

| Samuel 6

I Samuel 6:1–21, 7:1–2

The Philistines Return the Ark of God to Israel

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Doctrines Covered		Doctrines Alluded To
Beth-Shemesh	City of Kiriath-jearim	Shiloh
The Destruction of Shiloh		

Introduction: Now, you may recall in v. 6 of the previous chapter how the Septuagint had made mention of *mice*, which did not match the Hebrew text at all. In this chapter, we have the *return of the mice*, which indicates a couple of possibilities: (1) the information on the mice was lost from the previous chapter (or edited out) and the translators of the Septuagint sought to return it to where they believed that it belonged); or, (2) the translation from the Septuagint is the accurate one, and that the Hebrew text, since that time, became corrupted. (3) A third possibility is that *mice* were not mentioned in the previous chapter, but the translators of the Septuagint, because of this chapter, felt that they should have been mentioned, and therefore, they did. However, what is important is that there were mice (and/or rats), they did invade Philistia, and it is very likely that they brought with their invasion the bubonic plague.

In this chapter, we will view the temporary residence of the Ark of God in Palestine as a whole. In the previous chapter, we followed its movement throughout three of the Philistine cities; however, in this chapter we view this

as a whole and observe how those in Ekron sought to solve the problem. Now what is interesting is that the heathen religious hierarchy of the Philistines will actually give some very good advice to the rulers of Ekron and Philistia. Now, some of it will be crap, but there will be a lot of it that is well-thought out and logical. To give you a for instance: these Philistines religious types ask the rulers to look at what happened to Egypt when Egypt opposed the God of Israel. In the end, they let the Jews go anyway—however, prior to that time, they suffered a great deal. Why not simply bypass all that suffering and attacks from their God and give back the Ark? They also suggested some heathen sacrifices to accompany the Ark, whose efficacy is debatable, but their reverence for the power of the Ark appears to be greater than that of the Israelites in Beth-Shemesh, to whom the Ark was sent.

As you have no doubt noted from the hyperlinks above, I have included the first couple of verses from the next chapter with this one. The topic of this and the previous chapter is the location of the Ark. Therefore, ending this chapter without telling us where the Ark came to rest is like watching the first installment of “The Lord of the Rings.” It is intensely unsatisfying without an ending. 1 Sam. 7:1–2 provide this portion of God’s Word with a proper ending.

Actually, the division of chapters 5, 6 and 7 is a mess. 1Sam. 4 ends just as it should, with the bitter quotation of the wife of Phinehas, explaining the name of her son shortly before she dies. At that point, from 1Sam. 5:1–6:18, we have a narrative which was no doubt written by a newly converted Philistine. This should have been one chapter unit. 1Sam. 6:19–7:2 tells us about the Ark in Israel upon its return, and the associated problems with the Ark. This would have been a small, but reasonable chapter unit. Then, 1Sam. 7 would have begun in v. 3. However, I dislike dividing these chapters up too much. Now and again, I will include one or two verses from the previous chapter, or run one chapter into the next chapter for a couple of verses; however, I have attempted to avoid dividing these chapters up as I think they should have been divided up. I leave that for the reader to do in your own mental organization of the chapter. Furthermore, we have some material (1Sam. 6:13–18) whose authorship could easily be debated. All of what is there could have been recorded by a Philistine leader; however, most of it is about the Israelites and how they received the Ark (only v. 16, about the observing Philistine leaders would have to have been added or deduced at a later date).

So, to sum up, there was really no reason to separate the previous chapter from this chapter. The previous chapter was too short; this chapter carries on with the same topic (even through to the next chapter); and the separation here is borders on being arbitrary. The only reason to divide chapter 6 at all is original authorship.

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The Philistine Religious Icons Suggest that the Ark be Returned to Israel

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

And so is an Ark of Y^ehowah in a land of Philistines seven months. | Samuel 6:1 **Now the Ark of Y^ehowah was in the land of the Philistines [for] seven months.**

Now the Ark of Jehovah was in the land of the Philistines for seven months.

With this verse, we step back and are not concerned with where in Palestine the Ark is but as to how the Philistines decided to deal with the problems of having the Ark there. These are actually the Ekronites specifically in whose city the Ark is. Let’s see how others rendered this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text
Septuagint

And so is an Ark of Y^ehowah in a land of Philistines seven months.
And the Ark was seven months in the country of the Philistines, and their land brought forth swarms of mice.

Significant differences: This is one of the several instances where the LXX mentions that there was an invasion of mice into the land of Philistia because of the Ark. This is reasonable because this is an unlikely thing for a copyist to insert. I have spoken about textual criticism many times in the book of Samuel. What probably is the case here, it those with the Masoretic text probably had manuscripts where a portion was missing or unreadable. Since they cannot simply make up some additional text, the missing text was never restored. This may have even occurred prior to the Masorettes, so that they were left with a manuscript with a few missing portions, but with no explanation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV [After the sacred chest had been in Philistia for seven months,...](#) One ancient translation adds “and rats were everywhere” or “and rats ate the crops.”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™ JPS (Tanakh) [The ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months...](#)
[The Ark of the LORD remained in the territory of the Philistines seven months.](#) [The Septuagint adds: *...and mice invaded their fields*].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB [Now the ark of the LORD had been in the country \[or, *field*\] of the Philistines seven months.](#)

Young’s Updated LT [And the ark of Jehovah is in the field of the Philistines seven months,...](#)

What is the gist of this verse? This is a summary verse of all that has gone before—the ark of Jehovah was in the land of the Philistines for seven months.

1Samuel 6:1a			
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
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
’ărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong’s #727 BDB #75
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong’s #3068 BDB #217
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
sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced <i>sâw-DEH</i>]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong’s #7704 BDB #961

1Samuel 6:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
P ^e lish ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
shib ^e r âh (שִׁבְעָה) [pronounced shi ^p v ^e -GAW]	<i>seven</i>	feminine numeral	Strong's #7651 BDB #987
chôdesh (חֹדֶשׁ) [pronounced KHOH-desh]	<i>new moon, month</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2320 BDB #294

Translation: Now the Ark of Y^howah was in the land of the Philistines [for] seven months. Again, you will note that the Septuagint mentions the mice; however, it will be clear in the Hebrew that there was some sort of an invasion into Palestine by mice in subsequent verses. Again, keep in the back of your mind the three possibilities, which apply here as well as to the previous chapter.

The previous chapter covered a period of seven months, with the Ark remaining three specific cities of Philistia for several months at a time. The purpose of this verse is to refocus us on the same thing, from a different vantage point. We first looked at the Ark being moved from city to city; now we will look at its stay in the land of the Philistines as a whole, although primarily, we are looking to see what happened in Ekron.

What is important is that the invasion of the mice and the tumors did not occur immediately (or, at least, it does not appear that way). The Ark remained in each city for an average of 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ months; the Ark did not come on Tuesday, and by Tuesday night, the entire city was infested with rats and suffering the effects of the bubonic plague. When the Ark moved into the city, the rodent infestation began slowly, as did the spread of the disease (or diseases). It was not instantaneous, or the Ark would have been moved a lot sooner than it was. My guess is that the incidents in the Ashdod temple of Dagon occurred over the first couple of days. However, the spread of disease and the infestation of rats took a period of about 2–3 months. It was probably in the 4th month when it was determined that something should be done. So the Ark is taken to Gath after 3.5 months. The people of Gath made the decision to bring the Ark to Gath, so they keep it for awhile—say, 2 months, and the disease and rodent infestation increase from noticeable after the first week or so to intolerable after the second month or perhaps midway through the third month. They move the Ark to Ekron, which starts an immediate panic. Within six weeks, the Ark is moved out of Ekron, after a meeting with the leaders and the religious types of Philistia.

The Septuagint has some additional material at this point:

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

1Samuel 6:1b from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
hê (ἡ) [pronounced <i>hey</i>]	<i>the</i>	feminine singular definite article; nominative and vocative cases	Strong's #3588
gê (γῆ, γῆς, ἡ) [pronounced <i>gay</i>]	<i>earth; soil, ground; land; [inhabited] earth</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1093
αὐτῶν	<i>their, theirs; of them; from them</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, ablative/genitive case	Strong's #846
mues (μύες) [pronounced <i>MOO-ess</i>]	<i>mice, rats</i>	masculine plural noun; accusative case	No Strong's #

Translation: ...and the their land burst out [or, boiled over] [with] rats [and mice]. I give this portion of the Septuagint credence for two reasons: (1) it is unlikely that some translator would simply add this to the verse; and (2) this helps explain the golden mice which are sent with the Ark (1Sam. 6:4).

Although one might have guessed that only Ashdod would have been affected by the mice and rats, being close to the sea (recall that their ship might have borne these rodents); it is clear here that the rodents have infested their entire land.

And so called Philistines for the priests and for the diviners to say, "What will we do to an Ark of Y^ehowah? Tell us in what will we send him to his place."

1 Samuel
6:2

So the Philistines called for the priests and for the diviners, and said, "What will we do with the Ark of Y^ehowah? Tell us with what shall we send it to its place."

So the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, and asked them, "What will we do with the Ark of Jehovah? When we send it back, with what should we send it?"

You will note the shift in authority here. In the previous chapter, the five Philistine lords called all the shorts; they determined where the Ark was to be sent. In this chapter, the ideas of the Philistine lords being a bust, the religious types are called in. Now, in most cases, bringing in heathen religious types would not improve the situation; it would make things worse. However, that is not the case here. The Philistine priests, although they certainly had disagreements amongst one another, came to a consensus and presented that to the leaders of Philistia; and, surprisingly, these ideas had merit.

Now the other translations:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so called Philistines for the priests and for the diviners to say, "What will we do to an Ark of Y^ehowah? Tell us in what will we send him to his place."

Septuagint

And the Philistines call their priests and their prophets, and their enchanters, saying, "What will we do to the Ark of the Lord? Teach us with what we will send it away to its place."

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

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

...when the Philistines called for priests and people skilled in explaining omens. The Philistines asked, "What should we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how to return it to its [proper] place."

JPS (Tanakh)

Then the Philistines summoned the priests and the diviners and asked, "What shall we do about the Ark of the Lord? Tell us with what we shall send it off to its own place."

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

And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how [or, *with what*] we shall send it to its place."

Young's Updated LT

...and the Philistines call for priests and for diviners, saying, 'What do we do to the ark of Jehovah? Let us know with what we send it to its place?'

What is the gist of this verse? The Philistines call for their own religious types in order to determine how the Ark should be returned.

1Samuel 6:2a

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
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
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
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced <i>koh-HANE</i>]	<i>priest</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
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
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qâçam (קָצָם) [pronounced <i>kaw-SAHM</i>]	<i>diviners, the ones divining, those practicing divination</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #7080 BDB #890

This word is used only for those who are involved in superstitious or idolatrous divining.¹

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

Translation: *And the Philistines called for the priests and for the diviners, saying,...* The NIV Study Bible calls the priests *experts on religious matters* and the diviners are called *the discerners of hidden knowledge by interpretation of omens*; very compact, yet apt descriptions.² Maybe the latter were the mystics of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 6:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced ^f]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾâmar (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
mâh (מָה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
ʿâsâh (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 (ל) [pronounced ^f]	<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>			
ʾârôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: *So the Philistines called for the priests and for the diviners, and said, "What will we do with the Ark of Y^ehowah? Once the priests and diviners were assembled, the following two questions were posed to them: the first question is, "What will we do with respect to the Ark of Y^ehowah?" Obviously, no matter where the Ark is kept, it causes the Philistines great problems.*

1 Samuel 6:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâdaʿ (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHĠ</i>]	<i>to cause to know, to make one know, to instruct, to teach</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
b ^e (ב) [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

² *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 380.

1Samuel 6:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâh (מָה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle (with the definite article)	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
Bammâh (בַּמָּה) [pronounced <i>bahm-MAW</i>] means <i>wherein, wherewith, by what means</i> . This combination of particles is often used for indirect questions and can be rendered <i>in what?, in what thing?, on what account?, why?, how?, in what way?, by what means?</i>			
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>	1 st person plural, Piel imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מְקוֹמ) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHW</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: *Tell us with what shall we send it to its place.* The second question is: *Instruct us with what we should send it to its place.* Or, better: *Instruct us what should we send with it to its place.* Even though the Philistines specifically ask the religious hierarchy, they already know what they need to do—they need to send the Ark of God back to the Jews. Or, it is possible that they ask this question and the religious hierarchy says, “Send it back.” prompting the next question, “When we send it back, what shall we send with it (by way of sacrifice)?” In either case, it is clear that the Ark must be taken out of Philistia and returned to the Jews. What is not as clear is, *what else should be done?* They realized that they could not simply send the Ark back to the Israelites, with a note attached to it, *my bad*, and let it go at that. For seven months, the Ark has been in the land of the Philistines causing them no end trouble, revealing the power of the God of Israel. Therefore, the Philistine leaders know that some sort of obeisance should be paid to the Jews and to the God of the Jews. As I mentioned, the capture of this Ark was not some random event. There were Philistines who believed in the God of Israel after this seven month stay of the Ark.

You may recall a pharaoh of Egypt doing something similar when he had these disturbing dreams (Gen. 41:1–8). He called for the magicians and wise men of Egypt to explain this dream. When a later pharaoh of Egypt was confronted by Moses and Aaron for the first time, he brought in his wise men, magicians and sorcerers to compare notes and powers (Ex. 7:8–12). By contrast, Israel was not allowed to have such types in her country (Deut. 18:9–12 Isa. 2:6 Ezek. 21:21).

And so they say, “If those sending away an Ark of Elohim of Israel, do not send him away empty for a returning you [all] will return to Him a guilt offering so you [all] will be healed and he was made known to you [all] for why does not turn away His hand from you.”

1 Samuel
6:3

So they answered, “If [you are] sending away the Ark of the Elohim of Israel, do not send it away empty, for you will certainly return to Him a restitution offering [and] then you will be healed and you will have been ransomed. Will his hand [then] not be turned from you?”
[Heb.: ...*then it will be made known to you why His hand has not been turned away from you.*”]

Then they answered, “If some are sending back the Ark of the God of Israel, do not send it away empty. You must return to their God a restitution offering, and then you will be healed because a ransom has been paid on your behalf. Then God’s hand will be turned away from you.”

This appears, at first, to be a bit more complex than most of the verses than we have faced throughout most of this book. However, the Hebrew is fairly straightforward, with only a couple of minor difficulties. First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they say, “If those sending away an Ark of Elohim of Israel, do not send him away empty for a returning you [all] will return to Him a guilt offering so you [all] will be healed and he was made known to you [all] for why does not turn away His hand from you.”

Septuagint

And they said, “If you send away the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord God of Israel, do not on any account send it away empty, but by all means render to it an offering for the plague; and then will you be healed, and an atonement will be made for you; should not His hand be stayed from off you?”

Significant differences:

No significant differences, except for the addition of the short phrase noted above, which is not found in the Syriac or the Latin.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT “Send the Ark of the God of Israel back, along with a gift,” they were told. “Send a guilt offering so the plague will stop. Then, if the plague doesn’t stop, you will know that God didn’t send the plague after all.”

TEV They answered, “If you return the Covenant Box to the God of Israel, you must, of course, send with it a gift to him to pay for your sin. The Covenant Box must not go back without a gift. In this way, you will be healed, and you will find out why he has kept on punishing you.”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

They answered, “If you are going to send the Ark of the God of Israel away, do not send it away without anything; you must also pay an indemnity to Him. Then you will be healed, and He will make Himself known to you; otherwise, His hand will not turn away from you [or, you will know why His hand would not turn away from you; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain].”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

And they said, If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but at least return Him a guilt offering; then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed [and healing granted you],...

NASB

And they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you shall be healed and it shall be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

NRSV

They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means return him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed and will be ransomed; will not his hand then turn from you?"

Young's Updated LT

And they say, 'If you are sending away the ark of the God of Israel, you do not send it away empty; for you certainly will send back to Him a guilt-offering; then you are healed, and it has been known to you why His hand does not turn aside from you.'

What is the gist of this verse? Those gathered by the Philistine leaders said that, if the Ark to sent back, it cannot be sent back empty—some sort of a guilt-offering must be sent with it. Only that would cause God to back off from His attacks against the Philistines.

What we find in this verse is going to be surprisingly good advice, given the source.

1Samuel 6:3a

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
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
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>	masculine plural, Piel participle	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
ʾârôwn (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 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

1 Samuel 6:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced a/]	<i>not; nothing; none</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39.
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<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 imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	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
rêyqâm (רֵיקָם) [pronounced ray-KAWM]	<i>empty, empty-handed; in vain, to no purpose; without cause, without purpose, rashly</i>	adverb	Strong's #7387 BDB #938

Translation: So they answered, “If [you are] sending away the Ark of the Elohim of Israel, do not send it away empty... Or, more accurately: So they said, “If those sending away the Ark of the God of Israel...” It appears as though the JPS, in their primary translation, glanced at the Septuagint for some guidance; as you will see, the Hebrew will be more difficult than in most of the previous verses, but it is not really obscure or uncertain, as the JPS indicates. This takes into consideration that the ones to whom the religious hierarchy are speaking might not take the Ark back themselves. In fact, that was pretty much a foregone conclusion. The leaders who called in the religious types did not want to have anything to do with the Ark of God. As far as they were concerned, they did not see any reason to associate with that Ark. They were concerned that if they touched it themselves, they would die. So, the job of returning the Ark will be certainly given to underlings; however, realizing that there could still be consequences even if they simply returned the Ark, the Philistine leaders needed some kind of assurance that there would be no further repercussions to themselves or to their country.

The religious types continue. “Do not send it away empty...” When instructing the sons of Israel about the three feasts that they must attend, Moses adds, “And they will not appear before Jehovah empty-handed.” (Deut. 16:16b). Whether this was religious knowledge culled by the religious types of Philistia from Israel, or whether it had become a part of their religion, we don't know.

1 Samuel 6:3b

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

1Samuel 6:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	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	Hiphil infinitive absolute	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	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	2 nd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿâshâm (אֲשָׁם) [pronounced aw-SHAWM]	guilt [for an offense], offense, fault, blame; guilt-offering, trespass offering; compensation, restitution [offering]	masculine singular noun	Strong's #817 BDB #79

Translation: ...for you will certainly return to Him a restitution offering... Literally, this is: "...for a returning you will return to Him a guilt offering..." The other less-literal, but more accurate, rendering would be: "...for you will certainly return to Him a restitution offering..." The *Him* in this verse refers to the *God of Israel* and not to *Israel*. The religious types of Philistia are showing great respect and deference to the God of Israel—some to the point of faith.

What the religious types propose is not really not too far from what God expects of Israel. "If a person acts unfaithfully and sins intentionally against Jehovah's holy things, then he will bring his guilt offering to Jehovah: a ram without defeat from the flock, according to your valuation in silver by shekels, the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. And he will make restitution for that which he has sinned against the holy thing, and he will add to it a fifth part of it, and give it to the priests. The priest will then make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and it will be forgiven him." (Lev. 5:15–16). At first, you may wonder from where did the Philistine heathen get these ideas? However, that will be explained in the next verse. In any case, this restitution offering shows respect toward the God of Israel, as well as repentance for what they did.

Both Barnes and the NIV Study Bible have important comments to make here: Barnes, first: *The heathen idea of appeasing the gods with gifts, and the scriptural idea of expressing penitence, allegiance, or love to God, by gifts and offerings to His glory and to the comfort of our fellow worshipers, coincide in the practical result.*³ NIV Study Bible: *The priests and diviners suggest returning the ark with*

³ Barnes' Notes; *1 Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 17.

a gift, signifying recognition of guilt in taking the ark from Israel and compensation for this violation of the Lord's honor.⁴

1 Samuel 6:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâz (אז) [pronounced awz]	<i>then, at that time, in that case (when following an if or though), now, as things are; that being so</i>	adverb	Strong's #227 BDB #23
râphâ' (רפא) [pronounced raw-FAW]	<i>to be healed, to be restored to health; can be used figuratively of healing a nation undergoing suffering, or of people in distress</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #7495 BDB #950

The Greek adds, *and he [or, it] will make atonement for you.*

Translation: ...[and] then you will be healed... Bear in mind that these religious types and mystics really did not know how to placate the God of Israel; however, they were giving it their best shot. They assumed that they had to placate or please or show respect to the God of Israel in some way. They promised that the end result would be that the Philistines would be healed.

1 Samuel 6:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHÇ]	<i>to be known, to become known; to be instructed, to be taught by experience, to be punished</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
Lâmed + mâh can be rendered <i>why, for what reason, to what purpose, for what purpose</i> , indicating an interrogatory sentence.			
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

⁴ The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 380.

1Samuel 6:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çûwr (וּרָ) [pronounced soor]	<i>to turn aside, to depart, to go away</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
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 with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: *Will his hand [then] not be turned from you?* [Heb.: ...then it will be made known to you why His hand has not been turned away from you.†] The Greek is stated in the form of a rhetorical question; the Hebrew indicates that they would know what God had persecuted them as He had.

Now we need to examine the final line of this verse. This final line only appears to be rather inscrutable for several reasons: (1) the JPS calls the Hebrew uncertain, whereas, there is nothing about the Hebrew here that is uncertain. (2) What the Hebrew says is kind of meaningless, when taken in context. This verse says that God would make known to the Philistines why He had not turned His hand aside from [disciplining] them. Big frigging deal. No one at this meeting of the princes and the religious types is uncertain about this. They have the Ark of God and God is disciplining them for that. The purpose of the meeting is to determine how to placate the God of Israel. (3) Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Greek offer a much more reasonable alternative rendering, yet *only* the NRSV bases their translation on the DSS's and the Greek. That is probably the most inexplicable aspect of this verse. Many modern translations are aware of the Dead Sea Scrolls and often follow the DSS's when the rendering of the Hebrew doesn't seem to make much sense. However, here the Hebrew really does not jive with the context, yet every English translation that I am aware of, save one, follows the Hebrew. It is as though the hundreds of translators fell asleep at the wheel right here. Whatever.

The literal rendering of the Hebrew is: "...then, He will make known to you why His hand is not turned aside from you." Now, I am not certain about the Hebrew at the very end, where the leaders are told that they will know *why* God has not taken the pressure off. That would seem to be fairly self-explanatory: they took the Ark of the God of Israel out of Israel and God is pissed. The rendering of the Greek and the manuscripts found with the Dead Sea Scrolls seems to be more apropos to the context here: "...and then will you be healed, and an atonement will be made for you; should not His hand be stayed from off you?" This is what the leaders of the Philistines want to hear. They know why God is decimating them; they just want to know, *how do we make it stop hurting?* Surprisingly, very few modern translations follow the Greek and the DSS's (the NRSV is the only one that I am aware of out of about 20 different translations). *Why* the God of Israel is severely irritated with the Philistines is obvious—they took the Ark of Israel out of Israel. Most of Ekron recognizes that, as do the priests and religious types of Philistia. Enough of the leaders are leaning toward this understanding as well. If God is Who He says He is, then certainly the Philistines knew that there would be trouble when they took the Ark of God. So, *why God's hand has not been stayed from them* is not the real issue. What the Philistines want is (1) to be healed of the tumors; (2) for an atonement to be made on their behalf (they need to be ransomed or paid for; i.e., they feel they must give something to God in order to placate Him); and, (3) they desire that God's hand be taken from upon them. This should be accomplished by (1) returning the Ark to Israel and (2) offering the God of Israel some sort of a restitution offering. Now, realize that none of this could occur unless some of the people in Philistia believe in the God of Israel. This requires that some of the religious leaders, political leaders and regular people believe that the God of Israel is the God of the Universe and trust that He will receive their restitution offering and back off from His judgments against them. That is powerful; and that tells us *why* God allowed His Ark to be taken out

of Israel. God's Ark was somewhat like sending Bibles to a heathen nation—it evangelized some of the Philistines. Realize that, even though there will be future conflicts between Israel and Philistia, there will be alliances as well. David will eventually forge a friendship with Achish, King of Gath. 600 men of Gath will become David's allies, and will be a part of his army, even though he is estranged from Israel (we covered this somewhat when we examined three of the cities in Philistia).

Now, you may be confused as to, (1) how can Israel war with Philistia throughout much of the time of Saul and David; and, (2) how can there be alliances and friendships forged during this time period? We have recently waged war against a portion of Afghanistan. There were particular groups of Afghans that we were at war with. We dropped food on parts of Afghanistan, and dropped bombs on other parts. Men trained in Afghanistan used our airplanes to attack the World Trade Center in New York City. Yet, five months later, Afghan leaders were honored guests at the president's state of the union address. So, if we can today have such a mixed relationship with a country, then the relationship between Israel and Philistia should not be so difficult to understand.

It is also imperative that we recognize that this incident did not suddenly catch God unawares. God did not simply turn His back one day, and suddenly notice that His Ark had been removed from Israel. He didn't, in an unguarded moment, abruptly exclaim, "Oh dear, what the hell just happened now? I should have kept a closer eye on what was going on in Israel." The removal of the Ark of the Covenant resulted in the conversion of many Philistines. Just as the signs of God performed in Egypt resulted in the conversion of many Egyptians (called the *mixed multitude* and often incorrectly given a bad rap).

Let me give you a more modern example: some people view slavery as being the greatest evil of early America, but it did not just accidentally occur. The United States was populated by Americans who were mostly believers (although many were cultists), and certainly, the decision to import slaves from Africa was wrong and self-serving. However, God did not simply allow random Africans to be chosen. Early American slavery was not accidental and it was not random. God specifically chose each and every African who was brought to the United States for the purpose of their salvation and the salvation of their progeny. Many Black Americans (and primarily African Americans) have a tremendous faith in God, and very often, it was because God hand-picked their ancestors to be brought to the colonies in chains. Similarly, God allowed for the capture of the Ark, as it allowed for Him to evangelize the Philistines. We receive the gospel in a lot of ways. Some of us are simply told the gospel, and we believe. Others of us have to get under a little (or, a lot) of pressure and then we believe. Without violating our free will, God guides us to His Word and to salvation. We do the same with our children. As they become older, we give them guidance and yet we also give them some free reign so that they can make some mistakes and come to our way of thinking the hard way. Some of you cannot grasp what free will is and what absolute coercion of free will is. Let me see if I can explain by analogy: you've got a kid and he does something wrong. Let's say, he talks too much in the classroom. Guidance means that you discipline the child in some way: spanking, a cut back in allowance, a withdrawal of some privileges, or whatever. Coercion of his free will would mean that you remove his vocal cords or tape his mouth shut when he goes to class. In the first scenario, he still has the free will to chose to do wrong; in the second scenario, it does not matter that he chooses to do right or wrong—because he cannot do wrong (in that way, anyway). Now, the reality of free will of a child is (1) some children, after proper discipline, will choose to monitor their own behavior and to not talk excessively in the classroom; on the other hand, even after disciplinary measures have been taken, (2) others will continue to misbehave. That is free will and the proper restraint thereof. To stay with this analogy, God may put us on restriction, but He does not remove our vocal cords. We may do wrong and He may discipline us for doing wrong—but He allows our free will to remain operational. When it comes to salvation, no matter what God does to us by way of discipline, we can always still say *no* to His provisions.

One of the great mistakes of modern churches is the abandonment of exegesis and almost the total abandonment of the Old Testament in any aspect of their teaching. God has presented us with the Old and New Testament's; and, even though Church Age doctrine specifically is to come from the New Testament, this does not mean that the Old Testament has become passe. There is a tremendous amount of truth which is to be found in the Old Testament and an incredible number of times when application can be made. It is not because pastors have lost their way. They think that their job is to do a half-assed job of leading their congregation and an even more slipshod job of counseling their parishioners. This is simple: the Word of God is God's Truth placed here for our

growth. Peter tells us to **Grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ** (I Peter 3:18a). We are repeatedly told that the pastor, in Scripture, is the one whose spiritual gift it is to unearth this truth. Paul commands Timothy: **Study to show yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the Word of Truth** (II Tim. 2:15). We cannot grow and we cannot move forwards apart from God's Truth. **All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work** (II Tim. 3:16–17). And it is Satan's desire to keep us from the truth. So, what better way than to suck pastors into counseling one-on-one with their parishioners. Paul told the young pastor Timothy: **Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this, you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you** (I Tim. 4:16). A pastor cannot study if he is continually meeting with needy individual after needy individual. Is there a place in the church for counseling? Perhaps. Should counseling be allowed to usurp the pastor's time so that he cannot study and teach? Absolutely not. This is a simple thing to understand: Satan and his demon army will do everything that they can to take from the pastor's time. Whether the pastor is pulled away to counsel or to involve himself in administrative functions—whatever; these things are designed to keep him from studying and teaching the Word of God. One of the greatest modern teachers of the Word of God today avoided counseling, but allowed himself to be sucked into administrative functions which robbed him of his time and his theological edge. This is what Satan does.

I asked one friend, a Lutheran, about the teaching that she receives in her church. She told me that they sing a lot. I asked about the sermon, which should be the meat of the service. 15–20 minutes. Now, certainly, that is not every Lutheran church; and Martin Luther was a great theological scholar and intellect who helped man to rediscover what Scripture taught. But 20 minutes? Perhaps three times a week for those who are really dedicated? You cannot grow on one hour of truth each week. Schools, newspapers, the Internet,⁵ television and movies all tout human viewpoint and Satanic doctrine. You don't counteract continual exposure to lies with an hour of teaching a week. And under pressure, you rely on doctrine to pull you through. I've been under a great deal of pressure for various reasons and I've had dozen human viewpoint solutions, all sinful, occur to me. I don't sing a hymn nor do I pray through nor do I recite the Lord's Prayer over and over in order to guide myself. When people think the lyrics of a spiritual song or recite the Lord's Prayer, it is because this is the only substance that they have in their souls. Your soul must be filled with God's Truth; this way, you can face life and what it has to offer.

Back to the exegesis of this passage. So that you see the forest through the trees, the Philistine leaders will ask a question of the religious hierarchy and the religious hierarchy will answer this question in vv. 4b–9.

And so they say, "What the guilt offering that we should cause to return to Him?" And so they say, "A number of lords of Philistines, five tumors of gold and five of mice of gold for a plague one to all of them and to your lords.

I Samuel
6:4

Then they asked, "What [sort of] guilt offering should we cause to return to Him?" And they answered, "[According to] the number of lords of the Philistines, five tumors of gold and five mice of gold for the same plague [is] upon all of them and upon your lords.

Then the Philistine leaders inquired, "What sort of a guilt offering should be returned to Him?" And the religious types replied, "Return with the Ark five gold replicas of the tumors and five gold replicas of the mice as an offering because of the plague upon you and your population.

On the face of it, this appears to be a much more difficult verse than the previous one, however, it is fairly straightforward. First, here is what others have done with it:

Ancient texts:

⁵ And just who the hell decided that *Internet* must be capitalized?

Masoretic Text And so they say, “What the guilt offering that we should cause to return to Him?”
 And so they say, “A number of lords of Philistines, five tumors of gold and five of mice of gold for a plague one to all of them and to your lords.

Septuagint And they say, “What [is] the offering for the plague [which] we will return to it? And they said, ‘According to the number of the lords of the Philistines, five golden emerods, for the plague was on you, and on your rulers, and on the people;... [part of v. 5 was included here].

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

REB When they were asked, ‘What should we send to him?’ they answered, ‘Send five tumors modeled in gold and five gold rats, one for each of the Philistine lords for the same plague afflicted all of you and your lords.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) They asked, “What is the indemnity that we should pay to Him?” They answered, “Five golden hemorrhoids and five golden mice, corresponding to the number of lords of the Philistines; for the same plague struck all of you and your lords.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV And they said, "What is the guilt offering that we shall return to him?" They answered, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague was on all of you and on your lords.

NASB Then they said, “What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?” And they said, “Five golden tumors and five golden mice *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague was on all of you [lit., *them*] and on your lords.

Young's Updated LT And they say, ‘What *is* the guilt-offering which we send back to Him?’ and they say, ‘The number of the princes of the Philistines—five golden emerods, and five golden mice—for one plague *is* to you all, and to your princes,...

What is the gist of this verse? The religious icons and the mystics are asked what sort of guilt offering should be offered to the God of Israel and they are told, 5 cancerous growths and 5 mice—1 each for each prince.

1Samuel 6:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<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 maw]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
ʾâshâm (אֲשָׁמ) [pronounced aw-SHAWM]	<i>guilt [for an offense], offense, fault, blame; guilt-offering, trespass offering; compensation, restitution [offering]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #817 BDB #79

1Samuel 6:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<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>	1 st person plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: Then they asked, “What [sort of] guilt offering should we cause to return to Him?” Or, And they say, “What [sort of] restitution offering do we cause to be returned to Him?” The Hiphil form of the verb is used because these leaders are not going to go near to the Ark of God; they are going to assign that task to some underlings. *To Him* again refers to the God of Israel. If this referred to the Ark, then it would read *with Him* [It]. This is not a reference to *Israel* because it is not Israel which needs to be placated. They defeated Israel soundly in the last battle. They are not so much concerned about Israel. However, they recognize the power of the God of Israel, although they may not grasp how Israel lost the battle. In fact, this is simply not on their list of things to think about. Finally, it will be clear in the next verse that we are concerned with placating the God of Israel.

1Samuel 6:4b

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
ʾămar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<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

We would have really expected to find the kaph preposition here *according to*; it is found in Brenton's rendering of the Greek, but there is no equivalent Greek word found either. Also, at this point, we are in v. 5 in the LXX (not that it matters).

miç ^e phâr (מִסְפָּר) [pronounced mis ^e -FAWR]	<i>number, counted, numerical total; a recounting, a narration</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4557 BDB #708
ç ^e rânîym (סָרִיסִים) [pronounced s ^e -RAW-neem]	<i>warlords, lords, princes, czars, generals, officers; officials, VIP's</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5633 BDB #710
P ^e lish ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּים) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

1Samuel 6:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chămishshâh (חֲמִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>khuh-mish-SHAW</i>]	<i>five</i>	feminine numeral construct	Strong's #2568 BDB #331
ʿôphel (עֹפֶל) [pronounced <i>ĠOH-fell</i>]	<i>[a visible] growth, tumor, a swelling up, a cancerous growth</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #6076 BDB #779
zâhâb (זָהָב) [pronounced <i>zaw-HAW^eV</i>]	<i>gold; a measure of weight [related to gold]; [figuratively used for] brilliance, splendor</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2091 BDB #262

Translation: And they answered, “[According to] the number of lords of the Philistines, five tumors of gold... Or, So they say, “[According to the] number of Philistine lords, five tumors of gold...” In the Hebrew, we could have *according to* with the simple kaph preposition, which may have been left out. And, just as easily, the Greek translators could have inserted it to make more sense in their language (and ours).

1Samuel 6:4c

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
chămishshâh (חֲמִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>khuh-mish-SHAW</i>]	<i>five</i>	feminine numeral construct	Strong's #2568 BDB #331
ʿak ^e bâr (עֲכָבָר) [pronounced <i>ġahk^e-BAWR</i>]	<i>mouse</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5909 BDB #747
zâhâb (זָהָב) [pronounced <i>zaw-HAW^eV</i>]	<i>gold; a measure of weight [related to gold]; [figuratively used for] brilliance, splendor</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2091 BDB #262

Translation: ...and five mice of gold... That there has been some manuscript problems should be evident by the mention of *mice* several times in the Greek and the mention of *mice* in this line in the Hebrew (as well as thrice more in this chapter). In the Hebrew, this is the first time we find *mice* mentioned, which does not make sense. Somewhere, in the autographs, and perhaps as often as we find it in the Greek, it would appear that *mice* would have been reasonably mentioned already (it is found once in the Latin prior to this in 1Sam. 5:6). Given God's judgment of Egypt, which included extreme nuisance varminths like locusts and frogs, such a judgment on the Philistine area would make sense. Just so you know, the noun here is the masculine plural construct ʿak^ebâr (עֲכָבָר) [pronounced *ġahk^e-BAWR*], which means *mice*. For me, this gives new meaning to the proper noun Akbar. “...and five mice of gold...” Such an offering makes sense only if there has been an invasive influx of mice into the territory of the Philistines.

1Samuel 6:4d

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
maggêphâh (מַגְּפָהּ) [pronounced <i>mahg-gay-FAW</i>]	<i>a blow, a slaughter, plague, pestilence</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4046 BDB #620
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced <i>eh-KHAWD</i>]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	feminine singular numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25
lâmed (ל) [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>			
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Translation: ...for the same plague [is] upon all of them... This is a reference to all of the people of Philistia. It is a little uncertain at this point whether the mice were spreading out and invading the other cities, as they are not really next door to one another. The idea is, in any case, that the Ark is in a Philistine city seized by the Philistine army, so it should be expected that the plague is upon all of Philistia, whether it has begun to manifest itself completely or not. This would be my interpretation, as opposed to the idea of the mice already being in every Philistine city.

1Samuel 6:4e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wê (or vê) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [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>			
ç ^e rânîym (סָרְנִים) [pronounced <i>s^e-RAW-neem</i>]	<i>warlords, lords, princes, czars, generals, officers; officials, VIP's</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5633 BDB #710

Translation: ...and upon your lords. Then we have the wâw conjunction, the lâmed preposition, and *your [plural] lords*. This gives us: "...because of a certain plague to all them and to your lords." *All them* is a reference to all of the Philistine population and *your lords* refers to the five lords of the Philistines and it sounds as though they did not attend this conference but sense their chief ambassadors instead. That understanding might lead to a contradiction, as the lords of the Philistines are said to personally observe the movement of the cart carrying the Ark in 1Sam. 6:16. Let me suggest one possible explanation here: this wording is simply a way to convey respect.

The lords of the Philistines could be right there, in this meeting; however, they might be referred to in the 3rd person as a point of respect. Actually, there are at least 4 ways to resolve this possible contradiction (an apparent contradiction⁶ which no one else that I am aware of ever points out⁷); and these 4 possible explanations will be found in 1Sam. 6:16: **Are the Lords of the Philistines at this Meeting with the Religious Leaders?**

The choice of these ten items was not arbitrary. The religious hierarchy of Philistia had given this some thought and here is their rationale:

The Rationale for the Offerings of the Philistines

Five	There were five principal cities and five principal leaders of the Philistines.
golden replicas	The gold represents intrinsic value. What is being offered is not a work of art as much as it is a thing of intrinsic value. This shows respect and honor towards the God of Israel.
of mice	Philistia was obviously plagued by an influx of rodents. In the Hebrew, this is unclear; however, in the Greek and the Latin, it is very clear that mice and rats played a big part in the judgment of Philistia.
and of the tumors	The result of the influx of the rats and mice (probably) was their transmission of the bubonic plague, which resulted in tumors which could be easily seen. The replicas of the mice and the tumors recognized that the God of Israel was behind this judgment against Philistia.

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Now, these kinds of offerings were not completely unprecedented in the heathen world. Keil and Delitzsch point out: *...after a shipwreck, any who escaped presented a tablet to Isis, or Neptune, with the representation of a shipwreck upon it; gladiators offered their weapons, and emancipated slaves their fetters. In some of the nations of antiquity, even representations of the private parts, in which a cure had been obtained from the deity, were hung up in the temples in honour of the gods. They further add: [this]...also agrees with a custom which has prevailed in India...from time immemorial down to the present day, viz., that when a pilgrim take a journey to a pagoda to be cured of a disease, he offers to the idol a present either in gold, silver, or copper, according to his ability, of the shape of the diseased or injured member, and then sings a hymn. Such a present passed as a practical acknowledgment that the god had inflicted the suffering or evil. If offered after recovery or deliverance, it was a public expression of thanksgiving. In the case before us, however, in which it was offered before deliverance, the presentation of the images of the things with which they had been chastised was probably a kind of find or compensation for the fault that had been committed against the Deity, to mitigate His wrath and obtain a deliverance from the evils with which they had been smitten.*⁸

On the other hand, credit must be given where credit is due. The religious hierarchy of Philistia offered a reasonable guilt offering to God, given their limited spiritual knowledge. The gift showed deference and respect to the God of Israel. The Pharaoh of Egypt, when faced with the wrath of the God of the Jews, reacted in a completely different way. He rejected the God of the Jews. He withstood God's judgments against Egypt. And he died, and his firstborn died, and the firstborn of the population of Egypt all died; besides the many other afflictions which they faced because they rejected the power and sovereignty of God. The Philistines, in this generation, did not react that way. The Ekronites insisted that the Ark not simply be moved out of Ekron, but

⁶ An *apparent contradiction* means something which *appears* to be a contradiction, but, in reality, is not.

⁷ I would not be surprised if, sometime after this chapter is posted, at some point in time, someone lists vv. 4 and 16 as being contradictory, which would reveal intellectual dishonesty on their part (as an explanation for this apparent contradiction is also given).

⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 404–405. In these pages are further references to support this common heathen practice.

returned to Israel. The religious leaders suggested a reasonable and somber offering. The five Philistine leaders agreed to all of this, even though it meant that they would lose face before the Israelites, whom they had clearly defeated in battle. What I am telling you that, within this population of Philistines, there were many who became believers in the God of Israel. There were many who recognized His power and His sovereignty. Man was saved in the Old Testament just as he is saved in the New. He exercises faith toward the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, Jehovah Elohim, and he stands saved forever. In the Old Testament, you did not have to be a Jew nor did you have to follow the Law in order to be saved. Now, some who believed in the God of Israel no doubt moved to Israel, just as, when someone is exposed to outstanding Bible teaching in another city, they will often move to that city to enjoy the teaching.⁹ The Philistines, despite their animosity toward Israel, recognize that the God of Israel is the God of the Universe, and some will respond in a very positive way. Some of their children will become a part of David's crack infantry. You must appreciate the tremendous spiritual impact that this judgment upon Philistia had upon the Philistines. We are all rightly appalled by war or by natural disasters, such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and tornadoes. However, where they things occur, in the wake of these disasters often comes spiritual interest and spiritual healing. When man recognizes how his life and his lifestyle is preserved only by a bit of thread, then man looks beyond that which he sees with the eyes. I don't care how politically incorrect it may seem; when we invaded Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban rulership, we should have followed up with Christian missionaries. When the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics suddenly disintegrated into several independent states, there was a great influx of believers, and there was a great spiritual thirst in those nations. Disaster brings in its wake spiritual thirst and this is what happened in Philistia.

This quotation is continued in the next verse (the separation of verses as found in the Greek makes a great deal more sense).

And you have made images of your tumors and images of your mice the ones ravaging the land and you have given to the Elohim of Israel glory, perhaps He will lighten His hand from upon you [all] and from upon your gods [or, god] and from upon your land.

I Samuel
6:5

And [once] you have made images of your tumors and images of your mice, the ones [who are] ravaging the land; and [when] you have given glory to the Elohim of Israel, perhaps [then] He will lighten His hand from upon you and from upon your god [or, gods] and from upon you land.

Once you have made these images of your tumors and of the mice which ravage the land, and after you have given glory to the God of Israel, He will then perhaps lighten His hand from upon you and from upon your gods and your land.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And you have made images of your tumors and images of your mice the ones ravaging the land and you have given to the Elohim of Israel glory, perhaps He will lighten His hand from upon you [all] and from upon your gods [or, god] and from upon your land.

Septuagint

...and golden mice, the likeness of the mice that destroy your land; and you will give glory to the Lord, that He may lighten His hand from off you, and from off your gods and from off your land. [in the Greek, this is actually v. 5b]

Significant differences:

No significant differences; God is called *the Elohim of Israel* in the MT and *Lord* in the LXX.

⁹ That may seem far-fetched to you, but there are thousands of people who moved to Houston simply because Bob Thieme taught there. The Church of the Open Door in Los Angeles, during the time that J. Vernon McGee taught there was certainly not only attended by native Californians. When you recognize the Truth and the importance of the Truth, you will be willing to make a myriad of changes to be taught God's Word.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV So make five gold models of the sores and five gold models of the rats that are wiping out your crops. If you honor the God of Israel with this gift, maybe he will stop causing trouble for you and your gods and your crops.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) You shall make figures of your hemorrhoids and of the mice that are ravaging your land; thus you shall honor the God of Israel, and perhaps He will lighten the weight of His hand upon you and your gods and your land.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible Therefore you must make images of your tumors and of your mice that destroy the land, and give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps He will lighten His hand from off you and your gods and your land.

NASB “So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the eland, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods, and your land.

Young's Updated LT ...and you [all] have made images of your emerods, and images of your mice that are corrupting the land, and have given honour to the God of Israel; it may be He does lighten His hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land;...

What is the gist of this verse? The religious types and mystics suggest that images of the cancerous growths and of the mice be made in order to placate the God of Israel and His attack upon their gods and their land.

1Samuel 6:5a			
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
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
tzelem (צֶלֶם) [pronounced <i>TSEH-lem</i>]	<i>image, likeness, resemblance, semblance; mere, empty</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #6754 BDB #853
ʿôphel (עֹפֶל) [pronounced <i>G'OH-fell</i>]	<i>[a visible] growth, tumor, a swelling up, a cancerous growth</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6076 BDB #779
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
tzelem (צֶלֶם) [pronounced <i>TSEH-lem</i>]	<i>image, likeness, resemblance, semblance; mere, empty</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #6754 BDB #853
ʿakbâr (עַלְבָר) [pronounced <i>gahk'-BAWR</i>]	<i>mouse</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5909 BDB #747

1Samuel 6:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced shaw-KHAHTH]	<i>to cause one to go to ruin, to spoil, to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy</i>	Hiphil participle with the definite article	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: And [once] you have made images of your tumors and images of your mice, the ones [who are] ravaging the land;... Or, "And you [must] make images of your tumors and images of your mice, the ones ruining the land,..." In the Hebrew, this is the first mention of the mice and their actions (in the previous verse, the Philistine priests suggested that five golden mice be offered with the return of the Ark). Keil and Delitzsch claim that the additions to vv. 3 and 6 in the previous chapter in to v. 1 of this chapter are nothing more than explanatory glosses¹⁰ added by the translators or even perhaps by a copyist. *Mice* are mentioned in the previous verse, and in this verse, what they have done is mentioned. To me, this suggests that there may be things missing in our present-day Hebrew manuscripts from the previous chapter. The perfect tense tells us one of the two things which must come to pass before God will lighten His attack upon the Philistines.

The destructiveness of field mice are mentioned by Keil and Delitzsch: *It is a well-known fact that field-mice, with their enormous rate of increase and their great voracity, do extraordinary damage to the fields. In southern lands they sometimes destroy entire harvests in a very short space of time.*¹¹

1Samuel 6:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods, foreign gods, god; God; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43

¹⁰ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 405.

¹¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 405. They document this with Aristotle, *Animal*, vi. 37; and with additional documentation from Pliny, Strabo, and Aelian.

1Samuel 6:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yis ^ə râ ^ʿ êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis'-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
kâbôwd (כְּבוֹד) [pronounced <i>kaw^b-VODE</i>]	<i>glory, abundance, honor</i>	masculine singular adjective that can act like a substantive	Strong's #3519 BDB #458

Translation: ...and [when] you have given glory to the Elohim of Israel,... The Qal perfect of this verb and the one in the previous line emphasize that they *must* do this thing. They must make the images and they must give glory to God. The perfect tense is that of accomplished action, and the religious hierarchy does not simply say, *you should do this* but *you will do this*. That is the force of the perfect tense in this situation. "...and you will give unto the God of Israel glory..." Again, the perfect tense tells us what must occur first, and the result will be expressed by the imperfect tense.

1Samuel 6:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿûwlay (אוּלַי) [pronounced <i>oo-LAHY</i>]	<i>perhaps, peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
qâlal (קָלַל) [pronounced <i>kaw-LAL</i>]	<i>to make light, to lighten; to reckon lightly; to despise to bring to contempt</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7043 BDB #886
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
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
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to*

Translation: ...perhaps [then] He will lighten His hand from upon you... The verb found here is the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *qâlal* (קָלַל) [pronounced *kaw-LAL*] and it means *to treat something lightly, in a trifling manner*. In the Hiphil, it means *to make light, to lighten, to treat with contempt, to bring contempt, to bring dishonor [on someone]*. What God might perhaps lighten is *His hand* (which is preceded by the sign of the

direct object). This means that even the religious types and mystics of the Philistines recognized that the God of Israel had His hand upon them, causing these ills.

1Samuel 6:5d			
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
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
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to</i>			
ʾēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: ...and from upon your god [or, gods]... Then we have *and from upon your gods*. *Elohim* is a plural noun, but it is possible that they referred to the god of the Philistines, Dagon, by *Elohim*, just as Israel referred to their God as *Elohim*. I have mentioned previously that I believe that this was originally a plural noun used as a plural (as we find in Gen. 1); but that later usage changed this into a singular intensive sense. This is a theory of my part; one which I have not investigated.

1Samuel 6:5e			
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
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
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
Together, they mean <i>from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to</i>			
ʾerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: ...and from upon you land. Recall that Satan is a counterfeiter and he will try to counterfeit the True God of Israel as closely as possible. So, in this way, this sort of counterfeiting would be expected. Then we have, *and from upon your land*, giving us: “...and from upon your god [or, gods] and from upon your land.” What is quite interesting is this: those from the religious hierarchy are speaking to the Philistine leaders. When referring to the gods of the Philistines, they do not use the words *our gods* or *our god*, but *your gods*. The implication is that some of the religious types of Philistines had, in their hearts, deserted their god for the God of Israel.

For religious types, these men are doing their best. They recognize the power of the God of Israel, and what they suggest is not idolatry, but gifts of obeisance and apology. These gifts recognize what the God of Israel has done to the Philistines—it acknowledges what He has done to them. Their rationale for this action is given in the next verse, and indicates that some of these religious types have become believers.

And for why [would] you [all] harden your heart as which hardened Egyptians and Pharaoh their heart? Was not as which He dealt severely in them and so they send away them and so they depart?

1 Samuel
6:6

And why do you harden your heart as the Egyptians and Pharaoh harden their heart? Was it not as this [lit., *was is not as which*]: He dealt severely with them and then they sent them away and they departed?

And do not harden your hearts as did the Egyptians and the Pharaoh. Did He not deal severely with them, and finally relented and sent them away?

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And for why [would] you [all] harden your heart as which hardened Egyptians and Pharaoh their heart? Was not as which He dealt severely in them and so they send away them and so they depart?

The Septuagint And why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? Not when He mocked them, they let the people go, and they departed?

Significant differences: It is possible that the slight differences here are a result of translation rather than anything more fundamental than that.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Message Why be stubborn like the Egyptians and Pharaoh? God didn't quit pounding on them until they let the people go. Only then did he let up.

TEV Why should you be stubborn, as the king of Egypt and the Egyptians were? Don't forget how God made fools of them until they let the Israelites leave Egypt.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Why should you be as stubborn as the Egyptians and their Pharaoh were? After he toyed with the Egyptians, didn't they send the Israelites on their way?

JPS (Tanakh) Don't harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts. As you know, when He made a mockery of them, they had to let Israel [Hebrew, *them*] go, and they departed.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

“Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had severely dealt with them, did they not allow the people [lit., *them*] to go, and they departed?

Young's Updated LT

...and why do you [all] harden your heart as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their heart? Do they not—when He had rolled Himself upon them—send them away, and they go?

What is the gist of this verse? The religious types and mystics warn the Philistines not to harden their hearts as the pharaoh and the Egyptians had, warning that the Jews did eventually leave Egypt.

1Samuel 6:6a			
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
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâh (מַה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
Lâmed + mâh can be rendered <i>why, for what reason, to what purpose, for what purpose</i> , indicating an interrogatory sentence.			
kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced <i>kaw^b-VADE</i>]	<i>to make heavy, to make insensible; to honor, to do honor to</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3513 BDB #457
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
lêbab (לֵבָב) [pronounced <i>lay-BAHB^v</i>]	<i>mind, inner man, inner being, heart</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3824 BDB #523

Translation: *And why do you harden your heart...* God got a lot of mileage out of His dealings with the Pharaoh when the Jews were enslaved to Egypt. Here it is, about 400 years later, and the religious types of Palestine still recognize that as God's hand upon Egypt. The verb here is the 2nd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect of (כָּבַד) [pronounced *kaw^b-VADE*], which means *to honor, to glorify, to be great, to be vehement, to be heavy, weighty, burdensome*. In the Piel, it means (1) *to make heavy, to make insensible* as well as (2) *to honor, to do honor to*. They are warned not to be insensible toward the God of Israel.

There is a debate here, which does not include all of the back and forth which is found. The discussion may have preceded what the religious types and mystics are saying and it might be simultaneous with them. There is every indication that what is being said is either from the mouths of several religious leaders or represents a consensus of several religious leaders. In order to explain their position, a case history is given:

1Samuel 6:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kaʾăsher (כֹּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner</i> .			
kâbêd (כָּבֵד) [pronounced kaw ^b -VADE]	<i>to make heavy, to make insensible; to honor, to do honor to</i>	3 rd person plural, Piel perfect	Strong's #3513 BDB #457
Mitz ^e rayim (מִצְרַיִם) [pronounced mits ^e -RAH-yim]	<i>Egypt, Egyptians</i>	proper noun	Strong's #4714 BDB #595
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
par ^e ʾôh (פַּרְעֹה) [pronounced pah ^e -ĠOH]	transliterated <i>Pharaoh</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #6547 BDB #829
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
lêb (לֵב) [pronounced lay ^b v]	<i>heart, inner man, mind, will, thinking</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3820 BDB #524

Translation: ...[as the Egyptians and Pharaoh harden their heart?](#) Here, we have the kaph preposition (*as, like, according to*) followed by the relative pronoun, followed by the 3rd person plural, Piel perfect of kâbêd again, the difference being the tense. The imperfect tense is used of the Philistines, who are in a present state of hardening their hearts toward God; and the Egyptians, who *had* hardened their hearts toward God. The subject of the verb follows—*Egyptians and Pharaoh*—followed by the sign of the direct object and *their heart*, giving us: “[And why should you \[all\] harden your heart as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their heart?](#)” The obvious question is, *what's the benefit in that?* The position which they are presenting is clear: *this situation has occurred before in history; God made it clear to the Egyptians to let the Jews go, but they instead hardened their hearts. Do you expect to do the same thing and get away with it?*

The religious types further explain:

1Samuel 6:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (הֲ) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209

1Samuel 6:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לו' or לא') [pronounced low']	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
hă lô' together expect an affirmative answer.			
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר כִּי) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just as; because; according to what manner</i> .			
'âlal (עָלַל) [pronounced ġaw-LAHL]	<i>to satisfy thirst [akin to satisfying lust]; to satisfy one's mind [by doing what is in one's mind, including causing pain to someone or by making sport of them]; to act wantonly towards, to satisfy [sexual] thirst</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael perfect	Strong's #5953 BDB #759
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 with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #none BDB #88

Translation: Was it not as this [lit., was is not as which]: He dealt severely with them... Or, "As [to] which, did He not act severely towards them...?" The idea is that there is a futility in being hard-hearted against the God of Israel. It doesn't pay. Egypt was placed under a great deal of hardship and suffering, and eventually did what God through Moses told them to do anyway. Philistia was going through the same sort of attack by the God of Israel and there was no reason to think that this attack would just stop while their negative volition continued.

By the way, note the details which we get from this meeting. We are not getting each and every thing which is said, nor are we getting any of the debate which probably took place; however, we are getting enough of the reasoning of the religious types (which is the evangelistic portion of this passage) to realize that this information probably came from an eyewitness to this discussion.

1Samuel 6:6d

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
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<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 plural, Piel imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018

Translation: ...and then they sent them away... The Egyptians finally relented, after vicious plagues against them, and they sent the Jews out of the land of Egypt. The idea is, what the God of Israel wants will be the end of this matter. That is, the Philistines can do whatever they want, but God will continue to put on the pressure until His will is done, just as He did in Egypt.

1Samuel 6:6e			
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
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect; pausal form	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: ...and they departed? Or, "...so they departed." All that Moses had asked for was for Pharaoh to let His (God's) people go. Obviously, this is not a little thing. This was a major portion of the slave force of Egypt, responsible for some of the great structures of Egypt at that time. However, God showed great power through Moses, and the hard-heartedness of the Pharaoh and of his people were for naught. The Jews were still sent away and they still departed. The idea is obvious here: why not bypass all the upcoming judgment that would be a part of defying the God of Israel. It was clear that He was still powerful and He was still able to judge. Why tempt God any more than they had so far? History tells them that it is a waste of their time and severely dangerous to defy Him. What had happened to date revealed that it was not in their best interest to defy the God of Israel—therefore, the religious hierarchy suggests to return the Ark and to return it with gifts indicating repentance and obeisance. In case this is unclear to you, the upshot is that some of these religious types had believed in the God of Israel. Some of the leaders who heeded their advice also now believe in the God of Israel.

We do not know exactly how the Philistine religious types knew all of this information. More than likely, because of their vocation and interest, they were educated in the religious beliefs of those around them and, even prior to this meeting, many of them knew about Moses and Pharaoh and the exodus. Others likely learned of it from those who knew.

Particularly because of the charismatic movement, we have often viewed God as a God of signs and miracles, which, strictly speaking, He is. However, we are confused as to the frequency of those signs and miracles and we are confused about their quality. First let's cover....

Three Misconceptions About Divine Signs and Miracles

- I. There are three very common misconceptions about the signs and miracles of God; first is that the Old and New Testaments are filled with an incredible number of signs and miracles.
 1. I have explained over and over again that the Old and New Testaments are not filled with page after page of miracles. We have primarily two periods of time in the Old Testament when miracles were abundant: (1) during the time surrounding the exodus; and, (2) during the time of Elijah.
 - 1) In the first case, from the entrance of Moses onto the stage of Egyptian history, until his death 120 years later, there occurred perhaps two dozen signs, wonders and miracles. Given the mileage that God got out of these two dozen miracles (example: the Philistines still talked about them four hundred years later, and they were not even involved), these miracles were pretty impressive. However, if we examine the frequency of these miracles, from the first to the last, they might average out to one occurring every couple years. My point is that these signs and wonders were not like fireworks displays that we see. We watch explosion after explosion in the sky and believe that God's miracles have a similar frequency, and that is totally wrong. I have wandered into charismatic churches and they think that part of the service should include a half

Three Misconceptions About Divine Signs and Miracles

dozen miracles of healings. If God didn't perform miracles of such an incredible frequency at the hand of Moses, what makes you think that He is going to perform a hundred times the number of miracles in your little apostate, rinky dink church? You arrogant, turd-eating imbecile. Get a clue. And don't tell me that this is the New Testament and that Jesus has told us that we would do more and greater miracles. We all know that Jesus could have walked into any hospital and healed every person in the place. Pretty much every single sick person that He came in contact with, He healed. The reason that your pastor doesn't walk over to the nearest hospital and start healing is because he can't. And if you think there is real healing going on in your church, you are either very gullible or delusional.

- 2) The second period of time when we have a considerable number of miracles in the Old Testament is during the time of Elijah, which establishes the place of the prophet in Israel's spiritual history. God gives credence to the prophet, and sets in motion another set of miracles which last for a great deal of time.
2. The true fact of the matter is that:
 - 1) There are only two period of time when miracles were *abundant* in the Old Testament; and,
 - 2) Even during those two periods of time, the signs and miracles were not continuous and frequent.
 3. Similarly, we have two periods of time during the New Testament where we find a great frequency of miracles:
 - 1) When the Lord of Glory walked this earth. Now, at this time, miracles and signs and wonders were frequent.
 - 2) Secondly, at the establishment of the Church of God, we had a fair amount of miracles. In both cases, there were more miracles (or things of a seemingly miraculous nature) which occurred that we find in the Old Testament.
 - 3) However, very important to realize: once our Lord was ascended and the authority of the Apostles clearly established, the frequency of miracles greatly diminished. There are two recorded instances in Scripture where Paul was unable to heal two very good friends. After 60 A.D., it was unlikely that we had any miracles at the hands of the Apostles.
- II. The second misconception is related to the quality of signs and miracles. People seem to think that most of what we find of a seemingly miraculous nature in Scripture is a miracle which defies science.
 1. I have given a great deal of thought to the various *miracles* of Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament, and I have spent a great deal of time examining them, and, time after time, most of them can be explained as natural phenomena.
 2. Without going into great detail on each and every miracle in Scripture, recall the most recent: when the Ark came to three of the Philistine cities, we have a mention of rats, tumors and great chaos. I have explained how the rats could have invaded the cities of the Philistines from the trading ships, how they could have been carriers of the bubonic plague, and how the natural result would have been very quick and observable tumors. The disease would spread quickly and this would cause a great panic (*chaos*) in the city wherein was the Ark. God would have had to have timed the invasion of the rats and mice to coincide with the storing of the Ark; and He would have to move the vermin with the Ark. All this would have taken great preplanning from eternity past for everything to fall right into place as it did.
 3. When we examined the miracles of the exodus, I demonstrated that many, if not all of them, could have been an occurrence which was completely in tune with the laws of nature. However, God would have had these *miracles* planned out in eternity past in such detail that we cannot even conceive of the complexity of it all.

Three Misconceptions About Divine Signs and Miracles

- III. Finally, most people mistakenly believe that a miracle which goes against the laws of nature is more difficult than one which is in accordance with the laws of nature and therefore of a greater quality.
1. God can, at any time, snap His finger, and create something, or change the molecular structure of something. He can do anything which defies and Laws of Science.¹²
 2. When God does something miraculous, even though we may be unduly impressed, it is nothing to God. As easy as it is for us to blink our eyes, it is easier for God to do something miraculous. It requires no forethought, no plan; He simply does it (that does not mean that God performs a miracle when He does not have a plan).
 3. What is more difficult is to, at the foundation of the world, set up a series of events which will result in something which appears to be miraculous; and that this event occurs at exactly the moment that God chooses for it to happen. For instance, it is amazing that God could turn the river of Egypt into blood (or what appears to be blood) by natural means; but it is far more impressive that God in eternity past determined that it would happen at the exact instant that Moses placed his staff into the water.
 4. If I, as a teacher, wanted to walk into a classroom, clap my hands, and then have something immediately occur that would completely amaze the minds of my young audience, that would take a great deal of forethought and planning. God did this on a much greater level; He planned these things out in eternity past, and He set them into motion in eternity past. It is like me determining that not only would I do this amazing thing, but I would plan it out and set everything in motion 20 years in advance.
 5. My point is that, an instant miracle which defies the laws of nature is much easier for God to do than a seemingly miraculous event, which has natural causes, which God planned for and set the wheels in motion for thousands and thousands of years ago (and, perhaps, millions of years ago).

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Because there were so few miracles in the Old Testament, God made certain that they were of a quality such that He would get a lot of mileage from them. That is, what occurred in Egypt and then in the desert with His people would be so impressive that man would be discussing it for centuries after.

Scriptural References to the Exodus and Israel's Desert-Wilderness Wanderings

<p>Ex. 20:2–3 Deut. 5:6–7</p>	<p>God mentions His taking of the Jew out of Egypt in the Ten Commandments.</p>
<p>Deut. 1:19–3:29 4:32–49 6:12–22 7:6–19 8:14–20 9:7–10:25 13:5, 10 16:1–12 17:16 20:1 23:4 24:9–22 25:17–19 26:5–9 28:27, 60–61 16:2–29</p>	<p>Moses, in addressing his people for the final time, several times refers back to their exodus out of Egypt and their subsequent stay in the desert.</p>
<p>Deut. 34:11–12</p>	<p>Joshua added a postscript to the books of the Law, making a final note as to the marvelous signs and wonders which God performed at the hand of Moses.</p>

¹² Which is a misnomer, as science did not create these laws nor does science enforce them.

Scriptural References to the Exodus and Israel's Desert-Wilderness Wanderings

Joshua 2:9–11	Rahab the prostitute also had heard of the miracles that God performed to allow His people to walk out of Egypt. It was because of these miracles, occurring 40 years before (possibly even before she was born?) that she chose to help the spies of Israel.
Joshua 9	The Gibeonites knew of God's dealings with the enemies of the Jews in Egypt (Joshua 9:9), and they did not particularly want to die. They presented themselves as men from outside the country of Canaan in order to ally themselves with the Jews.
Joshua 24:1–7	When making a point, God often referred back to His dealing with the Jews in Egypt.
Judges 2:1–4	God reminded Israel of what He had done for them when they fell into adultery (actually, this was one of many times) during the time of the judges.
Judges 6:7–10	God reminded Israel about Egypt when they fell into slavery to the Midianites because of the disobedience of the Jews.
Judges 6:13	Gideon knew that Jehovah took Israel out of Egypt; however, he believed that God had since walked away from the Jew.
Judges 11:4–29	Jephthah had to remind the king of Ammon about Israel's trek out of Egypt because of a territorial dispute.
Judges 19:30	The Levite whose mistress was raped and murdered by Benjamites, used the memory of the Jews coming out of Egypt almost as a slogan.
I Sam. 2:27	Prophets sometimes referred back to what happened in Egypt to indicate that they represented the God of Israel.
I Sam. 4:8	The Philistines originally recognized that the God of Israel struck down the Egyptians with various plagues.
I Sam. 6:6 (our passage)	After the Ark had caused so much trouble in Philistia, the religious icons of Philistia argued that it was a bad idea for the Philistines to make the same mistakes that the Egyptians made under the Pharaoh of Egypt.
I Sam. 8:4–9 10:17–19 12:6–8	It is clear that, by the time of Samuel, at least one generation had allowed God's works in Egypt to slip from their minds. This would have been about 400 years later. God's deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt became an important theme whenever Samuel addressed the people of Israel.
II Sam. 7:23 I Chron. 17:21	David was fully aware of what God had done in Egypt.
Psalms 78, 105, 106, 114, 135	Several psalms mention the exodus and the power of God demonstrated in the exodus.
I Kings 6:1	Israel marked time based upon when they came out of Egypt

Scriptural References to the Exodus and Israel's Desert-Wilderness Wanderings

<p>I Kings 6:1 8:9, 16, 21, 51, 53 9:9 12:28 II Chron. 20:10 Psalm 80:8 81:10 Hos 12:9 13:4 Amos 2:10 3:1 9:7 Micah 6:4 7:15 Haggai 2:5</p>	<p>As time went on, the miracles of Egypt and the desert wilderness were mentioned less often; and what came to the forefront was simply that God brought Israel out of Egypt.</p>
<p>II Kings 17:36</p>	<p>God still reminded Israel of His power as demonstrated in Egypt.</p>
<p>Palm 135:8–18 II Chron. 7:22 Neh. 9:18 Ezek. 20:5–17, 36</p>	<p>When speaking of the idolatry of the Israelites, their deliverance from Egypt was often brought up. This was because this deliverance was a showdown between the God of Israel and the Gods of the Egyptians.</p>
<p>Neh. 9:9–21</p>	<p>Even after the first dispersion, Israel still recalled what God had done in Egypt.</p>
<p>Isa. 11:16 43:3 Jer. 2:6 7:22–26 11:4–8 16:14 31:32 34:13 Ezek. 20:5–17 Hosea 2:15 11:1 12:9 13:4 Amos 2:10 3:1 9:7 Micah 6:4 7:15 Haggai 2:5</p>	<p>The prophets look back to Israel's deliverance out of Egypt.</p>
<p>Jer. 23:7–8</p>	<p>There will come a time when God is seen as the One Who brought Israel back from being scattered throughout the nations rather than the One Who brought Israel out of Egypt.</p>
<p>Jer. 32:20–21</p>	<p>Even though, after 500 years or so, the miracles and wonders of the exodus were rarely mentioned, they were not completely forgotten.</p>
<p>Acts 7:36–42 13:17</p>	<p>Even the early church evangelists looked back upon God's deliverance out of Egypt.</p>
<p>Heb. 3:16–18 8:9 11:24–27</p>	<p>The writer of Hebrews looked back to Israel's deliverance from Egypt.</p>
<p>Jude 5</p>	<p>Jude warns that, even though God took all of Israel out of Egypt, He also destroyed those who were unbelieving.</p>

To conclude: what God did in Egypt was spectacular. Also, it might be important to think, *what else could God do in Israel which would have stood the test of time so well?* I hope that you realize that there was little that God could do which would stand the test of time as His signs and wonders performed against Egypt. There was little reason for Him to repeat this performance, so to speak. It is not that God was unable to do other great acts of power, but that another great set of actions as He did in Egypt would have been superfluous and would have watered down what He had previously done. Near the end of the book of Hebrews, the writer mentions Israel's deliverance from Egypt for a third time; however, this third time, he also emphasized what was important: the faith of Moses which led him out of Egypt. Note the emphasis: **By faith, Moses left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, seeing Him Who is unseen** (Heb. 9:27). And the true power of God is found in the gospel rather than in signs and miracles. **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the**

Scriptural References to the Exodus and Israel's Desert-Wilderness Wanderings

power of God for the purpose of salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jews first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16). In short, our focus is distorted and our doctrine is compromised when we are always looking for some new, titillating manifestation of God's power. Therefore, rather than make Israel a place of nonstop miracles, God demonstrated His power one time for two generations, and let these signs and miracles stand as a testimony to His power for many centuries.

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

The Contemporary English Translation of I Sam. 6:4–6

CEV	NASB	Semi-literal Hebrew
<p>"What should we send?" the Philistines asked.</p> <p>The priests and fortunetellers answered:</p> <p>There are five Philistine rulers, and they all have the same disease that you have. So make five gold models of the sores and five gold models of the rats that are wiping out your crops. If you honor the God of Israel with this gift, maybe he will stop causing trouble for you and your gods and your crops. Don't be like the Egyptians and their king. They were stubborn, but when Israel's God was finished with them, they had to let Israel go.</p>	<p>Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice <i>according to</i> the number of the lords of the Philistines, for one plague was on all of you [lit., <i>them</i>] and on your lords. "So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the eland, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods, and your land. "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had severely dealt with them, did they not allow the people [lit., <i>them</i>] to go, and they departed?"</p>	<p>Then they asked, "What [sort of] guilt offering should we cause to return to Him?" And they answered, "[According to] the number of lords of the Philistines, five tumors of gold and five mice of gold for a certain plague upon all of them and upon your lords. And [once] you have made images of your tumors and images of your mice, the ones [who are] ravaging the land; and [when] you have given glory to the Elohim of Israel, perhaps [then] He will lighten His hand from upon you and from upon your god [or, <i>gods</i>] and from upon you land. And why do you harden your heart as the Egyptians and Pharaoh harden their hearts? Was it not as this [lit., <i>was is not as which</i>]: He dealt severely with them and then they sent them away and they departed?"</p>

As usual, the CEV is a much easier read, much more imaginative in its rendering, and less complex than what we have in the Hebrew. However, I do not understand why they did not use quotation marks in this particular passage.

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And then take and make a cart, new, one, and a pair of cows nursing which has not ascended upon them a yoke; and you [all] have bound the cows in the cart and you have caused to return their sons from behind them the house-ward.

1 Samuel
6:7

Then take and construct one new cart and two nursing cows upon whom a yoke has not ascended; and you will bind the cows to the cart and you will cause their calves to return to the house.

Now, build a new cart and yoke to it two nursing cows who have not been yoked before. After binding the cows to the cart, cause their calves to return to the ranch.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And then take and make a cart, new, one, and a pair of cows nursing which has not ascended upon them a yoke; and you [all] have bound the cows in the cart and you have caused to return their sons from behind them the house-ward.

Septuagint “And now take wood and make a new wagon and take two cows that have calved for the first time, without their calves; and you will yoke the cows to the wagon, and lead away the calves from behind them home.”

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Message "So here's what you do: Take a brand-new oxcart and two cows that have never been in harness. Hitch the cows to the oxcart and send their calves back to the barn.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) Therefore, get a new cart ready and two milch cows that have not born a yoke; harness the cows to the cart, but take back indoors the calves that follow them.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB “Now therefore take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart and take their calves home, away from them.

Young's Updated LT ‘And now, take and make one new cart, and two suckling kine, on which a yoke has not gone up, and you [all] have bound the kine to the cart, and caused their young ones to turn back from after them to the houses,...

What is the gist of this verse? They are told to construct a new cart and to find two cows who are giving milk and who have never been yoked before, and yoke them to the new cart. They nursing young are to be sent back.

1Samuel 6:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (i) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

1Samuel 6:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced ʿah-tawh]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w ^e + the adverb ʿattâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.			
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ʿaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
ʿăgâlâh (עֲגָלָה) [pronounced ʿuh-gaw-LAW]	<i>[an ox-] cart, wagon; a chariot, a war vehicle</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5699 BDB #722
châdâsh (חַדָּשׁ) [pronounced khaw-DAWSH]	<i>new, new thing; fresh</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #2319 BDB #294
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	feminine singular numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25

Translation: [Then take and construct one new cart...](#) The general idea of this verse is fairly clear. They will get two cows who have recently born calves and who have never been yoked before—they will yoke these cows together in a new cart, and send their calves back toward the house. What will come in the next verse is how this will be the transportation for the Ark.

Keil and Delitzsch: *To place it [the Ark] upon an old cart, which had already been used for all kinds of earthly purposes, would have been an offence against the holy thing, and it would have been just the same to yoke to the cart animals that had already been used for drawing, and had had their strength impaired by the yoke see Deut. 21:3).*¹³

My guess here is, the newly constructed cart shows deference and respect to the God of Israel. This cart will carry upon it the most sacred thing which the Jews have; therefore, not just any cart will do.

¹³ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 406.

1Samuel 6:7b

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
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
pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced <i>paw-RAW</i>]	<i>heifer, cow</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #6510 BDB #831
ʿûwl (עוּל) [pronounced <i>gool</i>]	<i>to nurse, to suck, to suckle; to feed, to nourish</i>	feminine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #5763 BDB #732
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lôʾ (לוֹ אִם אוֹ לֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine??? plural suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752
ʿôl (עוֹל) [pronounced <i>gohl</i>]	<i>yoke</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5923 BDB #760

Translation: ...and two nursing cows upon whom a yoke has not ascended;... I am not certain as to their reasoning about the nursing cows. These are not simply cows who are giving milk, but cows who are nursing calves at this point in time. Now, certainly, such cows would not have led a cart before, which would be part of the reasoning. My guess is, this represents a complete separation between Philistia and the Ark of God. The cows will be suddenly and completely separated from their calves; and the Ark will be completely and suddenly separated from Philistia.

Don't misunderstand me—there is nothing in Scripture which outlines for us what must be done. These religious types were earning their keep here, improvising a procedure with the idea that this procedure will properly show respect to the God of Israel.

1Samuel 6:7c

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

1Samuel 6:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿâṣar (אַסַּר) [pronounced aw-AWHR]	<i>to bind, to tie [up, together, to]; to imprison, to make captive; to restrain</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #631 BDB #63
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
pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced paw-RAW]	<i>heifer, cow</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #6510 BDB #831
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	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿägâlâh (עֲגָלָה) [pronounced gûh-gaw- LAW]	<i>[an ox-] cart, wagon; a chariot, a war vehicle</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5699 BDB #722

Translation: ...and you will bind the cows to the cart... Or, "...and you [all] have yoked the cows to the cart..." The perfect tense emphasizes that this will be done. The cows separated from their calves here are yoked to the newly built cart, built for one reason only—to transport the Ark of God.

1Samuel 6:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<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>	2 nd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
mê'achar (מֵאַחַר) [pronounced may-ah- KHAHR]	<i>from, from after, from (being) after, from behind, from following after</i>	Compound preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577 and Strong's #310 BDB #29

1 Samuel 6:7d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular noun with the definite article and the directional hê	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: ...and you will cause their calves to return to the house. Or, more literally, "...and you will cause to return their sons from behind them to the house." What the religious types of Philistia have come up with is to take two nursing cows who have never been yoked, yoke them to a cart which has just been built and has not been used for any other purpose, and to also take the calves from the cows. Then they would place the Ark into the cart and send it toward Israel. There are actually two purposes in these actions, which I don't know if they have been explained before or not. First of all, the Philistines want to show a maximum amount of respect toward the God of Israel. They are not going to simply toss the Ark into the back of some old hay cart with a couple of old and dispensable cows and send it out. They may remove the Ark from Philistia, but their method of doing so would not placate a God of power. Whether they realized or not that the ceremonial Law of Moses occasionally involved an animal which had not been yoked (Num. 19:2 Deut. 21:3) is unknown to us.

Also, they are choosing cows who have not been yoked for another reason. Animals which have been yoked have had some training as to which way they should go and how they should behave with a yoke.¹⁴ That is, their behavior would be more predictable. It would be more reasonable to take an animal which had been yoked for several years, yoke him to a cart, place him on a road, and expect that it might simply just walk along the road. But we are taking an animal which is not accustomed to being yoked, to pulling a cart, and an animal whose innate desire is to return to her calves. In other words, if one was a betting man, he would bet that these cows would turn around and go back toward their calves (or toward where they believe their calves to be); or, that they would simply stand there and moo loudly. The idea behind the unpredictable behavior of the animals is to determine whether the God of Israel will guide His Ark back to Israel or whether the misfortune suffered by the three cities of Philistia is simply a coincidence. If the God of Israel was unable to guide two cows along the road for a few miles, then obviously this God had not caused the chaos in Philistia. If He were, on the other hand, able to guide His Ark to where it rightfully belongs, despite the natural instinct of the yoked cows, then this must be the God Who had inflicted them with evil. At this point, the religious types are showing themselves to be quite canny.

And you [all] have taken an Ark of Yehowah and you [all] have placed him in the cart and [the] articles of gold which you [all] have returned to Him—a trespass-offering you will place in [or, *against*] the box from his side and you have sent him away and he has gone.

1 Samuel
6:8

And you will take the Ark of Y^ehowah and you will place it in the cart along with [lit., *and*] the [manufactured] articles of gold which you will return to Him—a restitution offering [that] you will place in a box at its side and you will send it away and it will go.

Then you will take the Ark of Jehovah and place it into the cart, along with the golden statuettes as restitution (which will be placed into a smaller box next to the Ark), and you will send the cart on its way toward Israel.

Again, we have a typically long, but not particularly difficult verse. First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

¹⁴ The passages in the Law which require certain sacrifices to be of animals which have not been yoked have a completely different meaning. There, an animal is set apart to God—an animal which has not had a profane (or common) use. An animal which had been used to pull a cart or a farming implement would have been profaned, and therefore not a suitable sacrifice to God. The representation is of Jesus Christ, Who had no old sin nature, Who had committed no sin; He had not been profaned before God the Father, and therefore was suitable for a sacrifice to Him.

Masoretic Text And you [all] have taken an Ark of Y^ehowah and you [all] have placed him in the cart and [the] articles of gold which you [all] have returned to Him—a trespass-offering you will place in [or, *against*] the box from his side and you have sent him away and he has gone.

Septuagint And you will take the Ark and put it on the wagon; and you will restore to it the golden articles for the trespass-offering in a coffer by the side of it; and you will let it go and send it away, and you will depart.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) Take the Ark of the LORD and place it on the cart; and put next to it in a chest the gold objects you are paying Him indemnity. Send it off, and let it go its own way.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB “And take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a box by its side. Then send it away that it may go.

Young's Updated LT ...and you [all] have taken the ark of Jehovah, and put it on the cart, and the vessels of gold which you [all] have returned to Him—a guilt-offering—you [all] put in a coffer on its side, and have sent it away,...

What is the gist of this verse? The Ark of God is to be placed on the cart, along with the vessels of gold (i.e., the mice and the tumors) in a box next to the Ark; and then it is to be sent down the road.

1Samuel 6:8a

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
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: *And you will take the Ark of Y^ehowah...* The perfect tense of the verb, again, refers to something which has not yet taken place, but which comes with such a high recommendation from the religious types as to appear as though it is a complete action.

Calling this *the Ark of Y^ehowah* by a Philistine is very telling. Throughout I Sam. 5, the *Ark* was called *the Ark of God* (vv. 1, 2 and 10) or *the Ark of the God of Israel* (vv. 7, 8, 10 and 11). Referring to the *Ark* as *the Ark of the God of Israel* simply identifies to whom the *Ark* originally belonged, and, although it personalizes the God of Israel, it is a reference as one would refer to a national god. *Jehovah*, on the other hand, is the more personal name for God—*God* is more like His office, His title, His function; *Jehovah* is His name, and it distinguishes the God of Israel from all other gods (He is *never* presented in Scripture as being a God Whom we all know by different names). Speaking of the *Ark* as the *Ark of Jehovah* is a special recognition of the God of Israel, the True God of the Universe (such recognition is also given in I Sam. 5:3–4 when the idol representing Dagon fell over before the *Ark of Jehovah*).

1 Samuel 6:8b

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
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
êth (את) [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
el (אל) [pronounced <i>e]</i>	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
âgâlâh (עגלה) [pronounced <i>guh-gaw-LAW</i>]	<i>[an ox-] cart, wagon; a chariot, a war vehicle</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5699 BDB #722

Translation: *...and you will place it in the cart...* What is being placed in the cart, obviously, is the *Ark of Jehovah*, from the previous verse portion.

1 Samuel 6:8c

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
êth (את) [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

1Samuel 6:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
k ^e lîy (כֶּלִי) [pronounced k ^e lee]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
zâhâb (זָהָב) [pronounced zaw-HAW ^b V]	<i>gold; a measure of weight [related to gold]; [figuratively used for] brilliance, splendor</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2091 BDB #262

Translation: ...along with [lit. and] the [manufactured] articles of gold... The noun here generally refers to something which has been manufactured—not in a factory, but by hand. It is a general term for anything which has been assembled, carved, modified, built, etc. In this case, it is the 5 golden tumors and the 5 golden mice.

1Samuel 6:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<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>	2 nd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾâshâm (אֲשָׁם) [pronounced aw-SHAWM]	<i>guilt [for an offense], offense, fault, blame; guilt-offering, trespass offering; compensation, restitution [offering]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #817 BDB #79

Translation: ...which you will return to Him—a restitution offering... Interestingly enough, we find the masculine singular noun ʾâshâm (אֲשָׁם) [pronounced aw-SHAWM] again, which means *guilt-offering, trespass offering, restitution offering*. The Philistines did understand that there was culpability on their part and that they needed to offer to God an offering for what they have done wrong. They recognize that they have insulted the God of Israel in their behavior. They understand that the capture of the Ark was an offense which must be atoned for in some way. The gold statuettes are a restitution offering for their wrongdoing.

Gnana Robinson (not my favorite exegete), explains this word as *compensation or reparation for the infringement of the rights of another or for the misappropriation of one's property. Here the Philistines have misappropriated Yahweh's ark; that is their sin.*¹⁵

1 Samuel 6:8e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
sîym (סׁיַם) [pronounced <i>seem</i>]; also spelled sūwm (סׁוּוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i>]	<i>to put, to place, to set, to make</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
b ^e (ב) [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
ʿargâz (אֲרָגָז) [pronounced <i>ahr-GAWZ</i>]	<i>box, chest, coffer</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #712 BDB #919
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
tsad (צַד) [pronounced <i>tzahd</i>]	<i>side</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6654 BDB #841

The phrase *from a side* means *at the side of, to the side of, on the side of, beside*.

Translation:...[\[that\] you will place in a box at its side...](#) We have in this portion of v. 8 the masculine singular noun ʿargâz (אֲרָגָז) [pronounced *ahr-GAWZ*], which means *box, chest*. At first glance, when looking at this verse alone, this appears to be a synonym for *ark* and is only found in this chapter of I Samuel. However, in v. 11, it is clear that this is something other than the Ark. Because this word is found only this chapter, speculation has arisen as to whether it is a Semitic word¹⁶ or not and if perhaps it means *bag* or *pouch*.

They are not going to have these golden figurines stand around the Ark, so they place them into a container of some sort which is at the side of the Ark. They were smart enough not to put their restitution offerings loose next to the Ark, nor do they place these things inside the Ark or on the mercy seat of the Ark. They realize that the God of Israel is very powerful and they do not want to mess with or disrespect the Ark of God. These guilt offerings are placed in a box next to the Ark. Rotherham points out here that, although this reads *the box* (he uses the word *coffer*), that the definite article is probably the article *of species*, and hence should be rendered *a box*.¹⁷

1 Samuel 6:8f

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

¹⁵ Gnana Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations*; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, ©1993; p. 38.

¹⁶ Apparently there are strong arguments on both sides of this. For further references, see footnote for Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 102.

¹⁷ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 294.

1Samuel 6:8f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâlach (חָלַךְ) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<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 plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	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
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
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

Translation: ...and you will send it away and it will go. Or, "...and you have sent it away and it departs." Their overall advice is, "Get the Ark out of here, return it to the Israelites, and don't forget to say you're sorry." The Ark is being sent out of Philistia much like the Jews were sent out of Egypt. There is no need to suffer any more than they already had. The Philistines recognized that the horrible things done to Egypt could decimate their power.

And you [all] have seen if a way his territory [or, border] he will go up Beth-shemesh, [then] He, [even] He has done to us the evil the great the this, and if not, and we have known that not His hand has touched us—chance, he [even] he was to us."

1 Samuel
6:9

And you will see if it goes up toward its territory Beth-shemesh, [and we may conclude that] He [even] He has done [all] this great harm to us; and, if [this is] not [the case], then we will know that His hand did not touch us, [but] it was a chance [happening] to us."

Then you will see whether it goes up towards its own territory Beth-shemesh, which would allow us to conclude that He [the God of Israel] has done this great evil to us. However, if this is not the case, then we will know for a certainly that it was not His hand which touched us, but a set of chance circumstances which occurred."

Although the religious types appear to be very adamant about what is to be done, they leave themselves an out in this verse. These men are not schizophrenics, as one might suppose by reading vv. 3–9 together. What we have are differing opinions. When dealing with spiritual matters, that is to be expected. To give you a for instance, I made my Hebrew history teacher smile by saying, *get any two rabbis to agree at one time on any one thing, and Messiah will come.*¹⁸ What we have here are dissenting opinions. You have some of these religious types who recognize the power of God, and support this with historical documentation familiar to all. What we have in this verse represents the view of the dissenting minority of religious leaders. It is presented as one extended quotation; however, there are several who are voicing their opinions, combined with recommendations for the action which the Philistines follow.

There are some in Philistia who no doubt view the connection between the Ark and the disasters which are being endured by the Philistines as being tragically coincidental. Sending the Ark back to Israel will make the Philistines seem weak, even though they defeated the Israelites. Therefore, it was determined that the return of the Ark to Israel was not to be a fail-safe operation. As I have mentioned, the behavior of the cows is going to be unpredictable at best. It is not expected that these nursing cows who are not used to being yoked will easily and

¹⁸ Not original with me, by the way.

simply transport the Ark into Israel’s territory. The sign that it was the God of Israel dealing with them is that this cart with the Ark led by cows who are not used to being yoked and who naturally would want to return to their calves, will make its way to the territory of the Israelites on its own guided by the God of Israel. So if the cows pull the cart into Israeli territory, then they can reasonably conclude it was the God of Israel Who brought this great harm against the Philistines. If the Ark does not return to Israel, then all that occurred will have been by chance.

Now, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And you [all] have seen if a way his territory [or, *border*] he will go up Beth-shemesh, [then] He, [even] He has done to us the evil the great the this, and if not, and we have known that not His hand has touched us—chance, he [even] he was to us.”

Septuagint “And you [all] will see, if it goes the way of its coasts along by Bæthsamys, he has brought upon us this great affliction; and if not, then we will know that His hand has not touched us, but this [is a] chance [which] has happened to us.”

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) Then watch: If it goes up the road to Beth-shemesh, to His own territory, it was He who has inflicted this great harm on us. But if not, we shall know that it was not His hand that struck us; it just happened to us by chance.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB “And watch, if it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance.”

Young’s Updated LT ‘...and you [all] have seen, if the way of its own border it goes up to Beth-shemesh—He has done to us this great evil; and if not, then we have known that His hand has not come against us; an accident it has been to us.’

What is the gist of this verse? The idea is, they would watch the cart and notice whether it went to Beth-shemesh or not. If it does not return to Israel, then they can conclude that the disasters in Philistia were a result of plain bad luck.

1Samuel 6:9a			
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
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>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

1Samuel 6:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced <i>DEH-rek^e</i>]	<i>way, distance, road, journey, manner, course</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
g ^e bûl (גְּבוּל) [pronounced <i>g^{eb}-VOOL</i>]	<i>border, boundary, territory</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1366 BDB #147
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>ġaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
Bêyth shemesh (בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>bayth-SHEM-esh</i>]	<i>House of the Sun</i> and is transliterated <i>Beth-shemesh</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1053 BDB #112

Translation: [And you will see if it goes up toward its territory Beth-shemesh,...](#) The Philistines were to keep an eye on the cart with the Ark in it. They were to follow it along, to determine whether or not the God of Jehovah is behind all of their problems. This simply means that there was dissent in this discussion. We would expect this to be the case. Some would believe that the God of Israel surely was behind all of what happened in Philistia since the Ark had been captured. Others—particularly those in a city where the Ark had not yet been—might be more skeptical, thinking that they were jumping to conclusions.

1Samuel 6:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hûw ^ʾ (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>he, it</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>ġaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
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

1Samuel 6:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Three early printed editions read all of this great evil . Because of Rotherham's note ¹⁹ , possibly, this simply reads <i>all this</i> ? I cannot determine which is the alternate reading for this verse.			
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-GAW]	<i>evil, misery, distress, disaster, injury, iniquity, aberration, that which is morally reprehensible</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7451 BDB #949
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

Translation:...[and we may conclude that] He [even] He has done [all] this great harm to us;... Or, There are a variety of *if* phrases; this particular one, depending upon what follows, could stop right at this point—we will see *if* the Ark goes up toward its own territory. So, there is obviously a contingent there asserting that the God of Israel could not have caused all of these problems, but that these are unfortunate, natural and coincidental occurrences. It reminds me of the reasoning of the evolutionist. Creationists and evolutionists both believe that man was created out of the ground (i.e., chemicals of the earth)—the evolutionist simply believes that this was a huge number of natural, unguided progressive sets of coincidental occurrences. To the evolutionist, *time and nature* are god; and *time and nature* can create anything alive that we observe.

1Samuel 6:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
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
'îm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Together, 'îm lô' (אִם לֹא) [pronounced eem low] act as an emphatic affirmative and they mean <i>if not, surely, unless</i> .			
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

¹⁹ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 294.

1Samuel 6:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâda' (יָדָע) [pronounced yaw-DAHG']	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	1 st person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
nâgaph (נָגַף) [pronounced naw-GAHF]	<i>to strike, to strike down, to hit</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5062 BDB #619
b ^e (בְּ) [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 with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #none BDB #88

Translation: ...and, if [this is] not [the case], then we will know that His hand did not touch us,... It is actually this next sentence which indicates that the previous phrase should have been and *if...then...* statement. We have the wâw conjunction, the hypothetical *if* and the negative. So, what we are getting is: *now, if on the other hand, this was not...* So, the thinking of the religious types is that this is *probably* the God of Israel who had in fact attacked them. However, some of them are not completely convinced, and this plan allows for the uncertainty. “...and if not, then [lit., and] we will have known that His hand did not touch us...” I.e., if the cart does not find its way into Israel, then it will be clear that the God of Israel had nothing to do with the attacks upon the Philistines cities.

1Samuel 6:9d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mîq ^e reh (מִקְרֵה) [pronounced mik ^e -REH]	<i>an accident, a chance event, fortune, an unforeseen incident, a random occurrence, a fortunate or unfortunate incident</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4745 BDB #899
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
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 masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

1Samuel 6:9d

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 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation:...[but] it was a chance [happening] to us.” This is the alternate explanation—that what happened to them happened by chance. Literally, this reads: “...chance, it was to us.”

Again, there was apparently a dissenting opinion among the religious types, which is what we would expect. Most sided with the Ekronites that the God of Israel has plagued Philistia because of the Ark. It is clear that misfortune has followed the Ark into three cities. Those with this opinion also made reference to the Pharaoh of Egypt to determined that he would defy the God of Israel; and it was well-known at that time, some 400 years later, what had happened to him and to Egypt. However, there was a minority opinion who thought that the misfortune and the location of the Ark was simply happenstance. They said, “Fine—return the Ark of you must, but let’s set some constraints on this. If the Ark is to be taken back to Israel, let’s do this in such a way that if there is a God (or, if the God of Israel is as powerful as we are assuming), then He will have to guide the cart back to Israel Himself.”

Again, the key is what happens to the Ark. The God of Israel would guide the Ark to its home; and if He did not, then they could not blame God for what had happened to them. Given where the Ark is, where the Ark has been, and from where the Ark was taken, it would be a good idea to examine the **Doctrine of Beth-shemesh** right here.

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And just in case you don’t look it up...

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Beth-Shemesh

- Beth-Shemesh means *The House of the Sun*.
- There are two other cities which are thought to be equivalent to Beth-shemesh:
 - Ir-shemesh, which means *city of the sun*. This is mentioned in Joshua 19:41 near Zorah, which is very near Beth-shemesh. It is also possible that Ir-shemesh was the twin city of Beth-shemesh, and that, originally, there were Danites and Judahites which occupied that city or cities.
 - Har-heres (or *Mount Heres*) means *mount of the sun*. We find this city in Judges 1:35 mentioned in connection with Dan. It was one of the places where the Amorites continued to live. Sun worshiping was common in the Palestine area, even after the Jews took control of the land. Therefore, having more than one city with a name dedicated to the sun is reasonable to expect. It is unlikely that *Mount Heres* is equivalent to *Beth-shemesh*, because Beth-shemesh was in a valley. This city is likely in close proximity with Beth-shemesh and it is more likely equivalent to Ir-shemesh, mentioned above.
- Beth-shemesh is located in the lowlands of Judah (because we have the words *went down* in association with Beth-shemesh in Joshua 15:10), in the northwestern portion of that territory, 15 miles west of Jerusalem. It was a city on the border of Dan and Judah, which later became a bordering city for Judah and Philistia (1Sam. 6 2Chron. 28:20–23). When the Israeli kingdom was divided, Beth-shemesh would be a bordering city for Israel and Judah (2Kings 14:11–14 2Chron. 25:20–23). This would be along a common route from the hill country to the coastal plain.
- Beth-shemesh was one of the cities given over to the Levites; specifically to the Kohathites (Joshua 21:9, 16 1Chron. 6:54, 59).
- There was apparently a road of sorts which went through Philistia and Judah, along which road was the city of Beth-shemesh and probably Ekron. Ekron was also originally on the border between Judah and Dan. It was likely that the religious types of Philistia realized that Beth-shemesh was a city of Kohathites

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Beth-Shemesh

(a branch of the Levites), who were closely tied to the priesthood of Israel. Therefore, when the Philistines took the Ark of God, and suffered because of that, it seemed logical to deliver the Ark to the nearest godly city, which would be Beth-Shemesh. From Ekron to Beth-shemesh, we are dealing with a distance of 15–20 miles. 1Sam. 6:9–12

6. The Israelites immediately recognized the Ark. They offered up the cows to God, using the wood from the cart for the fire (1Sam. 6:13–15).
7. Several of the Beth-shemites were executed by God, as they did not revere the Ark, and peered into it out of curiosity. 1Sam. 6:19
8. The Beth-shemites became as afraid of the Ark as the Philistines in Ekron, and they sent messengers to Kiriath-jearim¹ asking them to come and take the Ark. There is some humor in the fact that this Levitical city called upon a city which was not occupied by Levitical families in order to look after the Ark of God (until it would be determined what would be done with It). 1Sam. 6:20–21
9. Amaziah, the ninth king after Solomon in the split kingdom of Judah, faced Jehoash, his counterpart over Israel, in Beth-shemesh (which was a part of Judah at the time). Amaziah was soundly defeated. This would have been during the late 8th century B.C. 2Kings 14:11–14 2Chron. 25:20–23
10. During the time that Ahaz was king over Judah (circa 732–716 B.C.), the Philistines invaded Judah and took several cities from her, including Beth-shemesh. 2Chron. 28:16–19. Ahaz appealed to Tiglath-Pileser III, the famous Assyrian king (circa 745–727 B.C.) (2Chron. 28:20–21).
11. Rainey supposes that Beth-shemesh back under Judæan control under King Josiah and possibly King Hezekiah,² although there are no more Biblical references to Beth-shemesh.
12. Beth-Shemesh is one of the most excavated cities in Palestine. Excavations of this area began in 1911–1912 and then were continued in 1928–1932.
13. There are two (and possibly three) *other* Beth-shemesh's found in Scripture.
 - a. The first is found in Naphtali bordering Issachar (Joshua 19:17, 22, 32, 38). There were Canaanites which lived in this Beth-shemesh who were not destroyed (as God had commanded), but pressed into slavery (Judges 1:33).
 - b. ZPEB strongly objects to the city of Beth-shemesh in Naphtali being equated with the city of the same name in Issachar.³ Since this view is not really the subject of this study, I won't pursue this particular topic any further. It appears as though the Beth-shemesh in Issachar might be 25 miles southeast of the one in Naphtali (see Joshua 19:22).
 - c. *Beth-shemesh* is also mentioned in Jer. 43:13, but that appears to be more of a translation rather than a transliteration and that the city named should be *Heliopolis*, which is in Egypt. *Heliopolis* means *City of the Sun*.

1 We will cover the city of Kiriath-jearim at the end of 1Sam. 6; suffice to say that this was a nearby city which was on the border of Dan, Benjamin and Judah. Surprisingly enough, it was not a Levitical city.

2 *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. a, p. 548.

3 *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 1, p. 545. I am obliged to point out, however, that ZPEB also equates Beth-shemesh with both Ir-shemesh and Mount Heres (op. cit.).

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A Cart with the Ark of God Finds its Way to Beth-shemesh

And so did [or, *construct*] the men so and so they take a pair of cows nursing and so they tie them in the cart and their calves they have shut up in the house.

I Samuel
6:10

And so the men did: they took a pair of nursing cows and yoked them to the cart; and they placed their calves in the house.

So the men took a pair of cows that were still nursing and yoked them to the cart, taking their calves back to the ranch.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text *And so did [or, construct] the men so and so they take a pair of cows nursing and so they tie them in the cart and their calves they have shut up in the house.*

Septuagint
The Septuagint *And the Philistines did so; and they took two cows that had calved for the first time, and yoked them to the wagon, and shut up their calves at home.*

Significant differences: Some minor, but insignificant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV *The Philistines followed their advice. They hitched up the two cows to the cart, but they kept their calves in a barn.*

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) *The men did so. They took two milch cows and harnessed them to the cart, and shut up their calves indoors.*

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB *Then the men did so, and took two milch cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home.*

Young's Updated LT *And the men do so, and take the two suckling cows, and bind them in the cart, and their young ones they have shut up in the house;...*

What is the gist of this verse? The Philistines execute this plan: they tie two nursing cows to a newly build cart; and the calves who are nursing are taken back to the farm (or house²⁰) of their origin.

1Samuel 6:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35

²⁰ Remember, there was probably very little by way of formal zoning laws in those days.

1Samuel 6:10a

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

Translation: *And so the men did...* This phrase sums up their actions and the next few sentences give us the various things that they did.

1Samuel 6:10b

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
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 perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
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
pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced <i>paw-RAW</i>]	<i>heifer, cow</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #6510 BDB #831
ʿûwl (עוּל) [pronounced <i>gool</i>]	<i>to nurse, to suck, to suckle; to feed, to nourish</i>	feminine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #5763 BDB #732

Translation: *...they took a pair of nursing cows...* So they rounded up the two nursing cows who had given birth to their first calves (I don't know why I made that assumption—that these are cows who have given birth for the first time—but it seems apt).

1Samuel 6:10c

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
ʿâçar (אַסַּר) [pronounced <i>aw-AWHR</i>]	<i>to bind, to tie [up, together, to]; to imprison, to make captive; to restrain</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #631 BDB #63
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

Although the bêyth preposition is primarily a preposition of proximity, it can also mean *in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on, before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; because of; by means of, about, concerning.*

1 Samuel 6:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿăgâlâh (עגלה) [pronounced ăuh-gaw-LAW]	[an ox-] cart, wagon; a chariot, a war vehicle	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5699 BDB #722

Translation: ...and yoked them to the cart;... The verb here is the 3rd person masculine plural (and a 3rd person masculine plural suffix), Qal imperfect of *to bind, to tie, to imprison, to restrain*. In relationship to cattle, it means *to yoke*. So, these cows who have given birth are yoked to the newly built cart.

1 Samuel 6:10d

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
ʿêth (את) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
kâlâh (כלה) [pronounced kaw-LAWH]	<i>to complete, to finish; to be past, to go by; to consume, to waste, to destroy; to be completed or finished, to be accomplished or fulfilled; to be consumed [wasted or spent]</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3615 BDB #477
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	Strong's #none BDB #88
bayith (בית) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as <i>inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: ...and they placed their calves in the house. The verb is the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *to shut up, restrain, withhold*. This gives us, literally, ...and they restrained their calves in the house. House refers to the overall compound, the entire ranch (obviously, these calves weren't taken into their private residence while the mother was taken away). The advice of the religious hierarchy was followed exactly.

And so they place an Ark of Y^ehowah in the cart and the box and mice of the gold and images of their hemorrhoids [or, tumors].

1 Samuel
6:11

Then they placed into the cart the Ark of God, the box, the mice of gold and the images of their tumors.

Then they placed the Ark of God into the cart, along with the box which contained the golden statuettes of the mice and tumors.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so they place an Ark of Y^ehowah in the cart and the box and mice of the gold and images of their hemorrhoids [or, *tumors*].

Septuagint And they set the ark of the Lord, and the coffer, and the golden mice, on the wagon.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) They placed the Ark of the LORD on the cart together with the chest, the golden mice, and the figures of their hemorrhoids.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the box with the golden mice and the likenesses of their tumors.

Young's Updated LT ...and they place the ark of Jehovah upon the cart, and the coffer, and the golden mice, and the images of their emerods.

What is the gist of this verse? The Ark of God is placed upon the cart. Next to it is placed a box with the golden tumors and golden mice in it.

1Samuel 6:11a

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
sîym (שׂוּם) [pronounced <i>seem</i>]; also spelled sūwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i>]	<i>to put, to place, to set, to make</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
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
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 (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

1 Samuel 6:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿăgâlâh (עגלֵה) [pronounced ăuh-gaw-LAW]	[an ox-] cart, wagon; a chariot, a war vehicle	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5699 BDB #722

Translation: Then they placed into the cart the Ark of God,... Or, And they placed the Ark of Y^ehowah in the cart... This is interesting at this point, because believers or unbelievers were not supposed to touch the Ark of God. However, there is no indication that anything happened to these men. I surmise that, when Hophni and Phinehas first brought the Ark into battle, they used the pole handles which had been slipped through the rings of the Ark. There is no reason to think that the poles had been removed from the Ark. Given that it came with its own set of poles which allowed easy handling of the Ark, there would have been no reason to try to improvise some other way of moving the Ark. This means that no one who moved the Ark would come in direct contact with it.

1 Samuel 6:11b

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
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿargâz (אֲרָגָז) [pronounced ahr-GAWZ]	box, chest, coffer	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #712 BDB #919
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿak ^e bâr (עֲכָבָר) [pronounced ăhk ^e -BAWR]	mouse	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5909 BDB #747
zâhâb (זָהָב) [pronounced zaw-HAW ^e V]	gold; a measure of weight [related to gold]; [figuratively used for] brilliance, splendor	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2091 BDB #262

Translation: ...the box, the mice of gold... What we have next are the other items which they placed into the cart. What is placed in after the Ark is the ʿargâz (אֲרָגָז) [pronounced ahr-GAWZ] again, which means *box, chest*. As has been mentioned before, since this word is found only in this chapter, so there is also speculation that it may mean *pouch* or *bag*. Although it was not clear in v. 8 whether or not this was separate from the Ark of God, in this verse it is clearly a different item. The second item is *mice of the gold*, which we would render *the mice of gold*. Even though we have not seen *mice* in the Hebrew of the previous chapter, where the plague appears only to be

tumorous growths, it is found so often in this chapter to suggest that there was an invasion by rodents as well (which squares us well with the Greek and Latin manuscripts).

1Samuel 6:11c

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
ʿêth (את) [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
tzelem (צלם) [pronounced <i>TSEH-lem</i>]	<i>image, likeness, resemblance, semblance; mere, empty</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #6754 BDB #853
ʾchôwrîym (טחוריים) [pronounced <i>t^e-khoh-REEM</i>]	<i>tumors, emerods</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #2914 BDB #377

According to *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance*, this is the word found in I Sam. 5:6, 9, 12 and 6:4, 5; however, also according to *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance*, the plural of the noun ʿôphel (עפל) [pronounced *ḶOH-fell*], which means *growth, tumor, a swelling up, a cancerous growth*; is found in those verses. Strong's #6076 BDB #779. These are obviously two different words with no letters in common (in the text, the endings are the same, as they are plural). In my Hebrew text, ʿôphel is found in I Sam. 5:6, 9, 12 and in 6:4, 5. And, in my Bible (Owen's work), the word found in v. 6:11 is ʾchôwrîym. Zodiates notes the same distinctions that I do. What about the Greek, you may ask? The corresponding Greek word is not even found in this verse (in fact, the corresponding Greek word is only found in v. 5 of this chapter and vv. 9 and 12 of the previous chapter—and the translation of v. 9 is much different in the Greek than it is in the Hebrew).²¹

Translation: ...and the images of their tumors. Altogether, this gives us: ...and the box [or, pouch] and mice of gold and images of their tumors.

I have mentioned above that we have a different word here for *tumors* than we have previously. So, let me simply compare these words side by side.

Tumors from the Hebrew

The Hebrew	ʿôphel (עפל) [pronounced <i>ḶOH-fell</i>]	ʾchôwrîym (טחוריים) [pronounced <i>t^e-khoh-REEM</i>]
Cognates	Verb means <i>to swell up</i>	Unused verb possibly related to difficult bowel movements. Closest used verb means <i>to grind, to crush</i> .
Gesenius	<i>A hill, a tumor.</i>	<i>Anal tumors, hemorrhoids.</i>
BDB	<i>Mound, hill, tumor.</i>	<i>Tumor as a result of dysentery.</i>
Identifying numbers	Strong's #6076 BDB #779	Strong's #2914 BDB #377

²¹ In the Greek, the Gittites are making themselves images of *tumors*, whereas, in the Hebrew, these *tumors* (or cancerous growths) and breaking out on their skin.

Tumors from the Hebrew		
Found in:	Deut. 28:27 Sam. 5:6, 9, 12 and in 6:4, 5	I Sam. 6:11, 17
God's Word™	tumors	hemorrhoids
N A S B , N I V translations:	tumors	tumors
Rotherham	tumours	tumours, boils
Young's translation:	emerods	emerods

Interestingly enough, it is not clear in Gesenius or in *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* which word is in which passage. Apart from having a copy of the Hebrew itself (or Zodiates's *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*), one would not know. The authorities which are and have been treat these words identically, for the most part. According to Keil and Delitzsch, the Massorites substituted one word for another, although this was not altogether clear when and where.²² It is not difficult to suppose that the Philistines suffered a visible swelling up under their skin, indicating cancerous tumors. That these tumors also were in the anal region²³ is a reasonable supposition.

Additional Note: Now, I realize that some of these distinctions which I point out may be of no interest whatsoever to you. That's not really my concern. My concern is that there is something buried here in the Hebrew that you would not get from your English translation. I can't say that there is some great significance here—only that there is a difference.

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Personally, like the other translators, I am nonplussed at this point, and can only suppose that these words are synonyms. In any case, the other three things placed into the cart are: [...and the box and the mice of gold and the images of their tumors](#) [or, *hemorrhoids*].

And so went straight the cows in the road upon the road [to] Beth-shemesh, in a highway one they went going and mooing and they had not turned aside right and left and lords of Philistines were going behind them as far as a border of Beth-shemesh.

I Samuel
6:12

So the cows went straight along the road toward Beth-shemesh, along a certain highway; and they went, going and mooing, and they did not turn aside to the left or to the right; and the lords of the Philistines were going behind them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.

So the cows remained on the road to Beth-shemesh, continually moving and mooing, neither veering off the highway to the left or to the right, with the lords of the Philistines following behind them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

²² In the exegesis of I Sam. 5:6, they say that for עֲפֹלִים invariably substituted is טַחֲרִים, but we find עֲפֹלִים in v. 6, so I don't understand their point exactly. Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, pp. 402–403. Sometimes, since this commentary is a translation, the meaning can be screwed up and they may have gotten it backwards.

²³ Which is, of course, a good name for a band.

Masoretic Text	And so went straight the cows in the road upon the road [to] Beth-shemesh, in a highway one they went going and mooing and they had not turned aside right and left and lords of Philistines were going behind them as far as a border of Beth-shemesh.
Septuagint	And the cows went straight on the way to the way of Bæthsamys, they went along one track; and labored, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after it as far as the coasts of Bæthsamys.

Significant differences:

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	The cows went straight ahead along the road to Beth-shemesh. They went along a single highroad, lowing as they went, and turning off neither to the right nor to the left; and the lords of the Philistines walked behind them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	And the cows took the straight way in the direction [lit., way] of Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh.
Young's Updated LT	And the cows go straight in the way, on the way to Beth-Shemesh, in one highway they have gone, going and lowing, and have not turned aside right or left; and the princes of the Philistines are going after them unto the border of Beth-Shemesh.

What is the gist of this verse? The cows, on their own, go straight to Beth-shemesh, along the highway. They do not veer to the left or the right. The Philistine princes follow them this entire way.

1Samuel 6:12a

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
yâshar (יָשַׁר) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAHR</i>]	<i>to make smooth, to make straight, to make straight one's going, to go straightforward; to lead straight along, to direct; to esteem as right, to approve of</i>	3 rd person feminine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3474 BDB #448

Yâshar (יָשַׁר) [pronounced *yaw-SHAHR*], which has three chief meanings: (1) *to go straight* (and this is the only passage quoted by BDB); (2) *to be pleasing, agreeable, to be right*; (3) *to be straightforward, to be upright, to be right* (in an ethical sense). The three Piel meanings are: (1) *to make smooth, to make straight, to make straight one's going, to go straightforward*; (2) *to lead straight along, to direct*; (3) *to esteem as right, to approve of*. Yâshar is a good choice of a verb, as this is exactly what the Philistines are supposed to do. They are to get the Ark back into the hands of the Israelites as quickly as humanly possible taking the most straightforward route.

1Samuel 6:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced paw-RAW]	<i>heifer, cow</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #6510 BDB #831
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	Strong's #none BDB #88
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek ^e]	<i>way, distance, road, journey, manner, course</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ǵahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek ^e]	<i>way, distance, road, journey, manner, course</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
Bêyth shemesh (בַּיִת שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced bāyth-SHEM-esh]	<i>House of the Sun and is transliterated Beth-shemesh</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1053 BDB #112

Translation: *So the cows went straight along the road toward Beth-shemesh,...* Interestingly enough, we have a repeat of the word derek^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek^e], which means *way, distance, road, journey, manner, course*. It can also be translated *toward*. Each time, it is with a different preposition, and it is possible that this means something in particular. So, literally, we have: *And so went straight the cows in the road upon the road Beth-shemesh...* However, it is reasonable that derek^e is used in two different ways here, giving us: *So the cows went straight along the road toward Beth-shemesh...*

Recall that these cows have given birth and were nursing their calves. Their calves were taken from them back to the ranch and the cows were yoked to this cart. Their natural instinct would be to go back toward their calves.

1Samuel 6:12b

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	Strong's #none BDB #88
m ^e çillâh (מַסְלָה) [pronounced mesial-LAW]	<i>highway, raised way, public road</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4546 BDB #700
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	feminine singular numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

1Samuel 6:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hālak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
The infinitive absolute has four uses, and is affected whether it occurs prior to or immediately after its cognate. Since it follows its cognate verb form, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea. ²⁴			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gā'âh (הָאָה) [pronounced gaw-GAW]	<i>to moo, to low, to bellow</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1600 BDB #171

This word is onomatopoeic.

Translation: ...along a certain highway; and they went, going and mooing,... Apparently there was a well-used and maintained road which went from Ekron (or a place near Ekron) to Beth-shemesh. This is why the city of Beth-shemesh was chosen. There is one primary road on which to travel from Ekron to Beth-shemesh. ...along the one highway...

There is an irritating battery commercial on television about how their batteries *keep going and going and going*; this is the idea here. The cart which the cows lead just kept going and going and going in a straight direction. The Philistines watched it and some of them followed it, and it proceeded along a straight path as if there were someone leading the cows. Now, of course, this was a roadway, but there is no reason that the cows would have remained on the roadway the entire time, apart from divine guidance. Here, the infinitive absolute of the word *to moo* acts as an English gerund, so that we may add *ing* to the end of the verb.²⁵ ...they went [and kept] going and mooing... The continual mooing would be a result of their separation from their calves. I do not know the length of time that a cow remembers anything, but, apparently for all of their trip to Beth-shemesh, they mooed for their calves, but did not turn around or veer from the course.

1Samuel 6:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
qûwr (וָרָחַק) [pronounced soor]	<i>to turn aside, to depart, to go away</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693
yâmîyn (יְמִינָהּ) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #3225 BDB #411

²⁴ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

²⁵ We covered the four basic uses of the infinitive absolute in I Sam. 2:28.

1Samuel 6:12c

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
s ^e mô'î (שֵׁמֹאל) [pronounced s ^e MOHL]	<i>the left, the left hand, the left side; north [when facing east]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8040 BDB #969

Translation: ...and they did not turn aside to the left or to the right;... The cows continued to moo because of their calves. However, they still moved in a straight line along the road.

Zodhiates comments: *Normally, it is difficult to drive even the best trained cows straight on a road when their calves have just been taken away from them. In this case, the cows did follow a straight line, carrying the ark back to Israel, which revealed that their behavior was being controlled by God.*²⁶

You will note that these cows traveled in exactly the opposite direction that we would have expected. We would expect them to turn around and go toward their calves, but instead, they move forward along the road, indicating divine intervention.

1Samuel 6:12d

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
ç ^e rânîym (סָרְנִים) [pronounced s ^e -RAW-neem]	<i>warlords, lords, princes, czars, generals, officers; officials, VIP's</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5633 BDB #710
P ^e lish ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּים) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
mê'achar (מֵאַחַר) [pronounced <i>may-ah-KHAHR</i>]	<i>from, from after, from (being) after, from behind, from following</i>	Compound preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577 and Strong's #310 BDB #29
'ad (אֲדָ) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723

²⁶ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 733. I don't know where Zodhiates got his data on this—have there been studies? Is there a typical behavior of cows separated from their calves? Maybe I make too light of this, as animals which I have observed do act quite differently after having a litter. Dogs and cats tend to act very protective and even secretive. However, I recall one stray cat that, once her kittens were old enough, she brought them into our garage for us to take care of.

1Samuel 6:12d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
גְּבוּל (ג ב ו ל) [pronounced g ^{eb} -VOOL]	<i>border, boundary, territory</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1366 BDB #147
Bêyth shemesh (בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>bâyth-SHEM-esh</i>]	<i>House of the Sun</i> and is transliterated <i>Beth-shemesh</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1053 BDB #112

Translation: ...and the lords of the Philistines were going behind them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. One of the interesting things in Scripture is that there are at least two important incidents observed and testified to by unbelievers. Here, the fact that the Ark is returned to Beth-shemesh without incident, despite the natural predilection of the cows will be testified to by the Philistine lords, who would no doubt like to tell their people that the capture and possession of the Ark had nothing to do with Philistia's troubles. We have a similar situation when the heathen during the crucifixion of our Lord placed guards at His grave site to make certain that Jesus' followers did not spirit His body away to fulfill His prophecies (Matt. 27:63–67). No doubt that in both cases, some unbelievers became believers.

Now, you might recall at the beginning of I Sam. 5, I mentioned that most of the Scripture we find is written by a believer who was an eyewitness to the events recorded; or, at the very worst, by a believer who was told the events by an eyewitness (there are, of course, exceptions to this—the greatest exception being the book of Chronicles which was put together based upon several documents which were extant at the time of its being written down). So, what just took place, took place in the territory of the Philistines. There were no Jews around, only unbelieving Philistines. However, recall what the religious types said; the referred back to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, which acted as the gospel message for many centuries. The reality and the power of the God of Israel was never brought into question. They covered themselves by saying what happened to the Philistines may have been a coincidental series of bad luck incidents, but their money appeared to be on the power and might of the God of Israel. Furthermore, the lords of the Philistines seemed to agree, as they went along with what was suggested by the religious types. So, what does that mean? That means that what happened to the Philistines had a profound affect upon them—many of them very likely believed in the God of Israel. They believed in His power and in His reality and in His hand upon them in discipline. Old Testament faith in Jehovah, the God of Israel, is equivalent to New Testament faith in Christ Jesus. My point is: there were eyewitness/believers in the territory of the Philistines—some of the Philistines themselves. In fact, as we will see later on in this chapter, their reverence for the Ark of Jehovah was greater than the Jewish inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, who treated the Ark rather lightly (until many of them died from apparently just looking at the Ark). The reverence of the Philistines was greater than the reverence of many of the Jews, and that very difference resulted in the deaths of over 50,000 Israelites.²⁷

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Now, how do we know about this? It is highly unlikely that a Philistine moved to Jerusalem, recorded this bit of history, and then David copied it.

²⁷ And, as I have mentioned many times previous, we are a bit uncertain as to the accuracy of the large numbers in Scripture. They would seem to be more accurate if reduced by a power of ten.

How Did the Incidents of 1Samuel 5–6 find their way into Scripture?	
	Theory
1.	David or Samuel, when recording the incident, is inspired by God the Holy Spirit and writes down something which they did not actually observe. God the Holy Spirit made certain that this was accurate. As far as I am concerned, this is the weakest explanation.
2.	Some Jew followed the Ark around and made observations. This is even weaker than the weakest explanation—recall that Israel was completely defeated in the previous battle with the Philistines; for some lone Jew to follow the Ark around after such a defeat is highly unlikely.
3.	Everything which we find in 1Sam. 5–6 would not have been observed by a Jew. These things would have been observed by a Philistine (actually, by entire cities of Philistines). Any one of these could have written down this history, to be later uncovered by David or given to David by Achish, king of Gath, with whom he had become friendly. This is a possibility, although, not a great one.
4.	David could have, at some time, checked out the hall of records in Gath, as he did have a friendship with Achish, king of Gath. He may have come across this incident and remembered it, to record it at a later date. The problem with this and the previous explanation is, David <i>probably</i> did not record any of these early chapters of the book of Samuel (which is why the book of Samuel is called <i>Samuel</i> instead of <i>David</i>).
5.	A Philistine or even several Philistines, after observing these incidents with the Ark, came over to Israel as believers. They converted to the worship of the True God, Jehovah of Israel. At some point in time, they may have come over to Israel because of this incident. It is possible that these converted Philistines would go to him first, tell what had happened in detail, in order to become a part of Israel. The best argument against this is, we have nothing recorded in Scripture to this effect. However, we simply have nothing recorded in Scripture dealing with this particular question (making this criticism equally applicable to any theory). But, we do have a man (Obed-edom) from Gath to whom David does entrust the Ark to after bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. Entrusting this man with the Ark had to be more than just an arbitrary choice on David’s part.

Also, please recall that this incident took place while Samuel was still very young. It is reasonable that he, at a very young age, would listen to Philistines who had come to him and take their confession of faith at face value.

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The Men of Beth-shemesh Receive the Ark with Burnt Offerings to God

And Beth-shemesh was reaping a harvest of wheat stalks in the valley and so they lifted up their [two] eyes and so they see the Ark and so they rejoice to see. I Samuel 6:13

And [the people of] Beth-shemesh were reaping a harvest of wheat stalks in the valley when they lifted up their eyes and they saw the Ark. Therefore, they rejoiced to see [it].

As the people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting the wheat stalks in the valley, they looked up to see the Ark and they rejoiced when they saw it.

Now let’s see what others have done with this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And Beth-shemesh was reaping a harvest of wheat stalks in the valley and so they lifted up their [two] eyes and so they see the Ark and so they rejoice to see.

Septuagint And the men of Bæthsamys were reaping the wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the Ark of the Lord, and they rejoiced to meet it.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) The people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. They looked up and saw the Ark, and they rejoiced when they saw [it].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Emphasized Bible Now || they of Beth-shemesh || were reaping their what-harvest in the vale, —so they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to meet it.

NASB Now *the people of* Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark and were glad to see *it*.

Young's Updated LT And the Beth-shemeshites are reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley, and they lift up their eyes, and see the ark, and rejoice to see *it*.

What is the gist of this verse? The people of Beth-Shemesh are out farming and they see the cart coming their way with the Ark of God in it, and they rejoice when they see this.

1Samuel 6:13a

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
Bêyth shemesh (בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>bayth-SHEM-esh</i>]	<i>House of the Sun</i> and is transliterated <i>Beth-shemesh</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1053 BDB #112
qâtsar (קָצַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-TSAR</i>]	<i>to be short, to come short of, to cut off [with regards to grain], to reap, to harvest</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7114 BDB #894
qâtsîyr (קֹצֵיר) [pronounced <i>kaw-TZEER</i>]	<i>harvesting, harvest</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7105 BDB #894
chîttâh (חֵטָה) [pronounced <i>kheet-TAW</i>]	<i>wheat, wheat stalks</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #2406 BDB #334
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
´emeq (עֲמֵק) [pronounced <i>ĒEH-mek</i>]	<i>valley, vale, lowland, deepening, depth</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6010 BDB #770

Translation: [And \[the people of\] Beth-shemesh were reaping a harvest of wheat stalks in the valley...](#) Actually, we do not have *the men of Beth-shemesh* or *the Beth-shemeshites*, but simply *And Beth-shemesh...* If we were going to refer to the name of the city, this is the name that we would use. This is called a metonym. A *metonym* is where one thing stands in for another. Here, the proper name of the city stands in for the population of that city (and, specifically, those who were out in the field reaping). The wheat harvest occurs between mid-April and mid-June in Israel.

1 Samuel 6:13b			
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
nâsâ' (נָסְאוּ) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i>]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
êth (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
'ayin (עַיִן) [pronounced <i>ĠAH-yin</i>]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאוּ) [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
êth (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
'ărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #727 BDB #75

Translation: [...when they lifted up their eyes and they saw the Ark.](#) We then have 3 wâw consecutive's followed by 3 Qal imperfect verbs, indicating quick, yet successive actions. Even though it is a plural noun, referring to the men of Beth-shemesh who were working in the field, we still refer to their individual eyes. [...and they lift up their \[two\] eyes...](#)

The next phrase is, [...and they see the Ark...](#) They are out in the field, sweating, working; probably completely unaware of what is going on in the nearby Philistine cities. They look up and they see the Ark of God on a cart led by two mooing cows (which is probably what got their attention in the first place).

1Samuel 6:13c			
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
sâmach (חַמְצוּ) [pronounced saw-MAHKH]	<i>to rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful, to be merry</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8055 BDB #970
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: *Therefore, they rejoiced to see [it].* In the Greek, they rejoiced *to meet [it]*. The entire territory of Israel knew of the Ark being taken by the Philistines, which was a source of great sorrow. Now, out of what seems nowhere, here comes the Ark on an unmanned cart. This causes the Israelites great rejoicing.

It is important to note that the Israelites knew what it was. Except for those who went into battle against the Philistines, the average Israelite had never seen the Ark before. It was seen only once a year by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. So, how did they know?

How Did the Israelites Recognize the Ark?

1. Most Israelites realized that the Philistines had taken the Ark. It had been out of Israel for 7 months, which is long enough for that news to generate.
2. The Ark came on a Philistine cart from the direction of the Philistine territory.
3. Most Israelites had a rough idea as to what the Ark looked like. There was nothing like it, in fact. It was a wood chest overlaid with gold, and on the top was a golden mercy seat looked upon by two golden angels. This description was in Scripture, and those who knew would tell some of those who had not read it.
4. None of the men there had ever seen the Ark before, unless they had been in battle (which is also a possibility).
5. Therefore, there were possibly some soldiers from the battle against the Philistines present in the fields of Beth-shemesh.
6. All it takes is for a few men to recognize that it was the Ark of God in that cart. They would tell the remainder enough to convince them.

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Barnes tells us the resulting scenario: *The harvesting work was suspended in an instant, and all the workmen ran to where the Ark was.*²⁸ Once they all realized what it was, the in coming Ark was an incredible and momentous occasion.

²⁸ Barnes' Notes; *1 Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 18.

And the cart had come unto a field of Joshua a House of the Shemesh and so she takes a stand there and there a stone, great, and so they split apart wood of the cart and the cows they caused to ascend, a burnt offering to Y^ehowah.

1 Samuel
6:14

The cart had come into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite and it takes a stand there. Also, a huge stone [is] there. Then they split apart the wood of the cart and they caused to ascend the cows, [as] a burnt offering to Y^ehowah.

When the cart had come to the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite, it halted there, at a huge stone which was there. Then they cut up the wood of the cart and offered up the two cows as a burnt offering to Jehovah.

Let's see what others have done first of all:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And the cart had come unto a field of Joshua a House of the Shemesh and so she takes a stand there and there a stone, great, and so they split apart wood of the cart and the cows they caused to ascend, a burnt offering to Y ^e howah.
Septuagint	And the wagon entered into the field of Osee, which was in Bæthsamys, and they set there by it a great stone; and they split the wood of the wagon, and offered up the cows for a whole-burnt-offering to the Lord.
Significant differences:	The biggest difference is, the Ark comes to a stop in the MT; this is not mentioned, per se, in the LXX. Not a significant difference.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

<i>he Message</i>	The cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth Shemeshite, and stopped there beside a huge boulder. The harvesters tore the cart to pieces, then chopped up the wood and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to GOD.
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Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh and stopped there by a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.
JPS (Tanakh)	The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and it stopped there. They split up the wood of the cart and presented the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stood there where there was a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt-offering to the LORD.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And the cart has come in unto the field of Joshua the Beth-Shemeshite, and stands there, and there <i>is</i> a great stone, and they cleave the wood of the cart, and the cows they have caused to ascend—a burnt offering to Jehovah.

What is the gist of this verse? The cart with the Ark pulls to a stop by a large stone along the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite (meaning, he was from Beth-shemesh). The people there cut the cart or wagon into wood and offer up the cows as a sacrifice to God.

1Samuel 6:14a

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
ʿăgâlâh (עֲגָלָה) [pronounced <i>ăuh-gaw-LAW</i>]	[an ox-] cart, wagon; a chariot, a war vehicle	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5699 BDB #722
bôwʿ (בָּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
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
sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced <i>sâw-DEH</i>]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7704 BDB #961
Y ^e hōwshûaʿ (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) [pronounced <i>y^ehoh-SHOO-ahû</i>]	<i>whose salvation is Y^ehowah or Y^ehowah is salvation; transliterated Joshua or Yeshuah</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3091 BDB #221
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
shemesh (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>SHEH-mesh</i>]	<i>sun</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8121 BDB #1039

This appears to be equivalent to the proper noun Beth-Shemesh; the only difference being the definite article, which is not found previously in this chapter.

Translation: [The cart had come into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite...](#) We have here the proper noun *Joshua*, followed not by *Beth-shemesh*, but by *Beth of the Shemesh*, which could be reasonably interpreted as *the Beth-Shemeshites*. Now, just because there is a book of Joshua which we studied sometime ago, that does not mean that we are speaking of the same *Joshua*. *This Joshua* is called *the Beth-Shemeshites*, to distinguish him from other *Joshua*'s.

Now, you must be wondering about that name in the Greek. In the Hebrew, *Joshua* is Y^ehōwshûaʿ (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) [pronounced *y^ehoh-SHOO-ahû*]. Strong's #3091 BDB #221. The Greek equivalent to *Joshua* is usually Iêsous (Ἰησοῦς) [pronounced *ee-ay-SOOCE*], which is transliterated as *Jesus* in the English (there is no *j* and no *y* in the Greek and no *j* in the Hebrew). Strong's #2424. I actually don't know why we, in the English, chose to affix all these *j*'s to a large number of Old and New Testament believers.

I should point out that we do not have that Greek noun equivalent here; instead, we have Ôsêe (Ὅσηε) [pronounced *oh-say-EH*], which appears to be a stand-in for the name Hosêe (Ὅσηε) [pronounced *hoh-say-EH*], which was *Joshua*'s original name (see Num. 13:8, 16). My educated guess is that, because of Moses, the names *Joshua* and *Hosea* became equivalent names, like *Bill* and *William* or *Robert*, *Bob*, *Rob* and *Bobby*. Further, possibly the Greek translators sought to differentiate this guy from the *Joshua* of several centuries previous. Strong's #5617.

1 Samuel 6:14b

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
ʿâmad (אָמַד) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHD</i>]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5975 BDB #763
shâm (שָׁמ) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

Translation: ...and it takes a stand there. Or, ...and so it [the cart] took a stand there... So the cows in the cart did not just deliver the Ark to the territory of Israel, they stopped at the proper place as well. The Philistine lords are observing this in silence, amazed at what they see occurring.

1 Samuel 6:14c

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
shâm (שָׁמ) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
ʿeben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH^h-ven</i>]	<i>stone</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #68 BDB #6
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

Translation: Also, a huge stone [is] there. Or, ...and there [was] a great stone [there]... It is unlikely that this stone was in the middle of the road, to stop the cows, but it was probably off to the side. It appears by this verse that the cows stopped of their own accord and not because they were surrounded by the men of Israel. However, they may have stopped in their tracks as they saw a dozen or more men ran up to them.

By the way, just in case you did not get the symbolism here, the great stone is Jesus Christ. Don't misunderstand me—there is an actual physical stone where these cows stop; but that stone represents Jesus Christ, just as it did when Moses struck the stone to get water for the complaining Israelites. This is why the stone is mentioned; this is why God the Holy Spirit inspired the writer of this passage to notice and then to note the stone.

1Samuel 6:14d			
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
bâqa' (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHQ</i>]	<i>to separate, to divide, to cut [open or apart], to split; to tear apart, to tear into pieces (like a wild beast); to break forth, to break open, to burst out; to sit upon eggs [to hatch them]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1234 BDB #131
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
ʿêts (עֵצִים) [pronounced <i>gayts</i>]	<i>trees felled for building (I Kings 5:20, 32), lumber (Gen. 6:14 II Kings 12:13), sticks or logs for fuel (Gen. 22:3 Lev. 1:7)</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #6086 BDB #781
ʿăgâlâh (אֶגְלָלָה) [pronounced <i>guh-gaw-LAW</i>]	<i>[an ox-] cart, wagon; a chariot, a war vehicle</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5699 BDB #722

Translation: *Then they split apart the wood of the cart...* The other day, I was listening to Bobby Thieme and he was talking about how God provides everything for us with regards to our spiritual life.²⁹ This is what we have here: the wood to make the fire for the sacrifice; the cows to offer up to God. All of this is provided for these Israelites by God.

1Samuel 6:14e			
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
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
pârâh (פָּרָה) [pronounced <i>paw-RAW</i>]	<i>heifer, cow</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #6510 BDB #831
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to cause to go up, to lead up, to take up, to bring up</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748

²⁹ God also provides logistical grace, but that is not in view here.

1 Samuel 6:14e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿôlâh (עֹלָה) [pronounced <i>ô-LAW</i>]	<i>burnt offering, ascending offering</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong #5930 BDB #750
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
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

Translation: ...and they caused to ascend the cows, [as] a burnt offering to Y^ehowah. What ascends to God, actually, is the smoke, but spiritually, it is man reaching to God through the means which God has provided. ...and they caused to ascend the cows, a burnt offering to Y^ehowah. That God required offerings to be offered at His sanctuary alone (Deut. 12:4–7, 11–14 || Chron. 7:12) is not an issue here, as before them is the Ark of God, which had appeared almost miraculously.

The stone marked the spot where the cows stopped with the cart. The Israelites who were there broke apart the cart for firewood and offered up the two cows to God as a burnt offering. Obviously, they took the Ark off the cart first (which is what we find in the next verse). This is a marvelous picture of grace. God provided the Ark, He provided the sacrifice, He provided the wood for the sacrifice, and He provided the place for the sacrifice. God did all of the work and the men of Israel merely enjoyed that which He provided. And God the Son, the Rock of God, was right there with them. David will offer a similar sacrifice when pestilence is sent to Israel (II Sam. 24:18–25).

And the Levites brought down an Ark of Y^ehowah and the box which [was] with him which in it [were] artifacts of gold. And so they set against the stone the great and men of Beth-shemesh caused to ascend burnt offerings and so they slaughtered [sacrificial] animals in the day the that to Y^ehowah.

I Samuel
6:15

Then the Levites brought down the Ark of Y^ehowah and the box which [was] next to it, in which [were] the golden artifacts. The men of Beth-shemesh set [them] against the great stone and then caused [various additional] burnt sacrifices to ascend and slaughtered [sacrificial] animals to Y^ehowah on that day.

The Levites then brought down the Ark of Jehovah and the box next to it, in which were the golden figurines. The men of Beth-shemesh set them near the large stone and continued offering various additional sacrifices to Jehovah throughout that day.

Being of a more linear mind, I would have put these thoughts in more of a linear order. The cart with the Ark would have stopped in front of the large stone. The Israelites would then remove the Ark and the box from the cart. The cart would then be cut into pieces, a fire would be started, the cows would be slaughtered, and finally the cows would be offered as sacrifices upon the stone. Then more wood and more sacrifices would be brought to the stone and additional offerings would be made. The Hebrew mind is not as linear, and what occurred is not presented chronologically.

Now, let's examine what others have done with this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And the Levites brought down an Ark of Y ^e howah and the box which [was] with him which in it [were] artifacts of gold. And so they set against the stone the great and men of Beth-shemesh caused to ascend burnt offerings and so they slaughtered [sacrificial] animals in the day the that to Y ^e howah.
Septuagint	And the Levites brought up the Ark of the Lord, and the coffer with it, and the golden articles upon it, and placed them on the great stone, and the men of Bæthsamys offered whole-burnt-offerings and meat-offerings on that day to the Lord.
Significant differences:	You will note the slight difference between them <i>slaughtering sacrificial animals</i> in the MT and offering up meat-offerings in the Greek. There is little by way of real difference.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT	Several men of the tribe of Levi lifted the Ark of the LORD and the chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors from the cart and placed them on the large rock. Many burnt offerings and sacrifices were offered to the LORD that day by the people of Beth-shemesh.
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Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> TM	(The Levites had already taken down [from the cart] the ark of the LORD and the box which contained the gold objects and put them on a large rock.) The people of Beth Shemesh presented burnt offerings an sacrifices to the LORD that day.
JPS (Tanakh)	...and the Levites took down the Ark of the LORD and the chest beside it containing the gold objects and placed them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth-shemesh presented burnt offerings and other sacrifices to the LORD that day.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to the LORD.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And the Levites have taken down the ark of Jehovah, and the coffer which <i>is</i> with it, in which <i>are</i> vessels of gold, and place <i>them</i> on the great stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh have caused to ascend burnt-offerings and sacrifice sacrifices in that day to Jehovah;...

What is the gist of this verse? Before disassembling the cart, the Levites from this city took the Ark of Jehovah down from the cart, along with the box which was beside it, and placed them on the large stone and more sacrifices were offered up to God.

1Samuel 6:15a			
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
L ^e vîyyim (לְוִיִּים) [pronounced <i>l^e-vee-YIM</i>]	<i>joined to; and is transliterated Levites</i>	gentilic adjective/proper plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3881 BDB #532

1 Samuel 6:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to cause to go down, to cause to come down, to bring down, to lead down</i>	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
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
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: [Then the Levites brought down the Ark of Y^ehowah...](#) We begin with *and the Levites*. As you recall, the Levites were one of the twelve tribes of Israel which were connected to that which was spiritual. They assisted the Aaronic priesthood in whatever ways they could and they were scattered throughout Israel primarily in 48 cities. Recall that the tribe of Aaron is a subset of the tribe of Levi; those descended from Aaron were the actual priests (Samuel being an obvious exception). Also, further recall in the book of the Judges that several Levites became entrepreneurs with their spiritual services. One of those cities which was partially settled by the Levites was Beth-shemesh (Joshua 21:16). The Levites acted as the spiritual foundation upon which Israel stood, and also were a sign to Israel as to what would happen with Israel in the future. Israel would someday be scattered throughout the nations of the earth, much like the Levites were scattered throughout the territory of Israel. Therefore, in a situation like this, you call in the Levites, who made up a sizeable portion of the Beth-shemesh population. My point in all of this is, these Levites did not simply materialize out of nowhere. They lived there and possibly many of them were working in that field that day.

1 Samuel 6:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
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
ʿargâz (אָרְגָז) [pronounced ahr-GAWZ]	<i>box, chest, coffer</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #712 BDB #919
ʿăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

1Samuel 6:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Together, ʾăsher ʾêth literally mean <i>which [is] with</i> . I'm not sure if there is a more specialized meaning. Other translations give the meanings <i>that [was] beside [it]; beside [it]; in [it]; along with [it]</i> .			
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
bê (בְּ) [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 with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88
I don't know if there is a specialized meaning of ʾăsher and the bêyth preposition (I could not find anything in BDB or Gesenius). Literally, they mean <i>which [is] in [near, with, among] [it]</i> . The meanings which other translators have ascribed to this combination are <i>in which [are], containing</i> .			
k ^e lîy (כְּלִי) [pronounced k ^e lee]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
zâhâb (זָהָב) [pronounced zaw-HAW ^B V]	<i>gold; a measure of weight [related to gold]; [figuratively used for] brilliance, splendor</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2091 BDB #262

Translation: ...and the box which [was] next to it, in which [were] the golden artifacts. More completely: [And the Levites brought down the Ark of Y^ehowah and the box which \[was\] with it \[i.e, the Ark\]...](#)

Then we have the relative pronoun again, the bêyth preposition (which indicates proximity) and the masculine singular suffix (referring to the box), which gives us: [...which in it...](#), which is a little unwieldy. This gives us: [...in which \[are\] the artifacts of gold...](#) The men there notice what has been placed with the Ark.

1Samuel 6:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
sîym (סִיַּם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (סוּמ) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set, to make</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾeben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced EH ^B -ven]	<i>stone</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6

1 Samuel 6:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

Translation: The men of Beth-shemesh set [them] against the great stone... Or, Then they placed [them—the figurines] next to the great stone... Again, notice the symbology here: these items given by the Philistines are not placed upon the stone but against it or next to it. Again, the stone is Jesus Christ.

1 Samuel 6:15d

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
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Bêyth shemesh (בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>bâyth-SHEM-esh</i>]	<i>House of the Sun and is transliterated Beth-shemesh</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1053 BDB #112
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to cause to go up, to lead up, to take up, to bring up</i>	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿôlâh (עֹלָה) [pronounced <i>go-LAW</i>]	<i>burnt offering, ascending offering</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong #5930 BDB #750

Translation: ...and then caused [various additional] burnt sacrifices to ascend... We had both of these words for *burnt sacrifices* in the previous verse; however, in the previous verse, the *burnt offering* was in the singular and referred to the two cows (they were both offered at once); this verse refers to additional offerings which the Israelites made to God. This gives us: ...and then the men of Beth-shemesh caused to ascend [additional] burnt offerings... Translations which tell us that they offered burnt offerings are emphasizing that there we are dealing with cognates here. In the Hebrew, this and the next line sound almost poetic.

1 Samuel 6:15e

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

1Samuel 6:15e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zâbach (זָבַח) [pronounced zâw ^b -VAHKH]	<i>to slaughter [usually an animal for sacrifice]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2076 BDB #256
zebach (זֶבַח) [pronounced ZEH ^B -vakh]	<i>slaughtered animal [used in a sacrificial offering], slaughter, sacrifice, slaughterings, sacrificial animal</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2077 BDB #257
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	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
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...and slaughtered [sacrificial] animals to Y^ehowah on that day. Again, we have a verb and its cognate: we have the 3rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect of zâ^bvach (זָבַח) [pronounced zâw^b-VAHKH], which means *to slaughter [usually an animal for sacrifice]*. This is followed by its cognate, the masculine plural noun ze^bvach (זֶבַח) [pronounced ZEH^B-vakh], which means *slaughtered animal [used in a sacrificial offering]*. Then we have *in the day the that* following by *to Y^ehowah*, giving us: **And they slaughtered animals to Y^ehowah on that day.** The Israelites immediately slaughtered and offered the cows which came with the cart, and burnt the cart up so that they had fire for the sacrifices. While the cows were being offered, they brought more animals from around for proper sacrifices to God.

Certain more modern and less literal translations will combine two verses into one. The CEV does this quite often.

The Contemporary English Version of I Sam. 6:14–15

CEV

NASB

The Semi-Literal Hebrew

The cows left the road and pulled the cart into a field that belonged to Joshua from Beth-Shemesh, and they stopped beside a huge rock. Some men from the tribe of Levi were there. So they took the chest off the cart and placed it on the rock, and then they did the same thing with the bag of gold rats and sores. A few other people chopped up the cart and made a fire. They killed the cows and burned them as sacrifices to the LORD. After that, they offered more sacrifices.

And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stood there where there was a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt-offering to the LORD. And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to the LORD.

The cart had come into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite and it takes a stand there. Also, a huge stone [is] there. Then they split apart the wood of the cart and they caused to ascend the cows, [as] a burnt offering to Y^ehowah. Then the Levites brought down the Ark of Y^ehowah and the box which [was] next to it, in which [were] the golden artifacts. The men of Beth-shemesh set [them] against the great stone and then caused [various additional] burnt sacrifices to ascend and slaughtered [sacrificial] animals to Y^ehowah on that day.

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So far, the Israelites are doing just what they should be doing. They were concerned about their relationship to Jehovah, and they offered up sacrifices at unexpectedly receiving the Ark back. On the surface, it appears as though Israel is turning back to God and that their problems with Him are being ironed out.

And five lords of Philistines saw and so they return [to] Ekron in the day the that. | Samuel 6:16 **And the five lords of the Philistines observed [all this] and returned to Ekron in that day.**

After observing this, the five lords of the Philistines returned to Ekron on that day.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And five lords of Philistines saw and so they return [to] Ekron in the day the that.
Septuagint And the five lords of the Philistines saw, and returned to Ascalon in that day.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV When the five rulers of the Philistines saw what had happened, they went back to Ekron that same day.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) The five lords of the Philistines saw this and returned the same day to Ekron.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned to Ekron that day.
Young's Updated LT ...and the five princes of the Philistines have seen *it*, and turn back *to* Ekron, on that day.

What is the gist of this verse? After observing all of this, the five Philistine lords return to Ekron.

1Samuel 6:16a			
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
chămishshâh (חֲמִשָּׁשָׁה) [pronounced <i>khuh-mish-SHAW</i>]	<i>five</i>	feminine numeral construct	Strong's #2568 BDB #331
ç ^e rânîym (סָרְנִים) [pronounced <i>s^e-RAW-neem</i>]	<i>warlords, lords, princes, czars, generals, officers; officials, VIP's</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5633 BDB #710
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
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 plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: [And the five lords of the Philistines observed \[all this\]...](#) This tells us exactly who observed all of these events—five Philistine lords. This implies that one of them probably recorded this incident as well.

I need to explain some of this: it appears in previous verses (v. 4) that the meeting where all of this was a meeting between representatives of the Philistines lords and the religious leaders and mystics of Philistia. 1Sam. 6:4 reads: [And they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him? And they answered, Five golden hemorrhoids, and five golden mice, for the number of the lords of the Philistines. For one plague was on you all, and on your lords."](#) You see? It sounds as though the Philistine lords are not present at this meeting and that their representatives are being addressed. However, here, in v. 16, we are speaking of this being observed by the heads of Philistia themselves (1Sam. 6:16: [And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen, they returned to Ekron on that day](#)). How do I explain this?

Are the Lords of the Philistines at this Meeting with the Religious Leaders?

1. It is possible that we are seeing the results of one or more preliminary meetings with the religious leaders and representatives of the Philistine lords; and there is a final meeting with the Philistines lords themselves and the rest for a final disposition of this matter.
2. A second explanation is, the lords of the Philistines are contacted to observe the Ark, so that they could themselves return to their own cities as eyewitnesses of what actually happened. At this point in time, as I write this, Hurricane Katrina has already struck New Orleans and the president has made several appearances in New Orleans, as well as in other areas where the hurricane struck. This does not mean that nothing can move forward without the president actually being there, on the ground, making observations—that's foolishness—this simply is a symbolic gesture. Representatives of the lord of the Philistines could have followed the Ark. However, it is decided, at some point, that this must be done by the leaders of the Philistines.

Are the Lords of the Philistines at this Meeting with the Religious Leaders?

3. A third possible explanation is, v. 4 is proper grammar of respect in the language of the Philistines, but does not convey the same respect in the Hebrew—that is, it appears to refer to the lords of the Philistines in the 3rd person as if they are not there, whereas, this might be a way of referring to their office (for instance, the president of the United States will sometimes speak of his function in the office of presidency in the 3rd person—i.e., “This is the kind of disaster which requires the personal attention of the President of the United States”).
4. A 4th possibility is that these are not actually the *lords of the Philistines*, but their representatives—their eyes and ears. We might speak of a piece of legislation being done by this or that president, but, in point of fact, there are hundreds of hands on that piece of legislation, even if it originated from the executive office (as a bill to be presented to Congress).

There really is not enough information here to determine exactly the set of events which took place—that is, whether there were several meetings, whether those observing the Ark were really representatives of the lords of the Philistines, whether v. 4 should not be understood in a way to think that the lords are not there at this meeting—these options are offered to indicate that there is no contradiction here and that these events could be explained in such a way for there to be no real contradiction.

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1Samuel 6:16b

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 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 plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
ʿEqrôwn (עֲקְרוֹן) [pronounced <i>ġek^e-ROHN</i>]	transliterated <i>Ekron</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6138 BDB #785
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
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw ^ʾ (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

The bēyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean *in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day*.

Translation: ...and returned to Ekron in that day. The complete thought is: [So the five lords of the Philistines saw \[all this\] and returned to Ekron that same day.](#)

What this tells us is that the Philistine lords tended to be very *hands-on* types and/or the population of the Philistines was smaller than we would have thought. In any case, they did not trust anyone else to complete this particular mission. The five lords of the primary five Philistine cities themselves followed the Ark and watched the results. Again, this is not something that the Israelites would have known. This is more information than even a writer of Scripture would have had access to. Again, it is my opinion that there was a great turning to God in Philistia, and that at least some of the men migrated the short distance into Israel to worship the God of the Jews. Such a move would have resulted in the dissemination of this information about the five lords of the Philistines.

One reasonable theory is, the father of Achish, king of Gath, is one of these 5 lords; and he solemnly told his son, Achish about these events. Whether he or Achish became believers is unknown; however, given that this portion of Scripture was probably written by Achish, based upon the account of his father, it is not out of the question for both of them to be believers.

The Philistine lords all return to Ekron because that is where the meeting was held. There were religious types and mystics and the five lords of Philistia there (and who knows how many others—no doubt, this was a result of many complaints from the people of Ekron). So, what was expected was for these leaders to return and tell those in Ekron and those at the meeting what had happened. One of the main points was, whether the cows actually took the ark to Beth-Shemesh or not. This was going to be, for some of the Philistines, proof positive that this was all from God.

And these [are] the tumors of gold which returned, Philistines—a guilt offering to Y^ehowah: for Ashdod, one; for Gaza, one; for Ashkelon, one; for Gath, one; for Ekron, one;...

I Samuel
6:17

And these were the tumors of gold which the Philistines returned [as] a restitution offering to Y^ehowah: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, and one for Ekron;...

And the Philistines returned as a restitution offering to Jehovah five tumors of gold—one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, and one for Ekron;...

We will first see how others rendered this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And these [are] the tumors of gold which returned, Philistines—a guilt offering to Y ^e howah: for Ashdod, one; for Gaza, one; for Ashkelon, one; for Gath, one; for Ekron, one;...
Septuagint	And these are the golden emerods which the lords of the Philistines gave as a trespass-offering for the Lord: for Azotus one, for Gaza one, for Ascalon one, for Geth one, for Accaron one.

Significant differences: Apart from the verb noted, there are no significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	The following were the golden hemorrhoids that the Philistines paid as an indemnity to the LORD; for Ashdod, one; for Gaza, one; for Ashkelon, one; for Gath, one; for Ekron, one.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

And these are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to the LORD; one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron...

Young's Updated LT

And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines have sent back—a guilt offering to Jehovah: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;...

What is the gist of this verse? 5 golden mice and 5 gold tumors were offered with the Ark—one for each lord of Philistia.

1Samuel 6:17a			
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
ʿelleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced <i>KEHLleh</i>]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective	Strong's #428 BDB #41
ṭ ^e chôwrîym (טַחֲוֹרִים) [pronounced <i>t^e-khoh-REEM</i>]	<i>tumors, emerods</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #2914 BDB #377
zâhâb (זָהָב) [pronounced <i>zaw-HAW^ev</i>]	<i>gold; a measure of weight [related to gold]; [figuratively used for] brilliance, splendor</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2091 BDB #262
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
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 plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
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
ʾâshâm (אֲשָׁמ) [pronounced <i>aw-SHAWM</i>]	<i>guilt [for an offense], offense, fault, blame; guilt-offering, trespass offering; compensation, restitution [offering]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #817 BDB #79
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
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

Translation: And these were the tumors of gold which the Philistines returned [as] a restitution offering to Y^ehowah:... Or,: These things [are] the golden tumors which the Philistines returned—a restitution offering to Y^ehowah: What the Philistines did against the God of Israel was an awful thing, and they realize that (although there is obviously some disagreement which occurred at their meeting in Ekron). These things which are fashioned out of gold acknowledge that they realize that this was a plague from the God of Israel.

1Samuel 6:17b

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
ʿAsh°dôwd (אֲשְׁדּוֹד) [pronounced ash-DOHD]	<i>fortress, castle (according to Barnes) and transliterated Ashdod</i>	proper noun; location; with the directional hê	Strong's #795 BDB #78
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿazzâh (אֲזָחָה) [pronounced gahz-ZAW]	transliterated <i>Gaza</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #5804 BDB #738
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25

Translation: ...one for Ashdod, one for Gaza,... Then, we name each city which has offered a restitution to God. What we have is the same structure throughout. There is the lâmed preposition, then the city is named, and then we have the numeral ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD], which means *one, first, certain, only*. My guess is, each leader, despite his own personal feelings, agreed for there to be a guilt-offering or a restitution offering made from their city in particular.

The Ark had been in Ashdod, but probably not in Gaza. The narrative does not rule out that the Ark was in each of the Philistine cities; however, I believe that it was only in the 3 cities named.

1Samuel 6:17c

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
ʿAsh°q°lôwn (אֲשַׁקְלוֹן) [pronounced ash°-k°-OHN]	<i>weighing place [market]; and is transliterated Ashkelon</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #831 BDB #80
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25

Translation: ...one for Ashkelon,... As far as we know, the Ark did not go the Ashkelon. The Philistine cities seem to be named randomly in this verse.

1Samuel 6:17d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ¹]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Gath (גת) [pronounced gath]	wine-press and is transliterated Gath	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1661 BDB #387
ʿechâd (אחד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ¹]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿEq ^o rôwn (עקרונ) [pronounced êk ^o -ROHN]	transliterated Ekron	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6138 BDB #785
ʿechâd (אחד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity	numeral adjective	Strong's #259 BDB #25

Translation: ...one for Gath, and one for Ekron;... This gives us: ...one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, [and] one for Ekron. The one is for each of the five golden tumors. The Ark probably was never in two of the five cities of the Philistines; however, the Philistines did not want any additional trouble in the two unnamed cities, so an offering was given for them as well.

...and mice of the gold a number of all cities of Philistines to five of the lords from cities of fortification and as far as villages of the open country and as far as a village of the great [or, as far as the great stone] which they caused to rest against her an Ark of Y^ohowah, as far as [or, until] the day the this in a field of Joshua of Beth the Shemesh.

1 Samuel 6:18

...along with the mice of gold, [as per] an enumeration of all the cities of the Philistines of the five lords from fortified cities to villages of the open country, and as far as the great stone [or, possibly, the great village] (against which [lit., which against it] they had caused to rest the Ark of Y^ohowah), [which stone is] in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite [even] until this day.

...along with the mice of gold for the five capital cities of the Philistines, and also to include their land around the fortified cities and the villages. These all came to rest against the great stone, which stone is still in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite even until today.

This verse is a bit longer and may be a bit more involved than the previous ones. You will note the addition of 6 words in the NKJV; that means, this verse needs a lot of smoothing out. Furthermore, we have one miscopied Hebrew word and very likely one missing word as well, all of this meaning that this is going to be a rather difficult verse to struggle through. Let's first see how others have dealt with it:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	...and mice of the gold a number of all cities of Philistines to five of the lords from cities of fortification and as far as villages of the open country and as far as a village of the great [or, <i>as far as the great stone</i>] which they caused to rest against her an Ark of Y ^e howah, as far as [or, <i>until</i>] the day the this in a field of Joshua of Beth the Shemesh.
Septuagint	And the golden mice according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines, belonging to the five lords, from the fenced city to the village of the Pherezite, and to the great stone, on which they placed the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, that was in the field of Osee the Bæthsamysite.
Significant differences:	Except for the mention of the <i>Pherezite</i> in the LXX, there are no significant differences between the MT and the LXX.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT	The five gold rats represented the five Philistine cities and their surrounding villages, which were controlled by the five rulers. The large rock at Beth-shemesh, where they set the Ark of the LORD, still stands in the field of Joshua as a reminder of what happened there.
REB	The gold rats were for all the towns of the Philistines governed by the five lords, both fortified towns and open settlements. The great stone where they deposited the Ark of the LORD stands witness on the farm of Joshua of Beth-shemesh to this day.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	As for the golden mice, their number accorded with all the Philistines towns that belonged to the five lords—both fortified towns and unwalled villages, as far as the great stone on which the Ark of the LORD was set down, to this day, in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.
NIV	And the number of the gold rats was according to the number of Philistine towns belonging to the five rulers—the fortified towns with their country villages. The large rock, on which they set the ark of the LORD, is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	...and the golden mice, <i>according to</i> the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country villages. The large stone on which they set the ark of the LORD <i>is a witness</i> to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.
NKJV	...and the golden rats, <i>according to</i> the number of all the cities of the Philistines <i>belonging to</i> the five lords, <i>both</i> fortified cities and country villages, even as far as the large <i>stone of</i> Abel on which they set the ark of the LORD, <i>which stone remains</i> to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	...and the golden mice—the number of all the cities of the Philistines—for the five princes, from the fenced city even unto the hamlet of the villages, even unto the great meadow on which they placed the ark of Jehovah—are unto this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-Shemeshite.

What is the gist of this verse? Each mouse represented one fortified Philistine city. Their territory extended as far as Beth-shemesh apparently. The stone where the cart stopped stands as a witness to this entire event.

You will notice that even the JPS version is a bit difficult, which footnotes that vv. 18–19 are uncertain in parts. However, I have begun to include this translation as a *regular* because it is generally very accurate, literate as well as literal, and understandable, without being overly simplified.³⁰ Let me also point out the NKJV, which is filled with italics. Any word in the italics in the NKJV was inserted by the translators in order to smooth out the translation. There is no Hebrew word to which an italicized word corresponds. So, when you have seven inserted words in one verse added to make the verse more readable, and not one of them is a form of *to be*, then you know that there is trouble in River City.

1 Samuel 6:18a			
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
ʿak ^e bâr (עֲכָבָר) [pronounced <i>gahk^e-BAWR</i>]	<i>mouse</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5909 BDB #747
zâhâb (זָהָב) [pronounced <i>zaw-HAW^eV</i>]	<i>gold; a measure of weight [related to gold]; [figuratively used for] brilliance, splendor</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2091 BDB #262
miç ^e phâr (מִסְפָּר) [pronounced <i>mis^e-FAWR</i>]	<i>number, counted, numerical total; a recounting, a narration</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4557 BDB #708
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
ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
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
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
châmeshshâh (חַמֶּשֶׁשׁ) [pronounced <i>khuh-mish-SHAW</i>]	<i>five</i>	feminine numeral construct	Strong's #2568 BDB #331
ç ^e rânîym (סֵרָנִים) [pronounced <i>s^e-RAW-neem</i>]	<i>warlords, lords, princes, czars, generals, officers; officials, VIP's</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5633 BDB #710

Translation: ...along with the mice of gold, [as per] an enumeration of all the cities of the Philistines of the five lords... Or, Also the mice of gold, [as per] a counting [or, possibly, an enumeration] of all the cities of the Philistines of the five lords... My first interpretation of this, as I took it along with v. 4, was that there were not five more cities, but each golden mouse was for each Philistines lord, who had control over a number of smaller cities and villages. Two sets of offerings were sent; one for the main cities and one for their adjacent real estate. However, Keil and Delitzsch suggest that there were more mice than five which were sent along—in fact, there

³⁰ There is a place for overly simplified versions of Holy Scripture, so I am not knocking them here.

was one golden mouse (or rat) for each outlying town under Philistine control. This does not conflict with v. 4 of this chapter, wherein the heathen priests *suggest* that five golden mice be offered—it simply indicates that the leaders and the people offered more than the minimal amount suggested. This affords us a more natural reading and understanding of this first line, along with a lot less explanation. That is, that an additional offerings were made on behalf of the outlying territories of each primary city of Philistia.

In either case, the gold figurines of the mice represent the rodent infestation which God caused throughout Philistia. We can only speculate on what they might stand for.

1Samuel 6:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
mib ^e tsâr (מִבְּצָר) [pronounced <i>mib^{ve}-TZAR</i>]	<i>strongholds, fenced, fortress, fortification, fortified city</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4013 BDB #131
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
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
Together, min...wa ʿad (מִן וְ עַד) mean <i>from...to</i> or <i>both...and</i> ; as in <i>from soup to nuts</i> or <i>both young and old</i> .			
kôpher (כֹּפֶר) [pronounced <i>KOH-fer</i>]	<i>village</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3724 BDB #499
This noun can also mean <i>price of a life, ransom, bribe; asphalt, pitch (as a covering); the henna plant, name of a plant (henna?); village</i> . <i>Ransom</i> is its primary use. It is defined here only as a <i>village</i> , which leads me to say...			
The word which probably belongs here is...			
kâphâr (כָּפַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-FAWR</i>]	<i>village</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3723 BDB #499
This word is only found in two other passages, where it is consistently rendered <i>villages</i> . 1Chron. 27:25 SOS. 7:11.			
p ^e râziy (פְּרָזִי) [pronounced <i>p^eraw-ZEE</i>]	<i>country, rural</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6521 BDB #826

Translation: ...*from fortified cities to villages of the open country*,... Together, the two prepositions found in this verse give us the extent of a thing, or the range of a thing. In the English, we would render this as *be from...to* or *both...and*; as in *from soup to nuts* or *both young and old*. Then we have the feminine singular construct of *encampment, city, town*. This is used in the very widest sense of a group of people, from an encampment, to a village, to a city. This is affixed to the masculine singular noun *strongholds, fenced, fortress*. It refers to a city where there have been precautions taken in order to preserve its integrity from attack from without.

We also have in this verse the masculine singular construct kôpher (כֹּפֶר) [pronounced *KOH-fer*], which BDB says means *village*. However, it is only found that way in this passage. It has at least three other meanings, two of which are commonly used in Scripture: *ransom* and *pitch*. What we probably have here is the masculine singular construct of kâphâr (כִּפָּר) [pronounced *kaw-FAWR*], which does mean *village*, and is so found in three other passages. The difference between the words is simply the vowel points (which were added nearly two millennia later). This is affixed to the masculine singular adjective *country, rural*. This gives us: *...from fenced cities to rural villages...* So, we have *from the fortified cities as far out as the rural villages*.

1Samuel 6:18c			
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
ʿad (עד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
Together, min...wa ʿad (עד וְ) mean <i>from...to</i> or <i>both...and</i> ; as in <i>from soup to nuts</i> or <i>both young and old</i> .			
ʿÂbêl (אֶבֶל) [pronounced <i>aw^b-VAYL</i>]	<i>meadow; village; mourning</i> transliterated <i>Abel</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #58 BDB #5
ʿÂbêl only occurs twice (Judges 11:33 and I Sam. 6:18) and both times the reading is disputed (its homonym is found several times, and has ample cognate evidence for the meaning <i>mourning</i>). It is also used as a proper noun in II Sam. 20:18.*			
Owen says this noun is in the construct state; however, the noun itself is unchanged, suggesting that it may be indeclinable; a noun which is not declined, but in a construct position is often a proper noun.			
In the Greek, the noun here is <i>stone</i> (which is ʿeben (אֶבֶן), similar in the Hebrew to ʿâbêl).			
gâdôwl (גְּדוֹלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

Translation: *...and as far as the great stone* [or, possibly, *the great village*]... We then have the problem word ʿâbêl (אֶבֶל) [pronounced *aw^b-VAYL*], which ostensibly means *meadow* or *village*. Our problem is that this only occurs twice (Judges 11:33 and I Sam. 6:18) and both times the reading is disputed (its *homonym* is found several times, and has ample cognate evidence and means *mourning*).³¹ It is also found as a proper noun in II Sam. 20:18. Obviously, there is no mourning going on here. The Israelites are excited and celebratory to behold the Ark upon the cart. What most translators believe should be here (and which is in agreement with the Septuagint, the Aramaic paraphrase and even some Hebrew manuscripts)³² is the word ʿeben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced *EH^b-ven*], which means *stone*. This is followed by the definite article and the adjective *great*. The only problem, and it is a minor one, is in v. 14, it is called *the stone the great*, and here it is simply *a stone, the great*. In any case, given the problems with what is found in the Hebrew, given the fact that both the Septuagint and Aramaic translations render this as *stone*, and given the fact that a bad manuscript or a slip of the pen could have changed *stone* into *village*; and, given the fact that the meaning *village* itself is a disputed meaning for the Hebrew word

³¹ It is actually improper to refer to this *other word* as a *homonym*. In truth, ʿâbêl probably only has one primary meaning, and that is *mourning*.

³² The latter two are according to the *Tanakh, the Jewish Bible* by the Jewish Publication Society; ©1985; p. 426.

found here, we may reasonably conclude that this should be *stone* here. According to the NIV Study Bible, a few Hebrew manuscripts have *stone* here (along with the Septuagint), although most read *villages as far as Greater Abel, where...*³³ The problem with the proper noun rendering is what follows—what follows makes no sense, if we are to understand this as the last village of the Philistines. The proper understanding here is this: the Philistines had small encampments and villages throughout that portion of Palestine, and they stretched from the villages or encampments out in the open country as far as this huge stone, which marked the beginning of Israelite territory.

The great stone is the stone where the cart stopped, the stone which represents Jesus Christ, the Rock of Israel. If this refers to a large village, then I am less certain as to what we are talking about here.

1Samuel 6:18d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nûwach (נִוַּחַח) [pronounced <i>NOO-ahkh</i>]	<i>to deposit, to set down, to cause to rest</i>	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5117 (and #3240) BDB #628
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
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
ʾărôwn (אֲרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: *...(against which [lit., which against it] they had caused to rest the Ark of Y^ehowah),...* The Ark of Jehovah was set next to the large stone, where the cows had stopped. Again, this makes perfect sense, where as the other two approaches (this being a proper noun or meaning *mourning* make little sense). And, again, this is in accordance with other ancient manuscripts.

1Samuel 6:18e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

³³ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 380.

1Samuel 6:18e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hûw [ָ] (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
b [ֶ] (בּ) [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
sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7704 BDB #961
Y [ֶ] hōwshûā [ֹ] (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ) [pronounced y ^{eh} hoh-SHOO-ahg]	<i>whose salvation is Y^{eh}howah or Y^{eh}howah is salvation; transliterated Joshua or Yeshuah</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3091 BDB #221
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
shemesh (שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced SHEH-mesh]	<i>sun</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8121 BDB #1039

This appears to be equivalent to the proper noun Beth-Shemesh; the only difference being the definite article, which is not found previously in this chapter.

The wording here is equivalent to that of v. 14.

Translation:...[which stone is] in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite [even] until this day. Or, more fully, ...and as far as the great stone, against which they caused to rest the Ark of Y^{eh}howah... What we have here is that the Philistine territory included their five main cities along with several villages which extended as far as this great stone, which indicated the end of the Philistine territory and the beginning of Israeli land.

When you string all of this together, it makes little sense, being as convoluted as it is, which is why, even after changing the rendering of *ʾābēl* to *ʾeben*, that most translators insert a few extra words. I believe that we are missing another relative pronoun (referring back to the *great stone*) **which [is]**, *even to this day, in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite*. You will note that the NASB insert *is a witness*, referring again, back to the *great stone*, which remained *in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite even to this day as a witness [of the events which took place]*. Now, the translators of the NASB did not simply pull this out of the air, as JPS informs us that an emendation gives us *as a witness, there is*.³⁴ Young simply uses the verb *to be*, but you can tell that he also *wanted* to insert a relative pronoun. This would give us: ...and the mice of gold, [as per] an enumeration of all the cities of the Philistines of the five lords from fortified cities to villages of the open country, and as far as the great stone, (against which [lit., which against it] they had caused to rest the Ark of Y^{eh}howah), [which stone is] in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite until this day. The very last phrase meaning that Joshua still owned this field, and that field was still in Israeli territory, and the great stone was still there.

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³⁴ *Tanakh, the Jewish Bible* by the Jewish Publication Society; ©1985; p. 426.

Obviously, v. 18 was no fun, being both rather convoluted (which is unusual for these first few chapters of I Samuel) and difficult. One problem which I faced was determining when one sentence ended and the other began in vv. 17–18.

Various Translations of vv. 17–18

JPS	The following were the golden hemorrhoids that the Philistines paid as an indemnity to the LORD; for Ashdod, one; for Gaza, one; for Ashkelon, one; for Gath, one; for Ekron, one. As for the golden mice, their number accorded with all the Philistines towns that belonged to the five lords—both fortified towns and unwalled villages, as far as the great stone on which the Ark of the LORD was set down, to this day, in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.
Kukis	And these were the tumors of gold which the Philistines returned [as] a restitution offering to Y ^h owah: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, and one for Ekron; along with the mice of gold, [as per] an enumeration of all the cities of the Philistines of the five lords from fortified cities to villages of the open country, and as far as the great stone (against which [lit., <i>which against it</i>] they had caused to rest the Ark of Y ^h owah), [which stone is] in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite [even] until this day.
NAB	The golden hemorrhoids the Philistines sent back as a guilt offering to the LORD were as follows: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, and one for Ekron. The golden mice, however, corresponded to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, including fortified cities and open villages. The large stone on which the ark of the LORD was placed is still in the field of Jehovah the Beth-shemite at the present time.
NASB	And these are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to the LORD; one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron and the golden mice, <i>according</i> to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country villages. The large stone on which they set the ark of the LORD <i>is a witness</i> to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.
NJB	The golden tumours paid by the Philistines as a guilt offering to Yahweh were as follows: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; and golden rats to the number of all Philistine towns, those of the five chiefs, from fortified towns down to open villages; still to this day the large stone in the field of Joshua of Beth-Shemesh, on which they put the ark of Yahweh, is a witness.
REB	These golden tumours which the Philistines sent back as an offering to the LORD were for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, one for each city. The gold rats were for all the towns of the Philistines governed by the five lords, both fortified towns and open settlements. The great stone where they deposited the Ark of the LORD stands witness on the farm of Joshua of Beth-shemesh to this day.

What appears to be the case is that the five golden tumours corresponded to the five capital cities of the Philistines and that the several golden mice were offered for their other real estate holdings, which were an extension of these five cities, and that the Philistine territory extended pretty much up to this great stone, which marked the beginning of Israelite holdings. This was the same great stone against which the Israelites placed the Ark against, and that stone stands as a memorial or witness even until the time these words were written in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.

You may have noticed that we struggled with the Hebrew a bit more with this chapter than we did at the beginning of the first chapter of Samuel. So, what's the deal? It was pointed out to me some time ago that some of the convoluted Hebrew of the Old Testament was not always a matter of more difficult and complex Hebrew, but occasionally a problem of poor Hebrew. For anyone who knows a well-educated mid-eastern or oriental person who has moved to the west, they often have a tremendous English vocabulary (one which often exceeds the vocabulary of the average person), but their sentences occasionally tend to be complex and difficult to follow. I

mention this because it is possible that this portion of God's Word is written by a Philistine believer who was a witness to misfortune brought on by the illicit possession of the Ark of God. He could have even been one of these Philistine lords (I think that it is even possible for this to be the father of the King of Gath with whom David has a relationship). This would explain why what he says in the Hebrew does not always easily convey the meaning he is trying to get across. For this reason, I lean toward the NAB, NJB and the REB when it comes to conveying what is said in these two verses.

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The Men of Beth-shemesh Are Disciplined for Their Irreverence Toward the Ark

And so He strikes in [the] men of Beth-shemesh because they had seen in an Ark of Y^ehowah and so He strikes in the people of seventy a man, fifty thousand man [or, *fifty chief man*] and so mourned the people because had struck Y^ehowah in the people a striking great.

1 Samuel
6:19

Then [Y^ehowah] strikes down among the men of Beth-shemesh because they had seen inside the Ark of Y^ehowah; therefore, among the people, He strikes seventy men [and] 50 chief men. So the people mourned because Y^ehowah had struck a great slaughter among the people.

Later, Jehovah struck down 70 citizens and 50 leaders because they had looked inside the Ark of Jehovah. Therefore, the people mourned because Jehovah had slaughtered so many Israelis.

According to JPS, v. 19 also is uncertain in part (which I assume refers to the numbers found here). Apart from the problems with the numbers, my first read of v. 19 makes it appear to be much easier than v. 18. As we begin this translation, it is going to be pretty obvious that the Greek and the Hebrew are on completely different pages. The Greek mentions these sons of Jeconiah, which is nowhere close to what we find in the Hebrew. Then we have the problem of the numbers, wherein the Greek and Hebrew are in agreement, but which has caused several translators some trouble. Let's just see what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

But he slew of the men of Bethsames, because they had seen the ark of the Lord, and he slew of the people seventy men, and fifty thousand of the common people. And the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten the people with a great slaughter.

Masoretic Text

And so He strikes in [the] men of Beth-shemesh because they had seen in an Ark of Y^ehowah and so He strikes in the people of seventy a man, fifty thousand man [or, *fifty chief man*] and so mourned the people because had struck Y^ehowah in the people a striking great.

Peshitta

And the LORD struck the men of Beth-shemesh because they worshipped the ark of the LORD, and the LORD struck 5070 men of the people. And the people mourned because the LORD struck the people with a great slaughter.

Septuagint

And the sons of Jechonias were not pleased with the men of Bæthsamys, because they saw the Ark of the Lord; and [the Lord] struck down among them seventy men, and fifty thousand men; and the people mourned, because the Lord had inflicted on the people a very great plague.

Significant differences:

There is a mention of the sons of Jechonias in the LXX, which is confusing. The other ancient versions make more sense—that God killed the men of Beth-shemesh. The Latin, Syriac and Hebrew are from the same family of manuscripts. The Syriac indicates that the Ark was worshipped; in the Latin and Hebrew, the Hebrews simply looked inside of the Ark.

The difference in the final sentence could be simply a matter of translation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Some of the men of Beth-Shemesh looked inside the sacred chest, and the LORD God killed seventy of them. This made the people of Beth-Shemesh very sad,...
NLT	But the LORD killed seventy men from Beth-shemesh because they looked into the Ark of the LORD. And the people mourned greatly because of what the LORD had done. [The translators point out that most Hebrew manuscripts and the Greek Septuagint have the reading 50,070 men and suggest that perhaps the LORD killed 70 men and 50 oxen].
REB	But the sons of Jeconiah did not rejoice with the rest of the men of Beth-shemesh when they welcomed the Ark of the LORD, and he struck down seventy of them. The people mourned because the LORD had struck them so heavy a blow.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	[The LORD] struck at the men of Beth-shemesh because they looked into the Ark of the LORD; He struck down seventy men among the people [and] fifty thousand men. The people mourned, for He had inflicted a great slaughter upon the population.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	And He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because the had struck the people with a great slaughter.
NKJV	Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people [or, <i>He struck seventy men of the people and fifty oxen of a man</i>], and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.
NRSV	The descendants of Jeconiah did not rejoice with the people of Beth-shemesh when they greeted the ark of the LORD; and he killed seventy men of them. The people mourned because the LORD had made a great slaughter among the people.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And He strikes [down] among the men of Beth-Shemesh, for they looked into the ark of Jehovah, yeah, He strikes [down] among the people seventy men—fifty chief men; and the people mourn, because Jehovah struck [down] among the people—a great striking.

What is the gist of this verse? The men of Beth-shemesh treated the Ark with an irreverent curiosity and apparently looked into the Ark to see what was in it. God killed a large number of these men (as few as 120 total, which makes sense; and as many as 50,070, which seems excessive. The people mourn greatly because of this slaughter.

1Samuel 6:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (1) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

1Samuel 6:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nākâh (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
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
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Bêyth shemesh (בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced bayth-SHEM-esh]	<i>House of the Sun and is transliterated Beth-shemesh</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1053 BDB #112

Translation: [Then \[Y^ehowah\] strikes down among the men of Beth-shemesh...](#) Now, with respect to the Hebrew alone, the only difficult portion of this verse is the number of men that God killed. The rest of it is fairly straightforward. We begin with the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *smite, assault, hit, strike*. Since nākâh is not found in the Qal, the Hiphil does not necessarily connote causative action. We will find this verb used three times in this verse alone! What is odd is that the subject of this verb is not stated until later in this verse. However, God is the One assaulting Israel. The literal rendering is: [And then He struck down in the midst of the men of Beth-shemesh...](#)

1Samuel 6:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
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
ʿârôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	<i>transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: [...because they had seen inside the Ark of Y^ehowah;](#)... Then we have the reason for God striking these men—we begin with the explanatory conjunction kîy (*because, for*) followed by the 3rd person plural, Qal perfect of *to see, to look* followed by *in [the] Ark of Y^ehowah*, which gives us: [...because they looked into the Ark](#)

of Y^ehowah.³⁵ This also makes a great deal of sense. There are all these farming Israelites who had only heard of the Ark of God, but had never seen it. Now, not only can they see it, but it has become this object of interest, not from a religious standpoint but more from simple curiosity. However, rather than showing some reverence, apparently a significant number of Israelites actually opened up the Ark to see what was inside. Now, if the Ark is not supposed to be seen except by one man, the High Priest, and only once a year, it is pretty obvious that God does not want anyone just poking around the Ark and opening it up. Furthermore, it was just returned from the Philistines, where their control of the Ark resulted in great national catastrophe (admittedly, the Jews may not have known about that). This rendering of the first half of v. 19, according to the Hebrew, fits well into the context and is typical of human behavior. The idea that there were some people in this family of Jeconiah who were not pleased to see the Ark—that simply does not make any sense. I am assuming that the lack of mention of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the NRSV footnotes indicates to us that the Dead Sea Scrolls are in agreement with the Massoretic text. I have no idea as to why the REB chose to follow a less reasonable manuscript at this point (compare with v. 3 where the alternative manuscript should have been followed).

1Samuel 6:19c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâkâh (נָכָה) [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
b ^e (בְּ) [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
'am (אָם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
shib ^e rîym (שִׁבְעִים) [pronounced shi ^b -v-GEEM]	<i>seventy</i>	numeral	Strong's #7657 BDB #988
'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
chămishîym (חֲמִישִׁים) [pronounced kheh-mih-SHEEM]	<i>fifty</i>	Numeral	Strong's #2572 BDB #332

³⁵ According to Keil and Delitzsch, this means *to look at or to look upon with lust or with malicious pleasure*. They assert that no way did anyone look *into* the Ark, or there would have been a mention of opening the Ark. They say that the problem was *foolish staring*. I don't agree, but I include this, as Keil and Delitzsch are often right in matters of Hebrew nuances. Recall that the Ark of God was always kept in the Holy of Holies and no one saw the Ark except for the High Priest just once a year. Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 408. Edersheim did not really care for the idea that the text simply read that the Israelites looked into the Ark and says that the LXX, which reads: *And the sons of Jeconias did not rejoice among the men of Beth-shemesh, that they saw the ark of the Lord*. His conclusion appears to mean that these men died because they did not rejoice. Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 423. Personally, apart from the numbers, I believe the Massoretic text is reasonable.

1 Samuel 6:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿelep̄h (אֶלֶף) pronounced <i>EH-lef</i>	<i>thousand, family, (500?); military unit</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
It is possible that this word is, instead...			
ʿallûph (אֶלּוּף) [pronounced <i>ahl-LOOF</i>]	<i>tame, docile; friend, intimate; leader, ruler, prince, chief; clans</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #441 BDB #48
<p>This other noun, ʿallûph (אֶלּוּף) [pronounced <i>ahl-LOOF</i>], which, apart from the vowel points, looks exactly the same as ʿelep̄h. In fact, in the original Hebrew, which contained no vowel points, these words would have looked identical, even though they would have been pronounced differently. ʿallûph means <i>leader, a tribal leader, chief, sheik</i>. Actually, it is more complicated than that—some render it <i>clans</i> as well. We could certainly blow this off and say that we would have expected a plural noun here, but we would have expected (in our English thinking minds) to have the plural of the word <i>man</i>, when in fact, we have the singular. The point is, we may have here <i>fifty chief men</i>, which seems to make more sense, given that 50,000 would have been a sizable chunk of men from any portion of Israel. Now, for God to strike down 70 men and 50 chiefs of Israel would make sense, as those men higher up the political ladder would have felt more at ease with opening the Ark and looking into it.</p>			
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

Translation: ... therefore, among the people, He strikes seventy men [and] 50 chief men. We have the numeral *seventy*. This word actually occurs about 100 times in the Old Testament. So he strikes down among the people, seventy a man... In the English, we, of course, would render *man* in the plural.

The difficult portion of this verse comes next. We would first expect a *wâw* conjunction, but there is none. What we have is the numeral *fifty*. This is not in dispute. We then have the masculine singular noun ʿelep̄h (אֶלֶף) [pronounced *EH-lef*], which means *thousand*. It is this single word which may be key to understanding the numbering system in the Hebrew. This is our problem noun and may be the key to our understanding of the Hebrew numeric system and population counts. You see, there is this other noun, ʿallûph (אֶלּוּף) [pronounced *ahl-LOOF*], which, apart from the vowel points, looks exactly the same as ʿelep̄h. In fact, in the original Hebrew, which contained no vowel points, these words would have looked identical, even though they would have been pronounced differently. ʿallûph means *leader, a tribal leader, chief, sheik*. Actually, it is more complicated than that—some render it *clans* as well. We could certainly blow this off and say that we would have expected a plural noun here, but we would have expected (in our English thinking minds) to have the plural of the word *man*, when in fact, we have the singular. The point is, we may have here *fifty chief men*, which seems to make more sense, given that 50,000 would have been a sizable chunk of men from any portion of Israel. Now, for God to strike down 70 men and 50 chiefs of Israel would make sense, as those men higher up the political ladder would have felt more at ease with opening the Ark and looking into it. Most people (apart from some chosen men) could not even get near the Ark). One would have also expected an intervening *wâw* conjunction, but we do not have that either. This gives us: ...fifty thousand a man... or ...fifty chief men [lit., *man*]... or ...fifty clans [of] men [lit., *man*]...³⁶ According to a footnote in the *Open Bible*, some Hebrew manuscripts merely read *70 men*.³⁷ The NIV footnote also mentions this, both noting that most Hebrew manuscripts as well as the Septuagint read *50,070*.

³⁶ I might add that, according to the *Student's Commentary*, 50,000 seems to have crept into the text from the margin (this is a note from Rotherham which gives no more detail than that. Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 294.

³⁷ *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 373.

Furthermore, it is pretty much impossible for there to have been 50,000 people in Beth-shemesh. And, again, we would have expected to find a wâw conjunction preceding the 50,000, but we do not (although this is problematic even with a smaller number). Another problem is that, in the Hebrew, the larger number is generally given first—that is, this should read, *50,000 men and 70 men*; however, it reads *70 men, 50,000 men*. That nonconforming reading in itself suggests that there is a transmission error. Therefore, we will conclude that this refers to *50 chief men*. Furthermore, we must insert a copula for this to make some sense (and perhaps this wâw conjunction was left out by an early copyist).

Let's simply sum up this material in a table and you decide:

Pros and Cons for Various Readings of v. 19

Reading	Pros	Cons
50,070 men	This is the reading found in most Hebrew manuscripts and in the Greek Septuagint, which is a very ancient translation.	No way were there 50,000 men living in Beth-shemesh; some tribes did not have that many men.
70 men	A few Hebrew manuscripts read 70 men. Relatively speaking, this is a large number of men to die. Josephus, in his account, lists only 70 deaths (<i>Antiquities</i> vi. 1, 4). This makes sense. A copula is missing. Also, according to Gleason Archer, there are more transmission errors in I Samuel than there are in almost every other book. ³⁸	Most manuscripts, including the Septuagint, do not read 70 but read 50,070.
70 men [and] 50 chief men	This gives us a reasonable number of deaths and is easily explained with two minor copyist errors (which would have had to have occurred very early on). It makes sense that a disproportionate number of chief men died for looking into the Ark, as they would have <i>had connections</i> , so to speak, to be given that opportunity.	No manuscript reads this way. There is no copula to be found here. Furthermore, none of the ancient versions are in agreement with this understanding. Although, this is the reading I prefer, I cannot say that this must be the correct reading.

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1Samuel 6:19d

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
ʾâbal (אָבַל) [pronounced <i>aw-^BVAHL</i>]	<i>to mourn, to act like a mourner, to go through the motions a ceremonies of mourning</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hithpael perfect	Strong's #56 BDB #5

³⁸ *The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*; Gleason L. Archer; Zondervan Publishing House; ©1982; p. 169.

1 Samuel 6:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
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
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 perfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
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
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced <i>mah-KAW</i>]	<i>a blow, a wounding, a wound, a slaughter, a beating, a scourging</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4347 BDB #646
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i>]	<i>large, great or mighty [in power, nobility, wealth; in number, or magnitude and extent], loud, older, important, distinguished; vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

Translation: *So the people mourned because Y^ehowah had struck a great slaughter among the people.* In this portion of the verse, we do have the verb *to mourn, lament*. In the Hithpael, it means *to act like a mourner, to go through the motions and ceremonies of mourning, to mourn*. Now, because of the words *a great slaughter*, you might think that the previous line *must be* 50,000 men, because, for instance, 120 men would not have been a great slaughter. A great tragedy is based upon percentages and surrounding circumstances and not upon sheer numbers. In war, we might expect a large number of men to die; but we don't expect men to die simply from looking into a box. Furthermore, if the population of Beth-shemesh is 2000, and there are 100 chief men, then this would be a great slaughter. My point is that we still do not know for a certainty just exactly how many men were killed by God. We know that there were a significant number and that 50,070 seems like a bit much.

Scofield comments: *This number is generally considered to be a scribal error. Some discrepant statements concerning numbers are found in the extant Hebrew manuscripts. Error by scribes in transcription of Hebrew numbers was easy, whereas preservation of numerical accuracy was difficult. Inspiration extends only to the inerrancy of the original autographs.*³⁹

³⁹ *The New Scofield Reference Bible*; Dr. C.I. Scofield; ©1967 New York-Oxford University Press; pp. 328–329.

God warned Moses of a similar situation. When Moses spoke with God on Mount Sinai, God warned him to keep the people back so that they didn't come closer to try to get a glimpse of Him (Ex. 19:21). We will have a later incident where a man will reach out his hand to steady the Ark, and God will strike him dead for his irreverence (II Sam. 6:7 | Chron. 13:9–10). Men weren't supposed to even touch the Ark (Num. 4:15). It was constructed in such a way that those who carried it would never come into direct contact with the Ark itself. This is because Jesus Christ is perfect justice and perfect righteousness and we are in natural rebellion against God. At best, we have relative righteousness and there can be no contact between perfect righteousness and relative righteousness. In Beth-shemesh, men who looked into the Ark displayed an *irreverent curiosity*.⁴⁰ God had just vindicated His power and authority before the Philistines, and there were a substantial number of Israelite men whose irreverence was inexcusable.

Now, you may wonder, how did the Philistines get the Ark onto the cart and send it on its way without incident, and yet we have a substantial number of men in Beth-shemesh who are dying simply because they looked into the Ark. It's a simple explanation: the Philistines didn't know any better. Their original capture of the Ark was wrong, and they were aware of that, and they suffered the consequences. Their keeping the Ark in Philistine territory was also wrong, and they paid for that. However, when they decided to return the Ark to Israel, that was the correct move, and, even though they certainly handled the Ark in order to transport it, God did not discipline for the handling of the Ark (so far as we know). Furthermore, the Ark came with poles which were slipped through rings in order to keep anyone from touching the Ark directly. The Philistines were probably so wary of the Ark by the time they loaded it onto the cart, that they were careful not to touch the Ark itself. **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness [negative volition] and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them** (Rom. 1:18–19). Israel, on the other hand, had been given specific directions with regards to the Ark, and that did not include looks into the Ark out of curiosity. Israel knew better and was justly punished for their irreverence. In both cases, their irreverence was punished, even though their irreverence prompted different behavior.

And so say men of Beth-shemesh, “Who is able to stand to faces of Y^ehowah the God the Holy the this and unto whom will He go up from adhesion to us?”

I Samuel
6:20

So the men of Beth-shemesh said, “Who is able to stand before Y^ehowah, this Holy God, and to whom will [the Ark] go besides us?”

So the men of Beth-shemesh said, “Who can stand before Y^ehowah, this Holy God, and to whom can this Ark go besides us?”

First, let's see what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so say men of Beth-shemesh, “Who is able to stand to faces of Y^ehowah the God the Holy the this and unto whom will He go up from adhesion to us?”

The Septuagint

And the men of Bæthsamys said, “Who will be able to pass before this holy Lord God? And to whom shall the Ark of the Lord go up from us?”

Significant differences:

No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

...and they started saying, “No other God is like the LORD! Who can go near him and still live? We'll have to send the chest away from here. But where can we send it?”

⁴⁰ Using the words of *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 381.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

And the men of Beth-shemesh asked, "Who can stand in attendance on the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

And the men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?"

Young's Updated LT

And the men of Beth-Shemesh say, 'Who is able to stand before Jehovah, this holy God? And unto whom does He go up from us?'

What is the gist of this verse? The men of Beth-shemesh ask, "Who can live before Jehovah God?" The second question appears to be, "To whom could the Ark be sent?"**1Samuel 6:20a**

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
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
ʾiysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Bêyth shemesh (בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>bayth-SHEM-esh</i>]	<i>House of the Sun and is transliterated Beth-shemesh</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1053 BDB #112
mîy (מִי) [pronounced <i>mee</i>]	<i>who, whom; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
yâkôl (יָכוֹל) [pronounced <i>yaw-COAL</i>]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾamad (אָמַד) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHD</i>]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5975 BDB #763
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

1Samuel 6:20a

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> .			
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
ʾĕlōhîym (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
qâdôwsh (קָדוֹשׁ) [pronounced <i>kaw-DOWSE</i>]	<i>sacred, holy, set apart, sacrosanct</i>	masculine singular adjective/noun with the definite article	Strong's #6918 BDB #872
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

Translation: So the men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before Y^ehowah, this Holy God,... Their chief men, probably a reference to certain Levites, were killed. The Israelites probably realized what was happening in the territory of the Philistines (at least to some degree) and then had similar occurrences to them. Israel was custodian of the Ark and they now wondered who could be custodian of the Ark of God if having it causes such a great slaughter. Now, quite obviously, every Tom, Dick and Harry does not get to pop open the lid of the Ark to see what it contains. Only the High Priest could go into the room with the Ark of God and that was only one day a year. The upshot was that the people of Beth-shemesh treated the Ark with disrespect or, at best, with a curious indulgence. They treated the most holy object of Israel in a profane manner, and then asked, "Who can stand before Jehovah, this Holy God?"

The application should be obvious: who *can* stand before a holy God? Whose righteousness is good enough to be acceptable before God? Whose life is exemplary enough to find favor with God? The answer is, *no one* is acceptable before God; *no man* has righteousness equal to God's righteousness. As I observe my own sorry life, I become more and more astonished at the arrogance of those who expect that God will find their good works good enough to spend eternity with Him. They somehow think that God can look at their pitiful lives and the human good that they have accomplished, and to somehow judge that worthy of His approbation, despite His perfection and righteousness. Every day of my miserable existence, I cannot imagine having an acceptability before God, apart from Jesus Christ. The more spiritual information I amass, the more I am dumbfounded by God's love, that He would be willing to suffer what I deserve.

1Samuel 6:20b

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
ʾel (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

1Samuel 6:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	who, whom; occasionally rendered how, in what way	pronominal interrogative	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside	preposition of proximity with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to*

Translation: *...and to whom will [the Ark] go besides us?* Or, more literally, *“...and to whom will He [God’s presence as manifested by the Ark] ascend to from adhesion to us?”* The idea is, *the Ark is in Israel, where it belongs, and, furthermore, these are Levite Jews, assistants to the priesthood, and they are custodians of the holy things of God—and yet many people in Beth-shemesh are killed by Jehovah; to whom can the Ark safely go?*

Now, we have a 3rd person masculine singular in this second half, and it appears to refer to *God*, Who is found in this verse. However, God does not exactly ascend away from the Jews to another people. Therefore, *He* refers to both the presence of God and the Ark, which represents the presence of God.⁴¹ The question is really, *to where can the Ark of God be taken?* In the less literal rendering of this verse, I rendered mēʿal as *besides* (or, *other than*). It was obvious that the Ark could not remain with the Philistines—their population was being decimated by their continuing to hold onto the Ark. It was logical to send the Ark back to Israel. However, now Israel is suffering a great slaughter by being in possession of the Ark, and they ask, *“To whom else can this Ark be sent besides us?”* What is interesting is that the residents of Beth-shemesh react very much like those of Ashdod, Gath and Ekron. The thinking is to immediately shuffle the Ark off to some other place because they cannot face the judgment of God.

We do have a problem with this interpretation, which is, the masculine singular is used throughout this verse. *Ark* is a feminine noun. Therefore, we can either assume that the *Ark of God* is taken as a masculine noun or that the reference here is more to the presence of God, which is symbolized by the Ark of God. The former seems to be the most reasonable solution, as, in the next verse, the messengers will clearly speak of the Ark using the masculine singular again.

And so they sent messengers unto inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to say, “Have caused to return, Philistines, Ark of Y^ehowah. Come down; take up him unto you.”

1 Samuel 6:21

Therefore, they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have caused the Ark of Y^ehowah to be returned. Come down and take it up to you.”

⁴¹ It is unclear whether the Septuagint inserted the word *Ark* or whether it was found in the manuscripts from which they worked.

Therefore, they sent some messengers to Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have returned the Ark of Jehovah to us. Come down here and take it from us.”

First, here is what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so they sent messengers unto inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to say, “Have caused to return, Philistines, Ark of Y^ehowah. Come down; take up him unto you.”

The Septuagint And they send messengers to the inhabitants of Cariathiarim, saying, “The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; go down and take it home to yourselves.”

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV They sent messengers to tell the people of Kiriath-Jearim, “The Philistines have sent back the sacred chest. Why don’t you take it and keep it there with you?”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to say, “The Philistines have sent back the Ark of the LORD. Come down and take it unto your keeping.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down and take it to you.”

Young’s Literal Translation And they send messengers unto the inhabitants of Kiriath-Jearim, saying, ‘The Philistines have sent back the ark of Jehovah; come down, take it up unto you.’

What is the gist of this verse? The people of Beth-shemesh sent messengers to Kiriath-jearim, telling them that the Philistines had returned the Ark; and they wanted them to come and get it.

1Samuel 6:21a

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
mal ^ê âk ^ê (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced <i>mah^ê-AWK^ê</i>]	<i>messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong’s #4397 BDB #521

1Samuel 6:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Qir ^e yâth Y ^e ġârîym (קִרְיַת יְעָרִים) [pronounced KIR ⁱ yahth y ^e ġaw-REEM]	<i>City of the Forests [Wood, Thicket]; and is transliterated Kiriath-jearim (or, Kiriath-jearim)</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3293 and #3264 (plural form) BDB #420 Strong's #7157 BDB #900
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l̥]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Translation: Therefore, they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying,... Kiriath-jearim is about ten miles northeast of Beth-shemesh, right on the border of Dan, Benjamin, and Judah, belonging to Judah (Joshua 15:60). It is not really clear why Kiriath-jearim received the messengers and why those in Beth-shemesh didn't send messengers up to Shiloh, from whence the Ark originally came. My guess is, with all who were dying through their contact with the Ark, those in Beth-shemesh looked to find the quickest city to haul the Ark to. I must admit to not being overly confident in that explanation; however, I do not have a good alternate reason.⁴² In any case, I have alluded to on several occasions that it is possible that Shiloh has been burned to the ground.⁴³

1Samuel 6:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<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 plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
P ^e lish ^e tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p ^e -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
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
ʾârôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75

⁴² Wesley guesses that Kiriath-jearim was chosen because it was nearby (reasonable) and a city of stronger defenses, further from the Philistia-Israel border, and therefore, the Ark would be less likely to fall to the Philistines. The latter reason is silly, as the Philistines returned the Ark to them. John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, 1Sam. 6:21.

⁴³ This is also Clarke's opinion: Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 6:21.

1Samuel 6:21b

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

Translation:...“The Philistines have caused the Ark of Y^ehowah to be returned. In the this line, we have the content of the message. Obviously, the loss of the Ark was known throughout Israel. You will recall the *runner* who reported Israel’s loss to the people of Shiloh; no doubt, this occurred throughout all of Israel.

1Samuel 6:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i>]	<i>descend, go down</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
ʿalâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to cause to go up, to lead up, to take up, to bring up</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿêth (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
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 2 nd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: *Come down and take it up to you.*” The people of Kiriath-jearim were asked to *come down* because Beth-shemesh was in a low plain area and Kiriath-jearim was on a hill.

You must realize that Kiriath-jearim is not the closest city to Beth-shemesh; it is not a Levitical city; and it is not Shiloh, where the Ark had been kept throughout most of the time of the judges. So, why did the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh choose Kiriath-jearim to send the Ark to? Therefore, we need to examine is the **Doctrine of the City of Kiriath-jearim**, in order to determine why this city was chosen. The short explanation is this: Kiriath-jearim was right up the road from Beth-shemesh; it was the nearest major city. Furthermore, many of its inhabitants were Gibeonites, which are Canaanites. Along the same lines, this was not a Levitical city, as was Beth-shemesh, and the Levites of Beth-shemesh would rather send their *problem* to a city not with their brothers but to those for whom they feel disdain.

Then, as you realize, I have often fumed and spouted off about the division of the chapters of Scripture, and here is a good place to vent. The next two verses, I Sam. 7:1–2 properly belong with this chapter. Those verses deal with the Ark in Kiriath-jearim, which is apropos. In 7:3, we will deal with Israel’s spiritual revitalization (I don’t care much for the term *spiritual revival*, as there are so many goofy mental associations which come with that phrase). Therefore, what I will do is exegete these verses here in this chapter, and then include the final exegesis with the next chapter as well, without a detailed explanation:

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The Ark is Taken to Kiriath-jearim

And so come men of Kiriath-jearim and so they take up an Ark of Y^ehowah and so they brought him unto a house of Abinadab in the hill and Eleazar his son they consecrated to keep of an Ark of Y^ehowah.

1 Samuel
7:1

So the men of Kiriath-jearim came and they took up the Ark of Y^ehowah and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. Furthermore, they consecrated Eleazar, his son, to keep the Ark of Y^ehowah.

So men from Kiriath-jearim came out and they took up the Ark of Jehovah, taking it to the house of Abinadab, which was on a hill. Then they consecrated Eleazar, his son, to take responsibility for the Ark of Jehovah.

We will begin, as usual, with what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so come men of Kiriath-jearim and so they take up an Ark of Y^ehowah and so they brought him unto a house of Abinadab in the hill and Eleazar his son they consecrated to keep of an Ark of Y^ehowah.

Septuagint And the men of Cariathiarim come, and bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; and they bring it unto the house of Aminadab in this hill; and they sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.

Significant differences: Apart from the designation of the Ark, there are no significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV The people of Kiriath-Jearim got the chest and took it to Abinadab's house, which was on a hill in their town. They chose his son Eleazar to take care of it,...

NLT So the men of Kiriath-jearim came to get the Ark of the LORD. They took it to the hillside home of Abinadab and ordained Eleazar, his son, to be in charge of it.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ The men of Kiriath Jearim came to take the LORD's ark and brought it into Abinadab's house on the hill. They gave Abinadab's son Eleazar the holy occupation of guarding the LORD's ark.

JPS (Tanakh) The men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the Ark of the LORD and brought I into the house of Abinadab on this hill; and they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the Ark of the LORD.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

Young's Updated LT And the men of Kiriath-Jearim come and bring up the ark of Jehovah, and bring it in unto the house of Abinadab, in the height, and Eleazar his son they have sanctified to keep the ark of Jehovah.

What is the gist of this verse? Men from Kiriath-jearim did come down to get the Ark of God. They took it to a man named Abinadab, who lived on a hill, and his son, Eleazar, was consecrated so that he could store the Ark of Jehovah.

1Samuel 7:1a			
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
sâmach (שמח) [pronounced <i>saw-MAHKH</i>]	<i>to rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful, to be merry</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8055 BDB #970
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Qir ^e yâth Y ^e ġârîym (קִרְיַת יְעָרִים) [pronounced <i>KIR-yahth y^eġaw-REEM</i>]	<i>City of the Forests [Wood, Thicket]; and is transliterated Kiriath-jearim (or, Kiriath-jearim)</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3293 and #3264 (plural form) BDB #420 Strong's #7157 BDB #900

Translation: [So the men of Kiriath-jearim came...](#) We do not know much of the discussion; we simply know that the people of Beth-shemesh asked the people of Kiriath-jearim to come and fetch the Ark. There is no indication that any other discussion took place.

1Samuel 7:1b			
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
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>ġaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to come up, to rise, to climb</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
We would have expected to find the Hiphil here, which means <i>to cause to go up, to lead up, to take up, to bring up</i> . We will so render this verb, keeping in mind that this is not completely consistent.			
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
ʿârôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i>]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
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

Translation: ...and they took up the Ark of Y^ehowah... The complete verse so far: **And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the Ark of Y^ehowah...** It is interesting that, even though the Ark has left in its wake death and destruction, that these men would be willing to bring it into their territory. My guess is, they did not know the whole story. Or, it is possible that they knew some of it, and took religious precautions. That is, they did not treat the possession of the Ark lightly.

1 Samuel 7:1c

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
bôw' (וָבוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to take in, to bring, to come in with, to carry</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'êth (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
'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
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
'Ăbîynâdâb (אֲבִינָדָב) [pronounced <i>u^p-vee-naw-DAWB</i>]	<i>my father is noble and is transliterated Abinadab</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #41 BDB #4
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
gib ^e 'âh (גִּבְעָה) [pronounced <i>gib^e-GAW</i>]	<i>hill; this same word is transliterated Gibeah</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1389 BDB #148

Translation: ...and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. Abinadab is an unknown to us at this time, but obviously a man well-revered in the city of Kiriath-jearim. This is followed by *in the gib^e 'âh* (גִּבְעָה) [pronounced *gib^e-GAW*], which means *hill*. I should mention that this is *not* the city of Gibeah, even though it is the same word.⁴⁴ This gives us: **...and they brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill.** One early printed edition, along with the Aramaic, Greek and Syriac codices insert *which is* prior to *on the hill*, which would give us: **...and they brought it to the house of Abinadab which is on the hill.**⁴⁵

⁴⁴ To go into more detail would really open up a can of worms, which is better opened when we actually deal with one of the cities known as *Gibeah* (or, *Geba*).

⁴⁵ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 294. You may wonder why I include many of these minor differences; a point to be made is that the differences found between our present-day Hebrew manuscripts and even the translations of manuscripts which predate them by a millennium are very minor. This should give us great confidence in the modern translations of our Bible.

1Samuel 7:1d

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
ʾêth (את) [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
ʾEl ^e ʿâzâr (אֱלֹעָזָר) [pronounced <i>eġ-ġaw-ZAWR</i>]	<i>God has helped; and is transliterated Eleazar</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #499 BDB #46
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
qâdash (קִדַּשׁ) [pronounced <i>kaw-DAHSH</i>]	<i>to regard as holy, to declare holy or sacred; to consecrate, to sanctify, to inaugurate with holy rites</i>	3 rd person plural, Piel perfect	Strong's #6942 BDB #872
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAR</i>]	<i>to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036
ʾêth (את) [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
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

Translation: Furthermore, they consecrated Eleazar, his son, to keep the Ark of Y^ehowah. Then we have *Eleazar his son*, also a man previously unknown to us (although there has been at least two *Eleazar's* prior to this point in time that we have studied). The verb which is applied to Eleazar is 3rd person plural, Piel perfect of *to declare something holy, to consecrate [or, set apart to God] [something, e.g., a priest], to regard [something or someone] as holy*. Any of these words are good translations, particularly *consecrate*, however, unless you have been going to church for a long time or speak old English fluently, it doesn't mean much to you. This verb means that something is set apart to God; this something takes on the quality of being sacred, holy, different from that which is tied to the earth. The subject of the verb are the men who brought the Ark from Beth-shemesh to Kiriath-jearim (or, at least, certain men of Kiriath-jearim). Some of them may have been Levites (even though Kiriath-jearim is not a Levitical city, this does not mean that Levites do not live there—see the end of the book of Judges, where Levites moved throughout Israel in search of work). In fact, Levites from Beth-shemesh (a Levitical city) could have involved themselves here.

Now, it may sound as though there were some holy and impressive ceremony which consecrated Eleazar to take care of the Ark. There isn't. There is no provision in the Law for the Ark of God to be under the care of some

miscellaneous guy. What was going on is the Beth-shemeshites wanted the Ark gone right away. They wanted it out of their city limits. They took it to the closest major city, a city filled with Gibeonites, and dumped the Ark. However, they couldn't simply take it to the town square and leave it. Therefore, they found a man of note in the city, Abinadab, and entrusted his son with the Ark. They made up some ceremony to consecrate Eleazar to watch over the Ark, and then the Levites from Beth-shemesh (if there were any) split as quickly as they could.

Then we have what Eleazar was consecrated to do: the Qal infinitive construct of *keep, guard, watch, preserve*. Now, the Qal infinitive construct with the lamed introduces a purpose clause, a result clause or a temporal clause. All three are in view here: Eleazar was consecrated for the purpose of keeping the Ark; he was consecrated, and the result was that he guarded the Ark; and, from the standpoint of time, he had to first be consecrated and then he could keep the Ark of God.

Now, there was no show and tell involved here. Eleazar did not bring his ten best buddies over, crack open a 12-pack, and then say, "Hey, let's check out what's in the Ark? I've got it sitting out in the garage." Since we have the Ark being kept in Kiriath-jearim without incident, we may assume that Eleazar did not take his responsibility lightly.

Also, although we are not told which tribe Eleazar is in, one would assume that he is a Levite, simply because the things of God were to be entrusted to the Levites. Otherwise, as Barnes put it, this would have been a *gross violation of the Law*.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Eleazar was not living in a Levitical city, and, when David placed the Ark under temporary care, it went to a Gittite (a man whose family was from Gath, the Philistine city). Furthermore, this Gittite was blessed tremendously (II Sam. 6:10–11). Therefore, even though there are several exegetes who suppose that Eleazar must have been a Levite, we have nothing in Scripture which unequivocally supports that view.

The Ark will remain here in Kiriath-jearim under the care of Eleazar ben Abinadab until early in the reign of David when he brings the Ark to Jerusalem. **And they placed the Ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio led the new cart. They led the cart with the Ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, with Ahio walking ahead of the Ark** (II Sam. 6:3–4).

Now, what you do not realize is that, in reading over a half dozen commentaries in my studies, I come across some wicked stupid things. There is some German, Jan Dus, who suggests that the Ark was placed on a new cart with cows who had never been yoked and that wherever these cows took the Ark to, that would be its home for the next seven years; and that the Ark of God sort of took this meandering tour every seven years. I have no clue as to where he got this notion, except from either a dream or a very fertile imagination. Robinson mentions this after the Ark had been 7 months in Philistia and less than a month in Beth-shemesh.⁴⁷ To me, if you are going to suggest a goofy theory, why not at least suggest it in a place where the evidence is not so obviously contrary (furthermore, we will have a mention of David bringing the Ark from this very place in Kiriath-jearim, which would be about 45 years later). I mention this theory purely for its entertainment value.

And so he was from a day a lodging of the Ark in Kiriath-jearim. I Samuel 7:2a **So the Ark was, from the day of [its] lodging, in Kiriath-jearim.**

Therefore, the Ark remained for an indefinite period of time in Kiriath-jearim.

V. 2 is one of those transitional verses. On the one hand, this verse clearly ends the movement of the Ark, and therefore the discussion of the Ark; on the other hand, it brings into focus the spiritual state of Israel, which leads into Samuel taking the spiritual reigns of leadership over Israel after 20 years. Therefore, this is a proper ending to I Sam. 4–6, and a proper beginning as well for I Sam. 7. To be more precise, we will close out chapter 6 with 1Sam. 7:2a and begin chapter 7 with 1Sam. 7:2b.

⁴⁶ Barnes' Notes; *I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 19.

⁴⁷ Gnana Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations*; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, ©1993; p. 40.

How others rendered this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so he was from a day a lodging of the Ark in Kiriath-jearim.
Septuagint And it came to pass from the time that the Ark was in Cariathiarim.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV ...and it stayed there for twenty years. During this time, everyone in Israel was very sad and begged the LORD for help. Or, "Israel turned to the Lord and begged him for help."
NLT The Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim for a long time—twenty years in all. During that time, all Israel mourned because it seemed that the LORD had abandoned them. [All of v. 2 is here, to give the gist of the NLT].
TEV The Covenant Box of the LORD stayed in Kiriath Jearim a long time, some twenty years. During this time all the Israelites cried to the LORD for help. [All of v. 2 is here, to give the gist of the TEV].

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ A long time passed after the ark came to stay at Kiriath Jearim.
JPS (Tanakh) A long time elapsed from the day that the Ark was housed in Kiriath-jearim,...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And it came about from the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim that the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD. [All of v. 2 is given here].
Young's Updated LT And it comes to pass, from the day of the dwelling of the ark in Kiriath-Jearim.

What is the gist of this verse? The Ark was kept in Kiriath-jearim.

1Samuel 7:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
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 masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
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
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

1Samuel 7:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yāshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^h V]	to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Qir ^e yāth Y ^e ġārīym (קִרְיַת יְעָרִים) [pronounced KIR ^h yahth y ^e ġaw-REEM]	City of the Forests [Wood, Thicket]; and is transliterated Kiriath-jearim (or, Kiriath-jearim)	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3293 and #3264 (plural form) BDB #420 Strong's #7157 BDB #900

Translation: So the Ark was, from the day of [its] lodging, in Kiriath-jearim. This simply tells us that the Ark remained in Kiriath-jearim from that point on.

We will stop our exegesis with this particular verse, as the remainder of 1 Sam. 7 deals with the ministry of Samuel, apart from the Ark of God. In fact, we will stop with: **So the Ark was, from the day of lodging, in Kiriath-jearim** (1Sam. 7:2a).

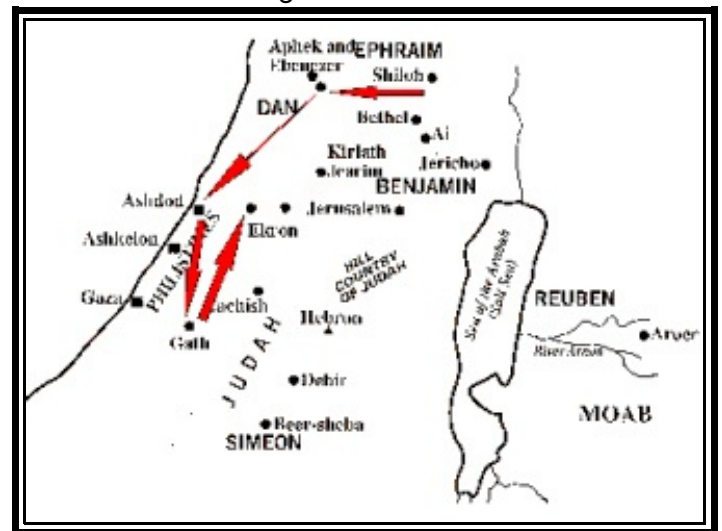
Now, for all intents and purposes, this would be the ideal place to end 1 Sam. 6, at 1 Sam. 7:2a. I am going to continue with the exegesis simply because v. 2 has caused a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding, as it is mistakenly taken as one whole. However, note how neatly this chapter could end:

I will continue the exegesis of this latter half of the verse in 1Sam. 7.

Okay, why did the Ark remain there? What happened to Samuel? Samuel was brought up by Eli, the last judge and a priest in the line of Ithamar, who is now dead. Samuel is a young man, from perhaps the age of three, growing up in the Tent of God. However, Eli did not take his responsibilities lightly and it is highly unlikely that he took Samuel on a grand tour to see the Ark. Samuel knew what was behind the veil and was probably told from the youngest age not to enter into the Holy of Holies. All of a sudden, Eli is old and feeble; soldiers come into the Tent of God demanding the Ark; Eli's two sons accompany the Ark (which they see as part of their bread and butter); Samuel is still a young man and still in training; the Ark is captured by the Philistines; the Philistines finally return the Ark; and *the men of Beth-shemesh* determine where the Ark should be sent.

My point in all of this is, Samuel is not running the show right now (as of 1Sam. 7:2a). He is God's man for the time, but he has little or no authority when the Ark is delivered to Kiriath-jearim. He, not unlike most of God's men, lacks confidence as to what to do. So, there he is, more or less in charge of the Tent of God, without the Ark, with an increasingly smaller group of Israelites to serve year after year because they fall into spiritual adultery. Furthermore, the Tabernacle of God may even be taken down at this point with Shiloh destroyed at this time.

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



Furthermore, if Samuel is older (and I don't think that he is), then he is probably acting also as a judge, which certainly would take up most of his time as well. However, I think that Samuel is still very young; I think he is around 12 at this time, not the age to take the spiritual reigns of Israel. Even though he was dedicated by Eli and trained by Eli, Samuel is not certain that he wants anything to do with the Ark. This is all unspoken, so we must fill in the gap here. He is an intelligent man, and he knows the history of the Ark's journey through the Philistine territory and back into Israel, and he also knows the hundreds of deaths that have occurred as the Ark has been moved from city to city. Therefore, Samuel is probably somewhat awed by the Ark, if not afraid.

In any case, between the Ark being taken to Kiriath-Jearim (1Sam. 7:1), and Samuel making a public speech (1Sam. 7:3), 20 years pass. Samuel's political duties as judge take up more of his time than his spiritual duties. The grandson of Eli is still too young to take over the responsibilities of the Tent of God, as he is 20 years old at this point (he was born the day that Eli died, which was a few hours or days after his father, Phinehas, died). What 1 Sam. 7:2b–17 is about is Samuel taking the reigns of his spiritual authority in Israel. He has gained the respect of Israel as a whole in the commission of his duties as a judge; Israel is aware of his beginnings. After 20 years, Israel is ready to listen to and to obey Samuel in spiritual matters.

When we get to the next chapter, I will discuss the various options as to how this verse and chapter break could go. Bear in mind that the verse and chapter breaks were done long after Scripture was written, so there is no reason to assume that they are divinely inspired (in fact, the chapter break and verse break here would indicate just the opposite).

There is an additional matter that we need to discuss, which may have been the reason that the Ark was never returned to Shiloh. Therefore, we need to examine the **Doctrine of the Destruction of Shiloh**.

I hope that you notice the irony that the Tent of Meeting eventually ended up in Gibeah, which was a city of the Gibeonites who were one of the few Canaanites groups to coexist peacefully with Israel (recall that they deceived Joshua into a treaty and therefore, he did not kill them). The Ark also was taken to a city of the Gibeonites, Kiriath-jearim. These cities were certainly inhabited by Israelites, as the Gibeonites originally occupied roles as hewers of wood and water carriers (i.e., the most menial of labor—Joshua 9:23, 27).

As mentioned, with the destruction of Shiloh, there was the possibility that other cities in that vicinity were also burned to the ground. Keller comments: *About 1050 B.C. Israel's very existence was threatened. It saw itself to be on the point of losing all the fruits of its conquests and all its work of colonization lasting almost 200 years. It was on the verge of falling under the yoke of the Philistines and facing an existence of hopeless slavery. The only way to meet this frightful peril would be to amalgamate the loosely federated tribes and form a solid united front. It was in the face of this pressure from without that Israel became a nation.*⁴⁸

As I have suggested, after the Philistines took the Ark, the soldiers continued to pummel Israel, attacking various cities, including Shiloh. While they did this, however, the Ark was reeking destruction in Ashdod, Gath and Ekron.

⁴⁸ Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (second revised edition); New York, 1981; p. 182.