

1 Samuel 5

1 Samuel 5:1–12

God Wreaks Havoc on the Philistines

Outline of Chapter 5:

- vv. 1–7 **The Ark of God Is Placed Next to the Idol Dagon in Dagon's Temple**
- vv. 8–9 **The Ark of God in Gath**
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Doctrines Covered in 1 Samuel 5

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|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| The City of Ashdod | The Pagan God Dagon | The City of Gath | The City of Ekron |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|

Introduction: This is going to be a very unusual chapter. We are going to follow the Ark of God through the cities inhabited by the Philistines, and as the Ark moves, great disaster comes upon each city that it is transferred to. What is so unusual about this chapter is the fact that all of it takes place in Philistine cities apart from any reference to any believer. In other words, it does not appear, at first, that this was written by an eyewitness/believer,¹ which is most often the case with Scripture (by the way, the idea that Scripture was handed down verbally for thousands of years and then written down is an highly unlikely theory). There are many places throughout Scripture where it seems apparent that the writer was also an eyewitness, or that he copied from the manuscript of an eyewitness. My favorite illustration is Jacob—we have incidents in Jacob's life that only he would know—such as his wrestling match with Jesus Christ (Gen. 32:24–32) or his dream (Gen. 28:10–16); these were things more likely to be recorded by Jacob rather than stories to be passed down. However, the clincher is his feelings about Rachel, his wife. He had an agreement with Rachel's father, his Uncle Laban, that he would work for Laban for seven years and then be given Rachel's hand in marriage. Jacob sums up those seven years with: **So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her** (Gen. 29:20). That was simply written by a man in love. Given Jacob's less than exemplary life combined with the details of said life, indicates further that this was all recorded by Jacob (or, at least by one of his sons to whom Jacob confided). That tends to be the case with Scripture—a believer who is also an eyewitness to the events recorded is the most likely person to write the information down that we find in Scripture. So, what happened here? Who is the believe/eyewitness who authored the record of the events of this chapter? I want you to keep that question in the back of your mind as we examine the next chapter and a half. This question helps to explain why God allowed the Ark to be captured and taken.

Recall from the previous chapter that the Philistines were camped in Ebenezer prior to their successfully confrontation with Israel. Edersheim explains God's plan to us at this point: *Although such heavy judgment had come upon Israel, it was not intended that Philistia should triumph. More than that, in the hour of their victory the heathen must learn that their gods were not only wholly powerless before Jehovah, but merely idols, the work of men's hands.*²

¹ In fact, I cannot come up with a single instance where Scripture was ever written by an unbeliever.

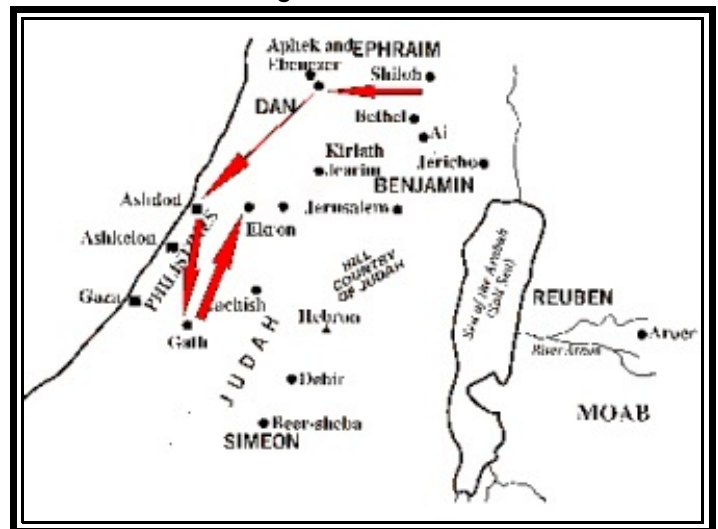
² Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 421.

This is a perfect example of God taking that which is messed up and making good of it. We have the army of Israel and their *spiritual leaders* Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, going into battle against the Philistines bearing the Ark of God as some kind of good luck charm. Given the fact that Eli's sons were not even believers and that the Ark of God was not simply to be taken along on any excursion as good luck, means that we are beginning with a situation that is messed up. We might think, *this is the Ark of God, the most sacred object in all of Israel—God cannot allow its capture, no matter what the circumstance*. Wrong; and the key is the quote from Edersheim. The Philistines will first bring the Ark of God to Ashdod and place it next to their god, Dagon (who is a statue, by the way). When they awake the next day, there are problems with Dagon. The first day, he is fallen over. On the next, the Philistines awoke to find his head and hands were cut off. God reveals to the Philistines that their pagan god Dagon is simply a meaningless statue which is completely vulnerable to attack. So, even though the elements in this event all would seem to add up to a bad result, God took these events and, in His graciousness, showed the Philistines that their idol was powerless before the God of Israel. The end result of all this is twofold: (1) the Philistines will remove a cancerous element in Israel's population and (2) the Philistines will be completely convinced of God's great power apart from any direct association with Israel. In addition, we may reasonably assert that God removed a cancerous element in the Philistine population as well.

Simultaneous to this demonstration, the inhabitants of Ashdod were struck with severe skin diseases. After the Philistine leaders from throughout the Philistine region meet, they decide to move the Ark to Gath, another Philistine city. In Gath, the people were struck with confusion, and tumors again became prominent on the inhabitants of Gath. Then the Ark was moved to Ekron, whose people protested against this—still, when it was left there, they experienced what their neighbors in Gath had experienced—great confusion and a quick spreading of deadly tumors. We stop in the middle of this and move to the next chapter from here.

The movement of the Ark might be of some interest. The territory of the Philistines included four cities near the coast, in the territories of Judah and Dan. Starting in the south and working to the north, we have Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Joppa, Joppa being the only city in Dan. Joppa also changed hands several times, so it was not always a city of the Philistines. Generally speaking, when referring to the five cities of the Philistines, Joppa is not on that list. Due west of Ashkelon was Gath, a Philistine city about a third of the way into Judah. North of Gath and northeast of Ashdod was Ekron, a Philistine city which was near the border between Dan and Judah. The Ark was taken in Shiloh, which is northeast of the central portion of Ephraim. The Ark would have been taken a little over forty miles southwest (as the crow flies) to Ashdod, which is not on the coast, but very near the coast of the Mediterranean. Given the ancient world and its lack of roads, there was no doubt a circuitous route which was traveled. Then the Ark was taken to Gath, which is about 20 miles southeast of Ashdod (so we are moving more inland again). From Gath, the Ark was taken about 30 miles due north to Ekron. Although these are the only three cities mentioned with regards to the Ark, this does not mean that these were the only cities that the Ark was taken to. Taking its final Philistine rest at Ekron does make a great deal of sense. The Ark is closer to Israel territory in Ekron than anywhere else (which they may have assumed would placate the God of Israel) and Ekron is very near Beth-shemesh, the Israel city to where the Ark will be shuttled in the next chapter.

This map gives you a rough idea as to the movement of the Ark of God throughout Israel and Philistia.



Some of us do not understand the will and purpose of God because we do not recognize the careful tightrope that He walks. We have, in the previous chapter, Israelites who treat the Ark as if it were an idol or a hostage. God was not going to bless their endeavors because they had the Ark with them in battle, treating it as an idol or a good luck charm. This is not the kind of precedent which God needs to set. However, on the other hand, their enemies

are a nation of (mostly) godless heathen (there were exceptions, as we will see). God cannot condone Israel's crass behavior nor can He bless the Philistines for attacking His people. Furthermore, since there is some positive volition in Philistia, God must respond to them as well. Bearing these things in mind, what God allowed with respect to the Ark makes a great deal of sense.

From the standpoint of the Hebrew, for the first half of this chapter, we have no new vocabulary words whatsoever. Every word used is found elsewhere in the previous four chapters of 1Samuel. Although the sentence structure is not quite as simple as it was in the first chapter, it is still relatively simple. Now, part way through, we do introduce some new words and the sentence structure becomes a little more complex.

To help set us up for this chapter: in the previous chapter, the Israelites went to battle against the Philistines and they were soundly defeated. The Israelite army retreated, grabbed the Ark of God for good luck, and re-engaged. Not only did the Philistines defeat them a second time, but the Philistines captured the Ark of God. That is where we pick up our narrative.

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The Ark of God Is Placed Next to the Idol Dagon in Dagon's Temple

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

And Philistines took an Ark of the Elohim and so they carried him from the Ebenezer Ashdod-ward

1Samuel
5:1

The Philistines seized the Ark of God and carried it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

The Philistines then took the Ark of God and carried it from their camp at Ebenezer to Ashdod.

First, here are how others handled this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And Philistines took an Ark of the Elohim and so they carried him from the Ebenezer Ashdod-ward.

Septuagint

And the Philistines took the Ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Azotus.

Significant differences:

None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

When the Philistines captured the Ark of God, they brought it from Eben-ezer to Ashdod.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

Now the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

Young's Updated LT

And the Philistines have taken the ark of God, and bring it in from Eben-Ezer to Ashdod,...

What is the gist of this verse? The Philistines sized the Ark and took it to Ashdod, a Philistine city.

1Samuel 5:1a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| P ^e lish ^{tîy} (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p^e-lish-TEE</i>] | transliterated <i>Philistines</i> | masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) | Strong's #6430 BDB #814 |
| lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>] | <i>to take, to take from, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize, to take possession of; to send after, to fetch, to bring; to receive</i> | 3 rd person plural, Qal perfect | Strong's #3947 BDB #542 |
| ʾărôwn (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, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |

Translation: [The Philistines seized the Ark of God...](#) In the previous chapter, we saw this from the side of Israel. That is, the messenger came to Shiloh and told Eli and the residents there that Israel had been beaten and the Ark had been taken. In this chapter, we will see this from the viewpoint of the Philistines.

1Samuel 5:1b

| 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 |
| bôw ^ʾ (בֹּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>] | <i>to take in, to bring, to come in with, to carry</i> | 3 rd person plural, Hiphil imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #935 BDB #97 |
| 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</i> | preposition of separation | Strong's #4480 BDB #577 |
| ʾEben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH^h-ven</i>] | <i>stone and is transliterated Eben</i> | proper masculine noun in construct form, according to BDB | Strong's #68 BDB #6 |
| ʿêzer (עֶזֶר) [pronounced <i>ĠAY-zer</i>] | <i>help and is transliterated Ezer</i> | proper masculine noun with the definite article | Strong's #72 BDB #7 |

1Samuel 5:1b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|--------------------------|
| Together, these are transliterated either <i>Ebenezer</i> or <i>Eben-ezer</i> . The definite articles are ignored in the transliteration. | | | |
| ʿash ^o dôwd (אֲשְׁדּוֹד) [pronounced <i>ash-DÔHD</i>] | <i>fortress, castle</i> (according to Barnes) and transliterated <i>Ashdod</i> | proper noun; location; with the directional hê | Strong's #795 BDB #78 |

Translation: ...and carried it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Then we have the min preposition followed by *the Ebenezer*, which means *Stone of Help*.³ This was simply where the Israelites were encamped prior to the battles with the Philistines (1Sam. 4:1). The Philistines apparently captured the Ark of God in the camp of the Israelites and then took it to Ashdod.⁴ Affixed to *Ashdod* is the directional hê. Suffice it to say that Ashdod is one of the five main Philistine cities. In fact, we should cover the **Doctrine of Ashdod** at this point.

Ashdod is the northernmost city on the coast of the Philistine cities. Although it is possible the Ark was hauled there for no other reason than many of the soldiers and commanding offices came from that city and that was where they first reported when returned from their defeat of Israel, I think the more likely reason is that this is where the temple of Dagon was. The Philistines saw this as a defeat of the God of the Israelites by their god, Dagon; therefore, placing the Ark of God in the temple of Dagon symbolized this defeat.

And so took Philistines an Ark of the Elohim and so they brought him [into] a house of Dagon and so they set up him beside Dagon. 1Samuel 5:2 **So the Philistines took the Ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon.**

The Philistines took the Ark of God and placed it beside their god Dagon in the temple of Dagon.

Don't panic by the use of the word *him* in this verse in the ultra literal portion. The Hebrew does not have a neuter gender, so the Ark of God is referred to by a masculine singular gender (which would be properly rendered *it* by the English). Let's see what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so took Philistines an Ark of the Elohim and so they brought him [into] a house of Dagon and so they set up him beside Dagon.

Septuagint And the Philistines took the Ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

Significant differences: No significant differences; it is the *Ark of Elohim* in the Hebrew and the *Ark of the Lord* in the Greek.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

³ A fuller explanation was given in 1Sam. 4:1.

⁴ We have very few new words introduced in the book of Samuel. Throughout most of this chapter and the next, there will be few words which we have not seen before. The only exception to this so far is the word *Ashdod*.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Keil and Delitzsch (revised) The Philistines took the Ark of God and brought it into the temple of Dagon and they set it up beside Dagon.

NASB Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

Young's Updated LT ...and the Philistines take the ark of God and bring it into the house of Dagon, and set it near Dagon.

What is the gist of this verse? The Philistines set up the Ark of God in the Temple of Dagon, and placed it near their idol Dagon.

1Samuel 5:2a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>] | <i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3947 BDB #542 |
| P ^e lish ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p^e-lish-TEE</i>] | transliterated <i>Philistines</i> | masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) | Strong's #6430 BDB #814 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [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 |
| ʾărôwn (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 with the definite article | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |

Translation: *So the Philistines took the Ark of God...* The vocabulary in this second verse is almost identical to the vocabulary from the first. *And so [the] Philistines seize [Qal imperfect] the Ark of Elohim and bring [Hiphil imperfect]...* It is very simple and repetitive Hebrew.

1Samuel 5:2b

| 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 |
| bôw (בָּוּ) [pronounced <i>boh</i>] | <i>to take in, to bring, to come in with, to carry</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #935 BDB #97 |

1Samuel 5:2b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| ʾêth (תֵּת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>] | <i>house, household, habitation</i> as well as <i>inward</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #1004 BDB #108 |
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced <i>daw-GOHN</i>] | <i>corn, grain; his fish</i> [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |

Translation: ...and brought it into the house of Dagon... Then we have the first new word of these two verses, the sign of the direct object with a masculine singular suffix (literally, *him*, but more reasonably *it*). Then we have *a house of Dagon*, which referred to the temple of their god *Dagon*. We briefly mentioned *Dagon* in Judges 16:31, and we will examine [The Doctrine of the Pagan God Dagon](#) at the end of this section. However, it is of some interest that the gods of the Philistines—Dagon, Ashtoreth and Baal-zebub—are all Semitic gods whose origins are not found with the Philistine people.⁵ The reason this is of some interest is that the Philistines and the Israelites moved into the Land of Promise at roughly the same time. The Philistines were apparently not predisposed to their own gods and religion, and could have placed their faith in the God of the Universe just as easily as they could have adopted the gods of the surrounding heathen. The key difference was positive volition. When a person is negative toward God, this does not mean that they are negative toward religion. The religious unbeliever will often try on several different religions and choose the one that seems to fit the best.

1Samuel 5:2c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, then</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| yâtsag (יָצַג) [pronounced <i>yaw-TSAHG</i>] | <i>to make to stand, to set, to station, to place, to leave, to establish, to let stay</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #3322 BDB #426 |
| ʾêth (תֵּת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| êtsel (עֵתֶל) [pronounced <i>AY-tsel</i>] | <i>a side; near, by, beside</i> | Preposition/substantive | Strong's #681 BDB #69 |
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced <i>daw-GOHN</i>] | <i>corn, grain; his fish</i> [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |

Translation: ...and set it up beside Dagon. This gives us: [Then the Philistines took the Ark of Elohim and brought it \[into\] the house of Dagan and set it up beside Dagon.](#) The whole idea here is that their god Dagon just defeated the venerated God of Israel in battle, and bringing the Ark into their temple of Dagon was their way of gloating. According to Gordon, *it was common practice in the near east for victorious armies to carry off enemy idols and*

⁵ Robert Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 98.

install them in the temple of their chief god in symbol of the latter's sovereignty over the subject people and its gods.⁶ No doubt, the Ark was set in some place of subjugation to the idol Dagon.

And so rise early Ashdodites from the next day and, behold, Dagon falling to his faces groundward to faces of an Ark of Y^ehowah. And so they take Dagon and so they caused to return him to his place.

1 Samuel
5:3

The Ashdodites arose early on the next day and, observe, Dagon had fallen on his face on the ground before the Ark of Y^ehowah. Then they took Dagon and caused him to return to his place.

However, the next morning, the Ashdodites arose early and found that their statue of Dagon had fallen over on its face before the Ark of Y^ehowah. They therefore lifted their idol up and returned him to an upright position.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Septuagint

And the people of Azotus rose early, and entered into the house of Dagon and looked, and behold, Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark of the Lord; and they lifted Dagon up and set him in his place.

Significant differences:

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

Early the next day, the Ashdodites found Dagon lying face down on the ground in front of the Ark of the LORD. They picked Dagon up and put him back in his place;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Emphasized Bible

And <when they of Ashdod rose early on the morrow and entered into the house of Dagon> they looked and lo! || Dagon || was lying prostrate on his face to the earth, before the ark of Yahweh, —so they took Dagon and restored him to his place.

NASB

When the Ashdodites arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set him in his place again.

Young's Updated LT

Now the Ashdodites rise early on the morrow, and lo, Dagon is fallen on its face to the earth, before the ark of Jehovah; and they take Dagon, and put it back to its place.

What is the gist of this verse? The Ashdodites open their temple early in the morning and they find the statue of Dagon laying face down. They right the idol.

⁶ Robert Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 98. He apparently takes this from Campbell, *the ark*, pp. 187ff.; P. D. Miller and J. J. M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord, A Reassessment of the 'Ark Narrative' of 1 Samuel*; Baltimore/London, 1977; pp. 9–17.

1Samuel 5:3a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shâkam (שָׁכַם) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAHM</i>] | <i>to start, to rise, to rise early, to make an early start; morning</i> (in the Hiphil infinitive absolute) | 3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #7925 BDB #1014 |
| ʿash°dôwdîym (אַשְׁדּוֹדִים) [pronounced <i>ash-dôhd-DEEM</i>] | <i>fortress, castle</i> (according to Barnes); or of <i>Ashdod</i> , which is transliterated <i>Ashdodites</i> or <i>people of Ashdod</i> | gentilic adjective | Strong's #796 BDB #78 |
| mâchôrâth (מָחָרָת) [pronounced <i>maw-chuh-RAWTH</i>] | <i>the morrow</i> (the day following a past day), <i>the next day, the following day</i> | feminine singular noun/adverb | Strong's #4283 BDB #564 |

With the min preposition, mâchôrâth means *on the morrow, on the next day*.

Translation: [The Ashdodites arose early on the next day...](#) The Ashdodites open up their temple early in the morning, probably with the rising of the sun. They open up their temple and go inside.

1Samuel 5:3b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|--|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>] | <i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i> | interjection, demonstrative particle | Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243 |
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced <i>daw-GOHN</i>] | <i>corn, grain; his fish</i> [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |
| nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i>] | <i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i> | Qal active participle | Strong's #5307 BDB #656 |
| lâmed (לְ) (pronounced ^l) | <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 noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #6440 BDB #815 |

1Samuel 5:3b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| 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> . | | | |
| ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets] | <i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i> | feminine singular noun with the directional hê | Strong's #776 BDB #75 |
| lâmed (ל) (pronounced P) | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| pânîym (פְּנֵי) [pronounced paw-NEEM] | <i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i> | masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) | 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> . | | | |
| ʾărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN] | <i>ark, chest; Ark</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH] | transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i> | proper noun | Strong's #3068 BDB #217 |

Translation: ...and, observe, Dagon had fallen on his face on the ground before the Ark of Y^ehowah. This gives us: *And the Ashdodites arose early on the following day and, behold, Dagon falling to his face to the ground before the face of the Ark of Y^ehowah.* You will note that in the Septuagint, they insert that the Ashdodites *enter into the House of Dagon and look*; the reading which Rotherham prefers. There is some significance to referring to the Ark as *the Ark of Jehovah* here (and in v. 4), but I won't discuss that further until 1Sam. 6:8. In any case, the Philistines go into their temple first thing in the morning and the idol statue of Dagon is laying face first on the ground, which is obviously unusual.

1Samuel 5:3c

| 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> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3947 BDB #542 |
| 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 |
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced daw-GOHN] | <i>corn, grain; his fish</i> [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |

1Samuel 5:3c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, then</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo^bv</i>] | <i>to cause to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to send back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, to be caused to return</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #7725 BDB #996 |
| ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>l</i>) | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>] | <i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i> | masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #4725 BDB #879 |

Translation: [Then they took Dagon and caused him to return to his place.](#) The verb is the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of *to take, to take from, to take in marriage, to seize*. We have then the direct object notation followed by *Dagon*. [Then they took Dagon...](#) This means that they grab a hold of him. We do not know the size of this idol, but it must be large, as this is a masculine plural verb, indicating that more than one person grabbed the idol.

We then have the wâw consecutive and the 3rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect of *to be caused to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover, to make restitution, reconsider, think again, or to be caused to return*. The second half of this portion reads: [...so they caused to return him to his place.](#) The Bible always enjoys poking fun at idols. This is the god of the Philistines, the god that they worship and do obeisance to, and now they (plural) are lifting him up and setting him upright. From the language, it appears that Dagon did more than simply fall over. It sounds as though the idol had been moved and knocked over because there is a word in the Hebrew meaning *to set upright* and it is not used here. Here, it appears as though Dagon had been knocked over and moved, and therefore, they had to take him and return him to his proper place.

The NIV Study Bible: *The ark was placed next to the image of Dagon by the Philistines in order to demonstrate Dagon's superiority over the God of Israel, but the symbolism was reversed when Dagon was toppled to a position of homage before the ark of the Lord.*⁷

In Isaiah, chapter 46 is devoted to the heathen idols, and v. 7 reads: ["They lift it \[the idol\] upon the shoulder and carry it; they set it in its place that it may stand. It does not move from its place. Though one may cry to it, it cannot answer; it cannot deliver him from his distress."](#)

⁷ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 379.

And so they arise early in the morning from a next day and, behold, Dagon falling to his faces ground-ward to faces of an Ark of Y^ehowah; and a head of Dagon and two of [the] palms of his hands cut off toward the threshold; only his trunk [or, *only Dagon*] [or, *only the trunk of Dagon*] remained to him.

1Samuel
5:4

And they arose early in the morning the next day and, observe, Dagon had fallen on his face on the ground before the Ark of Y^ehowah. Furthermore [lit., *and so*], the head and two of the hands of Dagon [lit., *two of the palms of the hands of Dagon*] had been cut off near the threshold; only his trunk remained to him.

When they awoke the next morning and went into the Temple of Dagon, they saw that Dagon again on the ground front-down in front of the Ark of Jehovah. Furthermore, Dagon's head and hands had been cut off and lay near the threshold; only his trunk remained intact.

First, what others have done.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they arise early in the morning from a next day and, behold, Dagon falling to his faces ground-ward to faces of an Ark of Y^ehowah; and a head of Dagon and two of [the] palms of his hands cut off toward the threshold; only his trunk [or, *only Dagon*] [or, *only the trunk of Dagon*] remained to him.

Septuagint

And it came to pass when they rose early in the morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off each before the threshold, and both the wrists of his hands had fallen on the floor of the porch; only the stump of Dagon was left.

Significant differences:

No significant differences. The final phrase is uncertain, although the Greek, the Latin and the Syriac tell us that only the *torso* or *stump* of Dagon remained.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NAB But the next morning early, when they arose, Dagon lay prone n the ground before the ark of the LORD, his head and hands broken off and lying on the threshold, his trunk alone intact.

NJB But when they got up on the following morning, there lay Dagon face down on the ground before the ark of Yahweh, and Dagon's head and two hands lay severed on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left in its place.

NLT But the next morning the same thing happened—the idol had fallen face down before the Ark of the LORD again. This time his head and hands had broken off and were lying in the doorway. Only the trunk of his body was left intact.

TEV Early the following morning they saw that the statue had again fallen down in front of the Covenant Box. This time its head and both its arms were broken off and were lying in the doorway; only the body was left.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ But the next morning they saw that Dagon had [again] fallen forward on the ground in front of the LORD's ark. Dagon's head and his two hands were cut off [and were lying] on the temple's threshold. The rest of Dagon's body was intact.

JPS (Tanakh) ...but early the next morning, Dagon was again lying prone on the ground in front of the Ark of the . The head and both hands of Dagon were cut off, lying on the threshold; only Dagon's trunk was left intact. [The meaning of the Hebrew for that last phrase is uncertain].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the . And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon [so with ancient versions; Heb., *only Dagon*] was left to him.

NKJV And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the Ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands *were* broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it. [*Dagon's torso*: so with LXX, Syriac, Targum, Vulgate; MT *Dagon*].

Young's Updated LT And they rise early in the morning on the morrow, and lo, Dagon is fallen on its face to the earth, before the ark of Jehovah, and the head of Dagon, and the two palms of his hands are cut off at the threshold, only the fishy part has been left to him;...

What is the gist of this verse? The next morning, the temple of Dagon is opened and the idol of Dagon had fallen on the floor. The head and hands had broken off and apparently laying on the threshold (?).

1Samuel 5:4a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|---|--|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shâkam (שָׁכַם) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAHM</i>] | <i>to start, to rise, to rise early, to make an early start; morning</i> (in the Hiphil infinitive absolute) | 3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #7925 BDB #1014 |
| b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</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 |
| bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i>] | <i>morning</i> | masculine singular noun with a definite article | Strong's #1242 BDB #133 |
| 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</i> | preposition of separation | Strong's #4480 BDB #577 |
| mâchōrâth (מָחָרָת) [pronounced <i>maw-chuh-RAWTH</i>] | <i>the morrow</i> (the day following a past day), <i>the next day, the following day</i> | feminine singular noun/adverb | Strong's #4283 BDB #564 |
| With the min preposition, mâchōrâth means <i>on the morrow, on the next day</i> . | | | |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>] | <i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i> | interjection, demonstrative particle | Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243 |

1 Samuel 5:4a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Dâgōwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced daw-GOHN] | corn, grain; his fish [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |
| nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL] | to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply | Qal active participle | Strong's #5307 BDB #656 |
| lâmed (ל) (pronounced ℓ) ^e | to, for, towards, in regards to | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM] | face, faces, countenance; presence | masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 3 rd person masculine 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> . | | | |
| ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets] | earth (all or a portion thereof), land | feminine singular noun with the directional hê | Strong's #776 BDB #75 |
| lâmed (ל) (pronounced ℓ) ^e | to, for, towards, in regards to | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM] | face, faces, countenance; presence | masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular) | 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> . | | | |
| ʾărōwn (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN] | ark, chest; Ark | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH] | transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i> | proper noun | Strong's #3068 BDB #217 |

Translation: *And they arose early in the morning the next day and, observe, Dagon had fallen on his face on the ground before the Ark of Y^ehowah.* On the second day, the temple of Dagon is opened up, and again, the idol had fallen on its face before the Ark of Jehovah.

1 Samuel 5:4b

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

1Samuel 5:4b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|
| rô`sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced <i>rohsh</i>] | <i>head, top, chief, front, choicest</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #7218 BDB #910 |
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced <i>daw-GOHN</i>] | <i>corn, grain; his fish [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| sh ^e tayîm (שְׁתַּיִם) [pronounced <i>sh^eTAH-yim</i>] | <i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of</i> | feminine numeral construct | Strong's #8147 BDB #1040 |
| kaph (כַּף) [pronounced <i>kaf</i>] | <i>palm, hollow or flat of the hand, sole of the foot; bowl, spoon</i> | feminine plural construct | Strong's #3709 BDB #496 |
| yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>] | generally translated <i>hand</i> | feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #3027 BDB #388 |
| kârath (כָּרַת) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAHTH</i>] | <i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i> | feminine plural, Qal passive participle | Strong's #3772 BDB #503 |

Translation: Furthermore [lit., and so], the head and two of the hands of Dagon [lit., two of the palms of the hands of Dagon] had been cut off... If you have read much of what I have written, you know that I tend toward a fairly naturalistic interpretation of most miracles; and, if you read carefully, you realize that such an understanding reveals a greater God than a simple miracle. However, here, where this occurrence appears to be much less majestic than, say, the fall of Jericho or the turning of the water of Egypt into blood; this is probably an out and out miracle. That is, there is no indication in the wording here that the statue of Dagon simply fell forward and broken into pieces, but that God had actually severed the extremities of this idol as a sign against Dagon and against the Philistines. This does not mean that a naturalistic interpretation can be given to this.

I do have a problem with the next phrase, however.

1Samuel 5:4c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| `el (אֶל) [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 for the word `el:

1Samuel 5:4c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|

(1) `el 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.⁸ Under this general heading, we have nine uses: ❶ Of motion to a place, or *to, towards*. Under this heading, `el is also used as a particle of giving or selling. ❷ `El 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 `El is used when one reaches a terminus or a mark; *even to*. Under this heading, we have two additional applications (a) the use of `el 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 `El is used in adding or super-adding, and rendered *besides, together with, besides these*. ❼ `El 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, `el can be used as expressive of rule or standard and be rendered *according to*. Finally, ❾ when `el is prefixed to prepositions which denote rest in a place, it give them the signification of motion or direction *to or towards* a place.

(2) The second set of meanings: `el is used of *remaining at, or in a place* to which one tends. Under this category, we have three divisions: ❶ *at, by or near*; ❷ *in, among*; ❸ also, `el is placed before particles, which imply a rest in a place, without change of sense.⁹

| | | | |
|---|------------------|--|----------------------------|
| miph ^e tân (מִפְתָּן) [pronounced <i>mif-TAWN</i>] | <i>threshold</i> | masculine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #4670 BDB #837 |
|---|------------------|--|----------------------------|

Translation: ...near the threshold;... We have preposition `el (עַל) [pronounced *e/*], which denotes direction and means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against*. This is followed by the masculine singular noun *threshold*. This gives us: ...toward the threshold... Our problem is, *just what exactly does this mean?* Are the hands and the head of Dagon lying at the threshold? Are they lying against the threshold? Is the torso on the threshold? I believe the idea is, the idol fell, and the hands and head broke off and rolled to the threshold of the temple.

There are a couple of instances where prepositions are either left out or seem to be used incorrectly in this chapter and the next. This is a rather small number; however, I have noticed that, when a person speaks in a language that is not his own, one area where they are often weak is the use of prepositions. I do not want to unequivocally suggest that this was written by a Philistine who wrote these things in Hebrew; however, that is a possibility.

1Samuel 5:4d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|

| | | | |
|--|--|--------|------------------------------------|
| raq (רַק) [pronounced <i>rahk</i>] | <i>only, provided, altogether, surely</i> —this adverb carries with it restrictive force | adverb | Strong's #7534 & #7535 BDB #956 |
|--|--|--------|------------------------------------|

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

1Samuel 5:4d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|---|--|
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced daw-GOHN] | corn, grain; his fish [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |
| Instead of <i>Dagon</i> , some versions have... | | | |
| gêv (גֵּב) [pronounced gayv]; also gav (גַּב) [pronounced gahv] | <i>back; trunk; midst</i> | masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #1458, #1459 [Aramaic] & #1460 BDB #156 |
| shâ`ar (שָׂאֵר) [pronounced shaw-AHR] | <i>to remain, to be left over; survivor (as a participle)</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect | Strong's #7604 BDB #983 |
| `al (עַל) [pronounced gahl] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752 |

Translation: ...only his trunk remained to him. At this point, we have what I believe to be the biggest problem with the NRSV—its all too brief and misleading footnotes. Its footnote here is *Hebrew lacks “the trunk of.”* According to Owen, that is not necessarily the case. In most Hebrew manuscripts, we have the proper noun *Dagon*; however, in *some* manuscripts, we have the masculine singular noun *gêv* (גֵּב) [pronounced *gayv*] instead, which means *back, trunk*. In the Greek, Latin and Syriac, we have both *Dagon* and *his trunk* (or, *body*). The problem is that the Greek word I find next to *Dagon* in the Greek is not one from my Greek dictionaries so I have to go along with Brenton. Therefore, with the masculine singular suffix, this gives us: ...only *Dagon*... or ...only his trunk... or ...only the trunk of *Dagon*... According to the NKJV, *trunk of Dagon* is found in the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Aramaic paraphrase and in the Syriac translation.

One of the rules of textual criticism (the science of determining what was actually in the autographs¹⁰ and what was not) is that, when given two or more alternate readings, one would choose the reading which makes the least sense.¹¹ The reason for such a rule, which seemed to me at first to be counter-intuitive, is that, it would be human nature of a copyist to write what makes the most sense and sometimes inadvertently (or intentionally) make a change from something difficult to understand to something which is easy to understand. The reading here could very well be *only Dagon was left to him*, even though, of all the readings, that seems to make the least sense. The idea would be that *Dagon* is simply a powerless, meaningless god. Even if he is representative of a demon, still, he has no real power, guidance, or involvement apart from what God allows; and the idol has absolutely no power whatsoever. *Dagon* is, in fact, nothing more than a useless trunk. The lack of hands and head do not make him less powerful, because the idol had no power to begin with—so removing the head and hands, while symbolic, leaves *Dagon* with that which is essentially *Dagon*—a powerless trunk. In either case, the general idea is still conveyed.

Now, although we ran into some rocky area in this verse, and even into a couple of words not found already in the book of Samuel, still, the idea is clear. *Dagon* had fallen face forward, and had possibly been moved; his head and hands were cut off as well—not simply broken off, as that verb is not used here—and they lay upon the threshold of the temple. Now, in case you do not grasp the symbology here, it is this: the first time *Dagon* fell before the Ark, it placed him in an inferior position to the God of Israel, as though he were worshiping the God of Israel. This was not understood by the men of Ashdod, as they simply set the idol upright again (the statue would

¹⁰ An *autograph* is a perfect copy of the original.

¹¹ There are exceptions to this; for instance, when it is clear that a copyist misplaced a phrase or a word, then correct placement of that word or phrase takes precedence.

now be towering over the Ark). The second time Dagon was prostrate before the Ark, it again indicated obeisance; but, the severing of the hands indicated that Dagon was absolutely powerless before God. Hands are indicative of power, and Dagon's hands lay upon the threshold, where anyone could step upon them. His head was off, indicating a lack of influence.

Now, a bit less symbolically: the first time that the idol Dagon was found fallen before the Ark, one might have thought perhaps the idol had simply fallen over for some reason—an accident of sorts. However, the second time, with the severed hands laying on the threshold, could not be an accident. No heavy wind, no earthquake or any other accident could have caused that. Furthermore, the hands and head of one's enemy were often taken in battle to indicate that the enemy had been completely defeated. In 1Sam. 17:54, David brings Goliath's head to Jerusalem (also compare 1Sam. 31:9–10).¹² This gives us a clear contrast between the powerless, severed hands of Dagon and the oppressive hand of Jehovah as seen in the next 8 verses.¹³

In noting this, no doubt at least one Philistine was moved to believe in Jehovah God of Israel (which would explain this account which we have).

Regarding so, do not tread priests of Dagon and all the entering ones [into] a house of Dagon upon a threshold of Dagon in Ashdod as far as the day the this.

1 Samuel
5:5

Therefore, the priests of Dagon and all those entering the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, even to this day.

Because of this incident, the priests of Dagon and all other visitors do not step on the threshold of the temple of Dagon in Ashdod, even until today.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

And only the stump of Dagon remained in its place. For this cause neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that go into the temple, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Azotus unto this day.

Masoretic Text

Regarding so, do not tread priests of Dagon and all the entering ones [into] a house of Dagon upon a threshold of Dagon in Ashdod as far as the day the this.

Septuagint

Therefore the priests of Dagon, and everyone that enters into the house of Dagon, do not tread upon the threshold of the house of Dagon in Azotus until this day, for they step over.

Significant differences:

The additional text found in the LXX may have been unreadable at some point in time in the manuscripts which were used by the Masoretes. Also, this phrase is missing from the Syriac and the Latin as well (as we would expect).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

TEV

(That is why even today the priests of Dagon and all his worshipers in Ashdod step over that place and do not walk on it.)

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

¹² There must be some extra-Biblical examples of this, as Robert Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; pp. 99, 336, cites Campbell, *The Ark*, p. 86 and Miller and Roberts' *The Hand of the Lord, A Reassessment of the 'Ark Narrative' of 1 Samuel* (Baltimore/London, 1977) p. 44–46.

¹³ From Robert Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 99 who took it from A. F. Campbell, *The Ark Narrative* (SBL Diss. Series, 16; Missoula, 1975), p. 86.

God's Word™

This is why the priests of Dagon and everyone else who comes into Dagon's temple in Ashdod still don't step on the temple's threshold.

JPS (Tanakh)

That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and all who enter the temple of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

Therefore, neither the priests of Dagon nor all who enter Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

Young's Updated LT

...therefore the priests of Dagon, and all those coming into the house of Dagon, tread not on the threshold of Dagon, in Ashdod, till this day.

What is the gist of this verse? From that point on (at least until the time that this narrative was written), the priests of Dagon and all of those who go into Dagon's temple do not step on the threshold.

1Samuel 5:5a

| 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 |
| kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>] | <i>so or thus</i> | adverb | Strong's #3651 BDB #485 |
| Together, ʿal kên (עַל כֵּן) mean <i>so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account.</i> | | | |
| lôʾ (לוֹ אִ or לוֹ אֵ) [pronounced <i>low</i>] | <i>not, no</i> | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| dârak ^e (דָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>daw-RAHK^e</i>] | <i>to march, to trample, to walk over, to walk; to bend [a bow—by stepping on it]; to enter [a place by walking]</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1869 BDB #201 |
| kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced <i>koh-HANE</i>] | <i>priest</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #3548 BDB #463 |
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced <i>daw-GOHN</i>] | <i>corn, grain; his fish [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i></i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>] | <i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered <i>any of</i></i> | masculine singular construct followed by a definite article | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| bôw ^ʾ (בּוֹ אֵ) [pronounced <i>boh</i>] | <i>the one entering [coming, one going] [in]; he who enters [goes, comes (in)]</i> | masculine plural, Qal active participle with the definite article | Strong's #935 BDB #97 |
| bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>] | <i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #1004 BDB #108 |

1 Samuel 5:5a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced daw-GOHN] | <i>corn, grain; his fish</i> [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |
| ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| miph ^e tân (מִפְתָּן) [pronounced mif-TAWN] | <i>threshold</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #4670 BDB #837 |
| Dâgôwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced daw-GOHN] | <i>corn, grain; his fish</i> [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |

Translation: *Therefore, the priests of Dagon and all those entering the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon...* This concerned the Philistines greatly that Dagon's head and hands were laying on the threshold of the temple; for these reason, they would not step on the threshold when entering into the temple. It is somewhat humorous that they would still go into Dagon's temple, and yet avoid the threshold. This is pure negative volition to the truth.

1 Samuel 5:5b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|---|
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <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 |
| ʿAsh ^e dôwd (אַשְׁדּוֹד) [pronounced ash-DÔHD] | <i>fortress, castle</i> (according to Barnes) and transliterated <i>Ashdod</i> | proper noun; location; with the directional hê | Strong's #795 BDB #78 |
| ʿad (עַד) [pronounced ʿahd] | <i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i> | preposition | Strong's #5704 BDB #723 |
| yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm] | <i>day; time; today</i> (with a definite article) | masculine singular noun with a definite article | Strong's #3117 BDB #398 |
| zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh] | <i>here, this, thus</i> | demonstrative adjective with the definite article | Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260 |

Translation: *...in Ashdod, even to this day.* Altogether, this gives us: *Therefore, the priests of Dagon and all those entering the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, even to this day.*

This last little phrase, *even to this day*, indicates three things: (1) this portion of Scripture was written (or edited)¹⁴ sometime after the Dagon incident and, (2) this remark was added, indicating that a considerable period of time had gone by (that is, if an eyewitness wrote this, then he wrote this particular draft several years (or several decades) after this incident occurred); and, (3) there was some way for the writer to confirm this. In other words, an Israelite would not have written this chapter. Or, if an Israelite wrote this, then it would have been based upon someone else's eyewitness account.

This incident, obviously, had a profound affect upon the citizenry of Ashdod for years to come. The Ark of Jehovah, for all intents and purposes, was on a missionary tour. There were some in Philistia who believed in Jehovah, the God of Israel. There were some who moved to Israel (which we are inferring) and some who allied themselves with Israel (David had 600 men under him from Gath—any one of them could have known about this incident, and, in fact, probably most of them were very familiar with it).

The Ark of Jehovah, for all intents and purposes, was on a missionary tour.

The reference to the threshold indicates that, in the ancient world, the threshold was more than something that one steps over. The NIV Study Bible suggests that there was something supernatural about it, e.g., spirits dwell at the threshold.¹⁵ Gordon says to the thresholds of the temples in the ancient world were normally treated with respect, as they represent the transition from the secular to the religious; they mark *the boundary dividing sacred from profane*.¹⁶ In the alternate, possibly they believed gods guarded the temple at that point and that these gods had been overpowered the Jehovah, making the threshold itself a place of bad luck. Or, even more likely, the hands (and possibly head) of their deity had lain upon the threshold. For them to step upon the threshold showed him great disrespect. In my trip to Thailand, I recall that some of the older homes had thresholds that one must step over; some perhaps 12 inches high. The idea was, according to those I spoke with, to keep out evil spirits (however, who knows; maybe the kept out varmints as well).

And so was heavy a hand of Y^ehowah toward the Ashdodites and so He caused them to be awestruck and appalled and so He struck them in tumors, Ashdod and her borders [or, territories].

1Samuel
5:6

So the hand of Y^ehowah was heavy against the Ashdodites and He devastated them; He struck them—Ashdod and her territories—with tumors. And, in the midst of their land, rats sprang up and there was a great death panic in the city.¹⁷

So the hand of Jehovah was heavy upon the people of Ashdod. He devastating them, striking both Ashdod and her territories with cancerous growths.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the Azotians, and he destroyed them, and afflicted Azotus and the coasts thereof with emerods. And in the villages and fields

¹⁴ The term often used is *redaction*, and it does not compromise the inspiration of Scripture. Joshua, for instance, probably appended the book of Deuteronomy and possibly inserted several notes into the writings of Moses. Genesis was probably written by a half-dozen authors (or more) and put together as one book with an occasional comment. Editing which would not be a problem would be by one who also wrote Scripture. If I, on the other hand, chose to add a verse or two and then publish this as God's Word, that would be a problem and what I added would not be inspired nor would it be God-breathed.

¹⁵ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 379. They reference Zeph. 1:9, which reads: "And I will punish on that day all who leap on the threshold, who fill the house of their Lord with violence and deceit." Barnes sees this reference as a confirmation that this tradition was carried out even to the time of Josiah (when Zephaniah was a prophet). *Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 16.

¹⁶ Robert Gordon, *1 & 2Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 99.

¹⁷ This addition is footnoted in the NKJV as from the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate and it is not equivalent to the version which is found in my version of the Septuagint (which is found below the verse).

in the midst of that country, there came forth a multitude of mice, and there was the confusion of a great mortality in the city.

Masoretic Text And so was heavy a hand of Y^ehowah toward the Ashdodites and so He caused them to be awestruck and appalled and so He struck them in tumors, Ashdod and her borders [or, *territories*].

Peshitta But he hand of the LORD was heavy upon the inhabitants of Ashdod, and He destroyed them and afflicted them with boils, both Ashdod and the territory thereof.

Septuagint And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon Azotus, and He brought [evil] upon them, and He burst out upon them into the ships, and mice sprang up in the midst of their country, and great rioting became death in the city.¹⁸

Significant differences: I want you to notice that we have some of the greatest differences in this verse; and yet, the overall meaning is unchanged—God brought horrible things upon the people of Ashdod as a result of the capture of the Ark of God. We will discuss what belongs here and what does not in the text itself.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT Then the LORD began to afflict the people of Ashdod and the nearby villages with a plague of tumors. Greek version and Latin Vulgate read ...*tumors*. *And rats appeared in their land, and death and destruction were throughout the city.*

REB The LORD's hand oppressed the people of Ashdod. He threw them into despair; he plagued them with tumors, and their territory swarmed with rats. There was death and destruction all through the city.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ The LORD dealt harshly with the people of Ashdod. He destroyed them by striking the people in the vicinity of Ashdod with tumors.

JPS (Tanakh) The hand of the lay heavy upon the Ashdodites, and He wrought havoc among them: He struck Ashdod and its territory with hemorrhoids.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, and he caused [mice to spring up and there was] very deadly destruction, and He smote the people with [very painful] tumors or boils, both Ashdod and its territory.

NASB Now the hand of the was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravages them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.

NKJV But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, *both* Ashdod and its territory. [*tumors* probably refer to the bubonic plague; LXX and Vg. add *And in the midst of their land rats sprang up, and there was a great death panic in the city*]

Young's Updated LT And the hand of Jehovah is heavy on the Ashdodites, and He makes them desolate, and strikes them with hemorrhoids, Ashdod and its borders.

What is the gist of this verse? God greatly judged Ashdod and struck them with cancers and rats.

¹⁸ Keil and Delitzsch have a fairly long footnote which indicates that there was additional information at the end of v. 3 and 4 in the Septuagint, but that the additional words (not found in my version of the Septuagint) must have been added sometime later (Thenius suggests that a Greek copyist interpolated a second translation of the 6th verse into the wrong place). The additional material added onto v. 6 appears to me to be accurate. Keil and Delitzsch also say something about the end part of v. 6 coming verbatim from v. 11, but that is not how it stands in my Septuagint version (and it is possible that these problems may have been cleared up for Brent's Septuagint). For more information, see Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 402.

1Samuel 5:6a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced <i>kaw^b-VADE</i>] | <i>to honor, to glorify, to be great, to be vehement, to be heavy, weighty, burdensome</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3513 BDB #457 |
| yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>] | generally translated <i>hand</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #3027 BDB #388 |
| YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>] | transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i> | proper noun | Strong's #3068 BDB #217 |
| ʿel (עַל) [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 |
| ʿAsh ^o dôwdîym (אַשְׁדּוֹדִים) [pronounced <i>ash-dôhd-DEEM</i>] | <i>fortress, castle</i> (according to Barnes); or of <i>Ashdod</i> , which is transliterated <i>Ashdodites</i> or <i>people of Ashdod</i> | masculine plural, gentilic adjective with the definite article | Strong's #796 BDB #78 |

Translation: [So the hand of Y^ehowah was heavy against the Ashdodites...](#) As you see, what happened to the Ashdodites in the Septuagint is quite a different story than what happened to them in the Hebrew. We have a mice invasion in the Greek and a striking with tumors or hemorrhoids in the Hebrew. We will examine the Hebrew, of course, with a careful eye to the Greek. We have the preposition ʿel (עַל) [pronounced *e/*], which denotes direction and means *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against*. Strong's #413 BDB #39. We would probably prefer to think of this as being *upon* the people of Ashdod, but the idea is that we have motion and direction—God's *hand being heavy on [or, against] the Ashdodites* is a matter of something which proceeds from Him to them. Essentially the Greek and Hebrew are in agreement here with this first phrase.

The phrase, *the hand of the Lord*, often refers to God's judgment upon a person or a nation. We find it so used in Ex. 9:3, which reads: "[Behold, the hand of Jehovah will come with very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks.](#)"

1Samuel 5:6b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, then</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shâmêm (שָׁמַם) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAIM</i>] | <i>to devastate, to ravage; to make desolate, deserted; to appal, to show horror</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect; with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix | Strong's #8074 BDB #1030 |

Translation: ...and He devastated them;... Then we have the 3rd person masculine singular (with a 3rd person masculine plural suffix), Hiphil imperfect of *shâmêm* (שָׂמַם) [pronounced *shaw-MAIM*], which means, in the Hiphil, *caused to be appalled and awestruck*. BDB gives the meanings as *to devastate, to ravage* in the Hiphil. **And he caused them to be appalled and awestruck... or And He devastated them...** Still, the Greek and Hebrew are in relatively close agreement. **God's hand was heavy against these Ashdodites—He ravaged them; He caused them to become awestruck.**

What follows is exactly how God's hand was heavy against the people of Ashdod.

1 Samuel 5:6c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, then</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i>] | <i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect | Strong #5221 BDB #645 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</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 |
| ʿôphel (עֹפֵל) [pronounced <i>ʿOH-fell</i>] | <i>[a visible] growth, tumor, a swelling up, a cancerous growth</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #6076 BDB #779 |

I have preserved the correct word order from the Hebrew above. I changed the word order in my English translation.

Translation: ...He struck them...with tumors. At this point, the two Greek and Hebrew diverge substantially. The masculine plural noun here means *growth, tumor, a swelling up, a cancerous growth*. Given that the related verb means *to swell up*, I would think that a tumor which is easy to see would be the more likely meaning. This does not have to be miraculous. Just a month or so ago, I had a lump appear on my ankle, almost out of nowhere. I did not see it grow, but it got to the size of a grape. About a month later, its size decreased to almost nothing over a period of a few weeks. So, from personal experience, I know that these things can occur suddenly. How many were struck and how quickly this occurred and the effect that these tumors had is unknown to us. What we do know if, it was enough to cause the Ashdodites to rethink keeping the Ark of God.

1 Samuel 5:6d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| ʿêth (אֶת) [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 |
| ʿAsh ^o dôwd (אֲשֶׁדּוֹד) [pronounced <i>ash-DOHD</i>] | <i>fortress, castle</i> (according to Barnes) and transliterated <i>Ashdod</i> | proper noun; location | Strong's #795 BDB #78 |

1Samuel 5:6d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wāw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [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 |
| g ^e bûl (גְּבוּל) [pronounced <i>g^{eb}-VOOL</i>] | <i>border, boundary, territory</i> | masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix | Strong's #1366 BDB #147 |

Translation: ...—Ashdod and her territories—[with tumors]. This phrase simply tells us who God struck. In the Greek, *Ashdod* is not named in this final phrase, but it simply reads *throughout all the city*. When Ashdod was given over to Judah in Joshua 15:46–47, there is an indication that there were several villages and settlements which were a part of Ashdod. Therefore, it would make sense that God would strike Ashdod and her *territories*. It is at 1Sam. 5:6b where the Greek diverges considerably; therefore, let me give you the Greek beginning from that point:

1Samuel 5:6b 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 |
| epagô (ἐπάγω) [pronounced <i>ep-AW-goh</i>] | <i>to bring on, to bring something upon someone; to cause something to befall someone (usually evil); to lead</i> | 3 rd person singular, Aorist active indicative | Strong's #1863 |
| autois (αὐτοῖς) [pronounced <i>ow-TOIC</i>] | <i>in them, by them; to them, for them; by means of them</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, locative, dative or instrumental case | Strong's #846 |

Translation: *And He brings [evil] for them:...* We do not actually find the word *evil* here. God brings something for the people of Ashdod, and this will be laid out in the remainder of this verse.

1Samuel 5:6c 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 |
| exezesen (ἐξέζεσεν) [pronounced <i>ex-EH-zeh-sen</i>] | <i>to burst out (according to Brenton); possibly from ex + zeô (to boil, to seeth)?</i> | 3 rd person singular, Aorist active indicative | No Strong's # |

1Samuel 5:6c from the Greek Septuagint

| Greek/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | Strong's Number |
|---|---|--|-----------------|
| autois (αὐτοῖς) [pronounced ow-TOIC] | <i>in them, by them; to them, for them; by means of them</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, locative, dative or instrumental case | Strong's #846 |
| eis (εἰς) [pronounced ICE] | <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 |
| tas (τάς) [pronounced tahss] | <i>the</i> | feminine plural definite article; accusative case | Strong's #3588 |
| naus (ναῦς, ἡ) [pronounced nowc] | <i>[large] ship, large vessel</i> | feminine singular noun; accusative case | Strong's #3491 |

Translation: ...and He burst out [against] them unto the ship... Ashdod was a city close to the Mediterranean Sea, and it appears that God attacked them either from the ship or as far as the ship. Exactly how God burst out (or seethed) against Ashdod will be covered in the final portion of this verse (from the Septuagint).

1Samuel 5:6d from the Greek Septuagint

| Greek/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | Strong's Number |
|---|--|---|-----------------|
| καί (καί) [pronounced kī] | <i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i> | conjunction | Strong's #2532 |
| mesos (μέσος) [pronounced MEH-soss] | <i>middle, midst, in the middle, among</i> | masculine singular adjective; accusative case | Strong's #3319 |
| tês (τῆς) [pronounced tayc] | <i>of the; from the</i> | feminine singular definite article; genitive and ablative cases | Strong's #3588 |
| chôra (χώρα, ας, ἡ) [pronounced KHOH-ra] | <i>country, land; district, region, place; [open] country [as opposed to the city]; [dry] land [as opposed to the sea]</i> | feminine singular noun; genitive case | Strong's #5561 |

This can also mean *the space lying between two places or limits; a region or country i.e. a tract of land; the (rural) region surrounding a city or village, the country; the region with towns and villages which surround a metropolis; land which is ploughed or cultivated, ground.*

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| autês (αὐτῆς) [pronounced ow-TAYC] | <i>her, hers; of her; from her</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular; ablative/genitive case | Strong's #846 |
| anephuêsan (ἀνεφύησαν) [pronounced aw-neh-FOO-â-sahn] | <i>to spring up [according to Brenton]</i> | 3 rd person plural, Aorist active indicative | No Strong's # |
| mues (μύες) [pronounced MOO-ess] | <i>mice, rats</i> | masculine plural noun; nominative case | No Strong's # |

Translation: ...and mice [or rats] sprang up in the midst of her land. Although it is not completely clear here, let me conjecture that they brought on this large vessel a huge number of mice and rats. These vermin completely overran everything from the ship to the land where they lived, including the city and the land around there. I once caused a minor rat infestation where I lived. I left some bird seed out in a coffee can with a plastic lid. I did not think much of it when I noticed that the plastic lid had been eaten through. A week or so later, I knew that I had rats. I never saw any until I found some dead ones; but, it was a gross feeling to know that somewhere in your house there are rats. This is far more gruesome. These people of Ashdod saw rats and mice everywhere they looked. They could not do anything to get rid of them. Whether their tumors were a result of being bitten by these rodents or whether the tumors were a separate curse is unknown. There may have not been any tumors (my version of the Septuagint does not mention tumors). In any case, life for those in Ashdod was extremely unpleasant while the Ark of God was in their midst.

1Samuel 5:6e 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 (νίνομαι) [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 rd person singular, Aorist middle indicative | Strong's #1096 |
| sugchusis (σύγχυσις, εως, ή) [pronounced <i>SOOG-khoo-sis</i>] | <i>confusion, tumult, disturbance [of people rioting]</i> | feminine singular noun; nominative case | Strong's #4799 |
| thanatos (θάνατος) [pronounced <i>THAH-nah-toss</i>] | <i>death [natural, a penalty, real, figurative, danger, threat, manner of]; physical death; spiritual death; eternal death</i> | masculine singular noun; genitive/ablative case | Strong's #2288 |
| meGas (μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα) [pronounced <i>MEH-gas</i>] | <i>large, great; wide, spacious; rich; loud [i.e., a greater intensity]; high [position], more prominent, important</i> | feminine singular adjective; nominative case | Strong's #3173 |
| en (ἐν) [pronounced <i>en</i>] | <i>in, by means of, with</i> | preposition | Strong's #1722 |
| tê (τῆ) [pronounced <i>tay</i>] | <i>to the, for the; in the; by the, by means of the</i> | feminine singular definite article; dative, locative and instrumental cases | Strong's #3588 |
| polis (πόλις, εως, ή) [pronounced <i>POH-liss</i>] | <i>city, city-state; inhabitants of a city</i> | feminine singular noun; dative, locative and instrumental cases | Strong's #4172 |

Translation: ...and great rioting became death in the city [or, [there] was a great confusion of death in the city]. The problems in Ashdod were great and the people were set off. I think that there was more than confusion, but the city became lawless and that people behaved despicably. Others were scapegoated and probably many were attacked and died during this.

The entire rendering from the LXX: **And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon Azotus, and he brought [evil] upon them, and He burst out upon them unto the ships; and, in the midst of their land, rats sprang up and great rioting**

became death in the city.¹⁹ There is some disagreement with the Septuagint which I use and what the NKJV quoted. What appears to be the case, at least from my version, is that the mice (or rats) are related to the merchant ships of Ashdod. Tumors are not mentioned in my Septuagint. Now, you may at first wonder *why the two different versions of the Septuagint?* Just as there are many Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts, there are also many Old Testament Greek manuscripts. There is no version of the Septuagint that we can unequivocally acclaim as the correct first version of the Septuagint. It was put together and then copies were made of it. In fact, there were apparently enough copies made that some, if not all, of the disciples had access to the Septuagint. Now, obviously the LXX was not as plentiful as the Bible is today; but it was available. My assumption is that it would be found in synagogues and libraries (I assume that there were definitely private libraries and organizational libraries; I do not recall whether there were public libraries, but it seems that there must have been in some major cities). Every time a handwritten copy of the Septuagint was made, there would be some errors; and there might even be an occasional revision made by a copyist, although that is much less likely. Our books today are often revised and updated. There is no reason to think that the same was not true of the Septuagint. Our knowledge of the Septuagint, even to its exact date and commission, is lacking. However, given that a translation was made in the first place would certainly suggest that a revision would be a reasonable possibility. Given the fact that there were many copies of the Septuagint, no doubt differing in places due to scribal error; and reasonably assuming that some revision occurred, there are going to be different versions of the Septuagint. Like Hebrew Scripture, the disagreements can be unimportant and others only moderately important. Here, we have versions which disagree considerably.

A reasonable question is *why is there so much lacking in the Masoretic text?* We already know just how ephemeral the manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament were. The oldest manuscripts which we have come from the Dead Sea Scrolls, some dating as far back as 100 B.C. (which is quite incredible). This means, however, we do not have a single portion of a manuscript from the Hebrew which dates before this because the materials used at that time were very biodegradable. They often used skins to write on. So, given all of the persecution of the Jews and the attacks of the Scriptures, there are going to be times when there are very few manuscripts available to a copyist or a translator and some of these manuscripts will be lacking. That is, it is not out of the question for a copyist or a translator to have a manuscript which has some unreadable text. Now, 100 miles away, might be another copyist or translator with a better manuscript. So, what we will have occasionally are passages where text probably was dropped out. It is less likely that text was added as most of the copyists and translators treated Scriptures with great respect. If the text was unreadable, rather than make it up, they probably left it out.

Personally, I put more stock in the Septuagint version at this point, because it makes little sense for the Philistines to make gold likenesses of tumors and mice (1Sam. 6:4) if they were only plagued by tumors. What I would go with is the NKJV with the addition of the portion found in the Septuagint and the Vulgate (which, again, does not agree with my version of the Septuagint): **But the hand of the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. And in the midst of their land rats sprang up, and there was a great death panic in the city.**²⁰

Now, I can offer two suggestions as to the reasons for the differences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text. (1) Our Hebrew text is corrupted and the short passage concerning the rats were dropped out. A scribe who skipped a line of text could have reasonably done this. (2) A later copyist, seeing what was to come in 1Sam. 6, reasonably inserted that rat plague into chapter 5. The second scenario is the least likely. Here's why: if a scribe is concerned about the Word of God and its accuracy and its continuity, that is a result of a great respect for God's Word and reasonably a belief in its divine inspiration (although he may differ with us on the particulars). Given this respect, he is not going to want to revise Scripture. Such a thing would be blasphemous to him. On the other hand, a Scribe who has no real regard for God's Word (and certainly there would be some of them), might not have any qualms about changing this verse or that; however, he would have less motivation to do so. He does not necessarily care if Scripture holds together. He has got a job to do, and that is to copy the Bible to a new

¹⁹ This addition is footnoted in the NKJV as from the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate and it is not equivalent to the version which is found in my Septuagint (which is found below the verse).

²⁰ The NIV has (appending their translation with the Septuagint and Vulgate): **The LORD's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumors. And rats appeared in their land, and death and destruction were throughout the city.**

parchment. Why make his job tougher and add a line here or there? The result is that he could lose this gig. Now, you could no doubt come up with a scenario of a man who did not see the Bible as God's Word and who would be willing to change a verse here or there so that there was a better narrative flow; and certainly there could be the devout scribe who saw no problem with helping God keep His Word accurate—however, these would be far less likely scenarios. Scholars have come up with a list of the various types of scribal errors, and I would think that 90% (if not 99%) of manuscript differences could be attributed to these errors.

is, the Ark of God was brought into Ashdod

Now, despite all of this controversy, and despite the wide variance of readings for this particular verse, step back for a moment and recognize, the essential meaning and thrust of this passage is unchanged, no matter which version you adhere to. Certainly, some details will be lost if we believe that the MT is the most accurate; but the plain facts of the matter are:

What Can We Say for Certain about 1Samuel 5:6?

1. The Philistines brought the Ark of God into Ashdod.
2. The Ark was placed in the temple of Dagon in a place of subjugation to Dagon.
3. The statue of Dagon was toppled at least twice and its head and hands fell off the final time it toppled over, causing a tradition to be observed in Philistia (the stepping over the threshold).
4. There was a plague or plagues which struck the people of Ashdod; this may have including physical ailments like tumors as well as a huge infestation of rats.
5. Given that the Ark, when sent back to the Jews, is accompanied by golden mice and golden tumors, we may reasonably assume that these were two of the ways in which people were struck by God.
6. This situation was so severe that the Ark will be moved out of Ashdod to another city.

So you see, despite all of the difficulties in determining the correct text, there is no problem whatsoever with the overall meaning of the passage.

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The notes in the NKJV suggests that bubonic plague, which is a very reasonable possibility. The bubonic plague is one of the worst of the epidemic diseases, and a form of it was known as *Black death* in the middle ages when a fourth of the European population died from it. The disease is often remains for a short period of time in a population, but carries with it a very high death rate. Infected rats often bring the disease to that population. It is typical for blood spots under the skin to turn black, for lymph glands to swell (in the groin, armpit and neck areas), and these swellings often become open sores. These symptoms would be the tumors spoken of in this verse. An attack of the bubonic plague is sudden and begins with chills, fever, headache and body pains. Although recorded case histories of this disease only go back as far as 430 B.C. in Athens, this may be even an earlier outbreak of the plague.²¹ Furthermore, Edersheim points out that a hoard of field rats could wipe out an entire harvest in one night and drive an entire tribe from its village.²² Given what we find in the next chapter, and given the reasonableness of the Septuagint's version of events, I think we can safely assume that God prepared an incredible number of rats which attacked the Philistines.

One of the problems which I run into when I offer a scenario as this is, some believers think that God's hand in the affairs of mankind must be absolutely supernatural. When He struck the Ashdodites with mice and with tumors, God did not necessarily make thousands of mice with the bubonic plague materialize out of nothing. A situation like this requires far greater planning on the part of God. God, being omnipotent, can, with a snap of His

²¹ This information came from *The World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 by World Book, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 545.

²² Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 421.

fingers, do or cause anything. There's nothing to it. It is easier for Him to perform a miracle as it is for us to put our hands in our pockets. What involves forethought and preplanning which boggles the imagination is for God to design, from eternity past, a series of events which would result in an invasion of Ashdod by infected rats at exactly the same time that the Ark of God is brought into the temple of Dagon. And He set these things in motion from the creation of the world. A hundred million events must fall exactly into place for this to occur, and God put all of these things into motion, knowing exactly what the end result would be. That God is able to do such a thing is a far greater miracle than any sudden and individual suspension of the natural order of things.

The NIV Study Bible comment here is outstanding: *God would not be manipulated by his own people...nor would he permit the Philistines to think that their victory over the Israelites and the capture of the ark demonstrated the superiority of their god over the God of Israel.*²³

In all of this, I want you to bear in mind, someone from Philistia believed in Jesus Christ because of the testimony of the Ark. This Ark was the gospel coming to Philistia. I think it is very reasonable to conclude that one or more Philistines became believers in Jesus Christ based upon these events, and that their record of the events is how we know all of this occurred. That seems to be far more likely than the idea that some writer of Scripture in Israel was moved by God the Holy Spirit to record events in Philistia which he did not know anything about.

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| <p>And so would see men of Ashdod that [things were] so and said, "Will not remain an Ark of Elohim of Israel with us for has been heavy His hand upon us and upon Dagon our Elohim."</p> | <p>1 Samuel 5:7</p> | <p>And the men of Ashdod saw how [the matter] stands, they said, "The Ark of the God of Israel will not remain with us, for His hand has been heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god."</p> |
|--|-------------------------|---|

When the men of Ashdod observed the judgments against them, they said, "The Ark of the God of Israel should not remain here, for He has attacked us and our god, Dagon."

First, we will see what others have done with this verse:

Ancient texts:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Masoretic Text | And so would see men of Ashdod that [things were] so and said, "Will not remain an Ark of Elohim of Israel with us for has been heavy His hand upon us and upon Dagon our Elohim." |
| Septuagint | And the men of Azotus saw that <i>it</i> was so, and they said, "The Ark of the God of Israel will not abide with us, for His hand <i>is</i> heavy upon us and upon Dagon our God." |

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

| | |
|-----|--|
| CEV | Finally, they said, "The God of Israel did this. He is the one who caused all this trouble for us and our god Dagon. We've got to get rid of this chest." |
| NLT | When the people realized what was happening, they cried out, "We can't keep the Ark of the God of Israel here any longer! He is against us! We will all be destroyed long with our god Dagon." |
| TEV | When they saw what was happening, they said, "The God of Israel is punishing us for our god Dagon. We Can't let the Covenant Box stay here any longer." |

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

²³ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 379.

JPS (Tanakh)

When the men of Ashdod saw how matters stood, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand has dealt harshly with us and with our god Dagon."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god."

Young's Updated LT

And the men of Ashdod see that *it is* so, and have said, 'The ark of the God of Israel does not abide with us, for hard has been His hand upon us, and upon Dagon our god.'

What is the gist of this verse? The men of Ashdod realize that the horrible problems which had befallen them were because of the Ark of God and they call for its removal.

1Samuel 5:7a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| 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> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7200 BDB #906 |
| ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>] | <i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #376 BDB #35 |
| ʾAsh°dôwd (אֲשְׁדּוֹד) [pronounced <i>ash-DOHD</i>] | <i>fortress, castle (according to Barnes) and transliterated Ashdod</i> | proper noun; location | Strong's #795 BDB #78 |
| 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 |
| kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>] | <i>so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;</i> | properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb | Strong's #3651 BDB #485 |

I do not find a listing for these two together in BDB. However, in 1Sam. 5:7, they are rendered as follows: *how things were, that [it was] so, what was happening, how it was.*

Translation: *And the men of Ashdod saw how [the matter] stands,...* We are not given an exact time frame here we know that the Ark was in Philistia for a total of seven months (1Sam. 6:1); so we would think that they determined that their problems were the Ark after 4–5 months. This tells us that they realized just what the problem was.

1Samuel 5:7b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|---|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| lô (לוֹא 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 |
| yāshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH^βV</i>] | <i>to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #3427 BDB #442 |
| ʾārōwn (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 construct | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>] | <i>transliterated Israel</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #3478 BDB #975 |
| ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>] | <i>with, at, by, near</i> | preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 1 st person plural suffix | Strong's #5973 BDB #767 |

Translation: ...they said, “The Ark of the God of Israel will not remain with us,...” The men of Ashdod understood clearly that the problem was the Ark of the God of Israel. Their problems were more than out of the ordinary, and it was clear by what happened that the capture of the Ark of God had caused all of this.

1Samuel 5:7c

| 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 |
| qâshâh (קָשָׁה) [pronounced <i>kaw-SHAWH</i>] | <i>harden, be severe, stiffen, to be fierce; to become inflexible, unyielding and self-willed; to become obstinate, stubborn, pig-headed and unalterable</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #7185 BDB #904 |
| yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>] | <i>generally translated hand</i> | feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #3027 BDB #388 |

1Samuel 5:7c

| 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 with the 1 st person plural suffix | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |

Translation: ...for His hand has been heavy upon us... It is not really clear whether the Philistines saw the Ark as being God or enough of a manifestation of God; or if they had any idea that it was a representation of God, a shadow form of Him. It is clear that the Israelites, as a whole, did not really grasp what the Ark was. However,

1Samuel 5:7d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>] | <i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i> | preposition of proximity | Strong's #5921 BDB #752 |
| Dâgōwn (דָּגוֹן) [pronounced <i>daw-GOHN</i>] | <i>corn, grain; his fish [or is simply a transliteration] and is transliterated <i>Dagan, Dakan</i></i> | masculine singular proper noun | Strong's #1712 BDB #186 |
| ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>] | <i>gods or God; transliterated <i>Elohim</i></i> | masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person plural suffix | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |

Translation: ...and upon Dagon our god.” The entire verse reads: “The Ark of the God of Israel will not remain with us for His hand is heavy upon [or, *against*] us and against our elohim, Dagon.” Here is where we find the plural of *God* used with reference to a heathen God.

This particular verse solves one question that we had earlier. The Philistines had earlier referred to the *God of Israel* as *Elohim*, which brought up the question, *did they know something about the Trinity?* However, in this verse, they also refer to Dagon as *elohim*. What we should know about Satan and his works is that he is the great imitator. So, even though in Genesis, when the use of the name *Elohim* is significant, at this point in time, it is no longer meaningful, as many of the ancient civilizations referred to their god in the plural, even in reference to a singular god, as we have here. We might call this the plural of intensity, where the thing in the plural is not in the plural in all actuality, but is found grammatically in the plural to emphasize its greatness or grandeur.

Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the Pagan God Dagon**.

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The Ark of God in Gath

And so they send and so they gather together all lords of Philistines unto them and say, “What will we do to an Ark of Elohim of Israel?” And so, they say, “Gath—let transfer over an Ark of Elohim of Israel.” And so they cause to bring around an Ark of Elohim of Israel.

1Samuel
5:8

So they sent for the rulers of the Philistines and gathered them together unto them, and asked, “What will we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?” And they answered, “Let us transfer the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath.” So they brought around [to Gath] the Ark of the God of Israel.

So they send out messengers and gathered together all the princes of the Philistines and posed the question, “What will we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?” They decided, “Let the Ark of the God of Israel be moved to Gath.” Therefore, they moved the Ark to Gath.

Gordon: *As the Ark moves on to Gath and then to Ekron...the story begins to read like a parody of a victory tour, in which the roles of victor and vanquished are reversed.*²⁴

Let’s see what others have done with this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they send and so they gather together all lords of Philistines unto them and say, “What will we do to an Ark of Elohim of Israel?” And so, they say, “Gath—let transfer over an Ark of Elohim of Israel.” And so they cause to bring around an Ark of Elohim of Israel.

Septuagint

And they send and gather the lords of the Philistines to them, and say, “What will we do to the ark of the God of Israel? And the Gittites say, “Let the Ark of God come over to us.” And the ark of the God of Israel came to Geth.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT

So they called together the rulers of the five Philistine cities and asked, “What should we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?” The rulers discussed it and replied, “Move it to the city of Gath.” So they moved the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™

The people of Ashdod called together all the Philistine rulers. “What should we do with the ark of the God of Israel?” they asked. “The ark of the God of Israel must be taken to Gath,” the rulers said [Dead Sea Scrolls, Greek read, “The citizens of Gath said, ‘Let the ark of God be brought to us.’ ”]. So the people took the ark of the God of Israel there.

JPS (Tanakh)

They sent messengers and assembled all the lords of the Philistines and asked, “What shall we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?: They answered, “Let the Ark of the God of Israel be removed to Gath.” So they moved the Ark of the God of Israel [to Gath].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

²⁴ Robert Gordon, *1 & 2Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 100.

NASB

So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel around.

NRSV

So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" The inhabitants of Gath replied, "Let the ark of God be moved on to us." So they moved the ark of the God of Israel to Gath.

Young's Updated LT

And they send and gather all the princes of the Philistines unto them, and say, 'What do we do to the ark of the God of Israel?' and they say, 'To Gath let the ark of the God of Israel be brought round;' and they bring round the ark of the God of Israel;...

What is the gist of this verse? It is decided to then take the Ark to Gath—a demand from the people of Ashdod placed upon the rulers of the Philistines.

| 1Samuel 5:8a | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>] | <i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7971 BDB #1018 |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| ʿâçaph (אַחַפּ) [pronounced <i>aw-SAHF</i>] | <i>relocate, transfer, transport, gather, to gather and remove, to remove</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #622 BDB #62 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [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 |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>] | with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i> | masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| çʿrânîym (סָרִיסִים) [pronounced <i>sʿ-RAW-neem</i>] | <i>warlords, lords, princes, czars, generals, officers; officials, VIP's</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #5633 BDB #710 |
| ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e]</i> | <i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 3 rd person plural suffix | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |

Translation: So they sent for the rulers of the Philistines and gathered them together unto them,... Again, the Hebrew and the Greek diverge. So that there is no confusion, the Hebrew is generally going to be closest to the autographs (the autographs are perfect copies of the original). It is the autographs which are completely and fully

inspired by God (or, *God-breathed*). *Textual criticism* is the science of taking the manuscripts that we have today and arriving at a finished product which is as close to the autographs as possible. In this exegesis of God's Word, what I attempt to do is to arrive at an English translation based as closely upon what I believe to be the autographs as possible. There are so many factors involved, that this is a slow, arduous process at times. The Greek Septuagint is an early translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (circa 100 B.C.). It was based upon manuscripts which are about 1000 years older than any Hebrew manuscripts which we have today (apart from that which is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls). The problem with the Septuagint is that it is an uneven translation. Parts of it are carefully translated, and other parts appear as though the translators read the Hebrew passage on Monday, then constructed the Greek translation on Tuesday from memory.²⁵ Here, it is difficult to determine whether the information found in the Greek is a clarification or from the manuscripts that they used. In the Greek, those who suggest that the Ark be moved to Gath are Gittites (men of Gath). In the Hebrew manuscripts which we have, those who suggest that the Ark be moved to Gath are not named.

It is unclear as to exactly the type of government that these Philistines had and the interrelationship between the various Philistine cities, including their relative independence. I suspect that each city had a say in policy and that they were a federation of united cities. Here, the Philistines acted in concert, trying to devise a solution which was mutually agreeable to all. What is likely is that the five heads of the five Philistine cities gathered for this meeting. 1Sam. 6:4 tells us that five golden tumor images and five golden mouse images were sent back to Israel with the Ark, which would confirm that we are speaking of the five leaders in this meeting (see also Joshua 13:3 Judges 3:3 1Sam. 6:16–18). Each leader may have arrived with an entourage; but each apparently had one vote.

That the Ark of God was captured and placed in Ashdod appeared to be a unilateral decision. However, given the problems which erupted because of the Ark being kept in Ashdod, the Philistines gather together their various rulers to come to a consensus as to where the Ark should be placed.

1 Samuel 5:8b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [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 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| mâh (מַה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>] | <i>what, how, why</i> | interrogative; exclamatory particle | Strong's #4100 BDB #552 |
| ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>] | <i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i> | 1 st person plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #6213 BDB #793 |
| lâmed (לְ) [pronounced <i>l</i>] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| Additional meanings of the lâmed preposition: <i>with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to.</i> | | | |
| ʾărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>] | <i>ark, chest; Ark</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| ʾēlohîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>] | <i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |

²⁵ It may not be that bad; it is possible, as we have discussed in the exegesis of Samuel, that they were dealing with a manuscript which is different in many respects.

1Samuel 5:8b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| Yisʿrâʿêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis'-raw-ALE</i>] | transliterated <i>Israel</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #3478 BDB #975 |

Translation: ...and asked, “What will we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?” This defined the exact topic of discussion of these rulers: just what exactly must be done with the Ark of the God of Israel.

1Samuel 5:8c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, then</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| Gath (גַּת) [pronounced <i>gath</i>] | <i>wine-press and is transliterated Gath</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #1661 BDB #387 |
| çâbab (סָבַב) [pronounced <i>saw^b-VAH^bV</i>] | <i>to turn oneself, to be caused to go around, to be turned around</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect | Strong's #5437 BDB #685 |
| ʾărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>] | <i>ark, chest; Ark</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| ʾēlohîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>] | <i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| Yisʿrâʿêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis'-raw-ALE</i>] | transliterated <i>Israel</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #3478 BDB #975 |

Translation: And they answered, “Let us transfer the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath.” In the Greek, it is clear that the lords of Gath propose this. Furthermore, they say, “Let the Ark of the God of Israel be moved over to us.” One of the unfortunate aspects of the Greek translation is that it is uneven. We cannot point to a change like this and say, unequivocally, that the Greek is slightly different because it was based upon better and older manuscripts than we have today. However, we do not know if the translator simply chose to make the translation a bit more readable, as we cannot depend upon the Septuagint to be a literal rendering. However, this does make sense for a city to volunteer to take the Ark, as opposed to several of them imposing the Ark on one of their cities. Also, it would make sense for one of the leaders to think, “Poppycock; they are not having these problems because of the Ark.” This is just conjecture, but it presents a reasonable possibility as to the dynamics of this situation.

Of course, the Philistine leaders were not about to simply let go of the Ark and send it back to Israel. They had captured the Ark of Israel, and supposed that they had gained some advantage over the power of Jehovah God in this way. The disasters which occurred in Ashdod, although severe, were certainly seen by most as

coincidence.²⁶ After all, vermin and tumors were things which all had natural and explainable origins. Furthermore, as Barnes explains: *[These Philistine] lords...were very unwilling to give up their triumph, and, with the common heathen superstition, imagined that some local bad luck was against them at Ashdod.*²⁷ Therefore, moving the Ark to another Philistine location seemed to be the best decision. Get it out of Ashdod, to placate the Ashdodites, but keep it under Philistine control. Now, the city of Gath was not some arbitrary choice. Gath was much farther inland and a simultaneous invasion by rats and mice from a trading vessel would have been much less likely. In other words, they did not just pick any city in Philistia, but they took the one which was least likely to have an influx of vermin. Furthermore, as I suggested, the King of Gath probably suggested his city.

As a side note, this is interesting, as, several decades from now, David will run to Gath, on two occasions, and each time, he will be accepted by the King of Gath. This would indicate that what is happening here might be preparing the king of Gath (of David's time) to treat David with respect.

1Samuel 5:8d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, then</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| çâbab (בָּבַב) [pronounced <i>saw^b-VAH^bV</i>] | <i>to be brought round, to turn, to change, to march around, to walk around, to go partly around, to circle about, to go on a circuitous march, to make a circuit, to surround, to encompass</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #5437 BDB #685 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [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 |
| ʿărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>] | <i>ark, chest; Ark</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| ʿĕlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>] | <i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| Yisʿrâʾel (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis'-raw-ALE</i>] | transliterated <i>Israel</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #3478 BDB #975 |

Translation: [So they brought around \[to Gath\] the Ark of the God of Israel.](#) The verse simply tells us that the Ark was brought to Gath. In the Greek, this is stated outright. Given that, it would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the City of Gath.**

Now that we have touched on this doctrine, recall that the Ark was kept at the home of Obed-edom, the Gittite (i.e., *from Gath*), as a person who touched the Ark when David was moving it died. Now, do you recall that I have been telling you that a Philistine probably wrote these chapters of Scripture, and that the Ark going to Philistia was almost like an evangelistic tour. Do you see the connections now? We will have at least one man from Gath, a Philistine, whom David trusts enough to have him keep the Ark of God for awhile (2Sam. 6:10–11). We have

²⁶ Even when the Ark is returned to Israel, the Philistine leaders would still have their doubts whether the judgement on their territory actually came from the God of Israel (see 1Sam. 6:9).

²⁷ *Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 16.

information from the land of Philistia which would be unknown to any Jewish writer of Scripture. We have the Ark going to the city of Gath, which be the original birthplace of Obed-edom (or of his father). This is probably our guy or probably our family who told David (or Samuel) all that happened in Philistia with the Ark. Furthermore, even though we are dealing with a couple of chapters which fit into the book of Samuel chronologically (1Sam. 5–6); apart from that, they seem to be a tangent, or an inserted story. My point is, this all fits and all makes sense. Of course, this is conjecture, but it is quite reasonable, given the circumstances and coincidences.

And so he is after they had brought around him to Gath and so is a hand of Y^ehowah in the city a panic great very and so He strikes men of the city from small and as far as great and so break out to them tumors.

1Samuel
5:9

So it was after they brought it [the Ark of God] around to Gath that the hand of Y^ehowah was against the city [causing] a very intense chaos. He strikes the men of the city from the insignificant to the great so that tumors broke out upon them.

So it came to pass after bringing the Ark of God to Gath that the hand of Y^ehowah was against that city, causing chaos and panic. God struck the men from every social strata of that city with tumors.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so he is after they had brought around him to Gath and so is a hand of Y^ehowah in the city a panic great very and so He strikes men of the city from small and as far as great and so break out to them tumors.

Septuagint

And it came to pass after it went about to Geth, that the hand of the Lord comes upon the city, a very great confusion; and he struck the men of the city small and great, and He struck them in their secret parts; and the Gittites made to themselves images of emerods.

Significant differences:

In the LXX, the verb which goes with the *hand of Jehovah* is different, but only slightly and could simply be a matter of translation. There is great *confusion* in the LXX and a *panic* in the MT (which, again, could simply be a matter of translation). Finally, the most significant difference of all: Jehovah strikes the Gittites with tumors in the MT; in the LXX, He strikes them in their secret parts and the Gittites make images of emerods.

There is an obvious difference of meaning in the final phrase; however, there is actually very little difference in the overall scheme of things; and absolutely no difference in the realm of doctrine.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

TEV

But after it arrived there, the LORD punished that city too and caused a great panic. He punished them with tumors which developed in all the people of the city, young and old alike.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

And after they had moved it, the hand of the LORD came against the city, causing great panic; He struck the people of the city, young and old, so that hemorrhoids broke out among them.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

But after they had carried it to Gath, the hand of the Lord was against the city, causing an exceedingly great panic [at the deaths from the plague], for He afflicted the people of the city, both small and great, and tumors or boils broke out on them. And it came about that, after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

NASB

But they had brought it to Gath, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic; he struck the inhabitants of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

NRSV

Young's Updated LT

...and it comes to pass after they have brought it round, that the hand of Jehovah is against the city—a very great destruction; and He smites the men of the city, from small even unto great; and breaks forth on them do emerods.

What is the gist of this verse? The Ark is take to Gath and God brings judgment against this city as well—men of the city are struck with what appears to be cancerous growths.

| 1Samuel 5:9a | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 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 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1961 BDB #224 |
| ʿachârêy (אַחֲרָי) [pronounced ah-kuh-RAY] | hinder parts; behind, after; following; after that, afterwards | preposition; plural form | Strong's #310 BDB #29 |
| çâbab (סָבַב) [pronounced saw ^b -VAH ^b V] | to be brought round, to turn, to change, to march around, to walk around, to go partly around, to circle about, to go on a circuitous march, to make a circuit, to surround, to encompass | 3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect | Strong's #5437 BDB #685 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to, toward | affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |

Translation: So it was after they brought it [the Ark of God] around to Gath... This decision to doubt God's power and authority would bring judgement upon all Philistia. However, this is a part of God's plan. This is what God expected to happen and what He planned to happen.

| 1Samuel 5:9b | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah] | and so, then | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |

1Samuel 5:9b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW] | <i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1961 BDB #224 |
| yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd] | generally translated <i>hand</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #3027 BDB #388 |
| YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH] | transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i> | proper noun | Strong's #3068 BDB #217 |
| b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}] | <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 |
| ġyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer] | <i>encampment, city, town</i> | feminine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #5892 BDB #746 |

Translation: ...that the hand of Y^ehowah was against the city... That God is against the city of Gath does not mean that the Ark going there is outside of His will. God had several reasons to allow the Philistines to capture the Ark, and at least one of those reasons was to evangelize the family of Obed-edom (a reasonable conjecture).

1Samuel 5:9c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| m ^e hûmâh (מְהוּמָה) [pronounced m ^e hoo-MAWH] | <i>chaos, widespread panic, tumult</i> | feminine singular noun | Strong's #4103 BDB #223 |
| ġâdôwl (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 ^e ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m ^e -ODE] | <i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i> | adverb | Strong's #3966 BDB #547 |

Translation:...[causing] a very intense chaos. This gives us: So the hand of Y^ehowah was against the city [causing] very great widespread panic [or, extreme chaos]. What occurred in Gath was probably more intense than what had happened in Ashdod. Everyone in Gath knew what had happened in Ashdod. They were no doubt extremely apprehensive simply because the Ark was being brought into their city. With the Ark came the rats and mice, and the tumors, and the death. They end result, apart from God's judgment, was self-inflicted chaos and apprehension.

1Samuel 5:9d

| 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 |
| nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced naw-KAWH] | <i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect | Strong #5221 BDB #645 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| ʿiysh (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced eesh] | <i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #376 BDB #35 |
| ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer] | <i>encampment, city, town</i> | feminine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #5892 BDB #746 |
| 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 |
| qâṭôn (קָטוֹן or קֶטָן) [pronounced kaw-TOHN] | <i>small, insignificant; a word particularly used for youth, younger</i> | masculine singular adjective | Strong's #6995 & #6996 BDB #882 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʿad (עַד) [pronounced ġahd] | <i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i> | preposition | Strong's #5704 BDB #723 |
| ġâdôwl (גְּדוֹלָה) [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 |

Translation: He strikes the men of the city from the insignificant to the great... God does not distinguish who He strikes. He did not spare the poor and the unimportant any more than He spared the rich and important.

1Samuel 5:9e

| 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 |
| sâthar (שָׁתַר) [pronounced saw-THAR] | <i>to burst out, to break out</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect | Strong's #8368 BDB #979 |

1Samuel 5:9e

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| ʿôphel (לֹּפֶל) [pronounced ʿOH-fell] | <i>[a visible] growth, tumor, a swelling up, a cancerous growth</i> | masculine plural noun | Strong's #6076 BDB #779 |

Translation: ...so that tumors broke out upon them. You will note how different the Hebrew is here from the Greek (...and He struck them in their secret parts; and the Gittites made to themselves images of Emerods; in the Syriac, they are covered with boils). The Hebrew seems to make the most sense—God strikes these men with cancerous growths. In the Greek, they are making themselves images of these cancerous growths. It is possible that both are true; the making of the images might be their response to contracting the very visible cancerous growths. However, I cannot really account for the difference of the renderings in a manner which is satisfactory to me. As is my preference, I will hold to the Hebrew unless there is a good reason that the Greek appears to be the better rendering.²⁸

Rodents were everywhere—in the houses of the rich and in the tents of the poor (I am assuming this). The city's inhabitants could not kill the rodents as quickly as the rodents could reproduce. Bubonic plague broke out. And if you are a heathen in a hopeless situation, and your house is filled with rats and mice, and your body is covered with sores and tumors, and you are deathly ill, you feel desperate; your behavior quickly spirals out of control. Those around you, expecting the same sores and tumors, expecting the same painful, excruciating death, also lose control. The very fabric of their civilization rapidly disintegrated.

Despite all of this, the lords of Philistia did not want to forsake their great victory. They not only defeated the Israelites, but they soundly defeated them while they were accompanied by their Ark. Furthermore, they had captured the Ark, an event unparalleled in the 300 year history of Israel, and they simply could not let go of that.

Practical Application: Aren't there sins and patterns of behavior which you hold to which bring their destructive effects upon your life and you cannot let go of them? Every addict subjects his life to this. Many of them completely realize that it is their addiction which is destroying their lives, but they cannot let go of it. That is the Philistine rulership. They rule over a great and powerful country, and that country is being destroyed—and they cannot let go of what is destroying them. We experience this on a national level as well. Free enterprise is the greatest economic system in the world, but it often spawns greed and jealousy, which in turn fosters immoral business practices and illegal activity. Men, at certain levels of society, steal and rob. This is not the man who steals a loaf of bread for his family—which is a pretty rare occurrence. These are men who steal and rob when they have no real need of the things which they take. Or, they use the money to fill themselves with drugs. Some businesses operate the same way. A business might be successful and thriving, and they will still engage in unethical and/or illegal business practices in order to be more successful. Individuals who have more money than they will ever spend might even do the same (or encourage the same of their employees). It is pure and simple greed; it is the unquenchable lust of the soul.

Practical application: Our country had become a legal quagmire. Some people sue simply because it is their lottery. They find themselves in a position where they can sue someone else who is more successful; or they can sue a company which is successful. They may fill themselves with self-righteous thoughts and continually feed

²⁸ Bear in mind that the Greek is a translation from the Hebrew. The primary difference is (1) those who translated the Septuagint had access to manuscripts over a millennium older than our present-day Hebrew manuscripts; and, (2) the Greek is a very uneven translation, sometimes moving into paraphrase. The Latin is also different at this point; it reads: ...and they had tumors in their secret parts.

their motivation with self-justification; but they are no different than the thief who walks into a convenience store with a gun. The same goes for their lawyers. They go on a mission to get money from anyone they can, regardless of who, if anyone, is truly liable; regardless of whether the medical expenses have been covered. It is simply lust of the soul; greed in the soul. It is destructive to you and to those you inflict your old sin nature upon.

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The Ark of God in Ekron

And so they sent an Ark of the Elohim [to] Ekron and so he is as a coming of an Ark of the Elohim [to] Ekron, cry out the Ekronites, to say, "They have brought around to me an Ark of Elohim of Israel to kill me and my people."

1 Samuel
5:10

Then they sent the Ark of Elohim to Ekron, and so it was when the Ark of Elohim came to Ekron, [that] the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought to me the Ark of Elohim of Israel to kill me and my people!"

Then they sent the Ark of God to Ekron. However, when the Ark of God arrived in Ekron, the Ekronites individually cried out, "They have brought the Ark of God of Israel to kill me and my people!"

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they sent an Ark of the Elohim [to] Ekron and so he is as a coming of an Ark of the Elohim [to] Ekron, cry out the Ekronites, to say, "They have brought around to me an Ark of Elohim of Israel to kill me and my people."

Septuagint

And they send away the Ark of God to Ascalon; and it came to pass when the Ark of God went into Ascalon, that the men of Ascalon cried out, saying, "Why have you all brought back the Ark of God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people?"

Significant differences:

What the Ekronites say in the LXX is a question, rather than a statement. Instead everything in the final sentence being in the singular, as we find it changed to a plural in the LXX, which could have simply been a matter of a free translation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

So the people of Gath sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They brought the ark of the God of Israel here to kill us."

JPS (Tanakh)

Then they sent the Ark of God to Ekron. But when the Ark of God came to Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, "They have moved the Ark of the God of Israel to us to slay us an dour kindred."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it happened as the ark of God came to Ekron that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us [lit., *me*], to kill us [lit., *me*] and our [lit., *my*] people."

NRSV

So they sent the ark of the God of Israel to Ekron. But when the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, “Why have they brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people?”

Young's Updated LT

And they send the ark of God to Ekron, and it comes to pass, at the coming in of the ark of God to Ekron, that the Ekronites cry out, saying, ‘They have brought round unto us the ark of the God of Israel, to put us to death—and our people.’

What is the gist of this verse? The Ark is next taken to Ekron, but the response of the people was immediately negative, saying, “Why did you bring the Ark of God to us—to kill us and our children?” (this is actually a statement in the Hebrew and a question in the Greek).

| 1Samuel 5:10a | | | |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>] | <i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect | Strong's #7971 BDB #1018 |
| ʾêth (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 |
| ʾărôwn (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 with the definite article | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| ʿEqrôwn (עֶקְרוֹן) [pronounced <i>gek²-ROHN</i>] | transliterated <i>Ekron</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #6138 BDB #785 |

Translation: *Then they sent the Ark of Elohim to Ekron,...* What they sent away was *the Ark of Elohim*. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Elohim* is followed by *of Israel*. Then, we don't have a preposition, just the proper noun *Ekron*. *So they send off the Ark of Elohim [to] Ekron...* Now would be a good time to examine the **Doctrine of the City of Ekron**.

Now, note: this time we do not have a call for the rulers of the Philistines. The text simply has *and they sent to Ark of Elohim to Ekron*. My guess is that this was an act of the people of Gath (which is in agreement with God's Word™). The Gittites seem to be independent thinkers. When there are problems with the Ark in Ashdod, the people of Gath said, “Bring the Ark to us.” There may have been a meeting of the Philistine leaders, but it was the people of Gath who apparently made this decision (probably not a democratic decision, but one made by those representing Gath). However, with the human destruction and panic that accompanied the Ark, the people of Gath acted quickly and moved the Ark to Ekron. It does not appear as though the leaders of Philistia were consulted. They are mentioned in v. 8 (while the Ark is in Ashdod) and in v. 11 (when the Ark is in Ekron), but not here. The response of the Gittites was, *get this out of our town, immediately!* They did not need to bring anyone in to Gath to make that decision.

It is possible that another meeting was arranged with the rulers of the Philistines; however, the people of Gath would have known about Ashdod; they would have been more sensitive to what was occurring and had looked for it. Many of them obviously believed in the strength of the Ark of God.

1Samuel 5:10b

| 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 |
| 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 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #1961 BDB #224 |
| kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>] | <i>as, like, according to; about, approximately</i> | preposition of comparison or approximation | No Strong's # BDB #453 |
| bôw' (בֹּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>] | <i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i> | Qal infinitive construct | Strong's #935 BDB #97 |
| 'ărôwn (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>] | <i>ark, chest; Ark</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| 'ēlôhîym (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 |
| 'Eq'rôwn (עֲקֵרוֹן) [pronounced <i>gek^e-ROHN</i>] | <i>transliterated Ekron</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #6138 BDB #785 |

Translation: ...and so it was when the Ark of Elohim came to Ekron,... What we have here is simply the build up for the public response to bringing the Ark to Ekron. At this point, there is a hue and a cry throughout the city of Ekron.

1Samuel 5:10c

| 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 |
| zâ'aq (זָעַק) [pronounced <i>zaw-GAHK</i>] | <i>to cry out, to call, to cry</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #2199 BDB #277 |
| 'eq'rôwnîy (עֲקֵרוֹנִי) [pronounced <i>gek-roh-NEE</i>] | <i>transliterated Ekronite</i> | masculine plural, gentilic adjective | Strong's #6139 BDB #785 |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| 'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>] | <i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i> | Qal infinitive construct | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |

Translation:...[that] the Ekronites cried out, saying,... What had been happening throughout the Philistine territory was fairly well known throughout Palestine. Although we are not completely sure, it appears as though the general population of Gath called for the removal of the Ark. However, here, it is clear that we are speaking of the general population of Ekron. There does not appear to be a meeting of the elders; this appears to be a grass roots sentiment.

| 1Samuel 5:10d | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| çâbab (בּוּבַב) [pronounced saw ^b -VAH ^b V] | <i>to be brought round, to turn, to change, to march around, to walk around, to go partly around, to circle about, to go on a circuitous march, to make a circuit, to surround, to encompass</i> | 3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect | Strong's #5437 BDB #685 |
| ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced e/] | <i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i> | directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #413 BDB #39 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth] | generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | indicates that the following substantive is a direct object | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| ʿărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN] | <i>ark, chest; Ark</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| ʿĕlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM] | <i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| Yis ^e râʿêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE] | transliterated <i>Israel</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #3478 BDB #975 |

Translation:...“They have brought to me the Ark of Elohim of Israel... In the Greek, this is stated as a question. The *they* to whom they refer is the people of Gath—the people of Gath sent the Ark to Ekron.

| 1Samuel 5:10e | | | |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |
| mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth] | <i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i> | Hiphil infinitive construct with the 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #4191 BDB #559 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |

| 1Samuel 5:10e | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| ʾêth (אֶת) [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 |
| ʿam (אָם) [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 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #5971 BDB #766 |

Translation: ...to kill me and my people!" The entire quote is: "They have brought around to me the Ark of the God of Israel to kill me and my people." The Greek appears to be an easier read: "Why have they brought the Ark of the God of Israel around to us—to kill us and our people?" It was well-known throughout the cities of Palestine what had happened in Ashdod and Gath, and the people of Ekron were concerned what would happen to them. What is interesting is how Ekron will deal with this problem.

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. 5:8–10

| CEV | NASB | Semi-literal Hebrew |
|---|--|---|
| <p>The people of Ashdod had all the Philistine rulers come to Ashdod, and they asked them, "What can we do with the sacred chest that belongs to the God of Israel?"</p> <p>"Send it to Gath," the rulers answered. But after they took it there, the LORD made sores break out on everyone in town. The people of Gath were frightened, so they sent the sacred chest to Ekron. But before they could take it through the town gates, the people of Ekron started screaming, "They've brought the sacred chest that belongs to the God of Israel! It will kill us and our families too!"</p> | <p>So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel <i>around</i>. And it came about that, after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them. So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it happened as the ark of God came to Ekron that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us [lit., <i>me</i>], to kill us [lit., <i>me</i>] and our [lit., <i>my</i>] people."</p> | <p>So they sent for the rulers of the Philistines and gathered them together unto them, and asked, "What will we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?" And they answered, "Let us transfer the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath." So they brought around [to Gath] the Ark of the God of Israel. So it was after they brought it [the Ark of God] around to Gath that the hand of Y^howah was against the city [causing] a very intense chaos. He strikes the men of the city from the insignificant to the great so that tumors broke out upon them. Then they sent the Ark of Elohim to Ekron, and so it was when the Ark of Elohim came to Ekron, [that] the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought to me the Ark of Elohim of Israel to kill me and my people!"</p> |

Obviously, the CEV is a much easier read, much more imaginative in its rendering, and less complex than what we have in the Hebrew.

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And so they send and so they gather together all lords of [the] Philistines and so they say, “Send away an Ark of Elohim of Israel and it returns to his place and he will not kill me and my people;” for is a chaos of death in all the city (heavy very was a hand of the Elohim there).

1Samuel
5:11

So they [the men of Ekron] sent for all the lords of the Philistines and gathered [them] together, and said [to them], “Send away the Ark of the God of Israel; [let] it return to its [own] place so that [lit., **and**] it will not kill me and my people” (for [there] was a deadly panic throughout the entire city and the hand of Elohim was very heavy there).

So the men of Ekron sent for the leaders of the Philistines, and, having gathered them together, said to them, “Return the Ark of the God of Israel to where it belongs, so that it will not kill us and our people.” They said this because there was a deadly panic throughout the entire city and that the judgment of God’s hand was upon them.

In the first meeting of the lords of the Philistines, the people of Gath seemed open to having the Ark of the God of Israel move to their city, possibly believing themselves to be tougher than those at Ashdod. However, after two cities, the people of Ekron did not want to be a part of this. First, the translations:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they send and so they gather together all lords of [the] Philistines and so they say, “Send away an Ark of Elohim of Israel and he returns to his place and He will not kill me and my people;” for is a chaos of death in all the city (heavy very was a hand of the Elohim there).

Septuagint

And they send and gather the lords of the Philistines, and they said, “Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it lodge in its place; and let it not slay us and our people.” For there was a very great confusion in all the city when the Ark of the God of Israel entered there;... [In the Greek, v. 12 begins with the word *For*].

Significant differences:

No significant differences, apart from the verse division.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT

So the people summoned the rulers again and begged them, “Please send the Ark of the god of Israel back to its own country, or it [or, *he*] will kill us all.” For the plague from God had already begun, and great fear was sweeping across the city.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

They too sent messengers and assembled all the lords of the Philistines and said, “Send the Ark of the God of Israel away, and let it return to its own place, that it may not slay us and our kindred.” For the panic of death pervaded the whole city, so heavily had the hand of God fallen there;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, “Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us [lit., *me*] and our [lit., *my*] people.” For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

Young's Updated LT

And they send and gather all the princes of the Philistines, and say, 'Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and it turns back to its place, and it does not put us to death—and our people;' for there has been a deadly destruction throughout all the city, very heavy has the hand of God been there.

What is the gist of this verse? The Philistine heads gather again, with the popular mandate to return the Ark of Israel to Israel in order to keep it from destroying the entire population of the Philistines. God's hand has been very heavy against the city of Ekron.

| 1Samuel 5:11a | | | |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>] | <i>to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7971 BDB #1018 |
| wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, and then, then, and</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| ʿâçaph (אַחַפּ) [pronounced <i>aw-SAHF</i>] | <i>relocate, transfer, transport, gather, to gather and remove, to remove</i> | 3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #622 BDB #62 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [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 |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>] | with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i> | masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun | Strong's #3605 BDB #481 |
| çʿrânîym (סָרְנִים) [pronounced <i>sʰ-RAW-neem</i>] | <i>warlords, lords, princes, czars, generals, officers; officials, VIP's</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #5633 BDB #710 |
| Pʰlishʰtîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>pʰ-lish-TEE</i>] | transliterated <i>Philistines</i> | masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) | Strong's #6430 BDB #814 |

Translation: So they [the men of Ekron] sent for all the lords of the Philistines and gathered [them] together... The succession of events appears that the Ark was taken to Ekron and then the people threw a fit, necessitating the regathering of the lords of the Philistines to discuss this great problem. The primary difference between the two verses is that subject of the verb in v. 8 would have been *the men of Ashdod* (v. 7); the subject of the verb in this verse is *the men of Ekron* (see v. 10). The situation was the same—in whatever city the Ark of God was, the people faced great adversity from God, and the solving of that problem involved a convocation of the rulers. The Philistines may have been very warlike, but they were a highly civilized and organized people.

1Samuel 5:11b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|
| wa (or va) (וַ) [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 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect | Strong's #559 BDB #55 |
| shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>] | <i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i> | 2 nd person masculine plural, Piel imperative | Strong's #7971 BDB #1018 |
| ʾeth (אֶת) [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 |
| ʾărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>] | <i>ark, chest; Ark</i> | masculine singular construct | Strong's #727 BDB #75 |
| ʾēlohîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>] | <i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural construct | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| Yisʾrâʾel (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-row-ALE</i>] | transliterated <i>Israel</i> | masculine proper noun | Strong's #3478 BDB #975 |

Translation: ...and said [to them], “Send away the Ark of the God of Israel;... Although this is a meeting of the heads of the Philistines, it is apparently the people who have demanded that the Ark be removed. The Ark has been in 3 Philistine cities and in each of these cities, the result has been great trouble. The only reasonable thing to do is to remove the Ark of God from Philistia altogether.

1Samuel 5:11c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo^bv</i>] | <i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #7725 BDB #996 |
| lâmed (לְ) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>] | <i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i> | directional/relational preposition | No Strong's # BDB #510 |

1 Samuel 5:11c

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
| mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>] | <i>place, situated</i> ; for a soldier, it may mean where he is <i>stationed</i> ; for people in general, it would be their <i>place of abode</i> (which could be their house or their town) | masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix | Strong's #4725 BDB #879 |

Translation: ...[let] it return to its [own] place... This gives us: *Then they send [for] and gather together all the lords of the Philistines and they say, "Send away the Ark of the Elohim of Israel and it returns to its place..."* Although the leaders of the Philistines will still doubt whether the Ark is associated with the disaster which has befallen the three cities of Philistia, the people of Ekron have no trouble connecting the dots. They do not simply want the Ark out of their city—they want it returned to Israel. Apparently, the other Philistine leaders have come to this meeting with a mandate from their people not to bring the Ark back into their city.

1 Samuel 5:11d

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (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') | <i>not, no</i> | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>] | <i>to kill, to cause to die, to put to death, to execute</i> | 3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect | Strong's #4191 BDB #559 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>] | untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to, toward</i> | affixed to a 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #853 BDB #84 |
| w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [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 |
| 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 1 st person singular suffix | Strong's #5971 BDB #766 |

Translation: ...so that [lit., and] it will not kill me and my people"... The bit of interpretation is *who is he?* Does this refer back to the *Ark of God* or does it refer directly to God? This is fairly easy. If we have a matching subject somewhere (i.e., a subject which matches in number and gender), then that is the subject of the verb. The matching subject is *the Ark of God*. Therefore, in the English, we would use a neuter pronoun (*it*) rather than the masculine singular pronoun (*he*). This is one of the places where an absolutely literal rendering would throw the reader a curve. In the Greek, this is the end of v. 11.

Okay, then, *who is “me and my people”*? This is what is said by the other Philistine leaders. They do not want the Ark brought to their city, as they do not want to die and they don’t want their people to die.

| 1Samuel 5:11e | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 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 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #1961 BDB #224 |
| m ^e hûmâh (מְהוּמָה) [pronounced <i>m^ehoo-MAWH</i>] | <i>chaos, widespread panic, tumult</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #4103 BDB #223 |
| mâveth (מָוֶת) [pronounced <i>MAW-veth</i>] | <i>death, death [as opposed to life], death by violence, a state of death, a place of death</i> | masculine singular noun | Strong's #4194 BDB #560 |
| b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | Strong's# none BDB #88 |
| kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>] | <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 |
| Literally, <i>in all</i> . Although I don’t have this in the lexicons, it is rendered by the most literal translations as <i>among all, through all, throughout all, with all</i> . | | | |
| ġîyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>ġeer</i>] | <i>encampment, city, town</i> | feminine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #5892 BDB #746 |

Translation:...(for [there] was a deadly panic throughout the entire city... Or, ...for chaos of death was through the whole city... In the Dead Sea Scrolls (but not in the Greek), this reads: ...for [there was] a deathly panic from the Lord throughout the whole city... The entire city here is Ekron, and the people of Ekron are severely panicked. They have good reason to be.

Let me explain why the Ark went to Ashdod, Gath and then to Ekron—there were likely people in those cities who were positive toward God at God-consciousness, and the coming of the Ark functioned as a missionary or an evangelist to those cities. There may have only been a handful of people in those cities who were positive toward Jesus Christ, but that is all that is required in order for God to bring them the truth.

You will note that I ended the quotation withthat it may not kill me and my people.” I will explain in the next portion of this verse.

| 1Samuel 5:11f | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
| kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced kaw ^p -VADE] | <i>to honor, to glorify, to be great, to be vehement, to be heavy, weighty, burdensome</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect | Strong's #3513 BDB #457 |
| m ^e ’ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m ^e -ODE] | <i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i> | adverb | Strong's #3966 BDB #547 |
| yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd] | generally translated <i>hand</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #3027 BDB #388 |
| ’êlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM] | <i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #430 BDB #43 |
| shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced shawm] | <i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i> | adverb | Strong's #8033 BDB #1027 |

Translation: ...and the hand of Elohim was very heavy there). You will note that different translations have the quotation of the Philistine leaders end at different points. However, that quotation should properly end with “...so that it will not kill me and my people”? This next phrase explains their sentiment: ...for [there] was a deadly panic throughout the entire city and the hand of Elohim was very heavy there. Notice that we have gone from *me and my* to using the word *there*, rather than *here*. Furthermore, we have the *hand of Elohim* used here, rather than *the hand of the Elohim of Israel*. That is, if the Ekronite was still speaking, he would have qualified the name *Elohim* with *Israel*. That is, he would have said, “The hand of the God of Israel is very heavy here.”

The next point of interpretation: why not end the quotation with *city*? Given the fact that the speaker said, “...and it will not kill me or my people;” we would expect him to call the city, *my city*. Since he does not, it has been generally interpreted that the quotation ends where I have it. The lack of a conjunctive connective between the final two phrases would indicate that the final phrase could be taken as parenthetical.

Keil and Delitzsch comment on this passage: *From this description, which simply indicates briefly the particulars of the plagues that God inflicted upon Ekron, we may see very clearly that Ekron was visited even more severely than Ashdod and Gath. This was naturally the case. The longer the Philistines resisted and refused to recognize the chastening hand of the living God in the plagues inflicted upon them, the more severely would they necessarily be punished, that they might be brought at last to see that the god of Israel, whose sanctuary they still wanted to keep as a trophy of their victory over that nation, was the omnipotent God, who was able to destroy His foes.*²⁹

Although we have some room for interpretation of the last phrase or two, the gist of the verse is simple: get the Ark out of Philistia and take it back to Israel. The Ekronites did not simply want to pass the buck, as had been done, but they wanted to removed the Ark from Philistia altogether. It was clear to them that the judgment leveled against their city was a direct result of the Ark being within the city’s borders.

And men who had not died were stricken in the tumors and so went up a cry of the city [to] the [two] heavens.

1Samuel
5:12

Also, the men who had not died were stricken with cancerous tumors, so the cry of the city went up to the heavens.

Also, the men who had not died were stricken with external cancerous growths, so that the city cried out to heaven.

²⁹ Keil & Delitzsch’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 403.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And men who had not died were stricken in the tumors and so went up a cry of the city [to] the [two] heavens.

Septuagint ...and those who lived and died not were struck with emerods; and the cry of the city went up to heaven. [this is actually v. 12b in the Greek].

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NJB The people who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the wailing from the town rose to the sky.

TEV Even those who did not die developed tumors and the people cried out to their gods for help.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ The people who didn't die were struck with tumors. So the cry of the city went up to heaven.

JPS (Tanakh) ...and the men who did not die were stricken with hemorrhoids. The outcry of the city went up to heaven.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible The men who had not died were stricken with the very painful tumors *or* boils, and the cry of the city went up to Heaven.

NASB And the men who did not die were smitten with tumors and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

Young's Updated LT ,,and the men who have not died have been smitten with emerods, and the cry of the city goes up into the heavens.

What is the gist of this verse? Men who did not die, cried up to heaven, because of their cancerous growths.

1Samuel 5:12a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|--|---|---------------------------|
| w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>] | <i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i> | simple wâw conjunction | No Strong's # BDB #251 |
| ʿêth (אֶת) [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 |
| ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>] | <i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #376 BDB #35 |
| ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>] | <i>that, which, when, who</i> | relative pronoun | Strong's #834 BDB #81 |

1Samuel 5:12a

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| לֹא (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>] | <i>not, no</i> | negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation | Strong's #3808 BDB #518 |
| מָוַת (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>] | <i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed</i> | 3 rd person plural, Qal perfect | Strong's #4191 BDB #559 |
| נָכַח (נָכַח) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i>] | <i>to receive a blow, to be beaten, to be [fatally] wounded [killed, slain]; to be attacked and captured, to be struck with a disease [man or animal]; to be blighted [plant]</i> | 3 rd person plural, Hophal perfect | Strong #5221 BDB #645 |
| בֵּ (בּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>] | <i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i> | a preposition of proximity | Strong's# none BDB #88 |
| עֹפֶל (עֹפֶל) [pronounced <i>ḤOH-fell</i>] | <i>[a visible] growth, tumor, a swelling up, a cancerous growth</i> | masculine plural noun with the definite article | Strong's #6076 BDB #779 |

Translation: Also, the men who had not died were stricken with cancerous tumors,... This is an interesting statement—we obviously have Philistines who have died when the Ark came into their city. We are not told how they died, whether it was from sickness, from these tumors, or how exactly they died.

The attack of God on the city was very real and very deadly. Those who were not killed developed very overt cancerous growths on their bodies. We know cancer as a silent and often undetected disease (until it is too late). For them, the cancerous growths were very overt. According to the Rabbins, these were swellings on the anus.³⁰ This explains the translation of the JPS (hemorrhoids).³¹

1Samuel 5:12b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| וּ (or וַ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>] | <i>and so, then</i> | wâw consecutive | No Strong's # BDB #253 |
| עָלָה (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>] | <i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i> | 3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect | Strong's #5927 BDB #748 |
| שָׁחָה (שָׁחָה) [pronounced <i>shāhv^e-ḤAW</i>] | <i>an outcry, a crying out, a cry for help</i> | feminine singular construct | Strong's #7775 BDB #1003 |
| עִיר (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>] | <i>encampment, city, town</i> | feminine singular noun with the definite article | Strong's #5892 BDB #746 |

³⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 402.

³¹ This is one of the very few times that I can recall the opinion of the rabbins playing a part in the translation of the JPS.

1Samuel 5:12b

| Hebrew/Pronunciation | Common English Meanings | Notes/Morphology | BDB and Strong's Numbers |
|--|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| shâmayîm (שָׁמַיִם) [pronounced shaw-MAH-yim] | heavens, skies | masculine dual noun with the definite article | Strong's #8064 BDB #1029 |

Translation: ...so the cry of the city went up to the heavens. We find essentially this same phrase used several times in Scripture: The sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of this slavery rose up to God (Ex. 2:23b). "Then we cried to Jehovah, the God of our fathers, and Jehovah heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression." (Deut. 26:7).³² And sometimes, when men cry out to God, He hears them (Ex. 3:7, 9 Deut. 26:7) and sometimes He does not (Jer. 11:11 46:12 Zech. 7:13).

Because of one very lame commentary, let me tell you what this is *not*. This does not mean that all heathen worship God in their own way and that simply a sincere call out to the god of any religion is acceptable. One exegete, Robinson,³³ actually quotes the Bhagavad Gita at this juncture: *Even those who worship other gods, if they worship truly in full faith, they do really worship me, even though they do not worship according to the prescriptions* (Gita IX 23, 17). Robinson here misses entirely the point of this passage. These people **do not** call out to Dagon, their heathen god (which Robinson would see as sincere and efficacious worship), but they call out to the two heavens, to the God of Israel, Whose Ark they have. Remember—Dagon, their idol god, was toppled in his temple. These people know that it is because this Ark is in their territory that these judgments are falling upon them. It is because of this that they turn to the God of Israel in fear and in hurt. Then we have the true fulfillment of Acts 10:34b–35: "I most certainly understand now that God is not One to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him."³⁴

This is an interesting turn of events. We have the very evil Philistines and suddenly, we have a city of them calling out to heaven because of the Ark of God. Now, when I first approached this passage, I personally thought that it was odd that God allowed the Philistines to capture the Ark of God. This is the most holy thing in Israel, that which most closely represents the coming Lord of Glory, and God allows the Philistines to take it in war. However, this final phrase of this chapter tells us what is going on and gives us a clue as to God's plan. Given this last phrase along with the information in the next chapter, and it will be apparent that some of the Philistines believed in the God of Israel, resulting in their eternal salvation. One of the purposes of God allowing the Ark of His Glory to be taken is that it functioned as a missionary. God's power, as manifested by the location of this Ark, caused several men of Ekron to believe in Him (and in Ashdod and Gath as well, I am sure). Here, they cry out to the heavens for mercy. In the previous verses, they recognize that with the Ark came the judgment of God. In the previous chapter, I asked to you keep in the back of your mind, *why did God allow the Ark to be taken?* This is your answer. When you die and walk into eternity, part of the redeemed population will be Ekronites from this era, as well as other Philistines. Don't forget, that after David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, that he had it kept at the house of a Philistine, a Gittite, Obed-edom; and as a result of this, God blessed Obed-edom and his entire household (2Sam. 6:11).

³² Although Gordon references Ex. 11:6 12:30, the Egyptians emit a great cry, but not a cry to heaven, as we have in this context. For this reason, these two passages are not more apropos. Robert Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 100.

³³ Gnana Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations*; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, ©1993; p. 36.

³⁴ In the past, I have made a clear and unequivocal case for the exclusivity of the God of Israel, Jesus Christ. However, let's here simply quote Peter again from the book of Acts: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

I have noticed something as a result of going back and working on this book—there are fewer things, apart from the narrative, which I am able to talk about. In other chapters of Samuel, there seems to be a wealth of spiritual information which allows me a number of tangents; however, I do not find the same thing here. My thinking is, this narrative was originally recorded by a convert from the Philistines; probably a man of Gath, and possibly even Obed-edom (as he is named later by David). If this history was written by a believer who was a Philistine, then it should be obvious that he is not necessarily a mature believer. That is, at the time of writing this history, he could add very little by way of insight or additional spiritual information. Had David or Samuel penned this portion of Scripture, my thinking is, we could have dug deeper more often and unearthed greater spiritual application.