselves and setting themselves up in battle array. Once the war began, the disorganization and chaos of warfare increased.

### 1Samuel 4:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgaph (נָגַף) [pronounced naw-GAHF]	<i>to be struck down, to be smitten, to be hit</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5062 BDB #619
Yis <sup>e</sup> râ`êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l) P)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>e</sup> tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** [...and Israel was defeated before the Philistines;](#)... One of the discussions earlier in this chapter was, *is Israel still under the tyranny of the Philistines?* Although this verse would be a good place to set the record straight, God the Holy Spirit chose not to. We are not clear whether the Philistines rule over a small amount of Israel territory and are looking to expand their influence; we don't know if Israel is under their tyranny and is now revolting against them; we don't know if this is simply another skirmish between the two powers. It appears that Israel does have a reasonable amount of autonomy and there is no language indicating that this is a rebellion by Israel. My thinking is that these are two major powers who exist side-by-side who, each of whom would like to carve out more real estate for themselves. The Philistines appear to be the aggressors (which is more clear in the Greek than in the Hebrew).

### 1Samuel 4:2d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253



## 1Samuel 4:2d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ma'ärekeh (מַעְרֵכָה) [pronounced mah-guh-reh-KEH]	row, rank, battle line; this is also translated armies	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4634 BDB #790
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
sâdeh (שָׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	field, land, country, open field, open country	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כְּ) [pronounced k <sup>eh</sup> ]	as, like, according to; about, approximately	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
'ar <sup>e</sup> bâ'âh (אַרְבָּעָה) [pronounced ahr <sup>e</sup> -baw-GAW]	four	feminine singular construct; numeral	Strong's #702 BDB #916
'ălâphîym (אַלְפִּיִּם) pronounced uh-law-FEEM]	thousands, families, [military] units	masculine plural noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
'îysh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced eesh]	a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** ...and they struck down from the army in the field about 4000 men. We are generally uncertain about the word *thousand* in the Hebrew, and, in this case, it could refer to [military] units,<sup>21</sup> meaning the casualties were much smaller. In the Septuagint, the Syriac and the Vulgate, it reads *and there were struck*; i.e., the word *slain* is in the passive voice. Now, even though there are some difficulties in the rendering of this verse, the final outcome is fairly easy to grasp. In their skirmish with the Philistines, Israel was soundly defeated.

And so come the people unto the camp and so said elders of Israel “For why struck us Y<sup>e</sup>howah the day to faces of Philistines? Let us bring unto us from Shiloh an Ark of Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah and He will come in our midst and He will deliver us from a hand of our enemies.”

1Samuel  
4:3

And the people came into the camp and the elders of Israel said, “Why did Y<sup>e</sup>howah strike us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the Ark of the Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah from Shiloh that He will come into our midst and deliver us from the hand of our enemies.”

<sup>21</sup> As suggested by Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 93.

**When the people of Israel returned to their camp, their elders asked, “Why did Jehovah allow us to be defeated before the Philistines? Let’s bring the Ark of Jehovah from Shiloh, and therefore, God will have to join us in battle and He will then deliver us from the power of our enemies.”**

First, what others have done:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so come the people unto the camp and so said elders of Israel “For why struck us Y <sup>e</sup> howah the day to faces of Philistines? Let us bring unto us from Shiloh an Ark of Covenant of Y <sup>e</sup> howah and He will come in our midst and He will deliver us from a hand of our enemies.”
Septuagint	And the people came to the camp, and the elders of Israel said, “Why had the Lord caused us to fail this day before the Philistines? Let us take the ark of our God out of Selom and let it proceed from the midst of us, and it will save us from the hand of our enemies.”
Significant differences:	The minor differences are noted in the different colored font. There is nothing which significantly alters our understanding at this point.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

<i>The Message</i>	When the troops returned to camp, Israel's elders said, "Why has GOD given us such a beating today by the Philistines? Let's go to Shiloh and get the Chest of GOD's Covenant. It will accompany us and save us from the grip of our enemies."
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#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<i>God's Word™</i>	When the troops came back to the camp, the leaders of Israel asked, “Why has the LORD used the Philistines to defeat us today? Let’s get the ark of the LORD’s promise from Shiloh so that he may be with us and save us from our enemies.”
JPS (Tanakh)	When the [Israelite] troops returned to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, “Why did the LORD put us to rout today before the Philistines? Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from Shiloh; thus He will be present among us and will deliver us from the hands of our enemies.

#### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it [or, <i>he</i> ] may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies.”
Owen's Translation	And when the troops came to the camp and said the elders of Israel, “Why has put us to rout Yahweh today before the Philistines? Let us bring unto us from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of Yahweh that he may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And the people come in unto the camp, and the elders of Israel say, ‘Why has Jehovah smitten us today before the Philistines? We take unto us from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and it comes into our midst, and He will save us out of the hand of our enemies.’

**What is the gist of this verse?** The troops are upset that God has allowed them to be struck down before the Philistines. Then they come up with the idea of bringing the Ark of Jehovah into battle.

## 1Samuel 4:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
'el (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

**Translation:** *And the people came into the camp...* Not all of Israel was destroyed. They were soundly defeated, but they still had an army remaining. They regroup in camp.

## 1Samuel 4:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
zâkên (זָקֵן) [pronounced zaw-KANE]	<i>old, elderly, aged</i>	masculine plural adjective used as a substantive; construct state	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
Yis'ra'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l')	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552

## 1Samuel 4:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Lâmed + mâh can be rendered <i>why, for what reason, to what purpose, for what purpose</i> , indicating an interrogatory sentence.			
nâgaph (נָגַף) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHF</i> ]	<i>to strike, to strike down, to hit</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect; with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5062 BDB #619
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day; time; today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
Pîlishîty (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** ...and the elders of Israel said, “Why did Y<sup>e</sup>howah strike us today before the Philistines? Their question, which is not asked of God, but apparently amongst each other, is: “Why did Y<sup>e</sup>howah strike us today before the Philistines?” This is actually a question similar to what Israel has asked before. After they had defeated Jericho for their first step into the Land of Promise, Israel was then beaten by the inhabitants of a smaller city named Ai. No less a man than Joshua himself petitioned God, saying, “Alas, O Jehovah God, why did You bring this people over the Jordan, and then deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?” (Joshua 7:7a). On the plus side, the stricken Israelites don’t cry out, *where is God?* Instead, they ask, *Why did You, O God, bring us to this side of the Jordan just to kill us?* (which was a common refrain of gen x, the exodus generation).<sup>22</sup> *Why did God strike us?* is the reasonable question that the Israelites should be asking themselves. They recognize that God is over all and in control, and that their loss relates to Him more than to anything else. The problem is, they do not pursue this question to its logical end, which would be that their relationship with God is messed up.

<sup>22</sup> They would ask, *Why did you, O God, bring us out of Egypt and into this desert? To kill us?*

## 1Samuel 4:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect; with the voluntative hê	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Shilôw (שִׁלּוֹ) [shi-LOH]	<i>quiet, relaxed, prosperous; transliterated Shiloh</i>	proper noun locale	Strong's #7887 BDB #1017
ʿêth (עִת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾărôṣ (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
bərîṯ (בְּרִית) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> reeth]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** *Let us bring the Ark of the Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah from Shiloh...* So, then, they don't really answer this question, although it might be implied that they do, by deciding the problem is that there is no Ark of God with them. So they decide to bring the Ark into battle. Some of them no doubt knew a little of their history and recalled that Joshua brought the Ark into battle against Jericho. However, what they fail to realize is, this was at the guidance of Jehovah Elohim.

## 1Samuel 4:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97

## 1Samuel 4:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בֵּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
qereb (קֶרֶב) [pronounced KĒH-re <sup>b</sup> ]	<i>midst, inward part</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7130 BDB #899

With the bēyth preposition, it means *in the midst of, among, into the midst of* (after a verb of motion).

**Translation:** ...that He will come into our midst... Their reasoning comes next: they will bring the Ark into battle, because this will cause God to go into battle with them. Now, do you see a problem here? God is not confined to the Ark. They did not lose because the Ark is kept in the Tabernacle. They lost because God was not with them, or God wanted many of them to die in battle. Bringing the Ark into battle will not change that fact.

## 1Samuel 4:3e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yāsha' (יָשַׁע) [pronounced yaw-SHAHQ]	<i>to deliver, to save; to set free, to preserve; to aid, to give relief</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kaph (כַּף) [pronounced kaf]	<i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3709 BDB #496
ʾâyab (אֵיִב) [pronounced aw-YA <sup>B</sup> V]	<i>enemy, the one being at enmity with you; enmity, hostility</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #340 BDB #33

**Translation:** ...and deliver us from the hand of our enemies." It is unclear whether the verb's subject is *Ark* or *Y<sup>e</sup>howah*. However, they are closely associated, so that they would be considered a package deal. That is, if the Ark is with them, Y<sup>e</sup>howah would be with them as well.

No doubt that the person who suggested bringing the Ark either quoted Scripture or told a familiar Bible story which involved the Ark of God. Now, this idea to bring the Ark reveals is an imperfect knowledge of what happened in the past. Perhaps one of the elders got this really holy look on his face and suggested that Joshua brought the Ark to the battle of Jericho (which is true—Joshua 6:6–21). However, Joshua didn't bring the Ark to every battle against every city. In fact, Joshua was not even the one who made the decision to bring the Ark with the troops of Israel when they marched around the city of Jericho. It was God, and not Joshua, who determined that would be done in Israel's attack against Jericho (Joshua 6:1–5).



Right after Israel destroyed the city of Jericho, they went up against a smaller city, Ai, and this time, Israel was soundly defeated (Joshua 7:1–15). Did they go fetch the Ark of God and regroup against Ai? Absolutely not. There were two things which were done by Israel to defeat Ai: (1) they dealt with the sin of Achan, who kept some items taken out from Jericho which should have been completely sacrificed to God (Joshua 7:16–26); and, (2) the army of Israel employed strategy and tactics (Joshua 8). The Ark of Jehovah was not a good luck charm which they took to Ai.

You may wonder by what means did these men of Israel take the Ark. First of all, the leadership of Tent of God was iffy. Eli was old and blind and certainly retired. It is unclear how old Samuel was; his authority, although God-granted, was not respected and would not be respected until 1Sam. 7:3, 21 years from this time (the end of 1Sam. 3 notwithstanding, as that gives an overview of his ministry—not an indication of how the people of Israel felt right then and there). Phinehas and Hophni had both acted as head priests prior to this and although it was not their idea to get the Ark, they certainly would have consented to it. I doubt that they really concerned themselves about the Ark. The BBQ was outside, and that was their primary concern.

Maybe an elder quoted Num. 10:34–35: *And the cloud of Jehovah was over them by day, when they set out from the camp. Then it was, when the ark was set out, that Moses said, “Rise up, O Jehovah, and let Your enemies be scattered; and let those who hate You flee from You.”* Some of the worst suggestions you will ever hear will be preceded by the quotation of a verse or two. Something like this would sound holy and godly, even though it does not pertain at all to the situation in which Israel now finds herself. With respect to the quotation, was Israel going to war against anyone in specific at that time? No. They were simply marching toward the Land of Promise at the time of Num. 10. In fact, almost immediately after Moses' stirring call to God in Num. 10, the spies bring back a report about the people of the Land of Canaan and how big they are. Then Israel went into a whining fit and refused to go to war against the peoples of Canaan. When they did have a change of heart and went to fight the Amalekites and the Canaanites, they were soundly defeated (Num. 14). Now, even though they did not take the Ark into battle with them that time, Moses didn't send them back a second time with the Ark (Num. 14:44–45).

My point in these two mentions of the Ark was that, any of the elders could have stood up and quoted Scripture out of context, conveying only half the information. They could have said that Joshua brought the Ark into battle against Jericho; that Moses put the Ark before them as they marched to the Land of Canaan. However, that would have only been a portion of the story. Note that I gave you the entire context, which shows that bringing the Ark into battle did not guarantee victory. Note what the elders of Israel did not do. They did not consult God; they did not inquire of Urim and Thummim by the High Priest. They did not go to Samuel or to Eli to ask them for their opinions. It was simply that they needed the Ark of God as a good luck charm, and that it would automatically pull God into the battle. Zodhiates makes essentially the same comment: *The Israelites were treating the ark as a kind of magic charm instead of the testimony of God's power and presence. There mere presence of the ark would not bring victory in the battle.*<sup>23</sup> Again, we have discussed Israel's initial defeat by the city of Ai, and that Israel did not bring the Ark of God into battle against the people of Ai in order to reverse their defeat. You might even wonder, *why didn't this work?* If you went to war and held up a Bible in front of you, it would not deflect bullets, would it? The presence of the Ark is not going to guarantee victory.

McGee: *My friend, this reveals the superstition and paganism of these people who thought there was some merit in the object. The merit was not in that box because God was not in that box. You cannot get God into a box! The merit was in the presence and person of God. In church work today many people, even in our good churches, are equally as superstitious. They think that God, as it were, is in a box. They say, “Look at this method. It is a nice little package deal. It is success in a box. This method will solve our problem.” So many people are moving in that direction today. My friend, that is not being spiritual. That is being superstitious. The merit is in Christ. Success is determined by whether or not we are with Him. That is all important.*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 729.

<sup>24</sup> J. Vernon McGee; *I & II Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 32.

You must also have an insight as to how the Philistines viewed this. Some pagan groups viewed their wars ultimately as wars between their gods and the gods of their opposition. The Philistines themselves understood and feared the strength of the God of Israel, which will come out later in this chapter. However, in this battle with Israel, there was nothing to indicate that the God of Israel was with them. When Israel chose to get the Ark, their thinking was reduced to the level of the Philistines. They saw it as a war between their respective Deities as well. The pagan notion was that the religious symbol or idol was directly connected to their god. You bring the idol, you have the god; you forget the idol, and the god of that idol isn't coming either. The NIV Study Bible puts it this way: [Israel's choice to bring the Ark into battle reflected *the pagan notion that the deity is identified with the symbol of his presence, and that God's favor could automatically be gained by manipulating the symbol.*<sup>25</sup> In case you don't recognize what the Israelites are doing here, they are being idolaters. The Ark of God represents God and it teaches salvation, but the Ark cannot be used to manipulate God or to invoke His power or presence. Now let me give you the even darker interpretation: taking the Ark into battle was like holding God hostage. Whatever considerations should have been taken were unnecessary because they had the Ark of God. God *had* to follow them into battle and deliver them. He did not have a choice because they had His Ark. By their thinking, God could not allow their defeat with His Ark and He could not allow anything to happen to His Ark. They took the Ark hostage, and now God would have to do their bidding. They were wrong.

This bypasses the idea of personal responsibility and their relationship with God. Israel was not going to win every battle because their God was the God of the Universe. Their thinking and their responsibilities toward God were a part of their existence as a nation and this relationship impacted the very wars in which they were engaged. How do I explain this? There was no contest between the God of Israel and the gods of the Philistines. That was not the issue. The problem was the soul of Israel and Israel's relationship with God. If Israel were right with God, everything else would fall into place. If Israel was not right with God, all manner of problems could occur. So the war here is not one between God and gods, but between Israel and herself.

**Practical application:** Now, as I go through this, you often think to yourself, *well, this borders on almost being fascinating, but it really doesn't have anything to do with me.* And you would be wrong. There are several applications. First, do you wear a cross? Do you have a cross hanging from your rearview mirror or a statue of Mary on your car dashboard? What do these represent to you? Do you think that it is less likely that you will be in an accident with these paraphernalia scattered about your car? That is idolatry. Do you think your cross will ward off evil? That is idolatry. Do you think that these items will bring God closer to you or invoke the spirit of Mary somehow to ride shotgun? That is idolatry. Now, let's say you take the statue of Mary down, and then you get into a car wreck, does that mean that I was wrong and you were right? Hell, no! It means that I am still right and you are an idiot. God's Word is what stands, and this is part of what this passage teaches us. It does not matter what happens in your day-to-day experience (and you should never supplant spiritual truth with that which you perceive from experiences in your daily life—that is what makes you a fool).<sup>26</sup>

**Practical application:** Secondly, you don't win every battle in this life. There are some you lose because God chooses for things to be that way and there are some you lose because of your spiritual state of being. Being a child of God does not mean that you go through this life without pain and suffering and defeat. Being a child of God who is right spiritually means that you can face this pain, suffering and defeat with enough internal fortitude to be able to deal with it and the outcomes, right or wrong, good or bad. Israel will lose their next battle just as they lost this one because of their spiritual state. Bringing the Ark, if anything, incensed God.

Let me go off on another tangent, now that I am here: I recall when I was first saved—I figured that no matter what decision I made, things would just turn out okay because I was a new believer and God was taking care of things. Now, God was able to take all of the decisions which I made, good and bad, and make them turn out for good; just as my parents could take my good and bad decisions and teach me from those decisions what is right and what is wrong. However, it would have been a hell of a lot easier to make the good and right decisions from the get go.

<sup>25</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 378.

<sup>26</sup> When you have the truth and choose anything else to take its place, that makes you a fool.

**Practical application:** Now, the third spiritual point which can learn from the application of this passage is this: You cannot simply pick some experience recorded in Scripture and copy it, thinking that is God's plan of action for you. What they did is, some of these men knew that the Ark had been used at a previous battle, so they decided to copy that. They took something which was legitimate and right and misapplied it to their own situation. Let me give you a common place where this is done: in holy roller churches. They notice that Jesus and the Apostles healed and also that the Apostles went out and spoke in tongues (actually, in foreign languages which they did not know); and they decide to copy these actions. Now, what they do is a rather lame copy. If you have ever seen holy rollers heal, you can immediately recognize that it bears little resemblance to the healings of Jesus. You have men striking or appearing to strike members of their congregation in the head, and those people will fall to the ground, having been *struck by the spirit*. Finding legitimate healings is nigh impossible. Much of what we find in the gospels are miraculous healings (although, it is very likely that not all of them are). We have cripples who walk, people who are insane cured, and we even see the dead rise. **Not one time does Jesus blame a person He heals for not having enough faith.**

Another place where these holy rollers develop a lame counterfeit to what we find in Scripture is speaking in tongues. There is one passage, and one passage only, which can be *mistakenly* understood to indicate that people speak with the *tongues of angels*. And so, instead of a few members of the congregation speaking in foreign languages to evangelize the unbelievers, as the Apostles did, you have most of the congregation speaking in a *holy ghost language, a language of angels*; which is just flat out emotional gibberish. Again, this bears little resemblance to the Apostles speaking the languages of the hearers on the day of Pentecost, evangelizing them in their native tongue. My point in all of this is, you do not pick some experience or some incident recorded in the Bible and copy it. That is not how we are supposed to conduct our lives.

**Practical application:** Many times a believer will suggest a course of action for a congregation, for a marriage, for himself and at least one other believer, and he will sound holy and he will mention things like *God, covenant, Holy Spirit*, and he might even quote some Scripture. The end result, is he will convince those around him to pursue some bogus course of action. Similar people convince others of some bogus *doctrine of Scripture* by saying a few holy words and quoting some Scripture. If anyone had any spiritual discernment, they would have stood up and said, "You can't simply haul the Ark of the Covenant into battle as some sort of a good luck charm. God did not guarantee us that whenever the Ark was taken into battle that He would defeat the enemy. We were just soundly defeated and we need to determine why before we go back into battle against the Philistines." You learn Scripture in order to be discerning. All sorts of believers and unbelievers twist Scripture into meaning something that it does not. Peter, when speaking of Paul's letters, as an aside said that what Paul wrote was often **hard to understand**, and then Peter adds, **which the untaught and the unstable distort, as they do with the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction** (II Peter 3:16). So, will Scripture be distorted? Obviously. Will it be distorted by seemingly godly men? Obviously. How do you keep from being taken in? By knowing God's Word. Believers are often taken down some wrong path—this is Satan's joy. He loves to quote Scripture, he loves to take believers in, and he loves to place us in compromising positions and in the wrong place doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. My point is, this passage has everything in the world to do with you. The people of Israel are being taken in by their elders, who know just enough doctrine to be dangerous. The best advice that I ever received as a believer early on was to *do nothing and take in Bible doctrine*. You might, as a young believer, have all kinds of enthusiasm, and that is great. Channel that enthusiasm into learning the Word of God. Don't think, one month or six months after salvation that you are going to go out and do all these great things for God. You are barely a spiritual baby. Two and three year old children have all kinds of energy and enthusiasm. Do we then send them out to set up great business corporations to support their family? Certainly not. Paul tells us that, in spiritual youth, do not attempt to make any great decision (II Cor. 7:17–27).<sup>27</sup> The key is fairly simple: upon your salvation, God will place before you a number of decisions to be made, each often increasing in its requirement of spiritual discernment. If you take in God's Word and apply God's Word, you will make the proper decisions. But do not go out there looking to make decisions that God has not placed before you. So, our Scriptural illustration: Israel has just been defeated in battle by the

<sup>27</sup> Paul illustrates with, **If you are a slave, don't seek to be freed. If you are married, don't seek a divorce. If you are single, don't look to get married** (this is a paraphrase of I Cor. 7:21, 27). Again, do not enter into these great and important life decisions simply because you just got saved. Getting married, for instance, isn't wrong (I Cor. 7:28), but that is not something that you should seek to do immediately (I Cor. 7:27).

Philistines. What should they do? They should inquire of God what the problem is; through Samuel, if they can't figure it out themselves. They are not to head on over to Shiloh to snatch up the Ark as though it is their secret weapon, and go back into battle against the Philistines. Now, we have every reason to expect that the men who place their hands on the Ark will die. However, that does not happen. And, there is a reason for that. We do not know the mode of transportation for the Ark, and it is even possible that they properly transported it. In any case, there were no resultant casualties from the moving of the Ark. However, just keep in the back of your mind that God allowed the transporting the Ark without incident for a reason.

Let me make another point: I teach each passage of the Bible in order, in its context, with as accurate of translation as I can come up with. When Scripture is taught using ICE principles,<sup>28</sup> it is much more difficult to twist Scripture out of its context. No one, with a complete understanding of Num. 10:33–36 or Joshua 6:1–6 would ever suggest to bring the Ark of God into battle as a solution.

Now, allow me another tangent: your pastor is supposed to teach you the entire body of Scripture. If you go to the same church for, say, 5 years, and he has not even exegeted two or three books in that time (or one long book), then he is not doing his job. As he teaches you Scripture, he should make application, as I have done here. You wouldn't get this on your own. Even if you were in some Bible study group that meets every Tuesday or Friday night, you would never, ever gain the insights and information which I have provided for you in these first four chapters of the book of Samuel).<sup>29</sup> You wouldn't have necessarily seen, for instance, the application of this passage to your life. You might have read this passage three or four times in your program to read through the Bible once a year and still, as far as you are concerned, it is some battle between two peoples which occurred a long time ago. This passage is relevant to you and your life. It has application to you and your day-to-day decisions. Not only the victories, but the losses suffered by other believers teach us about our spiritual walk. It is your pastor who both teaches your Scripture, line by line, and then makes application of God's Word to your life.

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## Israel Is Defeated a Second Time Before the Philistines

And so sent the people [to] Shiloh and brought from there an Ark of a Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah of Hosts, sitting, the cherubim; and there [were] a pair of sons of Eli with an Ark of a Covenant of God—Hophni and Phinehas.

1 Samuel  
4:4

And the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the Ark of the Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Armies, [Who] is sitting [between] the Cherubim. With the Ark of the Covenant of God, were two of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

And the people sent a small envoy to Shiloh to bring to them the Ark of the Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Armies, Who is enthroned between the Cherubim. Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's two sons, accompanied the Ark of the Covenant of God back to the camp.

First, the translations:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

And so sent the people [to] Shiloh and brought from there an Ark of a Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah of Hosts, sitting, the cherubim; and there [were] a pair of sons of Eli with an Ark of a Covenant of God—Hophni and Phinehas.

<sup>28</sup> This is from Thieme: ICE is an acronym which stands for (1) Isagogics (studying the relevant historical and cultural background of a passage); (2) Categories (stopping periodically and teaching various doctrines); and (3) Exegesis (the verse-by-verse, word-by-word study of God's Word, including taking excursions into the original languages).

<sup>29</sup> Unless, of course, someone in your Bible study has the gift of pastor-teacher and he essentially teaches you.

Septuagint And the people sent to Selom, and they took there the ark of the Lord, Who dwells [between] the cherubs; and both the sons of Heli, Ophni and Phinees, with the ark.

Significant differences: This time, it is the Greek which appears to be lacking a few words. However, the differences between the texts are insignificant.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV The army sent some soldiers to bring back the sacred chest from Shiloh, because the LORD All-Powerful has his throne on the winged creatures on top of the chest. As Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas,...

*The Message* So the army sent orders to Shiloh. They brought the Chest of the Covenant of GOD, the GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies, the Cherubim-Enthroned-GOD. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, accompanied the Chest of the Covenant of God.

TEV So they sent messengers to Shiloh and got the Covenant Box of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned above the winged creatures. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, came along with the Covenant Box.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) So the troops sent men to Shiloh; there Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were in charge of the Ark of the Covenant of God, and they brought down from there the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD of Hosts Enthroned on the Cherubim.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

*Updated Emphasized Bible* So the people sent to Shiloh, and carry from there the ark of the covenant of Yahweh of hosts, who inhabits [or, *sits upon* or, *is enthroned in*] the cherubim, —and ||there|| were the two sons of Eli with the ark of the covenant of God, namely, Hophni and Phinehas.

NASB So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts who sits *above* cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

NKJV So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

*Young's Updated LT* And the people sent to Shiloh, and they take up there the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of Hosts, inhabiting the cherubs, and there *are* two sons of Eli, with the ark of the covenant of God, Hophni and Phinehas.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The elders apparently sent some of their men to Shiloh to pick up the Ark, and Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's two sons, came along with the Ark.

### 1Samuel 4:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

## 1Samuel 4:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
Shilôw (שִׁלּוֹ) [shi-LOH]	<i>quiet, relaxed, prosperous; transliterated Shiloh</i>	proper noun locale	Strong's #7887 BDB #1017

**Translation:** *And the people sent to Shiloh...* The people refer back to the Israelites who had returned to camp defeated, along with the elders who were there. They apparently send a small but forceful delegation to Shiloh, where Eli and his sons were; and where the Ark was.

## 1Samuel 4:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾărôw (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i> ]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
b <sup>e</sup> rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced <i>b<sup>e</sup>reeth</i> ]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ts <sup>e</sup> bâ'ôwth (צְבָאוֹת) [pronounced <i>tz<sup>eb</sup>-vaw-OHTH</i> ]	<i>armies, wars</i>	masculine plural noun, simply the plural of Strong's #6635, but often used in titles	Strong's #6635 BDB #838



**Translation:** ...and brought from there the Ark of the Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah of the Armies,... We are given very little by way of specifics. We do not know if there was a negotiation here between these soldiers and Eli's sons; whether anyone stopped to ask Eli about this. We do not even know if the Bible was consulted with regards to the moving of the Ark. However, God allowed the Ark to be taken into the camp of the Israelites, and apparently without incident.

### 1Samuel 4:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yāshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i>	masculine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
k <sup>e</sup> rûwbîym (כְּרוּבִים) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> roo <sup>b</sup> -VEEM]	transliterated <i>cherubim</i> ; it means <i>angels</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3742 (and #3743) BDB #500

Some believe that this refers to a particular group of angels. I lean toward the idea that this indicates that we are in an unseen conflict.

**Translation:** ...[Who] is sitting [between] the Cherubim. Then we have the Qal active participle of *inhabiting, dwelling in, sitting upon*. Now, I would like to associate with this verb the masculine plural of כְּרוּבִים (k<sup>e</sup>rûwbîym) [pronounced k<sup>e</sup>roo<sup>b</sup>V], which is transliterated *cherub*. When using this word, it is not clear whether we are referring to a classification of angels, or if this is simply a word which can be used instead of *angel*. On top of the Ark of the Covenant, we have two sculpted cherubim (the *-im* is plural in the Hebrew) facing one another (Ex. 25:18–21). My particular thoughts is that the purpose of such a reference is to remind us that we are in the midst of the angelic conflict and that the unseen angels play a real part in our lives. We examined the Cherubim back in Gen. 3:24.

Now, even though it is clear that the *Cherubim* are sitting upon the Ark of God, the Qal participle is not in the plural, but in the singular. Therefore, the nearest masculine singular noun belongs to this verb, which noun is Y<sup>e</sup>howah, which, therefore, requires us to insert some words: ...[the One] sitting [between] the cherubim... We can reasonably infer *the One* from the masculine singular Qal participle, but whereas we have two prepositions meaning between in Ex. 25:22, we have no preposition here. So, no matter how we take this, this portion of the verse appears to be missing something. If it is Y<sup>e</sup>howah Who is sitting *between* the Cherubim, it would seem that we would need a preposition to describe where He is sitting with respect to the Cherubim, as we have in Ex. 25:22 and Num. 7:89. If it is the Cherubim who are sitting upon the Ark, we would need a plural ending for the verb (and, point in fact, they *stand* upon the Ark). Now, I personally thought that I had this problem solved in suggesting that it was Young who conveys the most accurate sense where it refers to God *inhabiting the Cherubim*. Whereas, God does not inhabit or indwell the Cherubim, the elders of Israel were behaving as though He did. The problem with that approach is that we have the same verbiage in 2Sam. 6:2 (and Psalm 80:1 99:1), where David is fetching the Ark, and it is an occasion of joy and celebration. Therefore, in the English, it seems our only reasonable approach is to insert the prepositions *between* or *above* and assume that yāshab implies one of those.

We might do well to spend a little time with...

## The Ark of the Covenant

The Ark was symbolic of Jesus, the God-man, to come in the flesh. It was symbolic of His work and His death upon the cross. The Ark was a box made out of acacia wood and covered inside and out with a layer of gold. The wood represented the humanity of Jesus and the gold His deity. Inside the Ark was Aaron's rod that budded, the Decalogue and the pot of manna. The pot of manna repress God's provision for man; the Decalogue (i.e., the Ten Commandments) represents God's perfect Law, which all men have transgressed; and Aaron's rod that budded represents the resurrection. It was a dead branch from which spouted live growth. On top of the Ark were the two Cherubim who represent the Angelic conflict and, more specifically, the fact that angels observe us constantly. In between the angels is the mercy seat, which is our point of contact with God. God sent His Son to take upon Himself the penalty for our sins, and the mercy seat represents that provision.<sup>30</sup>

What the Ark was *not* was a representation of God or an earthly manifestation of Him. God spoke to Moses from the mercy seat (Num. 7:89) because the Ark was God's point of contact with man. Unlike an idol, which is the earthly thing that a god supposedly inhabits, the Ark represented the plan of God, the provision of God, the perfect character of God and His Son to come in the flesh. It was a shadow of the good things to come, just as the animal sacrifices and other offerings of the priests, the Sabbath day and the various Festivals were shadows of the good things to come (Col. 2:16–17 Heb. 8:1–5). The point in all of this is that the Ark of the Covenant was not some idol representing God, but it represented and therefore taught a number of doctrines which were all related to the character of God.

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### 1Samuel 4:4d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
sh <sup>e</sup> nayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>e</sup>NAH-yim</i> ]	<i>two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
ʾărôh (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i> ]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75

<sup>30</sup> The articles of furniture in the Tent of God were laid out in the shape of a cross, although the Ark, which would have been the head of the cross, was hidden in a separate compartment in the Tent of God, which is an indication that God hid the specific mechanics of His mercy from Satan in time until the fulness of time.

## 1Samuel 4:4d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>ə</sup> rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced b <sup>ə</sup> reeth]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Châph <sup>ə</sup> nîy (חֹפְנִי) [pronounced chaff-NEE]	<i>hollow of hand? and is transliterated Hophni</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #2652 BDB #342
w <sup>ə</sup> (or v <sup>ə</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Phîyn <sup>ə</sup> châç (פִּינְחָס) [pronounced pheen <sup>ə</sup> -KHOSS]	<i>which possibly means Negro in Egyptian, and is transliterated Phinehas</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6372 BDB #810

**Translation:** With the Ark of the Covenant of God, were two of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Now, recall, from a couple chapters ago. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli. They disrespected God and His authority. Animal sacrifices were merely opportunities for them to add more meat to their diets. They had no concept or understanding of the Lord they served. In their own minds, Hophni and Phinehas had a good thing going. They worked very little and got all the barbeque they could eat. So, they did not want the Ark to fall into the *wrong hands*, so to speak. Therefore, they came along with the Ark of God. This is so indicative of the refrain in the book of Judges: *In those days there was no king in Israel, so every man did what was right in his own eyes* (Judges 17:6). Again, the details are sketchy. Although it is possible that Eli sent them with the Ark, it does not appear as though they would listen to Eli. Furthermore, Eli knows that his sons are going to die—sending them along with the Ark into battle might not be the sort of thing an overindulgent father would do.

One of the things which is left out is the confrontation between the army of Israel and these two hack priests is that these were large men, probably nearing 300 pounds, fairly rotund, and they were able to bully the average Israelite (1Sam. 2:16). However, here they faced a contingent from an army of rugged Israelites, which was a lot different from those they were used to bullying. So, on the one hand, you have these rough and tumble army veterans who don't want to offend Jehovah God or those they perceive that work for Him; yet, they intend to take that Ark with them into battle no matter what. On the other hand, you have these two very rotund hack priests, who (1) recognize that no matter what they say or do, the Ark is going into battle; and, (2) these priests still need to protect their goose that lays the golden eggs. Now, I am certain that, because of manners, much of this was left unsaid. The army (or, actually, several representatives) show up, explaining how they were beaten in battle and how they need to take the Ark into battle to insure victory. Even though this may have been presented as a formal request, the answer *no* was not going to be accepted. This was patently clear to the two brothers, who therefore had to determine how to go along with the request and protect their Ark.

And he was as a coming of an Ark of a Covenant of Y<sup>h</sup>owah unto the camp and so they shouted all of Israel a shout great and so stirred up the earth.

1Samuel  
4:5

And it was when the Ark of the Covenant of Y<sup>h</sup>owah came into the camp that all Israel shouted a mighty shout, and the earth was stirred.

Then, when the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, all of Israel shouted this tremendous shout which shook the earth.

First, what others have done:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And he was as a coming of an Ark of a Covenant of Y <sup>e</sup> howah unto the camp and so they shouted all of Israel a shout great and so stirred up the earth.
Septuagint	And it came to pass when the ark of the Lord entered into the camp, that all Israel cried out with a loud voice, and the earth resounded.

Significant differences: None.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	...[Hophni and Phinehas] brought the chest into camp, the army cheered so loudly that the ground shook.
The Message	When the Chest of the Covenant of GOD was brought into camp, everyone gave a huge cheer. The shouts were like thunderclaps shaking the very ground.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	When the LORD's ark came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth rang with echoes.
JPS (Tanakh)	When the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD entered the camp, all Israel burst into a great shout, so that the earth resounded.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	And it happened as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, that all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded.
Young's Updated LT	And it came to pass, at the coming in of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto the camp, that all Israel shouted—a great shout—and the earth is moved.

**What is the gist of this verse?** When the Ark entered into the camp of the army of Israel, the Israelites shouted so loudly, that the earth was moved (this is an expression, by the way—don't take it as being literal).

1Samuel 4:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כֶּ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	as, like, according to; about, approximately	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #935 BDB #97

## 1Samuel 4:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
אַרֹן (ʾārōn) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	ark, chest; Ark	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
בְּרִית (bᵊrîyth) [pronounced bʰreeth]	pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1285 BDB #136
יהוה (YHWH) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y <sup>e</sup> howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
עַל (ʿel) [pronounced e]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
מַחֲנֶה (machāneh) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

**Translation:** And it was when the Ark of the Covenant of Y<sup>e</sup>howah came into the camp... Why have I inserted the definite articles, yet they are not found in the Hebrew? Constructs simply do not have definite articles in the Hebrew.

The first thing they should have done was notice that with the Ark came Hophni and Phinehas, and those two should have been sent packing. However, there is no indication that the army or the elders of the army knew what they were doing any more than Hophni and Phinehas. The two brothers used their position to gorge themselves and the army was using the Ark in order to defeat the Philistines. There was nothing of spiritual dynamics here.

You may ask, *where is Samuel in all of this?* Samuel is still quite young, even though 1Sam. 4 may not follow the events of 1Sam. 3:1–18 immediately, there is nothing to indicate that they occurred *after* Samuel was firmly established as a prophet of God (1Sam. 3:19–4:1a). Those final verses are a summary, and not meant to be taken as the chronological order of things—that is, we do not have God calling Samuel, followed Samuel growing spiritually and being recognized by all Israel, followed by this war against the Philistines. Hebrew Scripture, for the most part, is very topical; therefore, what we have in 1Sam. 3:1–4:1a is a topical unit, beginning with God calling Samuel, and ending with a summary of Samuel's ministry. When we examine the movement of the Ark and this battle with the Philistines, that is a new topic which reasonably occurs before the summary verses of 1Sam. 3. Therefore, Samuel, not being yet recognized as a prophet from God, but probably still being a teen, had no authority to do anything. It is unlikely that anyone consulted him about the taking of the Ark; and it is very possible that no one even consulted Eli about the taking of the Ark. Very likely, this was an executive decision made by the elders at war and Eli's two sons.

## 1Samuel 4:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
rûwā' (רוּעַ) [pronounced roo-AHĠ]	<i>to shout, to raise a shout, to cry out, to give a blast, are caused to shout</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #7321 BDB #929
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Yis'ra'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis'-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
t'rûw'âh (תְּרוּעָה) [pronounced t'rû-AWH]	<i>a shout, a cry; a tumult, a loud noise; a joyful noise, rejoicing; a war cry, a cry for battle; the blast [of war, alarm or joy]</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8643 BDB #929
gâdal (גָּדַל) [pronounced gaw-DAHL]	<i>to be [become] great; to grow; to be greatly valued [celebrated, praised]; to twist together, to bind together</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1431 BDB #152.

**Translation:** ...that all Israel shouted a mighty shout,... What they shouted was a great shout. Their trust was not in God but in this religious artifact, which is quite a different thing. This religious artifact represented God; however, realize what came with it: Hophni and Phinehas. They represent unbelieving religion; they are the leaven in the faith; they are the distortion of that which is true and right. The fact that they came along, despite what is know about them in all of Israel, indicates that the people of Israel were willing to compromise the truth of God.

Secondly, bringing the Ark into battle does not insure victory in any way. There is nothing in the Law which states, "When you find your wars against the heathen not going so well, then go fetch the Ark of God to lead you into battle." What we do have is one historical incident of the Ark being taken into battle by Joshua **at God's request**. God made it clear that He was at war with the gods of the indigenous heathen of the Land of Promise. That is, from the earliest beginnings of Israel, God made it clear that He was against and at war with religion. Now, for the 1% who misapply everything they hear: this does not mean that you go out and burn down the nearest Mosque. Do not mix up the dispensation of Israel (where Israel was a theocracy) with the dispensation of the Church (where no national entity is a theocracy). Israel had specific commands to remove the religious heathen from the Land of Promise; we of the Church Age, on the other hand, have not received any such command, specifically stated or implied.

**Application:** Do not find some miscellaneous passage in the Old or New Testament where we find an historical narrative and copy what is done there. We are not supposed to copy each and every action which we find in Scripture—there is no call for us to do so at any time. Paul, Peter and John give us the doctrines which we should follow; the principles that we should learn—the epistles tell us what should and should not be done. Never go to any historical narrative, including the gospels and the book of Acts, and set out to copy what you read there. Some actions which we find are valid, some are not. Some apply to a very specific place in time; some actions have a wider application. Some actions are only valid for the pre-canon period of the Church Age. What I hope is obvious is, when Jesus came to this earth, He did things which were absolutely incredible—He healed all who came to Him; He never complained that someone did not have enough faith to be healed. This drew man's attention to Jesus



as God's Son. Please have enough sense to realize that, God has not called any of us to duplicate Christ's miracles—God does not think it necessary for huge groups of people to remark, “Hey, check out Charlie Brown—if you go to him with any disease, he will heal you.” God is not in the business of glorifying man. God focuses our attention on Jesus.

### 1Samuel 4:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hûwm (הוּמ) [pronounced hoom]	<i>to be disturbed, to be in commotion; to be throw into chaos, to be discomfited</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #1949 BDB #223
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:** ...and the earth was stirred. Then we have the wâw consecutive followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Niphal imperfect of *to murmur, to roar, to throw into chaos, to discomfit, to cause a stir, to cause a disturbance*. What receives the action of the verb is *the earth* (or, *the land*), giving us: ...a great shout so the earth was stirred up. All those of Israel were quite enthusiastic at the bringing of the Ark into the camp. This further illustrates that the men there viewed the Ark as equivalent to God coming into their camp; that is the essence of idolatry, pure and simple. When interpreting this, let us use a little sense. The earth did not swerve off of its axis; nor were people in India disturbed by the shouting of the Israelites. This simply means that the Israelite soldiers received the Ark of God with a resounding shout, which could be heard far outside their camp.

Here's the deal: these soldiers, even though they had great confidence, it was essentially in an idol—they saw the Ark of God as being an unbeatable good luck charm. They were making decisions based upon practically no doctrine at all; they were making decisions based upon copying an incident which occurred several hundred years previous, an incident which they did not understand or properly interpret. As a believer, you cannot just make any willy nilly decision and expect everything to be okay (and I am assuming that these men are believers, which they may or may not be).

**Application:** When I first believed in Christ Jesus, I foolishly thought that I could do whatever seemed right, and God would work things out. Now, certainly, it is true that God works all things together for good. No matter how much we screw up our lives, if we are still alive, then God still has a plan for us and He can straighten everything out. However, this does not mean that we should make whatever decisions that we feel like making (and I am not even talking about sin here). Paul emphatically tells us that at salvation, we should not endeavor to change our status in any major way. If we are single, we stay single; if we are married, we stay married; if we are slaves, we remain slaves (that is, don't suddenly change jobs from the CEO of a major company to running a Christian book store). You will be faced with hundreds of decisions immediately after salvation, and Paul tells us to avoid major changes (1 Cor. 7:10–29). The implication is that you will spiritually grow and then be able to make the proper and correct decisions. I, knowing very little at the beginning of my spiritual life (like everyone), made a lot of major decisions which I should have put off until I was ready to make these decisions. The results were pretty disastrous. These Israelites are just jumping into this battle without any spiritual foresight. They do not inquire the will of God; they look for no spiritual direction; they grab the Ark and go into battle. At salvation, you do not grab the flag and run into battle. You cool your heels; you grow; you learn the spiritual side of life, and make decisions based upon God's Word.

And so heard Philistines a sound of the shout and so they said, "What sound the shout the this great in a camp of the Hebrews." And so they knew that an Ark of Y<sup>e</sup>howah had come unto the camp.

1Samuel  
4:6

Then the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, and they said, "What [is] this noise of this great shouting from the camp of the Hebrews?" They knew that the Ark of Y<sup>e</sup>howah had come into the camp.

This shout was heard as far away as the camp of the Philistines, and they asked one another, "What is the reason for the shouting in the Israelite camp?" They knew that the Ark of Jehovah had come into the camp.

What others have done:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text      And so heard Philistines a sound of the shout and so they said, "What sound the shout the this great in a camp of the Hebrews." And so they knew that an Ark of Y<sup>e</sup>howah had come unto the camp.

Septuagint      And the Philistines heard the cry, and the Philistines said, "What [is] this great cry in the camp of the Hebrews?" And they understood that the Ark of the Lord was come into the camp.

Significant differences:      None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV      The Philistines heard the noise and said, "What are those Hebrews shouting about?"  
When the Philistines learned that the sacred chest had been brought into the camp.  
*The Message*      The Philistines heard the shouting and wondered what on earth was going on: "What's all this shouting among the Hebrews?" Then they learned that the Chest of GOD had entered the Hebrew camp.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)      The Philistines heard the noise of the shouting and they wondered, "Why is there such a loud shouting in the camp of the Hebrews?" And when they learned that the Ark of the      had come to the camp,...

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV      And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp,.

NASB      And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What *does* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews *mean*?" Then they understood that the ark of the      had come into the camp.

*Young's Updated LT*      And the Philistines hear the noise of the shouting, and say, 'What *is* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?' and they perceive that the ark of Jehovah has come in unto the camp.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines hear the shout made by the army of Israel and understand that the Ark of God was brought into their camp.

## 1Samuel 4:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>t</sup> îy (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qôl (קוֹל) [pronounced koh]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
t <sup>r</sup> ûw'âh (תְּרוּעָה) [pronounced t'û-AWH]	<i>a shout, a cry; a tumult, a loud noise; a joyful noise, rejoicing; a war cry, a cry for battle; the blast [of war, alarm or joy]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8643 BDB #929

**Translation:** *Then the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting,...* The two camps of the two armies are near enough to one another that when the Ark of God comes into the camp of Israel and Israel cries out in relief, the noise is loud enough to be heard by the Philistines.

## 1Samuel 4:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מָה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
qôl (קוֹל) [pronounced koh]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
t <sup>r</sup> ûw'âh (תְּרוּעָה) [pronounced t'û-AWH]	<i>a shout, a cry; a tumult, a loud noise; a joyful noise, rejoicing; a war cry, a cry for battle; the blast [of war, alarm or joy]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8643 BDB #929

## 1Samuel 4:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gâdôwl (גְּדוֹל) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective with a definite article	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
ʿib <sup>er</sup> îym (עִבְרִים) [pronounced ǵ <sup>be</sup> -VREEM]	<i>those from beyond; transliterated Hebrews, Eberites</i>	proper masculine plural gentis/noun with the definite article	Strong's #5680 BDB #720

**Translation:** ...and they said, “What [is] this noise of this great shouting from the camp of the Hebrews?” Or, “What [does] the sound of this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews [mean]?” The Philistines had just soundly defeated the Israelites in battle, killing 4000 of them; and suddenly, from the camp of the Israelites is this incredibly loud, passionate shout. The Israelites had nothing to shout about, insofar as the Philistines were concerned. They expected Israel to surrender or to sneak away or to run off; but they did not expect any shouting from their camp.

The word *Hebrew* is ʿib<sup>er</sup>îy (עִבְרִי) [pronounced ǵ<sup>be</sup>-VREE], which is poorly transliterated as *Hebrew*. This word, interestingly enough, is found most often in Genesis, Exodus, once in Deuteronomy, the book of 1Samuel; after this, we will find it thrice in Jeremiah and once in Jonah. We first find this mentioned back in Gen. 14:13 in reference to Abraham, at which time we discussed it in more detail in the **Doctrine of the Name Hebrew**.

## 1Samuel 4:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâda <sup>ʿ</sup> (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHÇ]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

## 1Samuel 4:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
אַרֹן (ʾārōn) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	ark, chest; Ark	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
יהוה (YHWH) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
בֹּא (bōw) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
עַל (ʿel) [pronounced e]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
מַחֲנֶה (machăneh) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

**Translation:** They knew that the Ark of Y<sup>e</sup>howah had come into the camp. We are not told how the Philistines knew this, although military intelligence is probably the method by which they came to know that the Israelites had brought the Ark into their camp.

Now, there are some unanswered questions here: why had the fighting stopped? Why did the Philistines not pursue the Israelite army and destroy them completely? There are a number of possibilities. The Philistines could have grown weary of fighting; they knew that they were going to win, so they allowed the Israelites to retreat. It is possible that such a move could have resulted in many Israelite soldiers deserting their army. There is no rule of war that states, when one side is winning that they will continue fighting until they have destroyed their enemies. Therefore, for whatever reason, the fighting between Israel and Philistia had be halted for a short time, and Israel managed to get the Ark during that respite.

There are two possible scenarios (and possibly more) which explain how the Philistines knew what had happened. They could have had spies watching over the camp of Israel, observing their activity, to best determine what to do next. Another possibility is, the Philistines heard the shouting, and then sent spies to try to figure out what had happened.

Personally, I would have placed the latter half of this verse with the next verse. And they knew that the Ark of God had come into the camp. Therefore, the Philistines were afraid, for they exclaimed, "Elohim has come into [their] camp." They also said, "Woe to us, for our generation has not faced anything like this before."

And so were afraid the Philistines for they had said, "Had come Elohim unto the camp"; and so they said, "Woe to us for there was not as this before.

1Samuel  
4:7

Therefore, the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the [their] camp." So they [the Hebrews] said, "Woe to us, for [there] was not like this before.

Therefore, the Philistines were afraid, and they said to one another, "God has come into their camp." They also said, "This is severely distressing. Our generation has never faced anything like this before."

The other translations:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so were afraid the Philistines for they had said, “Had come Elohim unto the camp”; and so they said, “Woe to us for there was not as this before.
Septuagint	And the Philistines feared, and said, “These are the Gods that are come to them into the camp. [v. 8 continues with: Woe to us, O Lord, deliver us to-day for such a thing has not happened before].
Significant differences:	Although the Hebrew has an additional sentence, this additional sentence is found as part of v. 8 in the Greek.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

NASB	And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “God has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before.
NJB	At this, the Philistines were afraid; for they said, ‘God has come into the camp. Disaster!’ they said. ‘For nothing like this has ever happened before...
REB	“A god has come into the camp,’ they cried. ‘We are lost! No such thing has ever happened before...

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God’s Word™	Then they were frightened and said, “A god has come into [their] camp.” They also said, “Oh no! Nothing like this has ever happened before...
JPS (Tanakh)	And when they learned that the Ark of the had come to the camp, the Philistines were frightened; for they said, “God has come to the camp.” And they cried, “Woe to us! Nothing like this has every happened before. [I obviously included part of the previous verse with this one, which makes more sense. The JPS translators recognized this as well]

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

ESV	...the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "A god has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before.
Young's Updated LT	And the Philistines are afraid, for they said, ‘God has come in unto the camp;’ and they say, ‘Woe to us, for there has not been like this heretofore.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines were concerned because they heard the Hebrews say, “God has come into our camp.” They Philistines were very upset, because they had not faced the God of Israel before.

**1Samuel 4:7a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
yârê’ (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3372 BDB #431



## 1Samuel 4:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
P <sup>h</sup> lish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>h</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun); with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** *Therefore, the Philistines were afraid,...* In this verse, we have the Qal imperfect of *to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect*. The subject of the verb is *the Philistines*. Context guides us as to its exact meaning. Here, it should be clear that the Philistines truly have a fear and perhaps a great respect for the God of the Hebrews, even though what God did on their behalf occurred four centuries previous. That is, it was well-known to the Philistines what God did with Israel—i.e., taking Israel out of Egypt and bringing them into the Land of Promise.

## 1Samuel 4:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
bôwʾ (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
machāneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	<i>camp, encampment; an army camp; those who are camped [army, company, people]; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

**Translation:** *...for they [the Hebrews] had said, "God has come into the [their] camp."* Then we have *for they said*, giving us: *And the Philistines were afraid, for they [the Hebrews] said...*

Now, I should stop here and note that we are operating in the literary form known as 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscience. That is, the author knows what is going on in both camps, even though he is not physically present at either. We do not know how this is. It could be as intricate as a prisoner of war observing this (which is highly unlikely); it could be information conveyed by the Philistines during the next battle or afterwards, which also seems convoluted. It is possible that a man of God wrote this and this information was a part of his inspiration; and it is even more reasonable that Israel had spies as well, and this information was brought back to the camp of Israel that very night. All of the information of this war would be brought back by Israelite soldiers. Personally, given that we have so much information about what happened with the Ark of God in Philistia (in upcoming chapters), my guess is, at least one Philistine was converted and he came over to Israel, after observing what he observed. It would be reasonable

to suppose that this is a very high-ranking soldier in the Philistine army. I believe that I have also suggested that some Philistine (possibly even the King of Gath) became so well-acquainted with these events that he told David of these things when David lived in Gath (which would not require a Philistine soldier or citizen to defect).

Now, for the content of what the Philistines said (which will go on for this and the next two verses): we begin with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to come*; the reason that the masculine singular aspect of this verb is important, is that the verb itself is a masculine plural; *ʿēlôhîym*<sup>31</sup> (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*], which means *gods* or *God*. This word can refer to the Godhead or to foreign gods. Context indicates which is applicable; here the singular verb tells us that the Philistines knew enough about Israel's God, to properly designate Him as *ʿēlôhîym*, which is a plural noun, yet to understand that He acts with a singular purpose, and thus we have a singular verb.

In the Greek, the quote continues in the next verse, the latter half of this verse is missing altogether. I could not find another translation which left out that second line.<sup>32</sup>

### 1Samuel 4:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾôwy (אֹוִי) [pronounced <i>ohy</i> ]	<i>woe! alas! oh!</i> ʾôwy is onomatopoetic; it is a passionate cry of grief or despair	Interjection	Strong's #188 BDB #17
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** *So they said, "Woe to us,..."* Then we have *and so they said* followed by the interjection *ʾôwy* (אֹוִי) [pronounced *ohy*], which means *woe!* It is onomatopoetic. It is an impassion expression of grief and desire, for which we have no modern-day equivalent (although I can picture a Shakespearean actor crying out, "Oh wretchedness, oh despair" such language would sound trite today). Today, the Jews use this same word, and you probably recognize it as *oy*; however, it conveys a lot less emotion. Prior to this, this word has only been found in Num. 21:29 24:23.

### 1Samuel 4:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

<sup>31</sup> Since this is so commonly referred to in reference books, we will use the designation *Elohim* as well.

<sup>32</sup> I did not peruse them all; the NRSV and the NAB both generally reflect these differences when they agree with the Dead Sea Scrolls (although neither is consistent in this regard), so I checked them along with the REB and the NJB, which are all conveniently found in one parallel Bible.

## 1Samuel 4:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (ל' or לו') [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hâyâh (ה'ה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
zô'th (ת'ת) [pronounced zoth]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	feminine singular of zeh; demonstrative pronoun, adverb	Strong's #2063 (& 2088, 2090) BDB #260
The kaph preposition and demonstrative feminine singular adjective zeh (ה') [pronounced zeh], which means <i>here, this</i> . According to BDB, together, they mean <i>the like of this, as follows, things such as this, as this</i> .			
eth <sup>e</sup> mûwl (ל'תמ'ו) [pronounced eth <sup>e</sup> -MÜHL]	<i>yesterday; and is used figuratively for recently, formerly</i>	adverb	Strong's #865 (and #8543) BDB #1069
shil <sup>e</sup> shôwm (ש'ל ש'ו) [pronounced shil-SHOHM]	<i>three days ago, the day before yesterday</i>	adverb	Strong's #8032 BDB #1026
Together, these two adverbs mean <i>before, previously, afore time, hitherto, heretofore</i> (see Gen. 31:2 2Kings 13:5).			

**Translation:** ...for [there] was not like this before. The complete thought is: And they also said, "Woe to us, for [there] as not been [something] like this before." This might be seen as a fulfillment to what Moses wrote hundreds of years before: "The peoples have heard and they tremble. Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia." (Ex. 15:14).

Now, other nations in other times have faced the Jews and their God Jehovah, but this generation of Philistines had never warred directly with the God of the Jews. They believed that if the Ark of God was with the Israelites, that Jehovah Elohim was also with the Israelites. If the Ark was not there, then the Israelites had not brought God into battle with them. This again is the mindset of idolatry. Some object is so closely associated with God as it is thought to be God. Our present day idolatry takes a different form entirely. Things are simply thought to be much more important than God are our idols today.

What the Philistines said is continued into the next verse:

**Woe to us; Who can deliver us from a hand of the Elohim the Mighty, the these. These, they [are] the Elohim the Ones striking Egyptians in every strike in the desert wilderness.**

1Samuel  
4:8

**Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the hand of these Mighty Gods (Elohim)? These [are] the gods (Elohim) [Who] were the ones striking [down] the Egyptians with every [kind of] beating in the desert wilderness.**

**Oh, hell! Who can deliver us from the hand of the Mighty God of Israel? This is the God Who decimated the Egyptians.**

The Hebrew is kind of a mess in this verse, which might indicate great emotion on the part of the speaker:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	Woe to us; Who can deliver us from a hand of the Elohim the Mighty, the these. These, they [are] the Elohim the Ones striking Egyptians in every strike in the desert wilderness.
Septuagint	Woe to us, O Lord, deliver us to-day for such a thing has not happened before; woe to us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These are the Gods that smote Egypt with every plague, and in the wilderness.

Significant differences: No significant differences; the Greek and Hebrew simply separate vv. 7–8 differently.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

NJB	Disaster! Who will rescue us from the clutches of this mighty God/ This was the God who struck down Egypt with every kind of misfortune in the desert.
REB	We are utterly lost! Who can deliver us from the power of this mighty god? This is the god who broke the Egyptians and crushed them in the wilderness.

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	"...We're in trouble now! Who can save us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every kind of plague in the desert."
JPS (Tanakh)	Woe to us! Who will save us from the power of this mighty God? He is the same God who struck the Egyptians with every kind of plague in the wilderness!

#### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	"Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all <i>kinds of</i> plagues in the wilderness.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	Woe to us, who will deliver us out of the hand of these Honourable gods? These <i>are</i> the gods who are smiting the Egyptians with every plague in the wilderness.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines are now extremely concerned, given that the God of Israel struck down Egypt with plagues.

## 1Samuel 4:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾôwy (וֹי) [pronounced <i>ohy</i> ]	<i>woe! alas! oh!</i> ʾôwy is onomatopoetic; it is a passionate cry of grief or despair	Interjection	Strong's #188 BDB #17
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîy (מִי) [pronounced <i>mee</i> ]	<i>who, whom;</i> occasionally rendered <i>how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced <i>naw-TSAHL</i> ]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve, to recover</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels</i> transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʾaddiy (אֲדִיר) [pronounced <i>ahd-DEER</i> ]	<i>majestic, powerful, magnificent, glorious</i>	masculine plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #117 BDB #12
That's the short version. According to Gesenius, this means ❶ <i>large, very great, mighty</i> (Psalm 93:4 Isa. 33:21); ❷ <i>powerful</i> when used of kings and kingdoms (1Sam. 4:8 Psalm 136:18 Ezek. 32:18); ❸ <i>prince, leader, chief, noble</i> (when used as a substantive); ❹ <i>magnificent, illustrious, glorious</i> (Psalm 8:2); and, ❺ <i>noble</i> (when applied in a moral sense, as in Psalm 16:3).			
ʾêlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced <i>KEHLleh</i> ]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #428 BDB #41

**Translation:** *Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the hand of these Mighty Gods [Elohim]?* Now, you may be confused, as we had *Elohim* in the previous verse, along with a singular verb; and now it shows up again in this verse, but with a plural verb. I just said that the Philistines understood, to some degree, the Trinity, and now here, with a plural verb, it appears as though they do not. Here is where we can be confident that the Hebrew text is superior to the Greek. The Hebrew text indicates that we have at least two different people speaking. One Philistine seems to understand that the God of Israel is spoken of in the plural, but acts singularly or with a singular purpose. Another Philistine may not be so steeped in theology, and simply recalls the mention of the Hebrew God, Y<sup>h</sup>owah Elohim, and recalls what happened in Egypt, and puts the two together, without showing a complete theological understanding of the events. This would not be unlikely. In fact, it would be very likely for those in the camp of the

Philistines to have an imperfect knowledge of the God of Israel. It would be reasonable that they would have slightly different and imperfect understandings of the God of Israel. So, what we find here is not the general moaning of the camp, but more individuals discussing this matter, expressing their fear and apprehension as well.

### 1Samuel 4:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hēm (הֵם) [pronounced haym]	<i>they, those; themselves; these</i> [with the definite article]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels</i> transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	masculine plural Hiphil participle with the definite article	Strong #5221 BDB #645
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Mitz <sup>o</sup> rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits-RAH-yim]	<i>Egypt, Egyptians</i>	proper noun with the definite article	Strong's #4714 BDB #595
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced mahk-KAW]	<i>a blow, a wounding, a wound, a slaughter, a beating, a scourging</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4347 BDB #646
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mid <sup>o</sup> bâr (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced mid <sup>o</sup> -BAWR]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness; mouth</i>	masculine singular noun with directional hê (with the definite article)	Strong's #4057 BDB #184

**Translation:** *These [are] the gods [Elohim] [Who] were the ones striking [down] the Egyptians with every [kind of] beating in the desert wilderness.* We have a repeat of the word *these*, which is, at first, disconcerting; however, this is the beginning of a new sentence (or, it has been accidentally copied twice—also a possibility).

Note that Israel's sound and complete defeat of Egypt was well-known to the Philistines. 400 years previous, Israel and Egypt's relationship is known by what God did to Egypt (Ex. 7–12). Egypt was beat down with every sort of



beating or scourging a nation could receive, and the Philistines understood that this was from the hand of God. Did they have an incomplete understanding of the Trinity? Certainly; but then, so do we. Whether they thought of Elohim as One God with three manifestations or as a Trinity of gods, or even as a plethora of gods, makes little difference. What is important is that they realized that they were in for it—that the God of Israel was powerful and great.

On a lighter note, it is also obvious that the information which the Philistines had was somewhat blurred. The Egyptians suffered at the hands of God many plagues, and Israel wandered through the desert wilderness, but it was actually in Egypt where God struck the Egyptians with the various plagues. It was in the desert wilderness that God tested Israel (and Israel did not fare too well). God did not attack Egypt with plagues in the desert wilderness. It was 4 centuries later, so we would expect that the history known by the Philistines might be somewhat inaccurate.<sup>33</sup> There have been explanations offered to clear this up and allow for the Philistine record of history to be more accurate at this point (e.g., inserting a copula near the end of this verse), but none of these solutions has a manuscriptal foundation (although the Greek Septuagint does insert the copula *kaí*, which almost fixes things).<sup>34</sup>

**Strengthen [yourselves] [or, *take courage*] and be as though men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as which they were slaves to you; and you [all] have been according as men and you have fought.”**

1Samuel  
4:9

**Take courage and be men, O Philistines, so that you do not become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you. Furthermore, you have been men and you have engaged in war [against them].**

**Show some courage and act like men, you Philistines, so that you do not end up being slaves to the Hebrews (as they were once slaves to you). Besides, you have acted like men in the past and you have warred against them in the past.**

It is at this point that good leadership and military discipline kick in for the Philistines. They have assumed that they are lost. They cannot imagine defeating the Israelis in battle now, but their officers encourage them and they will consent to war with the Israelites. Their leaders admonish them to act like men and offer them the opposite scenario. “Let’s say that you do not fight and that Israel wins—then you will become slaves to Israel!” so their leaders warn them.

What others have done:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

**Strengthen [yourselves] [or, *take courage*] and be as though men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as which they were slaves to you; and you [all] have been according as men and you have fought.”**

##### Septuagint

**Strengthen yourselves and behave yourselves like men, O you Philistines, that you may not serve the Hebrews as they have served us, but be men and fight with them.**

Significant differences: No significant differences.

<sup>33</sup> This does not make the Bible inaccurate, however. Scripture here merely quotes what the Philistines said. Also, it was Robert Gordon who pointed this out in his *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 95.

<sup>34</sup> Gordon also points out that in the Aramaic translation, the translator inserts *and performed wonders for His people* prior to *in the desert wilderness*. Therefore, the slight inaccuracy of the statement has been recognized for a long time. However, there is no reason for us to concern ourselves with cleaning it up.

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:***The Message*

On your feet, Philistines! Courage! We're about to become slaves to the Hebrews, just as they have been slaves to us. Show what you're made of! Fight for your lives!"

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

## JPS (Tanakh)

Brace yourselves and be men, O Philistines! Or you will become slaves to the Hebrews as they were slaves to you. Be men and fight!"

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

## NASB

"Take courage and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; therefore, be men and fight."

## Owen

Take courage and acquit yourselves like men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you. Acquit yourselves like men and fight.

*Young's Updated LT*

'Strengthen yourselves and become men, O Philistines, lest you [all] do service to Hebrews , as they have done to you—then you [all] have become men, and have fought.'

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines are strengthened by their leaders, challenged to go and fight the Hebrews, or to face slavery to the Hebrews.

**1Samuel 4:9a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
châzaq (חַזַּק) [pronounced <i>khaw-ZAHK</i> ]	<i>take courage, be strong [brave, courageous], show yourself to be strong [to aid, to assist]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpael imperative	Strong's #2388 BDB #304
wê (or vê) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>lê</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational	No Strong's # BDB #510
`ânâsîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-seem</i> ]; also spelled `îyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

## 1Samuel 4:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
P <sup>h</sup> lish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>h</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** *Take courage and be men, O Philistines,...* In v. 9, we get the pep talk, obviously from one in authority to those under his authority. It is unclear whether there is some demeaning sarcasm implied here or not (“*Act as though you were men, O Philistines*”). We have the Hebrew version of what was said in the language of the Philistines, so this would be difficult to tell. Certainly, it would carry with it the idea that if one did not stand up against the Hebrews, he would, in essence, demean his own manhood. Now and again in the modern world, we have to bolster up our young men by telling them, “Act like a man” or “Be a man.” Paul even gave such direction to the Corinthians: *Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong* (I Cor. 16:13).

In any case, note the detail here—this suggests that there is an eyewitness here. Had this been written simply from the point of view of some Israelite, the next few chapters would have been condensed to a verse or two.

## 1Samuel 4:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pen (פֶּן) [pronounced pen]	<i>lest, peradventure, or else, in order to prevent, or, so that</i> [plus a negative]	conjunction	Strong's #6435 BDB #814
ʿabad (עָבַד) [pronounced gaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHD]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>h</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿebriym (עֲבֵרִים) [pronounced g <sup>h</sup> -VREEM]	<i>those from beyond; transliterated Hebrews, Eberites</i>	proper masculine plural gentis/noun with the definite article	Strong's #5680 BDB #720

**Translation:** *...so that you do not become slaves to the Hebrews,...* You may recall that the Hebrews had some men who were potentially their slaves (the Gibeonites). The Gibeonites may have begun as their slaves, but that did not seem to hold. However, I digress. The Philistines faced two things, in their own estimation: death in battle against the Jews or slavery to the Jews.

## 1Samuel 4:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kaʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר כּ) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner</i> .			
ʿâbad (עָבַד) [pronounced ġaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHD]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** ...as they have been slaves to you. Or, ...as they have served you... In Israel's recent history, they had been slaves to the Philistines (see Judges 10:7 13:1). That was during the time to Samson, and it was probably relatively local rather than nationwide. It is this portion of the verse which indicates that Israel's servitude to the Philistines is in the past. Now, the argument could be made that since there is technically no past, present and future tense in the Hebrew, we cannot conclude this refers to a past event. However, just how much sense would this passage make if this referred to a future event? And, if Israel's slavery were ongoing, then the Qal imperfect would have been used, as the Israelites would have continually been under Philistine rule. However, since we have the Qal perfect, we are referring to a period of time which is summed up as a whole, rather than to an ongoing action. Therefore, we could safely conclude that Israel's slavery to the Philistines is in the past.

In any case, the argument is, *these people used to be your slaves...are you willing to be their slaves?*

## 1Samuel 4:9d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational	No Strong's # BDB #510

## 1Samuel 4:9d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾānāšîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced uh-NAW-seem]; also spelled ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced ee-SHEEM]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâcham (לָחַם) [pronounced law-KHAHM]	<i>to engage in battle, to engage in war, to wage war; to fight, to battle</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3898 BDB #535

**Translation:** Furthermore, you have been men and you have engaged in war [against them]. In this final phrase, the leader of the Philistines reminds them that they have already been in war against the Hebrews; they had already acquitted themselves as men—they just soundly defeated the Israeli army. So they are told, just go back and do it again. In other words, these are not orders for what these Philistines should do, but a reminder of what they have done.

The arguments are as follows:

18. The Israelites have been slaves to you.
19. If you just give up, you will become their slaves.
20. You should act like men.
21. You have already acted as men and have defeated them in battle; do it again.

Again, note how much we know about the pep talk that these Philistine soldiers receive. This clearly suggests that someone actually witnessed this event and recorded it. The reason I don't believe that this was a Jewish spy is, the information about the Ark will continue in subsequent chapters.

**And so fought Philistines and so was struck down Israel and so they flee a man to his tents and so was the slaughter great very and so fell from Israel 30,000 a footman.**

1Samuel  
4:10

**And the Philistines engaged in war and Israel was defeated, so they [Israel] fled [each] man to his [own] tent, and the slaughter was extremely great, and 30,000 foot soldiers of Israel fell.**

**As a result, the Philistines fought the Israelites and defeated them. Those who were not killed deserted, returning to his own home. The number of Israelite soldiers killed was 30,000.**

This is impressive. The Israelites had won a victory in attitude over the Philistines. The Israelis had assumed that they would triumph now in war and the Philistines had assumed that they would lose. However, the Philistines still fought bravely, exhibiting tremendous resolve. This is why discipline and leadership are so important in war. The Philistines do not expect to win, but they fight valiantly anyway. The result will be a tremendous victory over the Israelites.

What others have done:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so fought Philistines and so was struck down Israel and so they flee a man to his tents and so was the slaughter great very and so fell from Israel 30,000 a footman.
Septuagint	And they fought with them; and the men of Israel fall, and they fled every man to his tent; and there was a very great slaughter; and there fell of Israel 30,000 ranks.

Significant differences: No significant difference.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

TEV	The Philistines fought hard and defeated the Israelites, who went running to their homes. There was a great slaughter; thirty thousand Israelite soldiers were killed.
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### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	The Philistines fought; Israel was routed, and they all fled to their homes. The defeat was very great, thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell there.
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### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent, and the slaughter was very great; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.
Young's Updated LT	And the Philistines fight, and Israel is smitten [i.e., <i>struck down</i> ], and they flee each to his tents, and the blow is very great, and there fall of Israel thirty thousand footmen;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Israel and the Philistines fight, and the Philistines are victorious, killing 30,000 Israelites.

1Samuel 4:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâcham (לָחַם) [pronounced law-KHAHM]	<i>to engage in battle, to engage in war, to wage war; to fight, to battle</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3898 BDB #535
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>h</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814



**Translation:** *And the Philistines engaged in war...* This means that the pep talk given in the previous verse worked. The Philistines went to war against the Israeli army, despite their loss of confidence.

### 1Samuel 4:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgaph (נָגַף) [pronounced naw-GAHF]	<i>to be struck down, to be smitten, to be hit</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5062 BDB #619
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

**Translation:** *...and Israel was defeated,...* The military strength and resolve of the Philistine army pays off. They defeat Israel. Israel had confidence going into battle, but they foolishly depended upon the Ark as if it were some kind of good luck charm, or, even worse, as though it was the actual embodiment of Jehovah Elohim.

### 1Samuel 4:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nûwç (נוּחַ) [pronounced noose]	<i>to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to hasten quickly [away]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾohel (אֹהֶל) [pronounced OH-hel]	<i>tent, tabernacle, house, temporary dwelling</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #168 BDB #13

**Translation:** *...so they [Israel] fled [each] man to his [own] tent,...* Israel's reaction to the defeat was to desert (those who remained alive). We have the wâw consecutive and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to hasten quickly [away]*. Recall earlier in this chapter, where we seemed to have a subject and verb which did not match exactly; we have this here as well. *Israel* is in the singular, but this verb is a masculine plural (and it is followed by a masculine singular noun). The subject is actually implied, which is *the men or soldiers of Israel*. Then we have *a man*, which essentially means, in this context, *each man*, followed by *to his tents*, giving us: *...so they flee each man to his tents...* I would have expected *tent* (in the singular), but

it is plural in the Hebrew (but singular in the Greek).<sup>35</sup> In any case, The men of Israel did not simply retreat and regroup; the men of Israel retreated and deserted. In their own minds, they had no reason to simply retreat and regroup, as returning to war simply would mean their death. Their freedom (I should say, the freedom of Israel) did not mean that much to them. Or, they may have seen their fight as futile. They were ready to accept their fate as defeated; by retreating to their own tents, they preserved their own lives.

### 1Samuel 4:10d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced mahk-KAW]	<i>a blow, a wounding, a wound, a slaughter, a beating, a scourging</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4347 BDB #646
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
m'ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m'-ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

**Translation:** ...and the slaughter was extremely great,... There were a great number of Israelites who were killed. God destroyed these men who agreed that the Ark of God should be brought into battle. There are a great number of degenerates in Israel.

### 1Samuel 4:10e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656

<sup>35</sup> Many Israelites lived in more than one tent.

# 1Samuel 4:10e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Extended Qal meanings: <i>to fall [to the ground, in battle], to die, to die a violent death; a man felled [by sickness]; [a building] falling down [in decay]; about to fall, about to come to ruin; [a fetus] falling out [or, being born, being aborted]; to fall away [used of members of a body]; [a face being] cast down [in sorrow], to fall down, to come down [from heaven], to descend; [sleep, terror, calamity] to fall upon [anyone]; to throw oneself, to cast oneself; to rush upon; to fall prostrate, to prostrate oneself; to fall upon someone [in affection]; to fall upon [an enemy], to attack; to alight [from a beast or chariot], to let oneself down; to encamp [as an army]; [a prayer] to fall before [someone for consideration, to be heard]; to fall away, to desert.</i><sup>36</sup> I hope that the relationship is clear between the basic meaning, <i>to fall</i>, and the extended understanding of this verb.</p>			
min (מן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Yisʿrāʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-row-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
shʿlôshîym (שְׁלֹשִׁים) [pronounced <i>shʿlow-SHEEM</i> ]	<i>thirty</i>	plural numeral	Strong's #7970 BDB #1026
ʿelep (אֶלֶף) pronounced <i>EH-lef</i>	<i>thousand, family, (500?); military unit</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
ragʿlîy (רַגְלִי) [pronounced <i>rahgʿ-LEE</i> ]	<i>on foot, footmen</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #7273 BDB #920

**Translation:** ...and 30,000 foot soldiers of Israel fell. We have another wâw consecutive, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply*. Then we have *from Israel*, the two words for 30,000,<sup>37</sup> and the masculine singular adjective *on foot, footmen*. I don't see any way of rendering this as a singular in the English so that it makes sense. This gives us: *And so 30,000 footmen of Israel fell*. The slaughter in the ancient world war was either incredibly massive, beyond what we can imagine, or the number of the Hebrew language is different than we have supposed.<sup>38</sup>

Now, you may wonder, as certainly did the Israelites and the Philistines, why the Ark of God did not do the Israelites any good and why did God allow so many of the Israelites to be killed. Again, the Ark was *not* God. God did not travel with the Ark nor was God confined to the Ark. It simply was a teaching aide to the Israelites and God would, on occasion, speak to certain men from above the Ark. Next, why did God allow such a slaughter? God had warned Israel from the very beginning. *"However, it shall be that if you do not obey Jehovah your God and observe all of His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and they will overtake you...Jehovah will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them. You will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of this earth."* (Deut. 28:15, 25). Moses delivered this warning to the Israelites before they had even crossed over the Jordan into the Land of Promise. God fulfills this promise by this slaughter.

<sup>36</sup> Taken from H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 557.

<sup>37</sup> The numbering system in Hebrew is still somewhat of a mystery to us.

<sup>38</sup> We will discuss the numbers found in Old Testament Scripture in a bit more detail in 1Sam. 6:19.

And an Ark of Elohim was captured and a pair of [the] sons of Eli died—Hophni and Phinehas.

1Samuel  
4:11

Also, the Ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

Also, the Ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed in the battle.

What others have done:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text      And an Ark of Elohim was captured and a pair of [the] sons of Eli died—Hophni and Phinehas.

Septuagint      And the ark of God was taken, and both the sons of Heli, Ophni and Phinehas, died.

Significant differences:      None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

*The Message*      As if that wasn't bad enough, the Chest of God was taken and the two sons of Eli--Hophni and Phinehas--were killed.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)      The Ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB      And the Ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.  
Young's Updated LT      ...and the ark of God has been taken, and the two sons of Eli have died, Hophni and Phinehas.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines captured the Ark of God and Eli's two sons died in battle.

### 1Samuel 4:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾăṣôw (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i> ]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

## 1Samuel 4:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to be taken, to be taken away; to be brought; to be seized, to be captured</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542

**Translation:** [Also, the Ark of God was captured](#),... This turn of events was unexpected. Not the deaths of Hophni and Phinehas, but the taking of the Ark of God. No one in Israel would have ever thought such a thing could happen. This was unprecedented and a complete surprise to all Israel. The fact that the Ark was taken out of Israel is stated five times in this chapter alone (v. 11, 17, 19, 21–22). This repetition tells us just how unbelievable such a thing could be.

### Parallel Passage Psalm 78:56–61

We find a parallel passage in Psalm 78:56–61, the historical survey psalm (we studied it after finishing the book of Exodus).

[Then they tested God and they rebelled, against God Most High;](#)  
[furthermore, they did not keep His testimonies.](#)  
[Then they turned themselves away from God;](#)  
[and they behaved deceitfully and faithlessly, just like their fathers;](#)  
[they turned themselves away like a deceitful bow.](#)  
[Then they provoked Him to anger with their high places;](#)  
[and they moved Him to jealousy with their graven images.](#)  
[God heard about their apostasy which made Him furious;](#)  
[then He completely rejected Israel.](#)  
[He forsook His dwelling-place at Shiloh;](#)  
[the tent where He dwelt among men.](#)  
[Then He delivered His power to captivity](#)  
[and His glory to the hand of a foe.](#)

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This would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Ark of God** (which we have covered briefly in this chapter).

You might wonder how would God allow His Ark to be taken in battle—focus in on who is carrying the Ark: Hophni and Phinehas, two of the most degenerate priests in Israel's history (at least up until this time).

## 1Samuel 4:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## 1Samuel 4:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sh <sup>e</sup> nayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> NAH-yim]	<i>two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
Châph <sup>e</sup> nîy (חֲפִנִי) [pronounced chaff-NEE]	<i>hollow of hand? and is transliterated Hophni</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #2652 BDB #342
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Phîyn <sup>e</sup> châç (פִּינְחָס) [pronounced pheeh <sup>e</sup> -KHOSS]	which possibly means <i>Negro</i> in Egyptian, and is transliterated <i>Phinehas</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6372 BDB #810

**Translation:** ...and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. You will recall that Eli's sons were men who did not believe in God and used the sacrifices to increase their meat intake (1Sam. 2:12–17). Whereas, the first event was completely unexpected, many expected the second.

Keller comments at this point: *The hill country was occupied, Israel was disarmed, and garrisons were located in the tribal territories. At their first assault the Philistines had achieved their purpose, central Palestine was in their hands.*<sup>39</sup>

The mistake made by the Jews is a mistake commonly made by Christians—they looked at some which has already occurred, e.g., Joshua leading Israel into battle against Jericho with the Ark, and they misapply it to themselves. Joshua did not carry the Ark of God into battle at each city he attacked. God told him to bring the Ark one time against one city. Believers are forever looking back into this particular action or that which they dredge up from the Old or New Testament and then they try to copy that act. Simply copying this person or that is not the Christian way of life. Copying this action or that is not the Christian way of life. You must have some degree of discernment. The Christian way of life is the filling of the spirit, through naming your sins to God, and then learning God's Word (as both Thieme's call it, *epistemological rehabilitation*).

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## A Benjamite Brings News of These Battles to Shiloh

<sup>39</sup> Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (second revised edition); New York, 1981; pp. 181–182.



And so ran a man of Benjamin from the battle line and so he came [to] Shiloh the day the this and his clothes torn and earth upon his head.

1Samuel  
4:12

And a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and he came to Shiloh that same day; and his clothes were torn and [there was] dirt on his head.

Then a Benjamite ran from the battle line to Shiloh; his clothes were torn and there was dirt on his head.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so ran a man of Benjamin from the battle line and so he came [to] Shiloh the day the this and his clothes torn and earth upon his head.
Septuagint	And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the battle, and he came to Selom on that day; and his clothes torn, and earth upon his head.

Significant differences: None.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

<i>The Message</i>	Immediately, a Benjaminite raced from the front lines back to Shiloh. Shirt torn and face smeared with dirt,...
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#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	A Benjaminite ran from the battlefield and reached Shiloh the same day; his clothes were rent and there was earth on his head.
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#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	Now a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and dust on his head.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And a man of Benjamin ran out of the ranks, and came into Shiloh, on that day, and his long robes <i>are</i> rent [torn], and earth on his head;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** A man of Benjamin runs to Shiloh on the day, his outer clothing torn, and there is dirt upon his head.

1Samuel 4:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (l) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## 1Samuel 4:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rûts (רוץ) [pronounced roots]	<i>to run, to hasten to; to move quickly [and with purpose]; to rush upon [in a hostile manner]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Ben y <sup>e</sup> mîynîy (בֶּן־יְמִינִי) [pronounced ben-y <sup>e</sup> mee-NEE]	<i>son of [my] right hand and is rendered Benjamite</i>	gentilic adjective	Strong's #1145 BDB #122
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ma <sup>h</sup> ārekeh (מַעְרָכָה) [pronounced māh-ghuh-reh-KEH]	<i>row, rank, battle line; this is also translated armies</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4634 BDB #790

**Translation:** [And a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line...](#) It is pretty obvious that this altercation involves the central portion of Israel. The Philistines occupied the coast of the Mediterranean Sea along Judah and Dan, and they had taken over much of the territory of Dan. Adjacent to Dan are the territories of Ephraim (wherein was the Tent of God) and Benjamin. We should expect men from Ephraim, Benjamin and Judah to be involved in this war, and possibly from Dan (if there are any men left in Dan). Apparently there is a gloss in the Aramaic paraphrase which identifies Saul as the runner (which is apparently a rabbinic tradition), but there is no reason for that to be taken as the truth.<sup>40</sup>

## 1Samuel 4:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bōw' (בוא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
Shilōw (שִׁלֹּו) [shi-LOH]	<i>quiet, relaxed, prosperous; transliterated Shiloh</i>	proper noun locale	Strong's #7887 BDB #1017
yōwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

<sup>40</sup> Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 96.

## 1Samuel 4:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	that	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:** ...and he came to Shiloh that same day;... News services in those days were much different than we have today. Here, a man ran with the news to Shiloh. It is possible that, after capturing the Ark, that the Philistines set their sites on Shiloh to destroy next. However, we do not know when Shiloh will be destroyed; even though we are certain that Shiloh will be destroyed, and probably around this time period.

Now, I don't want you to think that this man is simply a military deserter. These soldiers fought for the freedom of their land and they fought for the freedom of their families. There were probably a number of soldiers who were designated as runners or as *associated press* who, when there was significant news to tell, would run to specific cities to spread this news. I don't know how much we know about these men, but we come across them on several occasions in Scripture. We don't know if one or a dozen traveled with the army; whether there was one so designated; or whether the designation came near the end of a battle. We do not know if, once this runner arrived to a city, if there were other runners who would go from that city out in all directions to spread the news. What the city would do after this news was spread would depend upon the news, the city, the events which took place and the general plan which the elders may have arrived at before the events took place.

## 1Samuel 4:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
maddîym (מַדִּיִּים) [pronounced mahd-DEEM]	measure, cloth garment, outer garments; armored coat; carefully tailored clothing; a thick piece of cloth; a leather garment, a carpet	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4055 BDB #551
qâra' (קָרַע) [pronounced kaw-RAHÇ]	to bend, to tear apart; to tear out, to tear away; to cut in pieces [with a knife]; to cut out; to tear with words [i.e., to curse]	Qal passive participle	Strong's #7167 BDB #902
qâra' (קָרַע) [pronounced kaw-RAHÇ]	to bend, to tear apart; to tear out, to tear away; to cut in pieces [with a knife]; to cut out; to tear with words [i.e., to curse]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7167 BDB #902
'ădâmâh (אֲדָמָה) [pronounced uh-daw-MAWH]	ground, soil, dirt, earth, tillable earth, land, surface of the earth	feminine singular noun	Strong's #127 BDB #9

## 1Samuel 4:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
rô'sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced <i>rohsh</i> ]	<i>head, top, chief, front, choicest</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7218 BDB #910

**Translation:** ...and his clothes were torn and [there was] dirt on his head. The Hebrews tended to be very demonstrative. He did not necessarily have torn clothes and dirt on his forehead from the battle, but he could have done that to himself, as an indication of his heart-felt sorrow. We find this same phrasing in 2Sam. 1:2, when a man reports to David that both Saul and his son Jonathan were dead. When the Israelites were defeated at Ai, when Israel first marched into the Land of Promise, Joshua and the other elders of Israel tore their clothes and put dust on their heads (Joshua 7:6). Often, the person was a bearer of bad news, and the torn clothes and the dust upon the head indicated that (2Sam. 1:2 13:19 15:32). It appeared as though there were men who specifically had the duty of acting as a runner to deliver important news (2Sam. 18:19–31). In some cases, these actions were done before God due to whatever sin or sins they may have committed (see Neh. 9:1 as well).

And so he came and, behold, Eli was sitting upon the seat [by the] side of a road watching [intently] [or, *side of a road of Mizpah*], for was trembling his heart on account of an Ark of the Elohim. And the man had come to make known in the city and so cried out [in distress] all of the city.

1Samuel  
4:13

And so he came and, he saw that [lit., *behold*] Eli was sitting on the seat [of honor] [by the] side of the road watching [intently] [or, *of the road of Mizpah*], for his heart was trembling on account of the Ark of Elohim. And the man had come to make known [the news of the defeat and capture] in the city, and all the city cried out [in great distress].

The man came and saw Eli sitting on his seat at the side of the road watching intently, and his heart was trembling because of the Ark of Elohim. The man had come to the city to make known what had happened in battle, and the city cried out in great distress.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so he came and, behold, Eli was sitting upon the seat [by the] side of a road watching [intently] [or, *side of a road of Mizpah*], for was trembling his heart on account of an Ark of the Elohim. And the man had come to make known in the city and so cried out [in distress] all of the city.

##### Septuagint

And he came, and, behold, Heli was upon the seat by the gate looking along the way, for his heart was greatly alarmed for the Ark of God. And the man entered into the city to bring tidings; and the city cried out.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

*The Message*

...he entered the town. Eli was sitting on his stool beside the road keeping vigil, for he was extremely worried about the Chest of God. When the man ran straight into town to tell the bad news, everyone wept..

## REB

When he arrived Eli was sitting on a seat by the road to Mizpah, for he was deeply troubled about the Ark of God. The man entered the town with his news, and all the people cried out in horror.

## TEV

Eli, who was very worried about the Covenant Box, was sitting in his seat beside the road, staring. The man spread the news throughout the town, and everyone cried out in fear.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

## JPS (Tanakh)

When he arrived, he found Eli sitting on a seat, waiting beside the road—his heart trembling for the Ark of God. The man entered the city to spread the news, and the whole city broke out in a cry.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:***The Emphasized Bible*

And <when he entered> lo! Eli was sitting upon his chair by the wayside watching, for his heart was trembling for the ark of God, —and ||the man|| entered to tell the news in the city, and all the city made outcry.

## NASB

When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on *his* seat by the road eagerly watching, because his heart was trembling for the ark of God. So the man came to tell *it* in the city, and all the city cried out. [Greek version reads: *beside the gate watching the road*]

## NKJV

Now when he came, there was Eli, sitting on a seat by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told it, all the city cried out. [MT and Vulgate: *by the wayside watching*; LXX: *beside the gate watching the road.*] Also, *trembled* or *trembled with anxiety*.

*Young's Updated LT*

...and he comes in, and lo, Eli is sitting on the throne by the side of the way, watching, for his heart has been trembling for the ark of God, and the man had come in to declare *it* in the city, and all the city cried out.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Eli is concerned, as he knows that his sons are under judgment, so he waits by the road to hear any news from what happens in this battle. A man enters into the city with news of the battle.

**1Samuel 4:13a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## 1Samuel 4:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kiççêʾ (כִּסֵּא) [pronounced kis-SAY]	<i>throne, seat of honor; seat of judgment</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3678 BDB #490

**Translation:** And so he came and, he saw that [lit., behold] Eli was sitting on the seat [of honor]... This narrative is still being given from the 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient point of view. It is not this Benjamite who sees Eli. Eli is waiting patiently, concerned about the taking of the Ark into battle; the Benjamite apparently enters into the city from another direction, bypassing Eli, and he tells the news to everyone else. This will become apparent in the next verse, as the entire city will know before Eli does. It is likely that this is intentional. The news that this man must give to Eli—that both the Ark was taken and his sons were dead—was the most difficult news to give to anyone.

As this man comes into Shiloh, he sees Eli sitting at the entrance, as we found him in 1Sam. 1:9.

## 1Samuel 4:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This Hebrew word is uncertain. In the Hebrew, we have the Hebrew word יָד or יַד, neither of which has a translation into English. What most scholars contend is that this is the yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd], which means <i>hand</i> . Yâd is also used figuratively to mean <i>the side of</i> . Strong's #3027 BDB #388.			
derek° (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek°]	<i>way, distance, road, journey, manner, course</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
tsâphâh (צָפָה) [pronounced tsaw-FAW]	<i>to watch or to look out [with great concern], to [carefully, intently] look about, to [faithfully] keep watch</i>	Piel participle	Strong's #6822 BDB #859



## 1Samuel 4:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>An alternate interpretation comes from the spelling of the Piel participle of tsâphâh, which is m<sup>e</sup>tsapeh (מִצְפֵּה) [pronounced <i>m<sup>e</sup>tzah-PEH</i>], which is very similar to mits<sup>e</sup>pâh (מִצְפָּה) [pronounced <i>mitz<sup>e</sup>-PAW</i>], which is transliterated <i>Mizpeh</i> or <i>Mizpah</i> (depending upon the vowel pointing, and it means <i>outlook point, watchtower</i>. Strong's #4708 (&amp; #4709) BDB #859.</p>			

**Translation:** ...[by the] side of the road watching [intently] [or, of the road of Mizpah],... In the Greek, we have, literally: ...*Heli on the seat beside the gate watching the road*... Neither rendering causes us any theological concern.

What Eli is doing is the Piel participle of *to look out, to view, to look about, to spy, to keep watch*. The Piel is the intensive stem, meaning that Eli is watching with great concern. Occasionally, we will have a phrase like this which is, apart from the situation at hand, almost humorous. Eli, a blind man, sits by the gate to the city *watching*.

In the exegesis above, it is possible that this reads that Eli is by the side of the road to Mizpah. Now, there are six different *Mizpah*'s in Scripture, the thinking is that this is the one south of the city, so that Eli is waiting by the *Mizpah gate*. This explains the NEB and REB translations. This gives us: ...[at the] side of [the] road watching... or, ...[at the] side of [the] road of Mizpah... The latter understanding means that Eli simply went to the wrong gate to wait at, as Mizpah is in the south and news would be coming from the west. However, even though the battle may have begun in the west, this does not mean Eli expected it to end in the west. What he had hoped for was for the Philistines to mount a retreat, which would send them southward toward their original cities, which would cause the news to come from the south. Although all of this would explain why Eli hears the news last, it does not jibe with the Septuagint's more natural rendering of ...*Heli on the seat beside the gate watching the road*... And, I should mention, that we can accept the translation from the Hebrew, and still explain why Eli hears the news last.

## 1Samuel 4:13c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced <i>layb<sup>v</sup></i> ]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524
chârêd (חָרַד) [pronounced <i>khaw-RAYD</i> ]	<i>trembling, fearful, afraid</i>	masculine singular Adjective (also used as a verb)	Strong's #2730 BDB #353

**Translation:** ...for his heart was trembling... This is an interesting phrase, as Eli is blinded with cataracts. What he is actually doing, is he is sitting on his seat of honor, listening intently. He can see, but everything is blurry, as though his eyeballs had been coated with Vaseline.

### 1Samuel 4:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
When not showing a physical relationship between two things, ʿal can take on a whole host of new meanings: <i>on the ground of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, concerning, besides, in addition to, together with, beyond, above, over, by on to, towards, to, against, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i> . It is one of the most versatile prepositions in Scripture. This word often follows particular verbs. In the English, we have <i>helping verbs</i> ; in the Hebrew, there are <i>helping prepositions</i> .			
ʾārōn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i> ]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...on account of the Ark of Elohim. What he is watching intently for is for news about the Ark of God. Eli realized that the taking of the Ark, without consulting him, without consulting God, was a dangerous and irresponsible thing to do. He was not so idolatrous as to think that the Ark had magical powers to keep Israel from being beaten in war; and he knew that there was nothing inherent in the Ark itself to keep it from being taken in battle. Whatever concerns he had about his sons are not mentioned—only his concern for the Ark. This prompted the NIV Study Bible to reasonably conclude that Eli was more concerned for the Ark than he was for his sons.<sup>41</sup>

### 1Samuel 4:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
bôwʾ (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational	No Strong's # BDB #510

<sup>41</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 379.

## 1Samuel 4:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
b <sup>e</sup> (בֵּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

**Translation:** *And the man had come to make known [the news of the defeat and capture] in the city,...* The runner-informant went throughout the city, telling of the defeat of Israel's troops, the loss of so many men, and the loss of the Ark. The information spread quickly.

## 1Samuel 4:13f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
zâʿaq (זָעַק) [pronounced zaw-ĠAHK]	<i>to cry out, to call, to cry</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2199 BDB #277
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

**Translation:** *...and all the city cried out [in great distress].* The result of his declaring what had happened is given with 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect of zâʿaq (זָעַק) [pronounced zaw-ĠAHK], which means *to cry out, to call, to cry*. It is often used for an utterance of horror, anxiety, alarm, distress, sorrow. Notice the onomatopoeic quality of this word. Most believers, during crisis periods of their lives, feel as though God has deserted them, and they cry out in distress (and they may keep it inside as well). This is how those in Israel felt. The idea that the Ark of God, their physical manifestation of God, could be captured and taken by heathen is beyond their imagination. They had assumed that God would protect His Ark and His people under any circumstance. And without God, they were nothing. The subject of the verb is *all of the city*, giving us: *...and so cried out [in distress] all of the city*. Recall that Israel had been in several cycles of slavery to other surrounding nations and this is what they expected to occur again. In particular, they had been under Philistine tyranny for years (Judges 13:1) and this threatened to reoccur during their generation.

Edersheim describes this scene for us: *Tidings fo this crushing defeat were not long in reaching Shiloh. Just outside the gate of the sanctuary, by the way which a messenger from the battlefield must come,*

*sat the aged high-priest. His eyes were “stiffened” by age, but his hearing was keen as he waited with anxious heart for the expected news. The judgment foretold, the presence of his two sons with the army in the field, the removal of the ark, without any Divine authority, at the bidding of a superstitious people, must have filled him with sad misgivings. Had he been right in being a consenting party to all this? Had he been a faithful father, a faithful priest, a faithful guardian of the sanctuary? And now a confused noise as of a tumult reached him. Up the slopes which led to Shiloh, “with clothes rent and earth upon his head,” in token of deepest meaning, ran a Benjamite, a fugitive from the army. As the high-priest he sped, without stopping to speak to him whose office had become empty, and whose family was destroyed. Now he has reached the marketplace; and up and down those steep, narrow streets fly the tidings. They gather around him; they weep, they cry out in the wilderness of their grief, and “the noises of the crying” is heard where the old man sits alone still waiting for tidings.<sup>42</sup>*

**And so heard Eli [the] sound of the outcry; and so, he said “What [is the] sound of the multitude the this?” And the man hastened and so he came and so he made known to Eli.**

1Samuel  
4:14

**Now Eli heard the sound of the outcry, and he said, “What [is] the sound of this crowd?” And the man hastened and came and made known [this information] to Eli.**

**Now Eli heard the sounds of the outcry, and he inquired, “What is the meaning of the sound of the crowds?” So then man hurried to go to Eli to tell him what had happened.**

Now, what this does not explain is, why did Eli—who is sitting by the city gate, waiting for news of the battle and his sons and concerning the Ark—why has he not heard the news yet? There have been a lot of explanations given here. One explanation is that Eli sat by the wrong gate. One tradition is that Eli is not waiting and *watching*, but he is waiting to *Mizpah*, which is to the south (see the REB and the exegesis of the previous verse); and the runner came from Ebenezer, which is from the west. Obviously, the idea is, Eli is an old man, who being blind and possibly a little daft, goes and sits by the wrong gate. Or, as mentioned before, Eli was hoping/expecting the battle to side with Israel, which means that the Philistines would retreat and that the Israelites would pursue them, taking them to the south toward the Philistine cities. Therefore, a runner with good news would be coming from the south. Anyway, when the runner comes in by the west gate, Eli is still sitting at the south gate waiting for the news, and Eli never hears what happened until the last. The other explanation, which is just as likely, is that the runner, seeing this fat old blind guy sitting near the gate of the city, just ran right by him without stopping, and went toward the first crowd that he saw. The crowd of people became larger and the messenger was then pointed in the direction of Eli, with an explanation as to who he was. And that is when Eli was told the news.

Now, what others have done:

#### **Ancient texts:**

##### **Masoretic Text**

And so heard Eli [the] sound of the outcry; and so, he said “What [is the] sound of the multitude the this?” And the man hastened and so he came and so he made known to Eli.

##### **Septuagint**

And Heli heard the sound of the cry, and said, “What is the voice of this sound?” And the man hastened and advanced to Heli, and said, to him,...

##### **Significant differences:**

There is a slight difference at the end of this verse; however, it might be a matter of translation.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

<sup>42</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 420.

**CEV** He was ninety-eight years old and blind, but he could hear everyone crying, and he asked, "What's all that noise?" The soldier hurried over and told Eli,... [vv. 14–15].

**The Message** They were appalled. Eli heard the loud wailing and asked, "Why this uproar?" The messenger hurried over and reported.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

**JPS (Tanakh)** And when Eli heard the sound of the outcry and asked, "What is the meaning of this uproar?" the man rushed over to tell Eli.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

**NASB** When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What *does* the noise of this commotion *mean*?" Then the man came hurriedly and told Eli.

**Young's Updated LT** And Eli hears the noise of the cry, and says, 'What—the noise of this tumult!' And the man hastened, and came in, and declares to Eli.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The city is crying out over the loss of the Ark and Eli hears this and asks, "What is the meaning of this noise?" The newsman comes now to Eli.

1Samuel 4:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שָׁמָע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qôwl (קוֹל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
ts <sup>er</sup> âqâh (צָעָקָה) [pronounced tz <sup>er</sup> -gaw-KAW]	<i>outcry, cry, a crying out</i>	Feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6818 BDB #858

**Translation:** Now Eli heard the sound of the outcry,... The verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *to listen, listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, listen and take heed to, listen and take note of, listen and be cognizant of*. Since there is no obedience

implied here, Eli is simply sitting on his chair listening intently to the sounds of the city, and the Israelites, being very demonstrative, are making a lot of sounds. We have the proper noun Eli and the direct object (i.e., what he is listening to), which is the masculine singular construct of *sound, voice*, which is affixed to the definite article and the feminine noun *outcry, cry*. **So Eli heard [the] sound of the outcry...** Recall that Jews tend to be very demonstrative with their emotions (at least in the Old Testament)—therefore, Eli would hear a lot of crying out, calling out to God, and remorseful epithets. Standing just outside the city gates, anyone could hear the lamentations of the city as a whole. So, Eli hears all this. He knows that something horrible has happened and he certainly assumes that it has something to do with the war against the Philistines.

### 1Samuel 4:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wā (or vā) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
māh (מָה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
qôl (קוֹל) [pronounced koh]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
hāmōwn (הַמֹּון) [pronounced haw-MOHN]	<i>multitude, crowd, throng</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1995 BDB #242
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

**Translation:** ...and he said, “What [is] the sound of this crowd?” Eli asks, to no one in particular, *what is this noise all about?* He can hear a large number of people crying out and knows that it must have something to do with the war against the Philistines.

### 1Samuel 4:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾīysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
māhar (מָהֵר) [pronounced maw-HAHR]	<i>to hasten, to hurry, to make haste; its transitive use is to prepare quickly, to bring quickly, to do quickly</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #4116 BDB #554



**Translation:** *And the man hastened...* Recall the Eli was nearly blind, somewhat of a relic of the town, although greatly respected. His hearing is acute, and he calls out, *What the hell is going on?* The Benjamite is told about this. It is possible that he did not know who Eli was, and it is possible that he was avoiding speaking to Eli, as what he has to say is so awful. Now he goes to Eli. As mentioned before, we can only speculate as to why he went to Eli *after* speaking to the city as a whole. (1) The man came in by a different entrance to the city (which seems unlikely, as Eli is waiting by the road); (2) the man did not know who Eli was, and just passed him by; or (3) the man avoided Eli because his news to Eli would be the most difficult to deliver.

1Samuel 4:14d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נִגַּד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿĒlîy (עֵלִי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750

**Translation:** *...and came and made known [this information] to Eli.* Even though Eli knows, to some degree, what the news will be, it is still difficult for him to take. In this situation, it is going to be the worst possible news. His making known to Eli this information will not occur until v. 16; we first get a description of Eli:

**And Eli, a son of ninety and eight a year; and his [two] eyes took a stand and he was not able to see.**

1Samuel  
4:15

**Eli [was] a son of ninety-eight years; and his eyes were fixed and he was unable to see.**

**Eli was 98 years old, and his eyes were blinded by cataracts.**

What others have done:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Latin Vulgate

Now Heli was ninety and eight years old, and his eyes were dim, and he could not see.

##### Masoretic Text

And Eli, a son of ninety and eight a year; and his [two] eyes took a stand and he was not able to see.

##### Peshitta

Now Eli was 78 years old; and his eyes were dim so that he could not see.

## Septuagint

Now Heli [was] a son of ninety years and his eyes were fixed, and he saw not.

## Significant differences:

The ages are different (recall that the Vulgate, Peshitta and MT all are from the same family of manuscripts so we should expect most agreement between them). Eli's eyes being *dim* is probably a result of a translation rather than any sort of difference in manuscripts.

## Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

## CEV

He was ninety-eight years old and blind,...

## Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

## JPS (Tanakh)

Now Eli was ninety-eight years old; his eyes were fixed in a blind stare.

## Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

## NASB

Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set so that he could not see.

## Young's Updated LT

And Eli is a son of ninety and eight years and his eyes have stood, and he has not been able to see.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Eli's age is given and the problem with his eyes, a sign of age, is again noted.

## 1Samuel 4:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
tish <sup>er</sup> îym (תִּשְׁעִים) [pronounced <i>tish<sup>e</sup>-GEEM</i> ]	<i>ninety</i>	indeclinable noun; archaic plural	Strong's #8673 BDB #1077
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sh <sup>e</sup> môneh (שְׁמוֹנֶה) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>e</sup>moh-NEH</i> ]	<i>eight</i>	masculine singular numeral	Strong's #8083 BDB #1032
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-NAW</i> ]	<i>year</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040.

## 1Samuel 4:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The Arabic and Syrian versions both read this as <i>78 years old</i> , but that is probably due to misreading a ץ ( <i>GAH-yin</i> ) for a צ ( <i>tsâdêy</i> ). <sup>43</sup> This reads <i>ninety</i> in the Greek (which could mean that a portion of the text was too difficult to read).			

**Translation:** Eli [was] a son of ninety-eight years;... We have our second to the last description of Eli prior to his death here. Eli is 98.

## 1Samuel 4:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿayin (עַיִן) [pronounced <i>GAH-yin</i> ]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לֹא') [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâkôl (יָכֹל) [pronounced <i>yaw-COAL</i> ]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

**Translation:** ...and his eyes were fixed and he was unable to see. The verb here is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect of *to stand, to take a stand, to rise up*. In this context, it simply means that his eyes were fixed.

<sup>43</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 418.

I don't understand why we have the feminine singular verb with a feminine dual noun (eyes). This gives us: **...and his eyes were fixed...** Recall that when God called out to Samuel, Eli's vision was beginning to deteriorate (1Sam. 3:2). What often occurs in older people is that the lens and often the lens sac both become clouded over. We often see this in older pets—we can see the white in the midst of their eyes. When you are on the other side of that cloudiness, it becomes very difficult to see through it. This cannot be corrected with glasses or with contact lenses, because the problem is the lens itself. If you took a pair of glasses and smeared them with Vaseline, this is how the world looked to Eli when his cataracts began to get bad. Eventually, both of his lenses were entirely clouded over, and he could not see at all. Since his eyes were no longer able to distinguish objects and no longer did they respond to light, they were simply fixed (this is my theory, anyway). There was no reason for Eli to look this way or that. Since there was no such thing as cataract surgery at that time, when a person got such a disease, they were stuck with it for the rest of their lives.<sup>44</sup>

This is followed by **...and he was unable to see**. The purpose of the description is to help us to understand how this news will kill Eli.

**And so said the man unto Eli, "I [am] the coming one from the battle field and I from the battle field escaped the day." And so he said, "What is the word, my son?"**

1 Samuel  
4:16

**Then the man said to Eli, "I [am] the one coming from the battle, and I fled from the battle field today." And he [Eli] said, "How is the matter, my son?"**

**Eli called out to what sounded like a crowd of men, saying, "What is all the commotion about?" Then the man ran over to Eli and said to him, "I have returned from the battlefield today." And Eli asked him, "What happened?"**

First, what others have done:

#### **Ancient texts:**

##### **Masoretic Text**

And so said the man unto Eli, "I [am] the coming one from the battle field and I from the battle field escaped the day." And so he said, "What is the word, my son?"

##### **Septuagint**

And Heli said to them that stood round about him, "What [is] the voice of the sound?" And the man hastened and advanced to Heli, and said to him, "I am he that is come out of the camp, and I have fled from the battle today." And Heli said, "What is the event, son?"

##### **Significant differences:**

For some reason, a portion of v. 14 is repeated in v. 16 in the LXX. Apart from that, the only differences are those which are probably based upon the translation, rather than being real differences.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

##### ***The Message***

The man said to Eli, "I've just come from the front, barely escaping with my life." "And so, my son," said Eli, "what happened?"

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<sup>44</sup> Keil and Delitzsch suggest, instead, that Eli was afflicted by black cataracts, which involve the paralysis of the optic nerve. Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 399.

JPS (Tanakh)

The man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battlefield; I have just fled from the battlefield."

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB

And the man said to Eli, "I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today." And he said, "How did things go, my son?"

Young's Updated LT

And the man says unto Eli, 'I *am* he who has come out of the ranks, and I out of the ranks have fled today;' and he says, "What has been the matter, my son?"

**What is the gist of this verse?** The man tells Eli that he has just come from the front, and Eli asks how did things go.

### 1Samuel 4:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾiysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced e]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
ʾânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE]	<i>I, me</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun (sometimes a verb is implied)	Strong's #595 BDB #59
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>the one entering [coming, one going] [in]; he who enters [goes, comes (in)]</i>	Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #935 BDB #97
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
maʿărekeh (מַעְרָכָה) [pronounced mäh-guh-reh-KEH]	<i>row, rank, battle line; this is also translated armies</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4634 BDB #790

**Translation:** Then the man said to Eli, “I [am] the one coming from the battle,... You will note that the Septuagint is a bit more coherent here. It sounds as though the crowd of men is right there near Eli, within several hundred yards, all surrounding this man who was telling them what had happened on the battlefield. Eli stands up and calls out, “What is going on?” In the Septuagint, this would be the second time that Eli asks this question. The man, either realizing who Eli was or being told by someone in the crowd, breaks away from the crowd and runs over to Eli to speak to him. The Septuagint paints us a more complete picture that what we find in the Massoretic text. Now, is the Septuagint a paraphrase at this point or do we have a repetition based on a faulty manuscript or is it accurate? I don’t know, and the Dead Sea Scrolls is missing most of 1Sam. 4. In any case, complete picture or not, the differences here are minor.

In any case, the man identifies who he is and from where he came.

### 1Samuel 4:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>aw-NEE</i> ]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
maʿărekeh (מַעְרֶכֶה) [pronounced <i>māh-ġuh-reh-KEH</i> ]	<i>row, rank, battle line; this is also translated armies</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4634 BDB #790
nûṣ (נוּס) [pronounced <i>noose</i> ]	<i>to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to hasten quickly [away]</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> ps, Qal perfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
yōwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

**Translation:** ...and I fled from the battlefield today.” The verb is the 1<sup>st</sup> person, Qal perfect of *to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to hasten quickly [away]*. Again, this is probably this man’s responsibility and not a matter of deserting the troops.

### 1Samuel 4:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55



## 1Samuel 4:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâh (מָה) [pronounced <i>maw</i> ]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw<sup>b</sup>-VAWR</i> ]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
<p>These three words have been translated in a myriad of ways: <i>How is the matter?</i> (Kukis ML) <i>How did the matter go?</i> (LTHB, NKJV, MKJV); <i>How did it go?</i> (The Amplified Bible, ESV, Owen); <i>How went the matter?</i> (HNV, WEB); <i>How did things go?</i> (NASB, NRSV); <i>What has been the matter?</i> (Updated Young Translation); and then we have the less literal renderings of this phrase: <i>What happened?</i> (God's Word™, NIV, the Tanakh); <i>What was the outcome?</i> (HCSB); <i>What is the news?</i> (REB); <i>What has happened?</i> (NJB). This set of translations are taken from 2Sam. 1:4.</p>			
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** And he [Eli] said, “How is the matter, my son?” Properly, in a traditional English format, we would have a new paragraph, as Eli will now speak. He asks: “How is the matter, my son?” or, “What is the word, my son?”

There are several implications of deference here. First, instead of speaking *to him*, the younger man speaks *unto him*, which generally indicates respect. Next, the younger man allows Eli to speak, rather than rushing right into the details of what has happened.

This situation, interestingly enough, parallels the beginning of 2Samuel. Saul will have gone into battle with the Philistines (1Sam. 31:1), and, after the outcome of the battle has been decided, a man will run from the battle to David. The man will have his clothes torn and there is dust on his head. Then David asks him what happened, and he tells David that the infantry retreated and deserted, and that Saul and his son Jonathan are both dead (2Sam. 1:1–5). The question asked here is identical to the question David will ask the Amalekite in 2Sam. 1:4.

And so answers the bringer of tidings and says, “Fled Israel to faces of Philistines and also a slaughter great was in the people; and also a pair of your sons died, Hophni and Phinehas; and an Ark of the Elohim was taken.”

1Samuel  
4:17

So the one bringing the tidings answered and said, “Israel fled before the Philistines and the slaughter was great among the people; furthermore, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died. Also, the Ark of God was captured.”

Then the messenger answered Eli, saying, “Israel retreated from the Philistines and there was a great slaughter among the people. Also, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead. Furthermore, the Ark of God was captured.”

What we have here is quite a tremendous blow, nationally, personally and spiritually to Eli. Israel was soundly defeated before the Philistines, Eli's two sons died in battle, and the Ark of God was captured by the Philistines. Actually, if anything, these things build in intensity. We have come out of the time period of the judges, so Israel's defeat in battle and subsequent slavery had occurred several times already to different portions of Israel. However, the loss of his sons, was particularly devastating to Eli. When a mother loses a son, even if he is executed for brutally and callously murdering someone, she is still grief-stricken, because she remembers the innocent boy he once was. Hophni and Phinehas may have been callous jerks for most of their lives, but Eli in part shielded himself from that aspect of their lives; and, like any father, he saw what he believed to be good in them. In any case, because they did not believe in the God of Israel, they would spend eternity in torment, separated from Eli forever.

Now, here are the various translations:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so answers the bringer of tidings and says, "Fled Israel to faces of Philistines and also a slaughter great was in the people; and also a pair of your sons died, Hophni and Phinehas; and an Ark of the Elohim was taken."
Septuagint	And the young man answered and said, "The men of Israel fled from the face of the Philistines, and there was a great slaughter among the people, and both your sons are dead, and the Ark of God is taken."
Significant differences:	The young man is referred to differently in the Greek and the Hebrew. This does not affect the meaning significantly, and it could be the result of a faulty manuscript.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	"Israel fled from the Philistines," the messenger answered. "Our troops suffered heavy casualties. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, also are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."
JPS (Tanakh)	The bearer of the news replied, "Israel fled before the Philistines and the troops also suffered a great slaughter. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the Ark of God has been captured."

#### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	Then the one who brought the news answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken."
Young's Updated LT	And he who is bearing tidings answers and says, 'Israel has fled before the Philistines, and also a great slaughter has been among the people, and also your two sons have died—Hophni and Phinehas—and the ark of God has been captured.'

**What is the gist of this verse?** The man who is dispensing the news tells Eli that Israel was soundly defeated, that Eli's sons are dead, and the Ark of God was taken in battle by the Philistines.

## 1Samuel 4:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced ʿaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
bâsar (בָּשַׂר) [pronounced bâw-SAHR]	<i>a bearer of good news, the bringer of news; a messenger</i>	Piel participle with the definite article	Strong's #1319 BDB #142
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nûṣ (נוּס) [pronounced noose]	<i>to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to hasten quickly [away]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l̥)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
Pʿlishʿtîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced pʰ-lîsh-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** So the one bringing the tidings answered and said, "Israel fled before the Philistines..." The Bible then again identifies the man speaking. We have the Piel participle of *to bear tidings, to bring news*. Generally, this is a very positive word. Not here. With the definite article and the participle, this means *the bearer of tidings, the bringer of news*. This implies that this man has a specific position, a specific responsibility. This word implies that this is his job and responsibility.

He first tells Eli that the Jewish army fled from the Philistines.

## 1Samuel 4:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
maggêphâh (מַגֵּפָה) [pronounced <i>mahg-gay-FAW</i> ]	<i>a blow, a slaughter, plague, pestilence</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4046 BDB #620
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i> ]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

**Translation:** ...and the slaughter was great among the people;... The newsman then tells Eli that there was a great slaughter of the army of Israel.

## 1Samuel 4:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Together, the wâw conjunction and the gam particle might mean <i>together with, along with, joined with, and, furthermore, and furthermore</i> .			
sh <sup>e</sup> nayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>eh</sup>NAH-yim</i> ]	<i>two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040

## 1Samuel 4:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Châph <sup>e</sup> nîy (חֲפִנִי) [pronounced <i>chaff-NEE</i> ]	<i>hollow of hand? and is transliterated Hophni</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #2652 BDB #342
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Phîyn <sup>e</sup> châç (פִּינְחָץ) [pronounced <i>pheen<sup>e</sup>-KHOSS</i> ]	which possibly means <i>Negro</i> in Egyptian, and is transliterated <i>Phinehas</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6372 BDB #810

**Translation:** ...furthermore, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died. Then the man adds, “And furthermore, two of your sons are dead—Hophni and Phinehas...” I suggested that this newsman did not know who Eli was, and that may be true. He may have entered into this city without knowing Eli personally or knowing what he looked like. However, in speaking to the crowd, he would have undoubtedly been pointed toward Eli.

However, the fact that this man knew that Eli's sons had been killed (and this was in a great slaughter) indicates that (1) even if he did not know Eli, he was told to report this information to Eli; or, (2) he knew Eli, and came in a different entrance, or (3) he was putting off telling Eli personally, as this would be the most difficult news to convey. I would go with 1 or 3, but that is pure speculation. I'll go over this in greater detail below.

This news absolutely stuns Eli. Certainly, we knew that their days were numbered, and God had so promised Eli, but for it to actually occur was still devastating.

I guess that we should take a moment to speculate: how did this messenger know who Eli was and, if he already knew Eli, why didn't he go to Eli first?

## Speculation About the Messenger and Eli

The two possibilities:	Various options based upon those possibilities:
The messenger did not know Eli	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It would have been natural for the messenger to ignore the old blind fat guy at the village gate. If the messenger was out of town, he would not have necessarily known Eli by sight.</li> <li>2. While bringing the news to the city of Shiloh, the townspeople would have told the messenger who Eli was.</li> <li>3. When Eli spoke, the messenger then came immediately over to him.</li> </ol>

## Speculation About the Messenger and Eli

### The two possibilities:

### Various options based upon those possibilities:

The messenger did know Eli

1. Eli was possibly at the wrong gate, which he went to because of his oldness and blindness.
2. The messenger spoke to a gathering of people first, and then individually to Eli.
3. The messenger, in walking around the town with the news, heard Eli and then went immediately over to him.
4. Since the bad news involved the loss of the Ark and the death of Eli's two sons, this messenger simply did not want to reveal this information to Eli, even though that was his mission.

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## 1Samuel 4:17d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾărôwn (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i> ]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i> ]	<i>to be taken, to be taken away; to be brought; to be seized, to be captured</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542

**Translation:** *Also, the Ark of God was captured.* Finally, the man tells Eli the worst **news**: the Ark had been taken in battle. This was the death blow to Eli. Eli, if anyone, was responsible for the Ark and now, for the first time in Israel's history, it is captured and taken out of Israel. We have four items of bad news in this verse: (1) Israel was defeated; (2) there was a great slaughter of the soldiers of Israel; (3) the sons of Eli died in battle; and (4) the Ark of God was taken.

*And so he is as his mention of an Ark of the Elohim, and so fell from upon the seat backward away from a side of the gate and so is broken his neck and so he dies for old the man and heavy and he judged Israel forty years.*

1Samuel  
4:18

*And it came to pass when he mentioned the Ark of God, that he [Eli] fell backward from upon the seat [of honor] near the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for [he was] an old man, as well as [lit., and] heavy. He had governed Israel [for] forty years.*



**When the messenger spoke of the Ark of God, Eli fell over backwards out off of his seat of honor (which was near the side of the gate). As a result, he broke his neck and died of that injury, as he was an old man, as well as overweight. He had governed Israel for forty years.**

First, what others have done:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so he is as his mention of an Ark of the Elohim, and so fell from upon the seat backward away from a side of the gate and so is broken his neck and so he dies for old the man and heavy and he judged Israel forty years.
Septuagint	And it came to pass when he mentioned the ark of God, that he fell from the seat backward near the gate, and his back was broken, and he died, for [he was] an old man an heavy; and he judged Israel twenty years.
Significant differences:	Eli's <i>back</i> is broken in the Greek; his <i>neck</i> in the Hebrew, Latin and Syriac. There are no other significant differences.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	Eli was still sitting on a chair beside the wall of the town gate. And when the man said that the Philistines had taken the sacred chest, Eli fell backward. He was a very heavy old man, and the fall broke his neck and killed him. He had been a leader of Israel for forty years.
TEV	When the man mentioned the Covenant Box, Eli fell backward from his seat beside the gate. He was so old and fat that the fall broke his neck, and he died. He had been a leader in Israel for forty years.

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

JPS (Tanakh)	When he mentioned the Ark of God, [Eli] fell backward off the seat beside the gate, broke his neck and died; for he was an old man and heavy. He had been a chieftain of Israel for forty years.
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#### **Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	And it came about when he mentioned the ark of God that Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And it came to pass, as his mentioning the ark of God, that he falls from off the throne backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck is broken, and he dies, for the man <i>is</i> old and heavy, and he had judged Israel forty years.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The capture of the Ark dealt a death blow to Eli. He falls off of his seat backward, and breaks his neck (*back* in the Greek). Eli dies because he is old and very heavy; he had been a judge in Israel for 40 years.

## 1Samuel 4:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced hâw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced 'k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
When the kaph preposition is combined with an infinitive, it can also take on the meaning <i>as, often, when, as soon as</i> .			
zâkar (זָכַר) [pronounced zaw-KAHR]	<i>to speak of; to remember, to cause to be remembered, to call to one's own mind, to bring to remembrance [before someone]; to make mention of [often with praise and/or celebration], to offer a memorial offering</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2142 BDB #269
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾărôḥ (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** *And it came to pass when he mentioned the Ark of God,...* We begin with *and so he is*, which means *and so it came to pass... or and so it was...* This is followed by the kaph preposition and the Hiphil infinitive construct (with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix) of *to speak of, to bring to remembrance [before someone], to make mention of [often with praise and/or celebration], to remember, to call to one's own mind, to offer a memorial offering, to cause to be remembered*. When the kaph preposition is combined with an infinitive, it can also take on the meaning *as, often, when, as soon as*. Interestingly enough, we have the mark of a direct object next, which I did not think would be necessary with the infinitive construct (which would cause *zâkar* to be rendered *a mention of...*). Then we have *an Ark of the Elohim*, giving us: *And it came to pass when his mention of the Ark of God...* We might smooth this out in the English to: *And it came to pass when he mentioned the Ark of God...*

This is the final bad news which Eli will receive.

## 1Samuel 4:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to</i>			
kiççêʾ (כִּסֵּי־אֵ) [pronounced kis-SAY]	<i>throne, seat of honor; seat of judgment</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3678 BDB #490
ʾăchôrannîyth (אַחֲרָנִי־יָת) [pronounced uh-khoh-ran-NEETH]	<i>backwards, back part, from the rear</i>	adverb	Strong's #322 BDB #30
baʿad (בְּאַד) [pronounced BAH-ğad]	<i>by, near; because of; behind, after; about, round about; between [two things], through; into, among; pro, for; away from, behind; on behalf of</i>	generally a preposition of separation or nearness	Strong's #1157 BDB #126
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This combination might only occur here, and, according to BDB, the reading is suspect. The various translations are <i>by the side of, toward the, by the</i> .			
shaʿar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced SHAH-ğahr]	<i>gate [control of city can be implied]; area inside front gate; entrance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8179 BDB #1044

**Translation:** ...that he [Eli] fell backward from upon the seat [of honor] near the side of the gate. The verb is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply*. Because of the description which follows, we know that this verb applies to Eli. What Eli falls from upon was his famous seat of judgment, mentioned four times in these first four chapters of 1Samuel. The adverb *backwards* describes the direction in which Eli fell. Therefore, he was not using a fence or a wall to lean his back against. Eli is near the side of the entry gate.

## 1Samuel 4:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâbar (שָׁבַר) [pronounced shaw <sup>b</sup> - VAHR]	<i>to be broken, to break [one's limbs, mind or heart]; to be torn to pieces; to be broken down, to be destroyed, to perish</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7665 BDB #990
maph <sup>e</sup> reqeth (מַפְרֵקֶת) [pronounced mahf <sup>e</sup> -RĒH-keth]	<i>neck</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4665 BDB #830

This word is only found here and there are no easily discernable cognates, which brings its meaning into question. However, the context would reasonably allow *neck* as the translation. The Latin and the Syriac render this word also as *neck*; the LXX renders this word *back*.

**Translation:** *His neck was broken...* Here we have the extent of Eli's injuries. What is broken is *neck*, but this word is only found here and there are no easily discernable cognates, which brings its meaning into question. However, the context would reasonably allow *neck* as the translation. This would explain why the Septuagint renders this word *back*.

## 1Samuel 4:18d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** *...and he died...* Then we had *and so he dies*, the imperfect being used to indicate the process by which Eli died. *...and his neck was broken and he dies...*

## 1Samuel 4:18e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
zâkên (זָקֵן) [pronounced zaw-KANE]	<i>old, elderly, aged</i>	masculine singular adjective often used as a substantive	Strong's #2205 BDB #278

## 1Samuel 4:18e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîysh (יִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced kaw <sup>b</sup> -VAYD]	<i>heavy, overweight, massive, abundant, numerous, dull; hard, difficult, burdensome, grievous; very oppressive, numerous, rich</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #3515 BDB #458

**Translation:** ...for [he was] an old man, as well as [lit., and] heavy. One may question how can Eli break his neck and then die from falling out of his chair? The narrator explains: Eli is very old and very fat. We have the masculine singular adjective kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced kaw<sup>b</sup>-VAYD], which means *heavy, grievous*. It has both a physical meaning as well as a metaphorical one (the hippies adopted a similar metaphorical meaning for this word in the 60's). We could get away with *overweight* in this context. Or, as McGee said, *He was a big fat fellow*.<sup>45</sup> Recall that, when Eli was unable to control his sons, God promised him, “Listen, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house.” (1Sam. 2:31). This is actually only a partial fulfillment of that prophecy. As discussed in much greater depth back in 1Sam. 2:31, this will find its complete fulfillment in 1Kings 2:27–35.

## 1Samuel 4:18f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַט) [pronounced shaw-FAHT]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis·raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

<sup>45</sup> J. Vernon McGee; *I & II Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 34.

## 1Samuel 4:18f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿarḇâʿîym (אַרְבָּעִים) [pronounced ar <sup>e</sup> -BAW-GEEM]	forty	undeclined plural noun	Strong's #705 BDB #917
shânâh (שָׁנָה) [pronounced shaw-NAW]	year	feminine singular noun	Strong's #8141 BDB #1040.

**Translation:** He had governed Israel [for] forty years.<sup>46</sup> We do not know how closely the deaths of Phinehas and Hophni parallel the end of Eli's judgeship. It is doubtful that either of them completely took his place as a judge, as no one would respect their decisions. It is possible that Samuel took over his position during the last few years of his life. Barnes suggests that there was an intervening priesthood as well.<sup>47</sup> However, there is nothing to suggest that anyone other than Hophni and Phinehas handled the priestly duties. What we have here are two separate functions. Eli functioned as a national leader, which is indicated by the word *shâphat*; and he functioned as a priest as well. It is obvious that his sons took over the priesthood several years ago (1Sam. 2:12–17) and nothing is said of Eli's leadership as a national or regional judge, apart from this verse here, and that lack of mention implies another authority. Samuel certainly assumed that authority (see, for instance 1Sam. 7:3); however, it is not clear whether this was back-to-back with Eli. Whereas, the book of Judges names even the minor judges (see Judges 12:8–15), the book of Samuel names no intervening judge or ruler over Israel. In fact, here is the first time that Eli is really spoken of as a political or national leader. It is possible that more local leaders took up the slack for Eli in his old age, and no one really took his place until Samuel. My point in all of this is that we do not know at what age Eli became a judge over Israel nor do we know at what point he ceased being a judge. However, given that he is called old from 1Sam. 2:22, we might assume that Samuel took to a position of authority fairly early in his life. We might guess that Eli was a judge from age 35 to 75 and that Samuel became a judge in his stead while relatively young (say, 15–20). These ages, of course, are simply guesses, as is the idea that Samuel took over. These ages would not jive at all with Samuel being 12 around the time that Eli is 98. It is not unreasonable that another judge took Eli's place; someone who is not mentioned by name. Samuel will be a circuit judge and will be very well-respected; however, there is nothing in this chapter to indicate that Samuel had any real authority yet.

The comments of the NIV Study Bible are particularly good here: *The death of Eli marked the end of an era that had begun with the death of Joshua and the elders who served with him (see Jos 24:29,31). Incapable of restraining Israel or his sons from their wicked ways, and weakened and blinded by age, the old priest is an apt symbol of the flawed age now coming to its tragic close. He is also a striking contrast to the reign of David, which is the main focus of this narrative.*<sup>48</sup> Eli meant well, and he was, to some extent, a good man with many flaws. However, he was unable to fulfill the responsibility that was his, and so we come to both the end of his life and almost to the end of the period of the judges, *when there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes* (Judges 21:25). Samuel later will clearly have taken over Eli's political duties (see 1Sam. 7:15–17), and Samuel will clearly be the last judge of Israel.

<sup>46</sup> Keil and Delitzsch tell us that we can disregard the reading *20 years* in the Septuagint, *if only because it is perfectly incredible that Eli should have been appointed judge of the nation in his seventy-eight year*. Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 399. The problem with Keil and Delitzsch's comment is that Eli did not judge Israel until his dying day. The difference between 20 and 40 years in the Hebrew is the confounding of one letter, misreading the letter *mêm* (מ) for *lâmed* (ל).

<sup>47</sup> *Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 379.



Now would be an ideal time to examine...<sup>49</sup>

The Failures of Eli

- 1. He did not lead the people of Israel to repentance (however, that is not on Eli's shoulders alone).
- 2. He did not teach Israel the spiritual character of the relationship between God and themselves. When at war against the Philistines, the Israelites did not seek God, nor did they ask Eli what to do; they merely charged into the Tent of God and they took the most sacred Ark of God into battle with them.
- 3. He did not keep the ordinances of God. One example is that it appears that he continued with a yearly religious festival, rather than with the prescribed festivals found in Scripture. During the festival where Hannah came into the Tabernacle area to pray, Eli figured that she was just some drunken babe from the festival. He did not appear to be busy with public sacrifices or any of his other duties.
- 4. Eli did not properly raise his sons. When it was clear that they did not believe in Jehovah, the God of Israel, then he should not have placed the weight of his own responsibilities on their shoulders.

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The Successes of Eli

- 1. The upbringing of Samuel.
- 2. He was able to recognize when God was speaking to Samuel.

The Death of the Wife of Phinehas; the Birth of the Son of Phinehas

And his daughter-in-law, a woman of Phinehas, pregnant, to give birth; and so she hears the report concerning a capture of an Ark of the Elohim and were dead her father-in-law and her man and so she bows and so she gives birth that turned against her, her labor pains.

1Samuel  
4:19

Also, his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, [was] pregnant [and about] to give birth when she heard the news concerning the capture of the Ark of God and [that] her father-in-law and her husband were [both] dead, she bent over and [began] to give birth because her labor pains turned against her.

Also, Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and about to give birth when she heard that the Ark had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were both dead. The stress caused her to go into premature labor and she was bent over with severe labor pains.

First, what others have done:

Masoretic Text

And his daughter-in-law, a woman of Phinehas, pregnant, to give birth; and so she hears the report concerning a capture of an Ark of the Elohim and were dead her father-in-law and her man and so she bows and so she gives birth that turned against her, her labor pains.

Peshitta

And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child; and was near to be delivered, and when she heard the news that the Ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed down and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

<sup>49</sup> The first 3 points come from Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 418. They were expanded upon.

**Septuagint** And his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinees [was] with child, [about] to bring forth; and she heard the news, that the Ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead; and she wept and was delivered, *for* her pains came upon her.

**Significant differences:** None, except that the LXX does not tell us that she bows; however, the difference here might be one simply of translation.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

**NLT** Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near her time of delivery. When she heard that the Ark of God had been captured and that her husband and father-in-law were dead, her labor pains suddenly began.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

**JPS (Tanakh)** His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was with child, about to give birth. When she heard the report that the Ark of God was captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she was seized with labor pains, and she crouched down and gave birth.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

**Updated Emphasized Bible** Now ||his daughter-in-law, wife of Phinehas|| was with child, ready to give birth, and <when she heard the news, as to the taking of the ark of God, and the death of her father-in-law and her husband> she bowed herself and give birth, for her pains had seized her [more literally, *turned upon her*; i.e., *came suddenly upon her*].

**NASB** Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.

**Young's Updated LT** And his daughter-in-law, wife of Phinehas, *is* pregnant, about to bear, and she hears the report of the taking of the ark of God, that her father-in-law and her husband have died, and she bows, and bears, for her pains have turned upon her.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Surviving Eli is his daughter-in-life (the wife of Phinehas). When she hears that the Ark of God is taken and hears of the deaths of her father-in-law and husband, she is affected emotionally, and goes into labor.

## 1Samuel 4:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (l) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## 1Samuel 4:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kallâh (כַּלָּה) [pronounced <i>kahl-LAW</i> ]	<i>daughter-in-law, spouse, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3618 BDB #483
Kallâh is rendered <i>daughter-in-law, spouse, wife</i> . We do not have an exact English equivalent as its translation depends upon who is speaking or who this is in reference to. It is an absolute noun which we only have relative nouns to stand in for it.			
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAWH</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Phîyn <sup>e</sup> châç (פִּינְחָס) [pronounced <i>phēeh'-KHOSS</i> ]	which possibly means <i>Negro</i> in Egyptian, and is transliterated <i>Phinehas</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6372 BDB #810
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i> ]	<i>pregnant, with child, having conceived</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #2030 BDB #248
The adjective and the verb are spelled alike, although both Owen and Zodhiates identify this as the adjective.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAH</i> ]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
The reading in the Hebrew is actually lâlath (לָלַת) rather than lâledeth (לָלַדְתָּ), which is the lâmed preposition with the Qal infinitive construct of yâlad. There is no Hebrew word lâlath or lath.			

**Translation:** Also, his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, [was] pregnant [and about] to give birth... In this portion of v. 19, We have the lâmed preposition with a questionable reading. What the translators above and what Owen suppose it to be is the Qal infinitive construct of yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced *yaw-LAH*], which means *to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget*. For this to be the case, one letter, a dalet (ד), would have had to have dropped out of the original text.

This is the first time this woman is mentioned. We do not know her name, but this is the testimony that the royal priesthood of Eli continued through her. You will recall that there are two lines of priests from Aaron: Eleazar and Ithamar. Eli was descended through Ithamar, a line which God promised to break the strength of. See 1Sam. 2:27–36 for more information about this curse upon Eli's line.

## 1Samuel 4:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## 1Samuel 4:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma' (שָׁמָעַ) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
sh'mû'âh (שְׁמוּעָה) [pronounced sh-moo-GAW]	<i>message, tidings, a report; instruction, teaching, doctrine; rumor</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8052 BDB #1035
'el (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to be taken, to be taken away; to be brought; to be seized, to be captured</i>	Niphal infinitive construct	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
'ărōwn (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
'ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...when she heard the news concerning the capture of the Ark of God... Note, what is of most importance is the capture of the Ark of God. This is something which was unthinkable, as believers in Israel knew what God had done for Israel during the exodus.

## 1Samuel 4:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
châm (חָם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>a husband's father, a wife's father, a father-in-law</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #2524 BDB #327
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## 1Samuel 4:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîysh (יִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** ...and [that] her father-in-law and her husband were [both] dead,... There were two other things that she heard which caused her great emotional turmoil: the death of her father-in-law and the death of her husband. I don't know if Eli was mentioned first out of deference to his age, or perhaps simply because he was more important to her than her husband (many women discover what their husbands are like after marriage, and are sorely disappointed). This woman is already under some pressure. The security of her land is threatened by the Philistines; her husband and brother-in-law have gone to where Israel is at war, and, although they are both bullies, they do not appear to have been in battle before. Her father-in-law, to whom she is probably closer than even her husband, has been in ill health. So, therefore, to this point in time, the woman is under a great deal of stress. What has happened is pretty much the fulfillment of all her worst fears.

## 1Samuel 4:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kâra' (כָּרַע) [pronounced kaw-RAHG]	<i>to bend the knees, to bow down, to bend down before [usually used for doing obeisance to a king]; to crouch [down]; by implication: to fall, to sink</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3766 BDB #502

**Translation:** ...she bent over... The picture here is of a pregnant woman who receives some horrible news, and begins to fall to the ground in great grief. It appears as though the news caused her knees to buckle and that the entire situation induces her to go into labor.

## 1Samuel 4:19e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHG]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

## 1Samuel 4:19e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâphak <sup>e</sup> (הָפַךְ) [pronounced haw-FAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to turn oneself about; to be overthrown; to be turned, to be changed [mostly for the worst]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #2015 BDB #245
double check with Gesenius and rest of usages			
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ǵahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
tsîyr (צִיֵּר) [pronounced tzeer]	<i>labor pains, pangs [of childbirth]</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6735 BDB #852

This is a homonym with two additional meanings: *ambassador* (probably the mistake of one letter); *pivot [of a door], hinge*.

**Translation:** ...and [began] to give birth because her labor pains turned against her. We are first told that this woman is going to give birth, and then we are given an explanation as to why. The combination of accumulated stress and hearing all of what happened was enough to send the wife of Phinehas into labor.

And as a time of her death and said the females standing unto her, "Fear not, for a son you have borne." And she did not answer and she did not set [or, place] her heart.

1Samuel  
4:20

And, as she [was about to] die [or, And at the time of her death], the female attendants said to her, "Do not fear, for you have born a son." But she did not answer nor did she place her heart [on that thought].

While she was dying, one of the female attendants said to her, "Do not be fearful, for you have given birth to a son." However, she did not answer nor was this her present concern.

First, what others have done:

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And as a time of her death and said the females standing unto her, "Fear not, for a son you have borne." And she did not answer and she did not set [or, place] her heart.

##### Septuagint

And in her time she was at the point of death; and the women that stood by her, said to her, "Fear not, for you have borne a son;" but she answered not and her heart did not regard it.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:



**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):***God's Word™*

As she was dying, the women helping her said, "Don't be afraid. You've given birth to a son." But she didn't answer or pay attention."

*JPS (Tanakh)*

As she lay dying, the women attending her said, "Do not be afraid, for you have borne a son." But she did not respond or pay heed.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:***NASB*

And about the time of her death, the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention.

*Young's Updated LT*And at the time of her death, when the women who are standing by her say, 'Fear not, for a son you have borne,' she has not answered, nor set her heart *to it*;....

**What is the gist of this verse?** The wife of Phinehas would die after giving birth. Her attendants tell her not to fear, that she has given birth to a son, although she apparently becomes very morose after giving birth (or simply non-responsive).

**1Samuel 4:20a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כ) [pronounced <i>kʰ</i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
The kaph preposition means <i>like, as, according to</i> . However, with the infinitive, it can also take on a temporal use, and mean <i>as, often, when, as soon as, about</i> .			
There are two very similar prepositions: the kaph preposition (כ) and the bēyth preposition (ב). Three early printed editions have the bēyth preposition (which would properly be rendered <i>at</i> in this case); furthermore, the Septuagint, Syriac codex and the Vulgate all render this passage as though we have a bēyth here. <sup>50</sup> We therefore render this, <i>And, at the time of her dying,...</i>			
ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced <i>gaht-TAWH</i> ]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** *And, as she [was about to] die* [or, *And at the time of her death*],... The wife of Phinehas has not died; we are simply told her that she will die shortly after giving birth.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 293.

## 1Samuel 4:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>to be stationed, to be left standing, to station oneself, to take one's stand</i>	feminine plural Niphal participle	Strong's #5324 BDB #662
The Niphal is the passive stem, and the definite article combined with the feminine plural causes nâtsab to function as a substantive. It should be rendered <i>women stationed, women standing, females stationing themselves</i> ; less formally, this could be rendered <i>females attendants</i> .			
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
ʾal (אַל) [pronounced al]	<i>not; nothing; none</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39.
yârêʾ (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

**Translation:** ...the female attendants said to her, “Do not fear,... This is a desperate situation—the wife of Phinehas has gone into labor somewhat prematurely and under great emotional stress. The women around her are going to say, “It’ll be alright.” “Don’t worry.” “Everything is fine.” “It’s a boy!” That is exactly the situation that we have here.

The content of some of the things said is listed next. The feminine plural of the previous verse simply indicates that there were several women there and they all said these things. First we have a negative and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperative of *to fear*, giving us: “**Fear not...**” The idea is, *don’t worry; everything is going to be alright* (when even the attendants know that it isn’t).

## 1Samuel 4:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAH</i> ]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

**Translation:** *...for you have born a son.* A little explanation is needed here. The woman is dying, in great pain, and is simply doing what she has to do. The female attendants are thinking of other things. The priestly line of Ithamar (one of the sons of Aaron) has just seen the removal of its three primary males; the fact that this woman bears a son means that the line of Ithamar can continue in the office of High Priest. This is not the only male, however, in this line. Apparently, Phinehas had another son named Ahitub,<sup>51</sup> who is mentioned in 1Sam. 14:3.

## 1Samuel 4:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לֹא') [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i> ]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לֹא') [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shîyth (שָׁתַּת) [pronounced <i>sheeth</i> ]	<i>to put, to set, place; to appoint; to arrange, to set in order; to found; to station</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7896 BDB #1011

<sup>51</sup> There are quite a number of *Ahitub*'s in the priestly line. See my exegesis of 1Chron. 6.

## 1Samuel 4:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Gesenius explains that shîyth means ❶ <i>to set up</i> that which is supposed to be upright; ❷ <i>to place</i> or <i>to put</i> something where it properly belongs, ❸ <i>to put</i> in the sense of <i>directing</i> or <i>turning</i> in some direction, ❹ <i>to make</i> or <i>to render</i> when followed by an accusative or an accusative with the lâmed or bêyth prepositions; and ❺ more rarely <i>to make, to prepare</i> (for someone) when followed by a dative and even <i>to give</i>. My thinking is that with this verb you are placing something or doing something to something to make it the way it is supposed to be. Something should properly be upright, so you set it upright. Something should be turned in a specific direction, so you turn it in that direction.</p>			
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced layb <sup>v</sup> ]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524

**Translation:** But she did not answer nor did she place her heart [on that thought]. The wife of Phinehas either did not care, was in too much pain to respond, or she was nearly dead. The idea is that this should be a focus of hers. The fact that there are no male heirs in the line of Ithamar for the priesthood is important; however, she does not turn her heart in that direction. She does not set her thinking on that. As you no doubt noticed in the other translations, there are a great many ways of expressing this (that is, its exact meaning is difficult to ascertain). With that in mind, this gives us: And she did not answer and she did not set her heart [upon it]. Whether selfishness was an issue or whether it was really an unimportant matter, or whether this woman was half-dead when these things were said to her, we don't know. However, she did not give much thought to what was being said to her.

And so she named to the child *Ichabod*, to say, *has departed glory from Israel* regarding a capture of [the] Ark of Elohim; and regarding her father-in-law and her man.

1Samuel  
4:21

And so she named the child *Ichabod*, saying "The glory has departed from Israel," because of the capture of the Ark of God, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

She named the child *Ichabod*, which meant that *the glory has departed from Israel*, because the Ark of God had been captured, and because both her father-in-law and her husband [the near end of the Priestly family line of Ithamar] were dead.

What others have done:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so she named to the child *Ichabod*, to say, *has departed glory from Israel* regarding a capture of [the] Ark of Elohim; and regarding her father-in-law and her man.

##### Septuagint

And she called the child Uæbarchaboth, because of the Ark of God, and because of her father-in-law, and because of her husband.

##### Significant differences:

There is one additional phrase in the Hebrew about the capture of the Ark. The differences are insignificant.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):***God's Word™*

She called the boy Ichabod [No Glory], saying, "Israel's glory is gone," because the ark of God had been captured and because her father-in-law and her husband [died].

*JPS (Tanakh)*

She named the boy Ichabod, meaning, "The glory has departed from Israel"—referring to the capture of the Ark of God and to [the death of] her father-in-law and her husband.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:***NASB*

And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

*Young's Updated LT*

...and she calls the youth I-chabod, saying, 'Honour has removed from Israel,' because of the taking of the ark of God, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

**What is the gist of this verse?** She names the child Ichabod, which means *glory has departed from Israel*. This is a reference to the capture of the Ark and the death of her father-in-law and husband.

1Samuel 4:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
lamed (ל) (pronounced l)	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
na'ar (נַעַר) [pronounced NAH-ğahr]	boy, youth, young man, personal attendant	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654
lôy kâbôwd (לֹא יָכָבֹד) [pronounced ee-kaw <sup>b</sup> -VOHD]	not glory or not glorious and is transliterated Ichabod	masculine proper noun	Strong's #336 BDB #33

## 1Samuel 4:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p><i>Ichabod</i> means <i>not glory, not glorious; in glorious or where is the glory?</i> The word in question is the first syllable. We have the adverb <i>not</i>, which is <i>ʾîy</i> (יֵי) [pronounced ee]. Although this word is found often in Rabbinical writings and means <i>impossible</i> (when in conjunction with another word), it is found rarely with this meaning in Scripture (it is found over three dozen times and means <i>isle, island</i>). It also means <i>woe</i> (so found twice in Scripture). The reason we find these two meanings is that the word <i>where</i> is <i>ʾân</i> (אֵן) [pronounced awn] (Strong's #575 BDB #33); and the more common word for <i>not</i> is <i>ʾayin</i> (אֵין) [pronounced ah-YIN] (Strong's #369 BDB #33). I suspect that the abbreviation could stand for either word and the key is the pronunciation of the name. Strong's #336 BDB #33. He is mentioned only in 1Sam. 4:21 14:3. Strong's #350 BDB #33.</p>			

**Translation:** *And so she named the child Ichabod,...* There are going to be some problems with this translation, because it will appear as though the exact same thing is said in the next verse. This suggests (1) that the next verse is a gloss; (2) the traditional way of rendering this verse (see the NASB or Young) is incorrect; or, (3) these last two verses are unnecessarily repetitive. Reason #2 seems to make the most sense. The child's name is reasonably transliterated *Ichabod*. Literally, the name means *not glory or not glorious*.<sup>52</sup> According to Rotherham, *Ichabod* means *where is the glory?*<sup>53</sup> Her choice for this boy's name will be explained.

## 1Samuel 4:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
<p>Literally, this means <i>to say</i>, but this does not necessarily mean that a quotation is to follow (although it usually does). What we have hear is something which is more akin to our expression <i>to wit</i> or <i>meaning, namely, by interpretation, to explain, that is, in other words</i>.<sup>54</sup></p>			
gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>to uncover, [one's ear to hear something]; to reveal, to disclose, to make naked; to remove, to depart; to make [a land] naked of inhabitants, to emigrate, to be led into exile</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1540 BDB #162
kâbôwd (כְּבוֹד) [pronounced kaw <sup>b</sup> -VODE]	<i>glory, abundance, honor</i>	masculine singular adjective that can act like a substantive	Strong's #3519 BDB #458

<sup>52</sup> The NKJV says it means *inglorious*. New King James Version; Thomas Nelson Publishers; ©1994; p 244.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 293. The NJB agrees.

<sup>54</sup> When doing this kind of work, utilizing an outstanding thesaurus is imperative (I use Roget's Fifth Edition Thesaurus).



## 1Samuel 4:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-row-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

**Translation:** ...saying “The glory has departed from Israel,”... Altogether, we have: *And so she called the child Ichabod, that is glory has departed from Israel...* The wife of Phinehas had three reasons for calling her son *No Glory*, all three of which came under the heading of the glory departing from Israel: (1) the Ark of God was captured, which was a representation of God here on earth; (2) her father-in-law had died, which signaled the end of the great priestly line of Aaron through Ithamar.<sup>55</sup> (3) Finally, her husband, who was her support, died as well.

## 1Samuel 4:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾel (אל) [pronounced <i>e</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

There are two basic sets of meanings (1) ʾel acts as a preposition which signifies, in general, *to tend to anything, to verge to or towards any place*, whether it is reached and even entered or not, whether it be by motion or turning and direction of the body or of the mind, turning to anything in thought.<sup>56</sup> Under this general heading, we have nine uses: ❶ Of motion to a place, or *to, towards*. Under this heading, ʾel is also used as a particle of giving or selling. ❷ ʾEl is used for the *turning* or the *direction* to anything, and can be used of the mind as well as the body. ❸ The motion or turning can be hostile, and mean *against*. ❹ ʾEl is used when one reaches a terminus or a mark; *even to*. Under this heading, we have two additional applications (a) the use of ʾel in measure, e.g. *even to* the length of a cubit; (b) *even out of*, as being removed out of something like a thorn hedges which go around a field (Job 5:5). ❺ This preposition is used when the limit is entered into, and is rendered *in*. When it is used of a number or multitude into which one enters, it may be rendered *among*. ❻ ʾEl is used in adding or super-adding, and rendered *besides, together with, besides these*. ❼ ʾEl is used regarding anything, having respect or regard to anything, hence (a) *as to, in respect to, because of*; and (b) *concerning* (after verbs of speaking, narrating or telling). ❽ Metaphorically, ʾel can be used as expressive of rule or standard and be rendered *according to*. Finally, ❾ when ʾel is prefixed to prepositions which denote rest in a place, it give them the signification of motion or direction *to or towards* a place.

<sup>55</sup> There was some hope for this line. This woman apparently had at least two sons by Phinehas—Ichabod and Ahitub (1Sam. 14:3). There are several people in the priestly line named *Ahitub*, by the way, so don't think *Phinehas's son* each time that you come across that name.

<sup>56</sup> Most of this is quoted or paraphrased from H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 46–47.

## 1Samuel 4:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p><b>(2)</b> The second set of meanings: <i>ʿel</i> is used of <i>remaining at</i>, or <i>in a place</i> to which one tends. Under this category, we have three divisions: ❶ <i>at</i>, by or <i>near</i>; ❷ <i>in</i>, <i>among</i>; ❸ also, <i>ʿel</i> is placed before particles, which imply a rest in a place, without change of sense.<sup>57</sup></p>			
lāqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to be taken, to be taken away; to be brought; to be seized, to be captured</i>	Niphal infinitive construct	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
ʾārōn (אָרֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...because of the capture of the Ark of God,... I've given you why she named her son *Icabod*; however, I did not simply make this up; it is explained in the remainder of this verse. She named her son *no glory* because the Ark of God had been captured. Note how many times this has been said just in this one chapter.

## 1Samuel 4:21d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); expanded meanings given here	Strong's #413 BDB #39
chām (חָם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>a husband's father, a wife's father, a father-in-law</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #2524 BDB #327
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** ...and because of her father-in-law and her husband. According to Rotherham, some codices (he does not specify which) insert *the death of* prior to *father-in-law*. Altogether, this gives us: ...because of the capture of the Ark of God and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

<sup>57</sup> I don't follow this third use at all, but it, along with the other two, are taken from H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 47.

You may recall that the last time we had a woman who gave birth and died during labor was Rachel, the wife of Jacob. She also named her child at her death, although her husband overrode her decision (see Gen. 35:16–19).

We have explained the stress which came upon the wife of Phinehas. Now, the name, *Ichabod*. As we have already discussed, the Ark of God is not synonymous with God. Later, the prophet Jeremiah will speak of a time when the Ark will not be a part of Israel (Jer. 3:16–17). However, the mere fact that God would allow the Ark to be taken out of Israel indicates God's attitude toward Israel. The NIV Study Bible explains it this way: *God was not inseparably bound to the ark...Yet the removal of the ark from Israel did signal estrangement in the relationship between God and his people, and it demonstrated the gravity of their error in thinking that in spite of their wickedness, they had the power to coerce God into doing their will simply because they possessed the ark.*<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, although she has a son already (see 1Sam. 14:3), he is obviously too young to serve as a priest and the only men who could be priests in the line of Ithamar are now dead. The fact that God would allow Israel to be without a proper priest also indicates a loss of glory.

The glory of Israel is Jehovah Elohim. It is God's function as the Savior, Deliverer, King and Husband of Israel which is the glory of Israel. When Israel would periodically reject God, she rejected her own glory as well. In this period of time, Israel has obviously rejected God and the wife of Phinehas recognizes this in the naming of her child. That Israel is presently out of line, spiritually speaking, is further emphasized in 1Sam. 7:3–6, where Israel, guided by Samuel, will recant her evil ways.

**And so she says, "Has departed glory from Israel because has been captured an Ark of the Elohim."**

1Samuel  
4:22

**And so she said, "The glory has departed from Israel because the Ark of God was captured."**

**Some of her last words were, "The glory has departed from Israel because the Ark of God was captured."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so she says, "Has departed glory from Israel because has been captured an Ark of the Elohim."
Septuagint	And they said, "The glory of Israel is departed, because the Ark of the Lord is taken."

Significant differences: The difference between these two main versions is *who* says "The glory of Israel is departed..." The Latin and Syriac are in agreement with the Hebrew, which is usually the case, as they come from the same family of manuscripts.

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	"Israel's glory is gone because the ark of God has been captured," she said.
JPS (Tanakh)	"The glory is gone from Israel," she said, "for the Ark of God has been captured."

<sup>58</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 379.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB

And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken."

Young's Updated LT

And she says, 'Honour has removed from Israel, for the ark of God has been taken.'

**What is the gist of this verse?** We have a repetition here, which is what the wife of Phinehas says: "The Ark was taken from Israel, so glory has departed from Israel."

**1Samuel 4:22a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>to uncover, [one's ear to hear something]; to reveal, to disclose, to make naked; to remove, to depart; to make [a land] naked of inhabitants, to emigrate, to be led into exile</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1540 BDB #162
kâbôwd (כָּבוֹד) [pronounced kaw <sup>b</sup> -VODE]	<i>glory, abundance, honor</i>	masculine singular adjective that can act like a substantive	Strong's #3519 BDB #458
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Yisʾrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

**Translation:** And so she said, "The glory has departed from Israel... All of the vocabulary of this verse has been seen once, if not several times, already in this chapter. *She says* is in the Qal imperfect. *Has departed* is a Qal perfect (the same morphology as the previous verse). *Glory* is the same masculine singular noun (or adjective) from the previous verse. We then have *from Israel*.

**1Samuel 4:22b**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

## 1Samuel 4:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lāqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to be taken, to be taken away; to be brought; to be seized, to be captured</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
ʾărôwn (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...because the Ark of God was captured.” Rather than the preposition ʾel, we have the explanatory conjunction kîy, which means *because, for*. Then we have *an Ark of the Elohim*, which should be rendered *the Ark of God*, giving us: *And so she says, “Glory has departed from Israel, because the Ark of God has been captured.”* Again, it is not a matter of God and His Ark being inseparable entities. The Ark was a representation of God’s character, His provision and the angelic conflict. It was not an idol. However, the fact that God would allow this to be taken out of Israel indicated that Israel had rejected God and His glory, because of their rejection, had departed from Israel.

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The CEV often combines verses together and changes the order for literary reasons; below is an example of that:

## The Contemporary English Translation of 1Sam. 4:19–22

CEV	NASB	Semi-literal Hebrew
<p>The wife of Phinehas was about to give birth. And soon after she heard that the sacred chest had been captured and that her husband and his father had died, her baby came. The birth was very hard, and she was dying. But the women taking care of her said, "Don't be afraid—it's a boy!"</p> <p>She didn't pay any attention to them. Instead she kept thinking about losing her husband and her father-in-law. So she said, "My son will be named Ichabod," because the glory of Israel left our country when the sacred chest was captured."</p>	<p>Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention. And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband. And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken."</p>	<p>Also, his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, [was] pregnant [and about] to give birth when she heard the news concerning the capture of the Ark of God and [that] her father-in-law and her husband were [both] dead, she bent over and [began] to give birth because her labor pains turned against her. And, as she [was about to] die [or, <i>And at the time of her death</i>], the female attendants said to her, "Do not fear, for you have born a son." But she did not answer nor did she place her heart [on that thought]. And so she named the child <i>Ichabod</i>, meaning <i>glory has departed from Israel</i> because of the capture of the Ark of God, and because of her father-in-law and her husband. And so she said, "The glory has departed from Israel because the Ark of God was captured."</p>

Obviously, the CEV is a much easier read, and far less complex than what we have in the Hebrew.

Edersheim has provided for us a summarization of Samuel's ministry: *Samuel's ministry restored and strengthened belief in the reality of God's presence in His temple, and in His help and power. In short, it would tend to keep alive and increase historical, although not spiritual belief in Israel. Such feelings, when uncombined with repentance, would lead to a revival of religiousness rather than of religion; to confidence in the possession of what, dissociated from their higher bearing, were merely externals; to a confusion of symbols with reality; and to such a reliance on their calling and privileges, as would have converted the wonder-working Presence of Jehovah in the midst of His believing people into a magic power attaching to certain symbols, the religion of Israel into mere externalism, essentially heathen in its character, and the calling of God's people into a warrant for carnal pride of nationality. In truth, however different in manifestation, the sin of Israel was essentially the same as that of Eli's sons. Accordingly it had to be shown in reference to both, that neither high office nor yet the possession of high privileges entitles to the promises attached to them, irrespective of a deeper relationship between God and His servants.*<sup>59</sup> Now that we have seen Israel's behavior in response to the Philistines, this quote of Edersheim's makes much more sense.

<sup>59</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 418–419.