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# 1 SAMUEL 14

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## 1Samuel 14:1–52

## Jonathan's Victory; Saul's Victories and Defeat

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**Introduction:** In 1Sam. 14, we venture into a very detailed examination of Jonathan's incredibly brave two-man attack upon the Philistines. The primary reason that this is treated as a separate chapter from 1Sam. 13 is that we follow Jonathan and his incredibly heroic exploits.

1Sam. 14 deals with the success of Jonathan and also suggests to us who has written this and the previous chapter—Jonathan. We have a great deal of detail here which could only be known by Jonathan or by his armor bearer. One of the very difficult things to determine is who is the author of any portion of Scripture when the author has not made that clear to us.

One of the things which we notice immediately is that there are words used by this author which are not found anywhere else in 1Sam. 1–12; and there are quite a number of words found here but not in 1Sam. 13. The indication is that we are dealing with what appears to be a different author who has a greater vocabulary than the author of the first 12 chapters.

One of the things which surprised me in this chapter was just how many mistaken interpretations that I came across in the commentaries of McGee, Barnes and Keil and Delitzsch (as well as in other, less accurate, commentaries where erroneous interpretations are to be expected).

Finally, we would hope that if the text is more difficult that we would have a very reliable text. Furthermore, this is narrative, rather than simply being a list of names of people or cities, so I would have expected fewer problems with the Hebrew. Unfortunately, there will be several places where it is clear that the Hebrew text is corrupt, as well as several places where the Greek and Hebrew are radically different. What often helps us in this latter situation is the Dead Sea Scrolls; if they are in agreement with the Greek, then we can generally assume that the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) is the better source. Unfortunately, we have several instances where the latter Hebrew text and the Dead Sea Scrolls are in agreement with one another, and differ from the Septuagint. This will make for some tough choices. This will cause us to examine the laws of textual criticism in this chapter.

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## Jonathan and his Armor-Bearer Assault the Philistine Camp

## Slavishly literal:

## Moderately literal:

And so is the day and so says Jonathan, son of Saul, unto his boy carrying his manufactured goods, "Come and let us pass over into a post of the Philistines who [are] beyond this." And to his father he did not make known.

1Samuel  
14:1

Then [it] was on the day that Jonathan, Saul's son, said to his personal attendant carrying his weapons, "Come and we will pass over to the garrison of Philistines which [is] beyond this." But he did not tell [this] to his father.

Then, on one particular day, Jonathan, Saul's son, said to his personal servant that carried his weapons and armor, "Let's go over beyond that to where the garrison of Philistines is." However, he did not let his father know his plans.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

## Masoretic Text

And so is the day and so says Jonathan, son of Saul, unto his boy carrying his manufactured goods, "Come and let us pass over into a post of the Philistines who [are] beyond this." And to his father he did not make known.

## Septuagint

And when a certain day arrived, Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man that bore his armor, "Come, and let us go over to Messah of the Philistines that is on the other side yonder; but he told not his father. .

## Significant differences:

No significant differences; the only significant difference is where the LXX transliterates one word instead of translating it.

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

## CEV

One day, Jonathan told the soldier who carried his weapons that he wanted to attack the Philistine camp on the other side of the valley. So they slipped out of the Israelite camp without anyone knowing it. Jonathan didn't even tell his father he was leaving. [The CEV transposes vv. 1, 2 and 3]

*The Message*

Later that day, Jonathan, Saul's son, said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to the Philistine garrison patrol on the other side of the pass." But he didn't tell his father.

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

One day Saul's son Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Let's go to the Philistine military post on the other side." But Jonathan didn't tell his father [he was going].

## JPS (Tanakh)

One day, Jonathan son of Saul said to the attendant who carried his arms, "Come, let us cross over to the Philistine garrison on the other side"; but he did not tell his father.

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

## NASB

Now the day came that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the Philistines' garrison that is on yonder side." But he did not tell his father.

*Young's Updated LT*

And the day comes that Jonathan son of Saul says unto the young man bearing his weapons, "Come and we pass over unto the station of the Philistines, which *is* on the other side of this;" and to his father he had not declared *it*.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan speaks to the young man who carries his weapons, telling him that they were going to go over to the camp of the Philistines. He does not tell his father that he is going.

### 1Samuel 14:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
yôm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day, today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
There are two primary ways of spelling <i>Jonathan</i> ; the other is: Y <sup>e</sup> hōwnâthân (יְהוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>-hoh-naw-THAWN</i> ], which we find used 71 times, whereas Yôwnâthân is found 41 times.			
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Shâʾûl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
nâʿar (נָעַר) [pronounced <i>NAH-ğahr</i> ]	<i>boy, youth, young man, personal attendant</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654
nâsâʾ (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
k <sup>e</sup> lîy (כֶּלִּי) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>lee</i> ]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479

**Translation:** Then it was the day when Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man bearing his armor... Jonathan again decides to take matters into his own hands. The beginning wâw consecutive closely connects this chapter with the previous one (along with the context of this chapter).

Apparently, Jonathan has an assistant who carries Jonathan's armor and weapons (as there would be for Saul), and Jonathan speaks to this assistant.

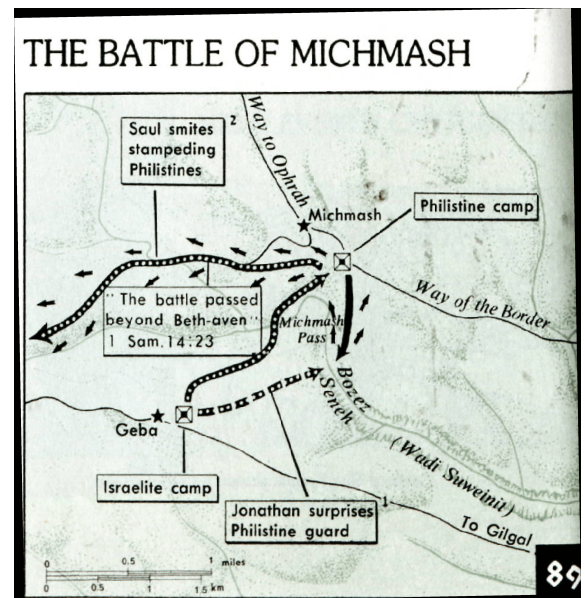
1Samuel 14:1b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative (with a voluntative hê)	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿâbar (עָבַר) [pronounced <i>gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect (with a voluntative hê)	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
matstsâb (מַצֵּבָה) [pronounced <i>matz-TZA<sup>b</sup>V</i> ]	<i>standing-place, station, garrison, post</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4673 BDB #662
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>tîy</sup> (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿêber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced <i>ĠAY<sup>b</sup>-ver</i> ]	<i>region across, beyond, side</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #5676 BDB #719
hallâz (הַלֵּז) [pronounced <i>hahl-LAWZ</i> ]	<i>this, who, which</i>	demonstrative pronoun	Strong's #1975 BDB #229

**Translation:** “Come and pass over to the garrison of the Philistines which is beyond this.” Here, Jonathan suggests to his armor bearer that they go over to the Philistine outpost. There is no more information recorded here than this, so it is possible that the armor bearer does not know what they are going to do. It might even be possible that Jonathan does not know exactly what he is going to do at this point. However, it is clear from the previous chapter that Israel has a problem. The Philistine army has moved full-force into central Israel and daily plagues Israel with raids to nearby cities (1Sam. 13:17–18). The Philistines attacked Israel with impunity. The purpose of these Philistine raids was threefold: (1) they kept their men in training by raiding nearby cities; (2) these raids psychologically pummeled the Israelites (we will later find that some Israelites even allied themselves with the Philistines); and (3) this provided the Philistine encampment with much needed food and supplies. This was not unusual for a people of that era to do. David will move to Ziklag temporarily (1Sam. 27) and he will support his army by raiding nearby peoples. Don’t misunderstand me—I am not saying that this is right; it is simply what was done at this time.

In any case, Jonathan knew something had to be done, as the Philistines were acting in defiance of the armies of the Living God. They were raiding nearby cities for food and sustenance, as well as to psychologically disturb the Israelites, and Jonathan rightfully determined that had to stop.

What this visit by Jonathan and his armor-bearer entails is not very clear, so let me tell you about the geography here. Between Michmash (where the Philistines were) and Geba (where Jonathan was) is the deep Wady es Suweinit, which runs between Bethel and Beeroth (represented today by the modern Beitin and Bireh), and into the Jordan valley. Between Michmash and Geba are two precipitous walls formed by this wady, so that going from one city to the other is no easy matter.

Robinson tells us of his traveling from Geba to Mukhmas: *The way was so steep, and the rocky steps so high, that we were compelled to dismount; while the baggage mules got along with great difficulty. Here, where we crossed, several short side wadys came in from the south-west and north-west. The ridges between these terminate in elevating points projecting into the great wady; and the most easterly of these bluffs on each side were probably the outposts of the two garrisons of Israel and the Philistines. The road passes around the eastern side of the southern hill, the post of Israel, and then strikes up over the western part of the northern one, the post of the Philistines, and the scene of Jonathan’s adventure.*<sup>1</sup> Put quite simply, moving between Michmash and Geba was not an easy thing to do. This is another reason why the assaults that the Philistines carried out went east, west and north.



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### 1Samuel 14:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>a</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (i) [pronounced weh]	and	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>1</sup> Robinson, *Biblical Researches*, p. 289. Taken from Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 454.

## 1Samuel 14:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾâb (אָב) [pronounced a <b>w</b> âv]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household or clan	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-<b>GAHD</b></i> ]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616

**Translation:** ...and he did not make [this] known to his father. This should be pretty obvious. There is little doubt that Saul saw Jonathan as the one who got him into this mess. Therefore, Saul would not really want Jonathan to do anything more. Now, we may feel the same way; however, it will become clear in this chapter that Jonathan had his head screwed on right and that he was doing what he should be doing.

And Saul was staying in an extremity of the Gibeah under the pomegranate which [was] in Migron and the people who [were] with him about six hundreds a man.

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14:2

Meanwhile, Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. The people who [were] with him [numbered] about 600 men.

At this time, Saul has hole up on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree; his troops numbered approximately 600.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

And Saul was staying in an extremity of the Gibeah under the pomegranate which [was] in Migron and the people who [were] with him about six hundreds a man.

#### Septuagint

And Saul sat on the top of the hill under the pomegranate tree that is in Magdon, and there were with him about six hundred men.

#### Significant differences:

Apart from my transliterating *Gibeah* instead of translating it, the MT and LXX are the same.

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

#### The Message

Meanwhile, Saul was taking it easy under the pomegranate tree at the threshing floor on the edge of town at Geba (Gibeah). There were about six hundred men with him.



NLT                      Meanwhile, Saul and his six hundred men were camped on the outskirts of Gibeah, around the pomegranate tree at Migron.

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

JPS (Tanakh)                      Now Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah, under the pomegranate tree at Migron, and the troops with him numbered about 600.

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

NASB                      And Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron. And the people who *were* with him *were* about six hundred men,...

Young's Updated LT                      And Saul is abiding at the extremity of Gibeah, under the pomegranate which *is* in Migron, and the people who *are* with him, about six hundred men,...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul is apparently not in Gibeah proper, but on the outskirts of Gibeah sitting under a pomegranate tree, in a panic, wondering what to do. There are about 600 men with him (recall that he recently had a personal force of 3000 men, and that he had put a call out to all Israeli males to join him in Gilgal—1Sam. 13:2, 4).

1Samuel 14:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Shâ'ûwl (שׂאול) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH<sup>av</sup></i> ]	<i>inhabiting, staying, dwelling, sitting</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
qâtseh (קָצֵה) [pronounced <i>kaw-TSEH</i> ]	<i>end, extremity, outskirts</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7097 BDB #892
Gib <sup>er</sup> âh (גִּבְעָה) [pronounced <i>gr<sup>ih</sup>-GAW</i> ]	transliterated <i>Gibeah</i> ; this same word means <i>hill</i>	proper feminine singular noun; construct form	Strong's #1390 BDB #149
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced <i>TAH-khahth</i> ]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath</i>	preposition	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
rimmôwn (רִמּוֹן) [pronounced <i>rim-MOHN</i> ]	<i>pomegranate, pomegranate tree</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #7416 BDB #941
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81



## 1Samuel 14:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בֶּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
mig <sup>e</sup> rôwn (מִגְרֹן) [pronounced mig <sup>e</sup> -ROHN]	transliterated <i>Migron</i> (possibly <i>Migdon</i> )	proper noun locale	Strong's #4051 BDB #550

**Translation:** And Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which [is] in Migron;...

We know nothing about this place Migron, except that it is on the outskirts of Gibeah, south of Michmash. Migron is also mentioned in Isa. 10:28; the details are sketchy, the intervening time frame is great, so that we do not know if the reference is to the same Migron or not. Robert Gordon suggests that a slight rearrangement of the letters for *Migron* would result in *threshing floor*.<sup>2</sup> I have examined several possibilities, and I just don't see it. The end result would have the two prepositions, bēyth and min, together (or, *in from*), which is not something which I can find another instance of. Given that we have no pressing reason that this proper noun is wrong, we will accept it as is.

Given all that had happened, Saul was taken aback. He really had no idea what to do, and he sat underneath the pomegranate tree in Migron pondering his situation. This is one of the smartest things that Saul could do—nothing. He was almost out of assets and in a hopeless situation. It was better for him to sit back and do nothing than it was to act.

One portion of this verse which I originally ignored was this pomegranate tree. Generally speaking, in a city, the important meetings took place near the gates of the city. However, Saul and his army are not holed up in a city, but on the outskirts of Gibeah. When Saul is outdoors, he does not stand out in the sun, he has a place underneath a tree which he has chosen. This is in keeping with Deborah, who used to sit under the palm tree (Judges 4:5) or the tamarisk tree under which Saul will stand in 1Sam. 22:6. This would indicate to us that this is summer in Israel, even though I am not certain whether that knowledge will help us in this chapter.

## 1Samuel 14:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

<sup>2</sup> Robert Gordon, *I & I1 Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 136.

## 1Samuel 14:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
kaph or kē (כּ) [pronounced <i>kʰ</i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
shêsh (שֵׁשׁ) [pronounced <i>shaysh</i> ]	<i>six</i>	masculine form of numeral	Strong's #8337 BDB #995
mêʾâh (מֵאָה) [pronounced <i>may-AW</i> ]	<i>one hundred</i>	feminine plural numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** ...and the people who [were] with him [numbered] approximately six hundred men. Saul has no idea what to do. This verse tells us that he did not have much of an army remaining. He originally had a personal fighting force of 3000 men (1Sam. 13:2) and he had just put out a call to all Israel to join him in Gilgal, his original rallying point (1Sam. 13:4). The end result is that he now has 600 men, indicating an unusually high desertion rate as well as a meager response to his call to action. It will also turn out that a considerable force of Israelis joined the Philistines, preferring to back a winner (1Sam. 14:21).

Often, as I go through various commentaries, it is very unclear as to what is physically going on. In one commentary, Saul has moved south from Geba to Gibeah in this verse. In another, in v. 2, Saul is in Gibeah while Jonathan is in Geba. Who moves from where to where? Using the very rough map below, I will describe the correct troop movement.

## Troop Movement of the Israelis and the Philistines

1. Originally, Saul is in Michmash with 2000 men; Jonathan is in Gibeah with 1000 men. Jonathan strikes a garrison of Philistines which is in Geba (1Sam. 13:2–3).
2. Saul summons the males of Israel to Gilgal (1Sam. 13:4). As Saul called for all Israel to assemble there, we may reasonably assume that Jonathan and his troops went there as well.
3. The Philistines gather in Michmash with 6000 horsemen, 3000 chariots, and innumerable support (1Sam. 13:5). Saul's men begin to desert him, and he will be left with only 600 men (1Sam. 13:6–7, 15 14:2).
4. Samuel goes to Saul in Gilgal, but Saul has already offered up sacrifices to God apart from Samuel (1Sam. 13:14).
5. Samuel leaves Gilgal and Saul and his men go to Gibeah (1Sam. 13:15—in the Greek).
6. Where we pick up the thread of our narrative in v. 2, Saul, Jonathan<sup>3</sup> and 600 men are in Gibeah (1Sam. 14:2); the Philistines are in Michmash, sending out raiding parties to the east, west and north (1Sam. 13:17–18).



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Saul had also just finished a tense confrontation with Samuel, who told him that his kingdom and dynasty were over, insofar as God was concerned (1Sam. 13:11–14). We have no record of Saul confessing or acknowledging his sin against God. We do not have any expression of regret. In fact, for all Saul knows, this could be his last stand. After all, Samuel did tell him that his kingdom would not endure and that [God has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and Jehovah appointed him as ruler over His people](#) (1Sam. 13:14b). Furthermore, Saul's army did not have the weapons to fight the Philistines. He was in a hopeless situation.

On the plus side, the men who remained with Saul are very courageous and dedicated men. They have witnessed thousands of men desert, yet they have remained with Saul in his move from Gilgal to Gibeah in what many of them realized could be their last days. Also on the positive side, we see no evidence of Saul blaming his son Jonathan for what has taken place. He does not spend any time concerned with assigning blame to their present situation.

**And Ahijah son of Ahitub, brother [or, relative] of Ichabod, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, priest of Y<sup>e</sup>howah in Shiloh wearing an ephod. And the people had not known that had gone Jonathan.**

1Samuel  
14:3

**And Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, brother of Ichabod, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, [was] the priest of Y<sup>e</sup>howah in Shiloh wearing the ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone [from them].**

**Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, the brother of Ichabod, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, was the priest of Y<sup>e</sup>howah in Shiloh who wore the ephod. The people did not know that Jonathan had left them.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

**And Ahijah son of Ahitub, brother [or, relative] of Ichabod, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, priest of Y<sup>e</sup>howah in Shiloh wearing an ephod. And the people had not known that had gone Jonathan.**

<sup>3</sup> We are assuming that Jonathan is with Saul at this time, based upon 1Sam. 3).

Septuagint And Achia son of Achitob, the brother of Jochabed the son of Phinees, the son of Heli, was the priest of God in Selom wearing an ephod; and the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

Significant differences: None.

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

CEV Ahijah was serving as priest, and one of his jobs was to get answers from the LORD for Saul. Ahijah's father was Ahitub, and his father's brother was Ichabod. Ahijah's grandfather was Phinehas, and his great-grandfather Eli had been the LORD's priest at Shiloh.

*The Message* Ahijah, wearing the priestly Ephod, was also there. (Ahijah was the son of Ahitub, brother of Ichabod, son of Phinehas, who was the son of Eli the priest of GOD at Shiloh.) No one there knew that Jonathan had gone off.

NLT (Among Saul's men was Ahijah the priest, who was wearing the linen ephod. Ahijah was the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother. Ahitub was the son of Phinehas and the grandson of Eli, the priest of the LORD who had served at Shiloh.

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

*God's Word™* [He had with him about 600 men] in addition to Ahijah, the son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub, who was the son of Phinehas and the grandson of Eli, the LORD's priest at Shiloh. Ahijah was wearing the priestly ephod. [the portion in brackets is v. 2b]

JPS (Tanakh) Ahijah son of Ahitub brother of Ichabod son of Phinehas son of Eli, the priest of the LORD at Shiloh, was there bearing an ephod.—The troops did not know that Jonathan had gone.

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

NASB ...and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD at Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

*Young's Updated LT* ...and Ahiah, son of Ahitub, brother of Ichabod, son of Phinehas son of Eli priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, bearing an ephod; and the people knew not that Jonathan had gone.

**What is the gist of this verse?** What we have here is the priestly line. Ahijah is the priest of Israel who wears the ephod. He was with Saul. He is the son of Ahitub who is Ichabod's brother (or relative). Ichabod is the son of Phinehas, who is the son of Eli, who was the priest of God at Shiloh. In the second half of this verse, we are told that Jonathan disappeared from camp and no one knew.

## 1Samuel 14:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾăchîyyâh (אֲחִיָּיָהוּ) [pronounced <i>uh-khee-YAW</i> ]	<i>brother of Yah (God)</i> , and is transliterated <i>Ahijah</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #281 BDB #26

## 1Samuel 14:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʾăchîṭûwᵇ (אחיטוב) [pronounced uh-khee-TU <sup>bw</sup> ]	my brother [is] goodness, and is transliterated Ahitub	masculine proper noun	Strong's #285 BDB #26
ʾăch (אח) [pronounced awhk]	brother, kinsman or close relative	masculine singular construct	Strong's #251 BDB #26
ʾîy kâᵇvôwd (אי כבוד) [pronounced ee-kaw <sup>b</sup> -VOHD]	not glory or not glorious and is transliterated Ichabod	masculine proper noun	Strong's #336 BDB #33
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
phîyn <sup>e</sup> châç (פִּינְחָס) [pronounced phe <sup>eh</sup> -KHOSS]	which possibly means Negro in Egyptian, and is transliterated Phinehas	masculine proper noun	Strong's #6372 BDB #810
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʿêlîy (עלי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated Eli	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced koh-HANE]	priest	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y <sup>e</sup> howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
Shilôw (שִׁלּוֹ) [pronounced shi-LOH]	to be quiet, to be at ease, to be prosperous; transliterated Shiloh	proper noun locale	Strong's #7887 BDB #1017
nâsâʿ (נָסָא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	to lift up, to bear, to carry	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
ʾêphôwd (אֵפֹד) [pronounced ay-FOHD]	part of religious clothing worn by High Priest; transliterated ephod	masculine singular noun	Strong's #646 BDB #65

**Translation:** And Ahijah [was] the son of Ahitub, brother [or, *relative*] of Ichabod, son of Phinehas son of Eli, the priest of Y<sup>e</sup>howah in Shiloh, bearing the Ephod. The verb *nâsâ`* indicates that there is more to this than the simple wearing of an outfit. *Bearing, lifting up, carrying* the ephod means that there is religious significance to the wearing of the Ephod; there is more to it than simply wearing a piece of clothing. It has always been closely tied to determining the will of God.

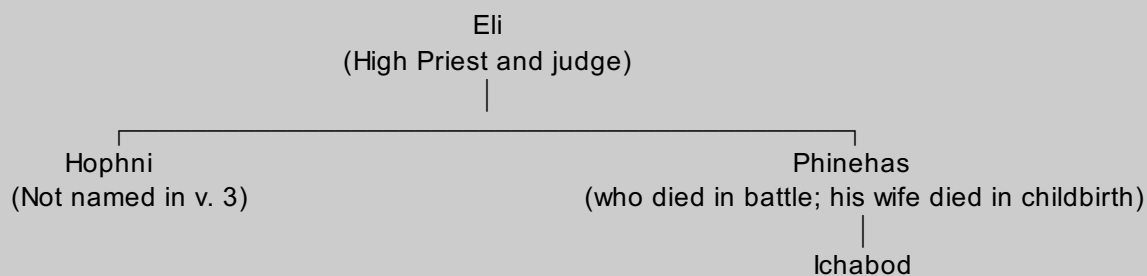
Furthermore, my guess would be that the *wearing of the Ephod* is attributed to Ahijah rather than to Eli (see also 1Sam. 14:18, 36b–37).<sup>4</sup> However, this introduces a problem—if Ahijah is the one wearing the Ephod, then would he also be the priest of Y<sup>e</sup>howah at that time in Shiloh? Now, the problem is not with Scripture, as we do not know exactly when Shiloh was destroyed; therefore, one interpretation this verse is that the Tent of God is still set up in Shiloh (minus the Ark of God, which is in Kiriath-jearim—1Sam. 7:1); and the destruction of Shiloh is still to come (as you may recall from our discussion, Shiloh may have been already destroyed by the Philistines under the watch of Samuel).

However, it is also possible to read this verse with Eli as *having been* the High Priest of Y<sup>e</sup>howah in Shiloh (he would have really been that last true High Priest); and his relative Ahijah is said to be wearing (actually, *bearing*) the Ephod, presumably in Gibeah with Saul and the people. The indication is that we are, in the midst of this confrontation, also mentioning the line of Eli, which is functioning once again in the realm of the priesthood, albeit imperfectly. Such an interpretation would allow for the previous destruction of Shiloh, having occurred around the time that the Ark was taken, and prior to the 20 or so years of peace enjoyed on Samuel's watch, alluded to in 1Sam. 7:13–14.

So there is no confusion—we have no contradiction here; we are simply trying to properly interpret this verse, and its interpretation would be related to when exactly Shiloh was destroyed. My interpretation is that Eli was the High Priest in Shiloh, which has since been destroyed; and that Ahijah is Eli's descendant, and that Ahijah is the one bearing the ephod and therefore the one who has the spiritual authority (which is below Samuel's authority). If we take this position, then all other previous mentions of Shiloh should be in agreement with our interpretation; otherwise, our speculation must be revised.

Sometimes, words just do not competently convey information. This is one of the reasons that my works include so many charts. It is much easier to grasp a family line by examining a chart than it is by reading the words which say the same thing.

#### The Line to Ahijah



<sup>4</sup> To give a more complete argument: in v. 18, in the Greek, Saul calls for the ephod. The ephod was used for guidance from God, which was what Saul needed. It would be reasonable to call for the ephod if the priest and ephod were in camp. Then we have Saul and the priest speaking to one another in w. 36b–37 and Saul is asking for the priest to determine God's will. Again, this is done using the ephod, which is not mentioned in this passage, but clearly implied.

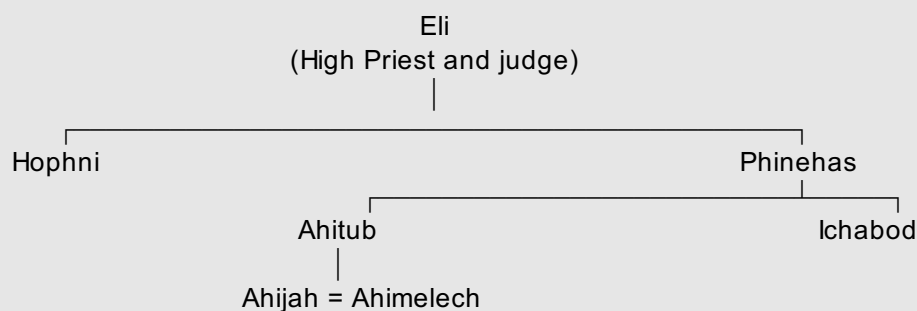




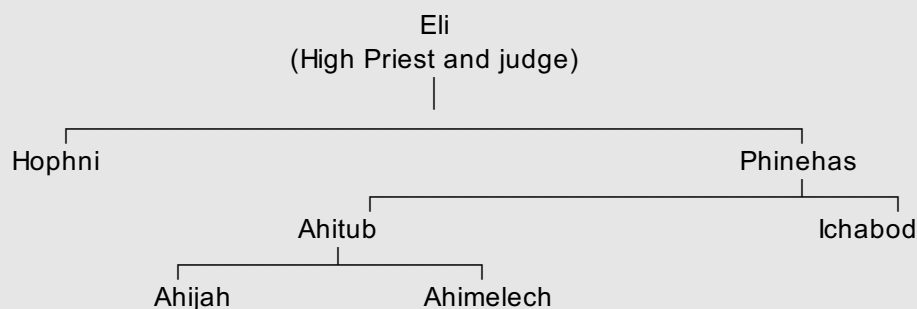
## What is the Relationship Between Ahijah and Ahimelech?

### Three Theories

1. The next problem to deal with is Ahijah, who is very possibly equivalent to Ahimelech of 1Sam. 22, who is called the son of Ahitub several times by Saul. In the Hebrew, *Ahijah* is ʾĀchîyyâh (אֲחִיָּהּ) [pronounced *uh-khee-YAW*]; *Ahimelech* is ʾĀchîymelek (אֲחִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced *uh-khee-MEH-lek*]. Although there is no way that one of these names is mistaken for the other, it is reasonable to suppose that the first is the shortened equivalent of the second. *Ahimelech* means *son of the king*. One might inquire, *You're the son of the king? Which king would that be?* However, there is nothing wrong with taking this as being the *son of the Divine King*, referring to God the Son, Who is King over Israel. *Ahijah* means *son of Jah* (a divine name). The difference in the names is simply replacing *Jah* with *melek*; both names refer to the same *Divine King over Israel*. A similar example of this would be the names *Eliakim* and *Jehoiakim* (two names for the same person—2Kings 23:34), as well as *Eliab* and *Elie* (1Chron. 6:27, 34). Given that *Ahimelech* is called the *son of Ahitub* three times in that passage, and Ahijah's name is never mentioned, we would assume that they are one and the same person. Of the three possibilities, this seems to be the most likely, primarily because Ahijah is never mentioned again). I will include a family line chart for each case to make this much easier to see.

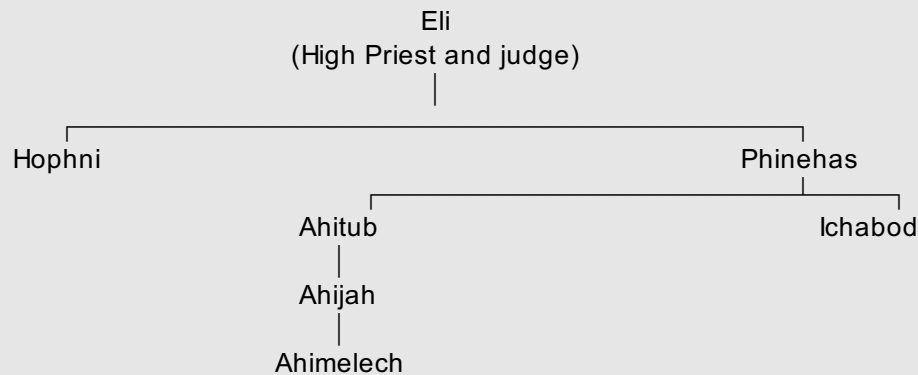


2. Another alternative is that Ahijah is the brother and possibly predecessor to Ahimelech. For some unknown reason, by 1Sam. 22, Ahijah is no longer the High Priest (in fact, it is even uncertain that he is the High Priest here). Ahimelech is not really called the High Priest in 1Sam. 22, but he does appear to be the head of the priests in Nob at that time. This uncertainly leads me to another tangent. We are fairly certain that the city of Shiloh was razed already by the Philistines, although the Scriptural proof are passages written long after the fact. This would account for all the priests being in Nob in 1Sam. 22 and it would account for the fact that we have no unequivocal High Priest of Israel. If Shiloh was burned to the ground and if the priests barely escaped with the Tent of God and the artifacts, then their priesthood is likely in some sort of chaos.



3. A third alternative is that Ahijah is the father of Ahimelech. However, given the recent mention of Ahijah in this passage, we would expect Ahimelech to be named as his son in 1Sam. 21–22. Therefore, this is the least likely scenario.

## What is the Relationship Between Ahijah and Ahimelech? Three Theories



Now, of course I realize to many of you, these are just names and the relationship of Bob to Biff is not really of any interest to you. I, on the other hand, tend to get very anal-retentive about some of these things, and I like them all to fall neatly into place. The way these things most neatly fall into place is if Ahijah = Ahimelech.

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Now that we have gone through the messy part of interpreting who is who in the first half of this verse, we should discuss in more detail who is who. Eli was the High Priest to God who raised Samuel as his own son in Shiloh (1Sam. 2:18–3:21). Eli was a rotund man and his sons, Phinehas<sup>5</sup> and Hophni, did not believe in God, but liked the sacrifices, as it meant that it was barbeque-time for them. Therefore, when he became old, they acted as priests to God, primarily for the meat (1Sam. 2:12–17). Because his sons were degenerate, God gave Samuel to Israel to act as the High Priest (his authority over Israel is clear in 1Sam. 8–12). Because of the degeneracy of Eli's sons, and because Eli did not bar them from priestly activity, God cut off the priestly line of Eli (1Sam. 2:27–33). The sign to Eli that this man of God was telling him the truth was that his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas would both die on the same day (1Sam. 3:34). Israel was at war against the Philistines in 1Sam. 4 and they needed something to turn the tide of battle, so they got the Ark of God as a good luck charm to take with them into battle against the Philistines. Along with this Ark came Hophni and Phinehas. The ark was captured by the Philistines and Hophni and Phinehas were killed in this battle. When Eli heard that they had died, he fell over backwards on his chair in grief, and died in this fall. At this time, all that remained of this line was the pregnant wife of Phinehas (as far as we know). She is extremely grieved at the death of her husband, father-in-law and brother-in-law and goes into labor at hearing the news. She dies in childbirth, but after giving birth to a son, Ichabod, whose name means *the glory of God has departed*. This is all in 1Sam. 4.

There are several men named Ahitub in the Levite priestly line. His actual relationship might seem murky here, but let's just simply go with the easiest explanation. Ahitub is the older brother of Ichabod and the son of Phinehas. The Hebrew allows for both Ahitub and Ichabod to be sons of Phinehas; it also allows for either one to be the son of Phinehas. Simplest understanding is what we will assume. Being the older brother, Ahitub would assume the priesthood responsibilities rather than Ichabod. The more convoluted explanation is that Ahitub is somehow differently related to Ichabod. The problem with this explanation is that it would be easier to state their relationship exactly, unless they were barely related, in which case it would be easier to just give his lineage. Again, we will assume that the simplest explanation is the correct explanation, and there is no Scripture which would contradict this. However, we need to deal with age next. Eli was old when he died and old when Samuel came along. It is reasonable to assume that Samuel was much younger than Eli's sons. He would be closer in age to Eli's grandsons, one of whom was definitely Ichabod and the other we are postulating to be Ahitub. Samuel was old at this time, meaning that Ichabod and Ahitub would also be old. Therefore, the likely candidate age-wise and lineage-wise for a priest would be a son of Ahitub. So, the simplest explanation also results in a reasonable age for the

<sup>5</sup> Let me state the obvious: this is not the great priest Phinehas from the days of Joshua.

priest (he's probably 20 years older than Saul, as a rough guess). However, if this battle against the Philistines is not at the beginning of Saul's career but midway through (which we will discuss in v. 50), then he and the priest would have probably been within 20 years of each other in age.

Now, it is interesting that Ahijah has assumed the priesthood, as Samuel is still around. Samuel is old, he is an icon, but he is well-known and respected by the people of Israel. His sons have not followed in his footsteps, so the priestly line does not continue through Samuel. Since Samuel is old enough to require his sons to function as judges, it is reasonable to assume that someone has to also function as a priest when Samuel is unavailable; and that is where Ahijah comes in. Again, we may go with the simplest explanation that Ahijah was the High Priest, as he did have access to the Ephod (which is implied but not outright stated in 1Sam. 14:3, 10,<sup>6</sup> 18–19, 37). And if not the High Priest, per se, then the priest of the camp of Saul; the highest ranking Aaronite.

Another thing which should be mentioned is the overall time-frame. Given that Ichabod was born the day that the Ark was taken from Israel and that Ahijah is probably his nephew (this would have to be by an older brother, Ahitub), and given that Samuel is an old man by this time, and if we are 20 years into the reign of Saul, then perhaps 50–60 years have passed since the Ark was taken and returned.

Sometimes, the easiest way to see this is in a chart.

The Ages of the Priests and their Descendants		
Priest/Descendant	Relationship	Age and information
<b>Eli</b>	High Priest and judge	98 years old at his death, as per Keil and Delitzsch. <sup>7</sup> Given that he was such a fat man, I might put his age at death between 60 and 70.
<b>Phinehas</b>	One of the two sons of Eli	Died on the same day as Eli; he would have been 60–65 as per Keil and Delitzsch; closer to 40–50 by my accounting.
<b>Samuel</b>	Eli's replacement; raised by Eli	Eli was already old when Samuel came on the scene; and Eli's sons were already acting as priests (but not doing a very good job). I see Eli as being about 50 (maybe slightly less) when Samuel was brought to him; his sons would have been about 30. So Samuel would have been about the age of the sons of Phinehas. This would make him about 70 (or younger) when Saul is warring with the Philistines in our chapter.
<b>Ahitub</b>	Son of Phinehas, older brother of Ichabod	Ahitub was probably about 10 years old (or younger) when Phinehas died. Ahitub would have been too young to participate in the war. <sup>8</sup> We have about 20 years of peace, another attack by the Philistines, and possibly another 20 years of peace which go by (1Sam. 7). At this time, Samuel is the spiritual leader and judge over Israel. We have another 20 years or so of Saul's reign (this will be discussed later), making Ahitub about 70 during the time that Saul is at war with the Philistines.

<sup>6</sup> This will require some explanation.

<sup>7</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 455. Keil and Delitzsch's remarks caused me to put together this chart.

<sup>8</sup> Keil and Delitzsch make Ahitub to be age 40; however, at that age, we would expect him to be at war with the Philistines, along with his father, Phinehas. Given that Phinehas will sire a son, Ichabod, who will be born the day he dies, it makes more sense for this son to be 10 years younger than his older brother rather than 40 years younger.

The Ages of the Priests and their Descendants		
Priest/Descendant	Relationship	Age and information
Ahijah	Son of Ahitub	Ahijah will be about 40–50 and living in the war camp while Saul is at war with the Philistines. Saul might be about 10 years younger than Ahijah. About 10–15 years from this war, Saul will kill Ahijah (also known as Ahimelech) <sup>9</sup> in 1Sam. 22 at Nob. At his death, Ahijah will be somewhere between 50 and 65.
Abiathar	The son of Ahijah and the priest during David's reign	When his father, Ahijah, is slain at Nob by Saul, Abiathar escapes. He must be 10–30 years old, as he will be the High Priest throughout the entire 40 year reign of David.

Being a former math teacher, I have to be comfortable with the ages and generations of these men. Those things must make sense to me in order for me to go on. I submit that, in most of these instances, the age I state could vary by as much as 10 years either way, without causing any problems with the text.

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The last thing that we need to examine is the Ephod of God. We will spend no little time justifying that the ephod of God is what Saul will call for in 1Sam. 14:18 (the Hebrew reads *Ark*), so we need to have some idea as to what the Ephod is. We find a description of the High Priest's clothing, including the Ephod, in Ex. 28 and 39. What appears to be the case is that the Ephod was similar to shoulder pads or an armless outer vest (which may have extended down as far as the wearer's hips) and that there were two stones mounted on the shoulders. Attached to the ephod was a breastplate, and mounted on the breastplate were 12 stones, one for each tribe of the Israelites. When God's will was desired, the High Priest would be called forward and apparently these stones would light up in answer to simple questions put forth of the priest. This might be seen as a very mystical approach; however, the more natural explanation is that the combination of the sun and clouds overhead to cause one stone to shine whereas the others did not. When one tribe was chosen over another tribe, the breastplate was used. If one desired simple yes or no questions to be answered by God, the Ephod was used. The Ephod is mentioned in our context (1) to indicate that there was a man who handled the priestly duties under Saul, and that man was Ahijah; and (2) to prepare us for Saul calling for the Ephod later on in this chapter for guidance (1Sam. 14:18). Sadly, Saul will have this same man murdered in cold blood right before Saul's own eyes (1Sam. 22).

There are at least two instances where the word *ephod* is used, but it is not a reference to the *Ephod* of God. In Judges 17:5, we have the itinerant priest Micah. The priesthood went down through the line of Aaron (it is a mistake to equate the Levites with the priesthood). It didn't take long before there were way more people in his line than would ever be needed to serve God at the Tent of God. Some priests went out and established private ministries elsewhere. Let's say you are a rich guy or there is a reasonably wealthy town, and they want to hire a man to be their personal priest,—well, this could be done. It was certainly not Biblical, but many Old Testament events do not line up with the will of God. Micah became a privately-employed priest and he built several religious artifacts (which no doubt gave great credence to his *priestly* office). Young Samuel also wore a linen ephod, which tells us that not every ephod had to be made to the specifications of Ex. 28. Samuel's mother made him clothing and it was very likely similar to the priestly clothing worn by Eli, but a 100 sizes smaller. In contrast to the Micah of Judges, this was not a blasphemous act on the part of Samuel's mother. Samuel was given over to God, and he was given a similar priestly uniform every year by his mother (1Sam. 2:18–19).

A reasonable question would be, *is this the real Ephod in this passage?* My first inclination would be to answer with a guarded yes. Recall that it is likely that Shiloh has been razed sometime during the previous 30–40 years,

<sup>9</sup> *Ahijah* means *son of Jehovah*; *Ahimelech* means *son of the king*. This is why these two names can be applied to the same person.

probably by the Philistines. We do not know exactly where the priests or the Tent of God are (although it did survive the attack). We would reasonably suppose they are in Nob (1Sam. 21). Whereas it is clear in Judges 17 and 1Sam. 2 that the ephods mentioned are not the *ephod of God*, it is unclear in this passage. Since nothing is stated which clearly defines this as Ahijah's homemade ephod, we will assume that we are speaking of the real deal here.

There is a connection between Urim and Thummim and the Ephod and breastplate, although we do not know exactly what it is. The Ephod of God and breastplate were both associated with determining God's will, as were the mysterious Urim and Thummim. I will theorize that perhaps *Urim* referred to the two stones of the ephod and that Thummim referred to the 12 stones of the breastplate. Another possibility is the Urim referred to one stone of the ephod and that Thummim referred to the other stone. Another possibility is that, whatever the Urim and Thummim were, they were placed *inside* the breastplate (see Ex. 28:30). A fourth possibility is the Urim and Thummim mean *lights and dark nesses* and refer to these stones lighting up or shining when questions are asked.

We also hear about the lots which Israel would throw to determine God's will, which may or may not be related to Urim and Thummim or to what is kept in the breast pocket of the Ephod. We have gone into great detail on this topic in Deut. 33:8 where we examined the **Doctrine of Urim and Thummim**.

Just in case you choose not to examine that doctrine, let me give you a brief summary:

### A Brief Summary of the Doctrine of Urim and Thummim

Although Urim and Thummim were used to determine God's will, we do not know the exact nature of Urim and Thummim. Some translate these words to mean *Lights and Dark nesses* as well as the more common *Lights and Perfections*. However, what Urim and Thummim were is unknown to us at this time. Some believe them to be the 14 stones affixed to the Ephod of God, which would light up in order to determine God's will. Some believe these to be lots which are kept in the pouch of the Ephod (this is only a theory, as we are *never* told this in Scripture) and others believe them to be two stones kept in the pouch of the Ephod (again, there is no evidence of this in Scripture either). These words are only found 7 times in Scripture (Ex. 28:30 Lev. 8:8 Num. 27:21 Deut. 33:8 1Sam. 28:6 Ezra 2:63 Neh. 7:65), and they are never directly associated with a specific incident where God's will is sought and revealed. However, we may reasonably assume that the three instances associated with seeking God's will from the Ephod of God involved Urim and Thummim (1Sam. 14 24:9–12 30:6–8). There are other incidents where the Ephod is not specifically named where Urim and Thummim may have been used (Joshua 7:6–19 15:1 16:1 Judges 1:1–2 20:18–28).

God purposely denied us specific details about Urim and Thummim so that there is no way that they would be duplicated and looked to for guidance. At this point in time, we have the Word of God to guide us.

The actual doctrine is about 10 pages long with much more than you wanted to know about Urim and Thummim.

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This next portion of the verse is rather difficult to grasp; not because the Hebrew is difficult, but because it seems to have been inserted without reason. We have Jonathan and his armor bearing heading over to take a look at the Philistines and the people don't realize that he has gone (next portion of this verse). However, suddenly, in the middle of this, those descended from the former High Priest Eli are named. What appears to be the situation is that it is Ahijah who is wearing the Ephod, which is used to determine the will of God; and, despite that, no one knows that Jonathan has gone.

## 1Samuel 14:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿam (אָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lô` (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâda` (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHÇ</i> ]	<i>to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
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
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw- THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220

**Translation:** *And the people did not know that Jonathan had departed.* This is a rather weird thing, to suddenly stop and mention Eli's line; and now we are back to the main action. Jonathan and his armor bearer have gone to spy on the Philistines, and those in Gibeah are not aware that they have left. Obviously, this would have all held together better if v. 3b were a part of v. 4. Or, even better, we could have left out Ahijah's lineage, and this would have all fit together perfectly.

It is this verse (and v. 17), which clearly tell us that Jonathan and Saul were originally together in Gilgal and then they moved as a group to Gibeah. Had Jonathan remained in Geba, (1) the fact that he left to investigate the Philistine camp and that the people in Gibeah did not know he was gone would make little sense. Why mention that Jonathan is gone from Gibeah if he was not in Gibeah in the first place? (2) When Saul realizes that something is up in the Philistine camp, then he quickly inventories the troops and finds that Jonathan is not there (1Sam. 14:17). There would be no reason to number the troops and determine that Jonathan was gone, if Jonathan was stationed in another city.<sup>10</sup>

*And between the passes which sought Jonathan to pass through above the garrison of the Philistines, a tooth of the rock from the side from this and from a tooth of the rock from the side from this. And a name of the one, Bozez; and a name of the one, Seneh.*

1Samuel  
14:4

*And between the passes through which Jonathan desired to pass through overlooking the Philistines's outpost, [there was] a sharp [steep?] crag on this side and a sharp [steep?] crag on that side. And the name of the one [was] Bozez; and the name of the other [was] Seneh.*

<sup>10</sup> I realize that I may often seem to overanalyze a passage; however, I usually do this because I read a commentary where this has been completely misinterpreted and that an exegete has Saul and Jonathan still in different cities at this time.



**There was a sharp high crag on both sides of the passes through which Jonathan desired to cross through to get to the Philistine's outpost. One side was named Bozez and the other was named Seneh.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And between the passes which sought Jonathan to pass through above the garrison of the Philistines, a tooth of the rock from the side from this and from a tooth of the rock from the side from this. And a name of the one, Bozez; and a name of the one, Seneh.
Septuagint	And in the midst of the passage whereby Jonathan sought to pass over to the encampment of the Philistines, there was both a sharp rock [lit., <i>tooth off a rock</i> ] on this side, and a sharp rock on the other side; the name of the one was Bases, and the name of the other Senna.
Significant differences:	No significant differences; it is difficult to determine where Jonathan is in relation to the Philistines, even with the extensiveness of this text.

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

CEV	Jonathan decided to get to the Philistine camp by going through the pass that led between Shiny Cliff [Bozez Cliff] and Michmash to the north and Thornbush Cliff [Seneh Cliff] and Geba to the south. [vv. 4–5]
<i>The Message</i>	The pass that Jonathan was planning to cross over to the Philistine garrison was flanked on either side by sharp rock outcroppings, cliffs named Bozez and Seneh.
NLT	To reach the Philistine outpost, Jonathan had to go down between two rocky cliffs that were called Bozez and Seneh.

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

<i>God's Word™</i>	There was a cliff on each side of the mountain pass where Jonathan searched for a way to cross over to attack the Philistine military post. The name of the one [cliff] was Bozez, and the name of the other was Seneh.
JPS (Tanakh)	At the crossing by which Jonathan sought to reach the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on one side, and another rocky crag on the other, the one called Bozez and the other Seneh.

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

NASB	And between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp crag on the other side, and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	And between the passages where Jonathan sought to pass over unto the station of the Philistines <i>is</i> the edge of a rock on the other side, and the name of the one is Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan has climbed to a spot where he can overlook the Philistine camp. He is at a particular passage way between two small rocky crags, each of which is named.



## 1Samuel 14:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּין) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>in the midst of, between, among</i> ; when found twice, it means <i>between</i>	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
ma <sup>e</sup> bârâh (מַעְבָּרָה) [pronounced <i>mahg'-baw-RAW</i> ]	<i>ford, pass, crossing pass, passage</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4569 BDB #721
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHSH</i> ]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾâbar (עָבַר) [pronounced <i>gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
matstsâb (מַצֵּבָה) [pronounced <i>matz-TZA<sup>b</sup>V</i> ]	<i>standing-place, station, garrison, post</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4673 BDB #662
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>tîy</sup> (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced <i>shayn</i> ]	<i>tooth, a sharp rock</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042
çela <sup>ʿ</sup> (צֶלַע) [pronounced <i>SEH-lahg</i> ]	<i>rock, cliff, jagged cliff, split, cleft, crag, stone</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5553 BDB #700

## 1Samuel 14:4a

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, since, above, than, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿêber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced GAY <sup>b</sup> -ver]	<i>region across, beyond, side</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5676 BDB #719
min...min... (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>on this side, on that side; on one side, on the other side</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
This is the second occurrence of <i>min</i> ; it does not occur twice without intervening words.			
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced <i>shayn</i> ]	<i>tooth, a sharp rock</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042
çela' (צֶלַע) [pronounced <i>SEH-lahg'</i> ]	<i>rock, cliff, jagged cliff, split, cleft, crag, stone</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5553 BDB #700
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿêber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced GAY <sup>b</sup> -ver]	<i>region across, beyond, side</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5676 BDB #719
min...min... (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>on this side, on that side; on one side, on the other side</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
This is the second occurrence of a pairing of <i>min</i> 's with intervening words.			
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

**Translation:** And between the passes which Jonathon desired to pass through, above the outpost of the Philistines, [there was] a sharp crag on this side and a sharp crag on that side. You will notice that there is an exact repetition of a fairly long phrase with a conjunction between the repetition. With the prepositions, it is difficult to ascertain for certain what is being said; however, it appears that Jonathan was getting a vantage point from which he could look down upon the encampment of the Philistines. They had just moved to the pass of Michmash (1Sam. 13:23). Jonathan needed to find a place where he could look down upon the Philistine camp. Where he and his armor bearer went to, there were sharp crags or rocks on both sides of this passageway which looked down upon the Philistines. What could be the geography is that on both sides of this passageway was more than simply two sharp sets of rocks, but actual rock mountains or rock hills, neither of which could be easily scaled (hence the description

as a *tooth of the crag*). The reason that I say this is that they are named, which would be something which would more reasonably applied to something larger than just two sets of sharp rocks. That is, you would name a mountains or a hill rather than name a single rock (which we will see in v. 1b).

### 1Samuel 14:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
This <i>and</i> is missing in the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate and in 2 early printed editions of the MT. <sup>11</sup>			
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced <i>eh-KHAWD</i> ]	<i>one, first, certain, only</i> ; but it can also mean a <i>composite unity</i>	numeral with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
bôwtsêts (בֹּצֵצִים) [pronounced <i>boh-TZAYTZ</i> ]	transliterated <i>Bozez</i>	proper noun locale	Strong's #949 BDB #130
The meaning of <i>Bozez</i> is difficult to ascertain; it could be related to the verb <i>to cut off, to break off, to gain by violence</i> . It could simply be a foreign name whose meaning could not be determined from the Hebrew. It is also very similar to the words for <i>swamp</i> and <i>mire</i> . According to Barnes and the REB (and others), it means <i>shining, shiny</i> .			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced <i>eh-KHAWD</i> ]	<i>one, first, certain, only</i> ; but it can also mean a <i>composite unity</i>	numeral with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
Çeneh (צִנְהָ) [pronounced <i>seh-NEH</i> ]	transliterated <i>Seneh</i> ; it means <i>acacia, thorny bush, bramble bush, blackberry bush</i>	proper noun locale	Strong's #5573 BDB #702

**Translation:** *And the name of the one, Bozez; and the name of the other, Seneh.* I quite frankly do not completely understand the reason for this; why Jonathan would record the names. However, where he was, was probably well known to those of his era. Let me make a guess—one cliff would have the sun on it most of the time, meaning that it would be to the north (so the sun would strike it from the south); the other side would be covered with thorns or brambles. So, even though Jonathan is generally approaching from the south, the entrance to the camp of the Philistines are these two cliffs with a north-south bearing, which is confirmed in the next verse.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 304.

In any case, the name *Seneh*, according to Barnes, means *Acacia*, a name which is given to the modern valley in that area, as it is filled with *Acacia* trees. Concerning *Bozez*, Barnes tells us that *the valley runs nearly due east and its northern cliff is of a ruddy and tawny tint, crowned with gleaming white chalk, and in the full glare of the sun almost all the day.*<sup>12</sup> Edersheim also gives us a good feel for the geography: *Passing from Geba northwards and westwards we come to a steep descent, leading into what now is called the Wady-es-Suweinit. This, no doubt, represents the ancient "passage of Michmash" (1Sam. 13:23). On the opposite steep brow, right over against Geba, lies Michmash, at a distance of barely three miles in a north-westerly direction. This Wady-es-Suweinit is also otherwise interesting. Running up in a north-westerly direction towards Bethel, the ridge on either side the wady juts out into two very steep rock-covered eminences—one south-west, towards Geba, the other north-west, towards Michmash. Side wadys, trending from north to south behind these two eminences, render them quite abrupt and isolated. These two peaks, or "teeth," were respectively called Bozez, "the shining," and Seneh, either "the tooth-like," the pointed," or perhaps "the thorn," afterwards the scene of Jonathan's daring feat of arms (1Sam. 14:1–13). Bethel itself lies on the ridge, which runs in a north-westerly direction from Michmash.*<sup>13</sup>

What appears to be the case is that this is a common pass from Michmash to Geba. The Philistines were camped north or northwest of this pass, ready to move out against Israel. Jonathan and his armor bearer approach this pass from the southwest and come through the well-known pass to observe the Philistines. However, even though the Philistines are north and the Jews are south, the actual pass that Jonathan will go through has a north-south bearing itself, as will be apparent below.

**The tooth the one from north opposite Michmash and the one from south opposite Geba.**

1Samuel  
14:5

**The one crag to the north [is] opposite Michmash and the other [crag is] to the south opposite Geba.**

**The crag to the north is opposite Michmash and the crag to the south is opposite Geba.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	The tooth the one from north opposite Michmash and the one from south opposite Geba.
Septuagint	The one way [was] northward to one coming to Machmas, and the other way [was] southward to one coming to Gabae.

Significant differences: None.

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

<i>The Message</i>	The cliff to the north faced Micmash; the cliff to the south faced Geba (Gibeah).
NLT	The cliff on the north was in front of Micmash, and the one on the south was in front of Geba.

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

<i>God's Word™</i>	One cliff stood like a pillar on the north facing Michmash, the other stood south facing Geba.
JPS (Tanakh)	One crag was located on the north, near Michmas, and the other on the south, near Geba.

<sup>12</sup> Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 447.

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

NASB	The one crag rose on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south opposite Geba.
Young's Literal Translation	The one edge is fixed on the north over-against Michmas and the one on the south over-against Gibeah.

**What is the gist of this verse?** In this verse, we are given yet more information about where Jonathan and his armor bearer are standing, as well as information which helps us with the overall geography. The jutting high rock to the north of them is opposite Michmash and the jutting high rock to the south of them is facing Geba. They are in between, closer to Michmash, looking down at the Philistine encampment, which is on the outskirts of Michmash.

1Samuel 14:5			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shên (שֵׁן) [pronounced shayn]	<i>tooth, a sharp rock</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8127 BDB #1042
According to both BDB and Owen, the noun is masculine here but feminine in v. 4; I don't see a dime's worth of difference between them. They are spelled exactly the same.			
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	numeral with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
mâtsûwq (מַצֹּוק) [pronounced maw-TZOOK]	<i>molten support, pillar, peak</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4690 BDB #848
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
tsâphôwn (צָפוֹן) [pronounced tsaw-FOHN]	<i>north</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6828 BDB #860
mûwl (מִוֶּל) [pronounced mool]	<i>in front of, opposite</i>	preposition	Strong's #4136 BDB #557
Mik <sup>e</sup> mas (מִכְמָשׁ) [pronounced mik <sup>e</sup> -MAHS]	transliterated <i>Michmash</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4363 BDB #485
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	numeral with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
Often, when ʿechâd is found twice in the same context, it means ... <i>the one...and the other</i>			

## 1Samuel 14:5

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
negeb (נגב) [pronounced <i>ne-GHE<sup>b</sup>V</i> ]	<i>south, south-country; often transliterated Negev or Negeb</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5045 BDB #616
mûl (מול) [pronounced <i>mool</i> ]	<i>in front of, opposite</i>	preposition	Strong's #4136 BDB #557
Geba' (גבעה) [pronounced <i>GEH<sup>b</sup>-vahg'</i> ]	transliterated <i>Geba</i>	proper noun	Strong's #1387 BDB #148

**Translation:** The one crag, is a sharp rock from the north opposite Michmash and the other is from the south opposite Geba. Jonathan and his armor bearer are on a mountain passageway overlooking the Philistine camp. The rocky crag on one side is to the north near Michmash; the rocky crag on the other side is opposite Geba, which is to the south. The Philistines are camped below them, adjacent to Michmash or just outside the city limits of Michmash.

This verse helps us with several things. We find the preposition *min* which is used in the phrase *from the north* and *from the south*. The location of the cities tells us that this prepositional phrase means *to the north* and *to the south*. There will be other places in Scripture when knowing this will be helpful. As has been mentioned before, Michmash is north of Geba, and the Philistines would travel south to get to Geba, and then Gibeah. According to the Macmillian Bible Atlas, Geba is southwest of Michmash. The route that the Philistines chose (and the route that Jonathan chose) involves going through a mountain pass with a north-south bearing as well. So the Philistines are coming south, but will have to veer west to go through this particular pass. Jonathan and his armor bearer will be moving northward, but they will veer to the east to go through this mountain pass.

And so says Jonathan unto the young man bearing his armor, "Come and let us go over unto a garrison of the uncircumcised ones. Perhaps will work Y<sup>e</sup>howah for us because nothing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] a hindrance to deliver, in many or in a few.

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Then Jonathan said to the young man, [the one who] carried his armor, "Come and let us go over to the camp of the uncircumcised. Possibly, Y<sup>e</sup>howah will work for us because [there is] nothing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah [which is] a hindrance to deliver, [whether] by many or by a few."

Then Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come, and we will go down into the camp of these uncircumcised Philistines and it is possible that God will work on our behalf, as He is not hindered by numbers or lack of."

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so says Jonathan unto the young man bearing his armor, "Come and let us go over unto a garrison of the uncircumcised ones. Perhaps will work Y<sup>e</sup>howah for us because nothing to Y<sup>e</sup>howah [is] a hindrance to deliver, in many or in a few.

Septuagint And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to Messab of these uncircumcised, if the Lord may do something for us; for the Lord is not straightened to save by many or by a few."

Significant differences: No significant differences. You can probably guess that the LXX transliterated one word instead of translating it.

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

CEV Jonathan and the soldier who carried his weapons talked as they went toward the Philistine camp. "It's just the two of us against all those godless men," Jonathan said. "But the LORD can help a few soldiers win a battle just as easily as he can help a whole army. Maybe the LORD will help us win this battle."

NLT "Let's go across to see those pagans," Jonathan said to his armor bearer. "Perhaps the LORD will help us, for nothing can hinder the LORD. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!"

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

God's Word™ Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Let's go to the military post of these uncircumcised people. Maybe the LORD will act on our behalf. The LORD can win a victory with a few men as well as with many."

JPS (Tanakh) Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his arms, "Come, let us cross over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf, for nothing prevents the LORD from winning a victory by many or by few."

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

NASB Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few."

Young's Updated LT And Jonathan says unto the young man bearing his weapons, "Come, and we pass over unto the station of these uncircumcised; it may be Jehovah does work for us, for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan goes to his armor bearer, his young man, his personal assistant, and suggests that they go over to the garrison of the Philistines. He will further suggest that God will work in their behalf, as God is not constrained by working through many men or through a few. The implication is that Jonathan is considering attacking the Philistine army with two men.

## 1Samuel 14:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Y <sup>e</sup> hōwnâthân (יְהוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>-hoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	alternate spelling; transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3083 (& #3129) BDB #220



## 1Samuel 14:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
There are two primary ways of spelling <i>Jonathan</i> : Y <sup>h</sup> ôwnâthân (יְהוֹנָתָן) [pronounced y <sup>h</sup> -hoh-naw-THAWN], which is found 71 times, and Yôwnâthân (יֹנָתָן) [pronounced yoh-naw-THAWN], which is found 41 times.			
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
nāʿar (נָעָר) [pronounced NAH-ġahr]	<i>boy, youth, young man, personal attendant</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654
nâsâʿ (נָשָׂא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
k <sup>h</sup> îy (כִּלְיָ) [pronounced k <sup>h</sup> lee]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative (with a voluntative hê)	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾâbar (עָבַר) [pronounced ġaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect (with a voluntative hê)	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
matstsâb (מַצֵּבָה) [pronounced matz-TZA <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>standing-place, station, garrison, post</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4673 BDB #662
ʾârêl (עָרְלִים) [pronounced ġaw-RAY]	<i>having foreskins, foreskinned ones; generally rendered uncircumcised</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #6189 BDB #790
ʾêlleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced EEHL-leh]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative adjective with the definite article	Strong's #428 BDB #41

**Translation:** The Jonathan said to his young armor bearer, “Come and let us pass over toward the outpost of these uncircumcised men.” *Uncircumcised* is a term of derision that the Jews applied to the heathen. Interestingly enough, this term was used primarily for Philistines (see, for example Judges 14:3 15:18 1Sam. 17:26, 36 31:4 2Sam. 1:20 1Chron. 10:4). God uses the same term to differentiate between believers and unbelievers—the believers are circumcised and the unbelievers are not (Jer. 9:25–26 Ezek. 28:10).

We don't know what sort of facial expression the armor bearer had at this time that Jonathan said this. He apparently had been Jonathan's armor bearer for awhile, and therefore was trusted enough to accompany Jonathan in scaling this mountainous area to observe the Philistine camp. Very likely, this is the armor bearer who served Jonathan when Jonathan attacked and defeated the Philistine garrison in Geba, the action which set all of these events into motion. So, the armor bearer was used to Jonathan's impetuous, but spiritually reasonable actions. However, this must have been a bit of a shock. Here is this huge Philistine encampment, which they can see from where they are; and now Jonathan says, "Let's get a bit closer." However, that is *not* the most shocking thing that he says.

### 1Samuel 14:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
אוֹלַי (אוֹלַי) [pronounced oo-LAHY]	<i>perhaps, peradventure</i>	adverb/conjunction	Strong's #194 BDB #19
עָשָׂה (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
יהוה (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
לִאֲמֹד (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
כִּי (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
אֵין (אֵין) [pronounced AH-yin]	<i>naught, nothing; it can be a particle of negation: no, not</i>	negative/negative substantive	Strong's #369 BDB #34

This is in the construct form; however, the construct form differs from the regular form by a vowel point, which was not a part of Scripture originally. Furthermore, a construct should be followed by a noun; this is followed by a preposition, meaning that it is probably not a construct.

לִאֲמֹד (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
יהוה (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
מַצֹּר (מַצֹּר) [pronounced mahg <sup>e</sup> -TZOHR]	<i>restraint, hindrance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4622 BDB #784
לִאֲמֹד (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

## 1Samuel 14:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâsha' (יָשָׁא) [pronounced yaw-SHAHṣ̌]	<i>to deliver, to save</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
rab (רַב) [pronounced rahv]	<i>many, much, great (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912
ʾō (וְ) [pronounced oh]	<i>or, or rather, otherwise, also, and</i>	conjunction	Strong's #176 BDB #14
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
m <sup>e</sup> at (מֵאֵת) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -GAHT]	<i>a little, fewness, few</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4592 BDB #589

**Translation:** “Perhaps Y<sup>h</sup>owah will work for us because nothing to Y<sup>h</sup>owah [is] a hindrance to save, [whether] by many or by a few.” Here is where it appears that Jonathan drops the bomb on his armor bearer. He suggests that God will work on their behalf, as He is not constrained by numbers. That is, God can deliver whether there are many or just a few to work with. The statement that Jonathan is making is that he and his armor bearer are about to take on the entire Philistine army—the army which has all of Israel quaking. Jonathan shows incredible courage and faith here. So observe—Jonathan and his armor bearer are on a cliff overlooking the camp of the Philistines; and now Jonathan suggests that they invade this camp.

Jonathan may have been looking back to the time when Gideon was going to attack the Midianites. Gideon first put God through a series of tests to make certain that God was God (Judges 6:36–40). Then God put Gideon through a bit of a test. The Midianites were like locusts in Israel, there were so many of them (Judges 6:5). To overthrow the Midianites, God required that Gideon pare down his fighting force to a very small number—from 22,000 down to 300 (Judges 7:3–7). Just as David told the mighty Goliath, “Jehovah does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is Jehovah’s and He will give you into our hands.” (1Sam. 17:47b). Similarly, the psalmist writes, *The king is not delivered by a mighty army; a warrior is not delivered by great strength; a horse is a false hope for victory; nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength* (Psalm 33:16–17). Or as Paul told the Romans, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31b). And as another psalmist tells us: *Whatever Jehovah pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all the deeps* (Psalm 135:6). And as per the famous quote from Zechariah 4:6b: “Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit,” says Jehovah of the armies. It is not unreasonable to suppose that as Jonathan and his armor bearer looked down upon the Philistine camp, with intents of attacking them, Jonathan thought to himself, “With men, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.” (Matt. 19:26b). It is clear that these Philistines threaten the armies of the Living God, and that they threaten the life of Israel in the land. To Jonathan, it is clear that such a thing will not be tolerated by God.

Throughout the Old Testament, we have instances of man believing in God over human viewpoint, and acting by faith, even in the face of certain doom. No doubt the writer of Hebrews was therefore inspired to write: *By faith*

[great men of the Old Testament] conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, [and] put foreign armies to flight (Heb. 11:33–34).

**Application:** People improperly apply this principle all of the time. Some people with illnesses, which legitimately require a physician, will not see a doctor, as they think this is lacking in faith. This does not preclude strategy and tactics in war either. There is a fine line between faith and laziness. There is a fine line between faith and craziness. What was occurring here was, God had given Israel the land, and the uncircumcised were there to test Israel. There was no confusion about these things. The influx of Philistines into the center of Israel was certainly a cause for great alarm; and their raiding parties are evil. Therefore, Jonathan has to step up, as his father appears to be paralyzed.

Now, as I originally pictured this, Jonathan and his armorbearer pass between these two steep cliffs to the outpost of the Philistines. They could see the camp through the passes, but still had to go down into a ravine and then up from there to get into the camp (v. 13). However, Edersheim pictures this as Jonathan and his armorbearer being up on one cliff, and they will have to descend between the cliffs and then come up on the other one to reach the Philistine camp.<sup>14</sup>

And so says to him bearer of manufactured goods, “Do all which [is] in your mind; Stretch out [or, *incline*] to you; behold, I [am] with you as your mind.”

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Then his armor-bearer said to him, “Do all that your heart leans toward; listen, I [am] with you; my heart is as your heart.”

Then his weapons-bearer said to him, “Do whatever you believe that you should do. I will remain with you and I am in complete agreement with you in all respects.”

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And his armorbearer said to him: “Do all that pleases your mind: go where you will, and I will be with you wherever you have a mind [to go].”
Masoretic Text	And so says to him bearer of manufactured goods, “Do all which [is] in your mind; Stretch out [or, <i>incline</i> ] to you; behold, I [am] with you as your mind.”
Peshitta	And his armorbearer said to him, “Do all that is in your heart; turn aside, and go; behold, I am with you; do whatever is in your heart.”
Septuagint	And his armor-bearer said to him, “Do all that your heart inclines toward; behold, I [am] with you, my heart [is] as your heart.”

Significant differences: In the Hebrew, there are two imperatives; in the Greek, the second verb in the armor-bearer’s encouragement is affixed to Jonathan’s heart. The armor-bearer tells Jonathan, in the Greek, that they are of the same mind (*my heart is as your heart*]; in the Hebrew, the meaning seems to be about the same, but he simply says, “I am with you as your heart.” When all is said and done, the idea is, Jonathan’s servant strongly supports Jonathan, whether viewing this from the Hebrew or the Greek.

It is both possible and reasonable that the Peshitta simply tried to give sense to the gist of the Hebrew, and came up with what they did. It is possible that they even inserted a word or two to give this verse greater sense. I suspect that Jerome did the same with the Latin. On the other hand, it is also possible that the translators of the Peshitta and Jerome had access to better manuscripts, which made a bit more sense here.

<sup>14</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 453.

I want you to notice that, in this verse, the Hebrew differs more from the Greek than any previous verse in this chapter. Nevertheless, the general meaning appears to be essentially the same. Although I will give the Greek exegesis, because it appears to be fairly simple, bear in mind that this may end up being much more information than you really are interested in.

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

CEV "Do whatever you want," the soldier answered. "I'll be right there with you."  
 NLT "Do what you think is best," the youth replied. "I'm with you completely, whatever you decide."

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

God's Word™ His armorbearer answered him, "Do whatever you have in mind. Go ahead! I agree with you."  
 JPS (Tanakh) His arms-bearer answered him, "Do whatever you like. You go first, I am with you, whatever you decide." Literally: His arms-bearer answered him, "Do whatever is in your heart. Incline yourself; I am with you, according to your heart." As per Septuagint: His arms-bearer answered him, "Do whatever your heart inclines to for I am with you; my heart is like your heart." [it was difficult to determine how to present these two footnotes].

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

NASB And his armor bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart; turn yourself, *and* here I am with you according to your desire [lit., *heart*]."  
 NRSV His armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that your mind inclines to. I am with you; as your mind is, so is mine." [the footnotes for this verse indicate that the NRSV follows the Septuagint more than the MT here, which is common in the NRSV].  
 Young's Updated LT And the bearer of his weapons says to him, "Do all that *is* in your heart; turn for you; lo, I *am* with you, as your own heart."

**What is the gist of this verse?** The young man who carries Jonathan's weapons is in complete agreement with Jonathan as to what they are to do. He doesn't ask for the day off; he doesn't tell Jonathan, "This is really stupid. We're both going to die!" He recognizes that what Jonathan says is true and is in full agreement with his plan.

## 1Samuel 14:7a

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
`âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

## 1Samuel 14:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
k'îly (כִּלְיָ) [pronounced k'lee]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced kaw],	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
lê <sup>b</sup> va <sup>v</sup> (לֵבָב) [pronounced lay <sup>b</sup> -VAHV]	<i>mind, inner man, inner being, heart</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3824 BDB #523

**Translation:** His armor bearer answered, “Do all that is in your heart...” Even more surprising than what Jonathan says is what his armor bearer says. He says to Jonathan, “Whatever, dude” with the implication that he will go along with him. It is amazing that God brought two men of such great faith together like this.

## 1Samuel 14:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâṭâh (נָטָה) [pronounced naw-TAWH]	<i>to stretch out, to spread out, to bow, to extend, to incline, to turn</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #5186 BDB #639
In the Greek, this is a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular verb, making the subject <i>your heart</i> from v. 7a (which gives us a very stilted reading; however, it does make some sense). See the comments on the Septuagint which follow this table.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition (with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510

**Translation:** [Incline yourself](#) [or, *spread out*];... The meaning of this phrase is quite confusing. His armor-bearer appears to be telling Jonathan to advance as he sees fit. The Greek is somewhat different here.

### 1Samuel 14:7c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity (with 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
In the Greek, we have the additional words <i>my heart</i> . Again, this fills out the verse and causes it to make more sense.			
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced <i>kʰ</i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
lê <sup>b</sup> va <sup>b</sup> v (לֵבָב) [pronounced <i>lay<sup>b</sup>-V<sup>b</sup>AHV</i> ]	<i>mind, inner man, inner being, heart</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3824 BDB #523

**Translation:** [...listen, I \[am\] with you as your heart.](#) The armor bearer pledges his loyalty to Jonathan. I am guessing, since they are approaching the Philistine camp, that they are splitting up or spreading out (although I would have expected the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural for that). The very last phrase, although a bit abstruse, just indicates to Jonathan that his armor bearer will act in accordance with his (Jonathan's) volition. It will be as though he is in complete accordance with Jonathan's heart. Although the Hebrew more or less makes sense (it is a little awkward), the Greek smooths this out. Whether a Greek translator added this in order to smooth out the verse or whether it came from a better Hebrew manuscript, we do not know. However, the Greek reads: [And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that your heart inclines toward; listen, I \[am\] with you, my heart \[is\] as your heart."](#) The last phrase means that they believe the same thing and that the armor-bearer is in complete agreement with Jonathan's plan. The armor bearer is somewhat of an extension of Jonathan's fighting arsenal; here he tells Jonathan that he is an extension of Jonathan's volition as well.

### 1Samuel 14:7a-b Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
I will just include the text of the armor-bearer's statement to Jonathan.			
poieô (ποιέω) [pronounced <i>poi-EH-oh</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce; to carry out, to execute [a plan, an intention]</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular, present active imperative	Strong's #4160
pás (πάς) [pronounced <i>pahs</i> ]	<i>each, every, any; all, entire; anyone, all things, everything; some [of all types]</i>	accusative singular neuter adjective	Strong's #3956



### 1Samuel 14:7a-b Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
ho (ὁ) [pronounced <i>hoh</i> ]	<i>the; this, that, these</i>	definite article for a nominative masculine singular noun	Strong's #3588
eán (ἐάν) [pronounced <i>eh-AHN</i> ]	<i>if, in case, suppose, let's suppose [for the sake of an argument]</i>	conjunction affixed to a subjunctive verb	Strong's #1437
hê (ἡ) [pronounced <i>hey</i> ]	<i>the; this, that; these</i>	feminine singular definite article; nominative and vocative cases	Strong's #3588
kardia (καρδία) [pronounced <i>kahr-DEE-uh</i> ]	<i>heart, mind, soul; will, character; center [or middle, or essence] [of something]</i>	nominative, feminine singular noun	Strong's #2588
sou (σου) [pronounced <i>sue</i> ]	<i>of you, your; from you</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #4771 (genitive is given Strong's #4675)
ekklinô (ἐκκλίνω) [pronounced <i>ehk-KLEE-noh</i> ]	<i>to turn aside, deviate (from the right way and course); to turn (one's self) away, to turn away from, keep aloof from one's society; to shun one; to avoid; to go out of the way</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, present active subjunctive verb	Strong's #1578

**Translation:** “Do all that if your heart turns aside [or, avoids, deviates from];... Even in the Greek, this part is not easy to deal with. I believe that the idea is, “Suppose you heart deviates from [Saul's orders to simply stay put]—[still] do all that [is in your heart]... Obviously, I am reading a lot into this passage. Jonathan's armor bearer is supposing that Jonathan's thinking might be turning away from something. Probably, the idea is, his heart is turning him away from just staying put, which would be Saul's orders. His armor bearer might not speak all of this, as he does not want to make it sound as if Jonathan would be disobeying his father Saul's orders.

Brenton renders this “Do all that your heart inclines toward...” He appears to be ignoring both the conjunction *if*, *suppose* and the actual meaning of the second verb.

### 1Samuel 14:7c Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
idou (ἰδοῦ) [pronounced <i>ih-DOO</i> ]	<i>behold, lo; listen, listen up, focus on this, get this, look, look here</i>	demonstrative singular particle; interjection	Strong's #2400
egô (ἐγώ) [pronounced <i>ehg-OH</i> ]	<i>I</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun, nominative case	Strong's #1473
meta (μετά) [pronounced <i>meht-AH</i> ]	<i>with, among, in the company of, in the midst of</i>	preposition with the genitive	Strong's #3326

## 1Samuel 14:7c Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
sou (σου) [pronounced <i>sue</i> ]	<i>of you, your; from you</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #4771 (genitive is given Strong's #4675)
hōs (ὥς) [pronounced <i>hohç</i> ]	<i>like, as, even as</i>	comparative particle	Strong's #5613
hê (ἡ) [pronounced <i>hey</i> ]	<i>the; this, that; these</i>	feminine singular definite article; nominative and vocative cases	Strong's #3588
kardia (καρδία) [pronounced <i>kahr-DEE-uh</i> ]	<i>heart, mind, soul; will, character; center [or middle, or essence] [of something]</i>	nominative, feminine singular noun	Strong's #2588
sou (σου) [pronounced <i>sue</i> ]	<i>of you, your; from you</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #4771 (genitive is given Strong's #4675)
kardia (καρδία) [pronounced <i>kahr-DEE-uh</i> ]	<i>heart, mind, soul; will, character; center [or middle, or essence] [of something]</i>	nominative, feminine singular noun	Strong's #2588
emou (ἐμοῦ) [pronounced <i>eh-MOO</i> ]; mou (μου) [pronounced <i>moo</i> ]	<i>me; of me; from me</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #1473 (also, this is known as Strong's #3450; the simpler form of Strong's #1700)

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**Translation:** Listen, I [am] with you as your heart [is with] my heart.” Or, as Brenton renders it: “Behold, I am with you, my heart is as your heart.” (by the way, I always update his text to modern English). The idea here is, “Listen, whatever you decide to do, David, I am with you 100%.” Obviously, even though the text of the Greek and Hebrew vary, the idea of this verse is essentially the same: the armor bearer is telling David, “Whatever you plan to do, I am with you completely.”

**And so says Jonathan, “Behold, we are crossing over unto the men and we have revealed ourselves unto them.**

1Samuel  
14:8

**Then Jonathan said, “Listen, we will cross over to these men and then reveal ourselves to them.**

**Then Jonathan said, “Listen, we’ll cross over this pass toward those men and reveal ourselves to them.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

And so says Jonathan, “Behold, we are crossing over unto the men and we have revealed ourselves unto them.

#### Septuagint

And Jonathan said, “Behold, we will go over to the men, and will come down suddenly upon them.

**Significant differences:** In the Hebrew (Syriac and Latin), Jonathan and his armor bearer are going to go far enough to be seen by the Philistines. Again, the agreement of the Hebrew, Latin and Syriac is less significant than you would think, as they come from the same family of manuscripts.

In the Greek, they will suddenly strike them. Even though the Greek sounds like the most reasonable plan, the context seems to support the Hebrew. The final Greek verb is difficult and perhaps means *do go over; will be rolled down suddenly*. The problem is, the Greek verb is related to a verb which means *to roll, to wallow* (it is even used of a pig). This verb is affixed to the preposition *katá* (κατά) [pronounced *kaw-TAW*], which means *down, down from, down upon, according to, after, according to a norm or standard*. Strong's #2596. This is combined with *pros* (πρός) [pronounced *pross*], which means *face to face with; to the advantage of; at, near, by; to, towards, with, with regard to*. Strong's #4314. Finally, we have the pronoun *them*. So, perhaps this could be taken to mean *we will roll down near them* or *we will roll down face to face with them*. Recall that the LXX is not the inspired text; however, I have included it and its details to help explain the English translation from the Greek.

A Greek translator may be stuck here, looking at the Hebrew, and not grasping why Jonathan would suggest that they simply go there and show themselves to the Philistines. Therefore, a Greek translator might try to give this verse a different spin.

I should add that, anytime we have a difficult text to deal with, and I leave out the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls, you may assume that we simply do not have a readable text of this passage.

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

CEV	"This is what we will do," Jonathan said. "We will go across and let them see us.
NLT	"All right then," Jonathan told him, "We will cross over and let them see us.

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

<i>God's Word™</i>	Jonathan continued, "Listen, we'll cross over to the Philistines and show ourselves to them.
JPS (Tanakh)	Jonathan said, "We'll cross over to those men and let them see us.

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

NASB	Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men and reveal ourselves to them.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And Jonathan says, "Lo, we are passing over unto the men, and are revealed unto them;..."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan continues (from v. 6) with the explanation of his plan. They will move forward and reveal themselves to the Philistines. In the Greek, it appears as though this will be more sudden and more surreptitious.

## 1Samuel 14:8

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
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Y <sup>e</sup> hōwnāthān (יְהוֹנָתָן) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -hoh-naw-THAWN]	alternate spelling; transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3083 (& #3129) BDB #220
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʾānach <sup>e</sup> nû (אֲנַחְנוּ) [pronounced uh-NAHKH-noo]	<i>we</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun	Strong's #587 BDB #59
ʾabar (עָבַר) [pronounced gaw <sup>b</sup> -VAHR]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾiysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>to depart, to uncover, to remove, to reveal in the Qal; to reveal, to publish</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #1540 BDB #162
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied); (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

**Translation:** Then Jonathan said, “Listen, we are crossing over unto the men and we will reveal ourselves to them.” The plan is not for the two men to move quietly about the perimeter of the camp, killing a guard here and there. Jonathan tells his aide that they will reveal themselves to them Philistines.

Again, the Greek text implies that the movement of Jonathan and his servant would be more sudden and surreptitious.

This may seem like crazy behavior to you. That is, we look at this and have a difficult time understand why Jonathan would even consider going right up to these Philistines and showing himself. However, I just saw a

special on 20-20 last night (December 9, 2005),<sup>15</sup> and one of the segments dealt with “T-type” individuals—teenagers who are great risk takers. The *T* stands for *thrill seekers*. They have little or no fear for themselves and they repeatedly engage in life-threatening behavior. Their brain requires this sort of stimulation. It is not abnormal for this sort of behavior to escalate, which is what we are seeing with Jonathan (first he takes his men and attacks a Philistine outpost; and now, he is going to a Philistine encampment with only his armor bearer). We’ve discussed ages before (the age of Saul and Jonathan), and one possible scenario has Jonathan as a teenager. His actions here are typical of a T-type personality. His actions are also in line with one who is a believer in Jesus Christ and the son of a king whose country has been invaded. God uses all personality types; I am simply pointing out Jonathan’s personality type.

**If thus they say unto us, ‘Be still until our coming unto you’ and we have taken a stand underneath us and we will not go up unto them.**

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14:9

**If they say this to us: ‘Be still unto we come to you’ then we will stand in our place and not go up to them.**

**If they tell us to stay here until they come up to us, we will take a stand right here and not go up to them.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	If thus they say unto us, ‘Be still until our coming unto you’ and we have taken a stand underneath us and we will not go up unto them.
Septuagint	If they should say thus to us, ‘Stand aloof there until we shall send you word,’ then we will stand still by ourselves, and will not go up against them.

Significant differences: Essentially the meaning is the same; however, in the Hebrew, the Philistines tell them to stay there and they would come to them; and in the Greek, they Philistines tell them to stay there until they tell them to move. In the previous verse, we looked at the Greek and Hebrew, and the Hebrew indicated that Jonathan and his servant would simply reveal themselves to the uncircumcised Philistines. This verse seems to go along with that notion, both in the Greek and Hebrew.

As we would expect, the Syriac and Latin agree with the Hebrew text.

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

CEV	If they agree to come down the hill and fight where we are, then we won’t climb up to their camp.
NLT	If they say to us, ‘Stay where you are or we’ll kill you,’ then we will stop and not go up to them.

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

God’s Word™	If they say to us, ‘Stay where you are until we come to you,’ then we’ll stay where we are and not go up to them.
JPS (Tanakh)	If they say to us, ‘Wait until we get to you,’ then we’ll stay where we are, and not go up to them.

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

<sup>15</sup> This link may or may not be good still: <http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=1387316>

NASB

"If they say [lit., *say thus*] to us, 'Wait until we come to you'; then we will stand in our place and not go up to them.

Young's Updated LT

...if thus they say unto us, 'Stand still till we have come unto you,' then we have stood in our place, and do not go up unto them;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan is going to outline two possible scenarios—one in this verse and one in the next. In this verse, he says "If the Philistines tell us to stay here, we will stay right here."

### 1Samuel 14:9

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾim (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
dâmam (דָּמַם) [pronounced daw-MAHM]	<i>be still, be silent, cease, be cut off</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1826 BDB #198
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced gahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
nâgaʿ (נָגַע) [pronounced naw-GAHG]	<i>to cause to touch, to cause to touch [the ground—i.e., to destroy], to touch, to reach [to anything—when followed by a lâmed], to come to [when followed by ʾel], to attain to [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #5060 BDB #619
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾamad (אָמַד) [pronounced gaw-MAHD]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5975 BDB #763

## 1Samuel 14:9

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath, in the place [in which one stands] [when found in accusative position]</i>	preposition (with 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
Examples of the latter usage: Ex. 16:29 Judges 7:21 1Sam. 14:9 2Sam. 2:23 7:10 1Chron. 17:9 Job 36:16 (given that this preposition has such a specific meaning and that I give it an entirely different spin here, I believe that it would be better to include passages which are in agreement with this other rendering).			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʿâlâh (אָלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

**Translation:** If thus they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up too them... Jonathan is going to present two possible scenarios. They are going to be a distance from the Philistine camp, but they will make certain that they are seen. What they will do next will depend upon what the Philistine perimeter tells them to do. This strikes me as interesting, as I would think if they did what the Philistines told them to do, then this would give the Philistines a psychological edge. However, Jonathan is functioning apart from any sound military tactics here. He knows that the Philistines have violated God's gift of the land to the Jews, and that God will deliver these Philistines into their hands.

It is difficult to look into the mind of Jonathan, but he seems to be setting up a situation where he will act according to what the Philistines say and do. The idea is, he is making this known to his servant, to God, and to the angels and demons which encompass him. Jonathan did not have the full revelation of Scripture, and as a result, the way he functioned with regards to guidance is going to be considerably different than what we do in our day-to-day lives.

**Application:** You cannot simply go to a passage and imitate the people in this passage, as that is not necessarily God's plan for our life. Bear in mind we have the completed canon of Scripture and the filling of God the Holy Spirit, two things which Jonathan lacks (although, I would assume that he has some association with the Holy Spirit, and I would assume that he can go in and out of fellowship just as we do). It is even reasonable to suppose that God the Holy Spirit is guiding him here in his decisions and subsequent actions. However, in most cases, if you are a soldier fighting terrorists in Iraq or Afghanistan, I would be disinclined to suggest that, if you have a certain feeling that you simply disobey orders to stay put and to move forward against the enemy. These are different times and different circumstances. On the other hand, this does not mean that you, as a military person, cannot improvise under pressure, if there is no clear cut, well-defined approach to the problem that you are facing. What I am saying is, there is no reason for you to do that which is tactically or strategically contraindicated, based upon this passage. Jonathan is improvising, and he is improvising in a hopeless situation. The Philistines are attacking Israel at will,



Saul's men are deserting him (and Jonathan's, ostensibly); and an attack by the Philistines appears to be inevitable. Jonathan is simply making the first move in this hopeless situation.

And if thus they say, 'Come up upon us' and we have gone up for has given them Y<sup>e</sup>howah into our [two] hands and this to us the sign."

1Samuel  
14:10

But if they say this: 'Come up to us' then we will go because Y<sup>e</sup>howah has given them into our hands and this [what they have said] [is] the sign [to us]."

On the other hand, if they say, 'Come on over to us,' then we will go to up them because Jehovah has therefore given them into our hands; this particular phrase will be the sign to us.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And if thus they say, 'Come up upon us' and we have gone up for has given them Y <sup>e</sup> howah into our [two] hands and this to us the sign."
Septuagint	[If] they should say thus to us, 'Come up to us;' then will we go up, for the Lord has delivered them into our hands; this [shall be] a sign to us."

Significant differences: No significant differences.

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

CEV	But we will go if they tell us to come up the hill and fight. That will mean the LORD is going to help us win."
NLT	But if they say, 'Come on up and fight,' then we will go up. That will be the LORD's sign that he will help us defeat them."

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

God's Word™	But if they say to us, 'Come up here,' then we'll go up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has handed them over to us."
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#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	"But if they say [lit., <i>say thus</i> ] 'Come up to us.' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us."
Young's Literal Translation	And if thus they say, 'Come up against us,' then we have gone up, for Jehovah has given them into our hand, and this to us is the sign."

**What is the gist of this verse?** It is a tad bit confusing here. In the previous verses, it sounded as though Jonathan and his personal servant were looking down upon the Philistine camp. However, as they move closer, there is apparently a valley between them, so that, from where they stand at this time, the Philistines are above them. In any case, this is the second possible scenario—if the Philistines tell Jonathan and his servant to come up to them, then they will go up to the Philistines, because God has given them [the Philistines] into their [Jonathan and his servant's] hands. And, according to Jonathan, this particular command would be a sign to them.

## 1Samuel 14:10

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced <i>koh</i> ]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>ġaw-LAWH</i> ]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>ġahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>ġaw-LAWH</i> ]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
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
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	<i>hand</i>	dual feminine noun (with 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
I'm a little confused here: Rotherham tells us that this is in the plural in the Septuagint, Vulgate and in 2 early printed editions of the MT. However, my MT has this in the dual, according to Owen. <sup>16</sup>			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 301. Also reference *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*; John Joseph Owens; Baker Book House, Grand Rapid, Michigan; ©1989; Vol. 2, p. 183.

## 1Samuel 14:10

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition (with 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾôth (אוֹת) [pronounced oath]	<i>sign, token, pledge, assurance</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #226 BDB #16

**Translation:** “But if they say thus: ‘Come to us’ then we will go up for Y<sup>e</sup>howah has given them into our hands and this [what they say] will be the sign to us.” At this point, Jonathan says if the Philistines tell them to come up, then he and his servant will go up to them, and this would be a sign to them that God has delivered the Philistines into their hands. What appears to be the case is that Jonathan and his servant began at a point above the Philistine camp and looked down upon them. As they move forward to reveal themselves to the Philistines, they go down to a valley where they are below the level of the Philistines when this will transpire.

What Jonathan says here has occurred on several occasions. When Abraham’s servant was sent out to get a bride for Isaac, the servant prayed to God that if he asked a girl at the well for a drink, that, if she offered a drink to his camels as well, that this would be the future wife of Isaac (Gen. 24:12–15). We’ve already mentioned Gideon and the things that he asked of God to prove that He was God (Judges 6:36–40). However, it is important to note that this sort of thing was not a common Old Testament occurrence.

Now, were Jonathan’s alternatives merely arbitrary? Not necessarily. If the Philistines wanted to come to them, the indication was that they were ready to do battle and did not fear Jonathan and his armorbearer. However, if the Philistines held back, asked Jonathan to stay there, that means that they were uncertain as to what to do, and the time that Jonathan spend moving toward them would be used by the Philistine guard to try to figure out what they should do.

There are many differences between the time in which we live and the Old Testament times. The correct doctrine of dispensations distinguishes between these time periods. Interestingly enough, even people who portend to not believe in dispensationalism actually do believe in dispensationalism. That is, if you believe that animal sacrifices and Temple worship ceremonies are no longer a part of our religious lives, then you believe in dispensations. That things are done differently now and that things are different now, in any way, that is the essence of dispensational doctrine. There are many things which the Israelites engaged in to determine the will of God. They consulted Urim and Thummim, they cast lots (which may have been the same thing?), and they did what Jonathan did here: *if this particular thing occurs, then we will know we are within God’s will*. God was very careful to preserve the concept of Urim and Thummim and the concept of lots, but God did not allow any of those things used to survive until our time, nor did He ever give enough information to us in His Word to duplicate these objects. This is because these things do not belong to this dispensation. Many of the more mystical occurrences of the Old Testament—miracles, prophecy, determining God’s will by throwing lots—we don’t find these things in our dispensation (miracles, by the way, were quite rare—even in the Old Testament). This is because we have the entire Word of God at our disposal.

**Application:** My point is, we are not going to go through the same sort of scenarios as Jonathan presents here. For instance, you do not follow a particular stock, and say, “If it goes up 1 point and then drops 2 points, then it is God’s will that I purchase 100 shares of this stock.” We don’t say, “Okay, if I walk by a redhead in the next 5

minutes, then I will enter into the nearest store and buy a lottery ticket.” Today, we ascertain God’s will by our knowledge of Scripture.

One thing which is not stated in this passage, but which is surely the case: the Holy Spirit had come upon Jonathan and his armor bearer. Whereas we can, at any point in time, choose to be filled with the Holy Spirit by naming our sins to God, in the Old Testament, only a very small percentage of believers were empowered by (or, possibly filled with) the Holy Spirit and this empowerment (or, filling) could be removed by God. God gave this filling to those who did His work. The most common occurrence, which is rarely mentioned, is a writer of Old Testament Scripture. When they wrote, they were filled with or empowered by with God the Holy Spirit. In times like these, when Jonathan and his servant are to face thousands of Philistines unafraid, trusting God for the outcome, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Bear in mind, what Jonathan is about to do is very rare, even for the Old Testament. He is going to face an entire encampment of Philistines with only his armor bearer. However, do not lose sight of the fact that there is certainly guidance by God the Holy Spirit, different from what we experience today.

**And so reveal themselves both of them unto a garrison of Philistines. And so say Philistines, “Behold Hebrews coming out from the holes where they have hidden themselves there.”**

1Samuel  
14:11

**Then both of them showed themselves to the garrison of Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the hiding places where they had hidden themselves.”**

**So they revealed themselves to the camp of Philistines, causing the Philistines to say, “Look there, the Hebrews are beginning to come out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.”**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so reveal themselves both of them unto a garrison of Philistines. And so say Philistines, “Behold Hebrews coming out from the holes where they have hidden themselves there.”
Septuagint	And they both went in to Messab of the Philistines; and the Philistines said, “Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of their caves where they had hidden themselves.”
Significant differences:	Two minor differences—Jonathan and his armorbearer reveal themselves to the Philistines in the Hebrew; they simply go into the Philistines in the Greek. The Latin and Syriac, as usual, are in agreement with the Hebrew.

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

CEV	Jonathan and the soldier stood at the bottom of the hill where the Philistines could see them. The Philistines said, “Look! Those worthless Israelites have crawled out of the holes where they’ve been hiding.” Then they yelled down to Jonathan and the soldier, “Come up here, and we will teach you a thing or two!” [vv. 11–12]
Moffatt	So the pair of them showed themselves to the Philistine garrison, and the Philistines said, “Look at the mice creeping out of their hiding-places!”
NLT	When the Philistines saw them coming, they shouted, “Look! The Hebrews are crawling out of their holes!”

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

God’s Word™	So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine troops. The Philistines said, “Look, some Hebrews are coming out of the holes they were hiding in.”
JPS (Tanakh)	They both showed themselves to the Philistine outpost and the Philistines said, “Look, some Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have been hiding.”

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

NASB

And when both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, the Philistines said, "Behold, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves."

Young's Updated LT

And revealed are both of them unto the station of the Philistines, and the Philistines say, "Lo, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hid themselves."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Now, we know exactly what is going on: Jonathan and his servant have approached the Philistine encampment alone to possibly attack the Philistines. The Philistines do not know this. The Philistines know that they have not found any Hebrews anywhere, apart from their raiding parties. Now, even though there is an army of Hebrews, the Philistines had not seen them anywhere around (although their spies were probably well aware of Saul's location). Furthermore, many of these Hebrews have hidden in holes and caves and in the thick jungle. So, what the Philistines see here is some of the Hebrews revealing themselves from where they were hidden. This is key: they do not know that there is only Jonathan and his servant. For all they know, they may be surrounded by the entire Hebrew army. In their minds, they believe that the Hebrews who appeared to desert (1Sam. 13:6) have actually surrounded them.

**1Samuel 14:11**

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
gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>to depart, to uncover, to remove, to reveal in the Qal; to reveal, to publish</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Niphal perfect	Strong's #1540 BDB #162
The Niphal is not used strictly as a passive voice; it also is used when the subject acts upon itself. More precisely, in plural forms, it emphasizes the individual's effect on each member of the group. Here we are dealing with a small group (Jonathan and his servant). However, Jonathan's revealing himself and his servant will have a profound effect upon the Philistines.			
sh <sup>e</sup> nayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced sh <sup>e</sup> NAH-yim]	<i>two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	masculine plural numeral; with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
matstsâb (מַצֵּבָה) [pronounced matz-TZA <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>standing-place, station, garrison, post</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4673 BDB #662
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>tîy</sup> (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
wa or va (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## 1Samuel 14:11

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Pʿlishîṭîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced pʰe-lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʿēbīrîm (עֲבֵרִים) [pronounced ʿi-be-VREEM]	<i>those from beyond; transliterated Hebrews, Eberites</i>	proper masculine plural gentis/noun	Strong's #5680 BDB #720
To explain Moffatt's rendering of "Look at the mice", the addition of an extra consonant (kaph) before the Hebrew word for <i>Hebrews</i> , results in the word <i>mice</i> . However, there is no reason to stray from the Masoretic text here.			
yâtsâʾ (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
chûwr (חֹוֹר) [pronounced khood]	<i>hole</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #2356 BDB #359
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
châbâʾ (חָבָא) [pronounced khawb-VAW]	<i>to withdraw, to hide; to hide themselves (in the plural Hithpael)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #2244 BDB #285
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there, thither, whither</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

**Translation:** So both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of Philistines and the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out from the hiding places where they have hidden themselves." The Philistines look out over the great forested area around them (v. 26) and they spot two men—Jonathan and his armor bearer. They noise this to the others. However, they don't think of it as just two men—they have assumed that all of the Hebrews are beginning to come out of hiding. Obviously, they think, Israel was not going to attack with just two men. Back in 1Sam. 13:6, when all appeared bleak to the Israelites, most of the Israeli army deserted, choosing to hide throughout the hills, caves and cellars of the land. We know this to be a result of fear and lack of trust in God. The Philistines assumed the same thing, until now. However, they also considered that this might have been a deployment of men as well. They are able through spies to observe troop movement, but they don't always know the reason for the troop movement. Now they see two Israelites approaching them without fear, and suddenly, the Philistines mentally seize upon the same notion—those soldiers who originally appeared to desert actually went

into hiding and now surround the Philistine encampment. Ironically, these soldiers who deserted will come out of hiding a bit later (1Sam. 14:11).

The term *Hebrews* was actually a term of derision generally used by non-Jews to refer to Jews. It is very likely that this is a term related to *Habiru* (also, *Apiru*), which refers to a class of immigrants or itinerants without property and who are dependent upon others for their own sustenance<sup>17</sup> (a semi-modern equivalent term might be *Gypsies*). Interestingly enough, the term lost its sense of derision over the years.

And so answer men of the watch Jonathan and bearer of his manufactured goods and so they say, "Come up unto us and we will cause to know you a word." And so says Jonathan unto his bearer of manufactured goods, "Come up after me for has given them Y<sup>e</sup>howah into a hand of Israel."

1Samuel  
14:12

Then the men of the watch answered Jonathan and his armor bearer, saying, "Come on up to us and we will show you a thing." So Jonathan says to his armor bearer, "Come up behind me for Y<sup>e</sup>howah has given them into the hand of Israel."

The men on guard called to Jonathan and his armor bearer, "Come on up; we have something to teach you." Then Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Follow me up to them, for we know that Jehovah has given them into the hand of Israel."

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so answer men of the watch Jonathan and bearer of his manufactured goods and so they say, "Come up unto us and we will cause to know you a word." And so says Jonathan unto his bearer of manufactured goods, "Come up after me for has given them Y<sup>e</sup>howah into a hand of Israel."

##### Septuagint

And the men of Messab answered Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and said, "Come up to us and we will show you a thing." And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord has delivered them into the hands of Israel."

##### Significant differences:

No real significant differences here; we have a transliterated word in the LXX; and the second difference is more one of interpretation.

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

##### NLT

Then they shouted to Jonathan, "Come on up here, and we'll teach you a lesson!"

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

##### God's Word™

"Come up here," the men of the military post said to Jonathan and his armorbearer. "We have something to show you."

##### JPS (Tanakh)

The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his arms-bearer, "Come up to us, and we'll teach you a lesson." Then Jonathan said to his arms-bearer, "Follow me, for the LORD will deliver them into the hands of Israel."

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

##### NASB

So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, "Come up to us and we will tell you something." And Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hands of Israel."

<sup>17</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 27.



## Young's Updated LT

And the men of the station answer Jonathan and the bearer of his weapons, and say, "Come up unto us, and we cause you to know something." And Jonathan says unto the bearer of his weapons, "Come up after me, for Jehovah has given them into the hand of Israel."

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines instruct the two Israelites to come on up to them. It is unclear as to what exactly they say to the Israelites beyond that; that is, we don't know if they are going to show the Israelites *a thing or two*; or whether they are simply calling them up with their limited knowledge of Hebrew. Obviously, Jonathan and his armor bearer had been overlooking the Philistine camp, and then they had to walk down into a valley below the camp, which is where they are here. The Philistines call on Jonathan and his servant to come up to them. This is the sign from God to Jonathan that God has given the Philistines into their hand; however, he recognizes that God has given the Philistines into the hand of the Israelites, and not simply into their hands.

## 1Samuel 14:12a

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
ʿânâh (ענה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i> ]	<i>to answer, to respond</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
ʾîysh (ישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
matstsâbâh (מצבֿה) [pronounced <i>matz-tzaw-VAW</i> ]	<i>guard, watch</i>	feminine singular noun (which appears to be almost equivalent to the masculine noun Strong's #4673)	Strong's #4675 BDB #663
There are several words which all have the same root. In fact, I got them mixed up at first. Therefore, we need to take a look at the <b>Doctrine of Matstsâbâh, Mûtsâb, Matstsêbâh, Matstsebeh, Mitsâbâh, Matstsâb, Nʿtsîyb, and Nâtsab</b> . See below for the summary of this doctrine.			
Yôwnâthân (יונָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
nâsâ' (נָסַע) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669

## 1Samuel 14:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
k <sup>o</sup> lîy (כָּלִי) [pronounced k <sup>o</sup> lee]	<i>manufactured good, areifact, areicle, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced ʿaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâdaʿ (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHÇ]	<i>to cause to know, to make one know, to instruct, to teach</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Hiphil imperfect (with a voluntative hê)	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object (with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dâ <sup>b</sup> vâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

**Translation:** Then the men on watch answered Jonathan and his weapons bearer, and they said, “Come up to us and let us make known to you a thing.” As you will recall from v. 10, if the Philistines call them up, then Jonathan takes this as a sign that God has delivered these men into their hands. It is unclear as to what the Philistines give as their reason—some translations interpret this as, “Come up here and we will show you a thing or two.” Another reasonable option is that the Philistines speak a rather weak Hebrew, and they are simply calling on the two Jews to come up to them and they will discuss matters.

And in case you did not want to look all of this up...

### A Summary of the Doctrine of Matstsâbâh, Mûtstsâb, Matstsêbâh, Matstsebeh, Mitstsâbâh, Matstsâb, N<sup>e</sup>tsîyb, and Nâtsab

1. The root verb for all of these words is nâtsab (נָצַב) [pronounced naw-TSAH<sup>B</sup>V], which means *to station*

## A Summary of the Doctrine of Matstsâbâh, Mûtstsâb, Matstsêbâh, Matstsebeh, Mitstsâbâh, Matstsâb, N°tsîyb, and Nâtsab

*oneself, to take one's stand, to stand up, to set something upright, to erect.* This appears to be the root for a great many words, including those in our study. Strong's #5324 BDB #662.

2. Masculine noun: n°tsîyb (נִצֵּיב) [pronounced *n°TZEE<sup>B</sup>V*]. Strong's #5333 BDB #662.
  - a. It means *pillar, post; prefect, deputy, someone [or something] placed over [someone/something else]; garrison, outpost, military base [station]; statue, idol*.
  - b. Occurrences in Scripture: Gen. 19:26 1Sam. 10:5 13:3, 4 2Sam. 8:6, 14 1Kings 4:19 1Chron. 11:16 18:13 2Chron. 8:10 17:2
    - i. When Lot's wife looked back toward Sodom and Gomorrah, she became a *pillar* or *statue* of salt. Gen. 19:26
    - ii. N°tsîyb means *garrison* in 1Sam. 10:5 and in 1Sam. 13:3–4, where Jonathan is said to have struck down the *garrison* of Philistines.
    - iii. David killed 22,000 Syrians and then set up *garrisons* in Syria, making them his servants who brought him tribute. He also established *garrisons* in Edom. 2Sam. 8:6, 14 1Chron. 18:13
    - iv. 1Kings 4:19 is one of the very few places where n°tsîyb clearly refers to a *prefect* or *deputy*. There is a reference to Geber, who is called the only *prefect* in the land of Gilead. We have a similar use in 2Chron. 8:10, which makes a reference to 250 men of Solomon who were the chiefs of *deputies* (or, *garrisons*).
3. Masculine noun: matstsâb (מַצֵּב) [pronounced *matz-TZA<sup>B</sup>V*]. Strong's #4673 BDB #662.
  - a. It means *Standing place; station, office; garrison, post, outpost*.
  - b. Obviously, there does not appear to be a great deal of differentiation between these two words, which have the same root.
  - c. Scripture: Joshua 4:3, 9 1Sam. 13:23 14:1, 4, 6, 11, 15 2Sam. 23:14 Isa. 22:19
    - i. We find this word used to speak of the *place* where the priests feet are standing firm in Joshua 4:3, 9. Obviously, this word has nothing to do with a military station in this passage; however, it is where the priests had a sure *foothold*.
    - ii. In 1Sam. 13:23, the *garrison* of Philistines go out to the pass of Michmash. This would indicate that this word could be used of a moving force of men. See also 1Sam. 14:1, 4, 6, 11, 15 2Sam. 23:14.
    - iii. An oracle of Isaiah tells Israel that God would pull them down from their *station* (as well as depose them from their office) in Isa. 22:19.
4. Masculine noun: mûtstsâb (מֻצֵּב) [pronounced *moots-TSAW<sup>B</sup>V*]. This is the same word as Strong's #4673 above, except with different vowel points. Strong's #4674 BDB #663.
  - a. It means *garrison, a station* (of soldiers).
  - b. Scripture: In Isa. 29:3, God tells Jerusalem, "I will camp against you, encircling you; I will lay siege against you with a mound; I will raise up battle towers against you."
  - c. There is probably no reason to treat this word any differently than matstsâb.
5. Feminine noun: matstsâbâh (מַצְבָּה) [pronounced *matz-tzaw-VAH*], which means *guard, watch*. This is the feminine form of the Strong's #4673. In Zech. 9:8, this is spelled with an *mi-* rather than an *ma-*; mitstsâbâh (מִצְבָּה) [pronounced *mitz-tzaw-VAH*]. Strong's #4675 BDB #663.
  - a. This word means *guard, watch; garrison, station [of soldiers]*. Gesenius sees these two forms as equivalent to the masculine noun mûtstsâb (Strong's #4674).
  - b. We do not have enough Scripture to differentiate between the masculine and feminine noun.
  - c. Scripture: In 1Sam. 14:12 Zech. 9:8:
    - i. In 1Sam. 14:12, the men of the *garrison* call out to Jonathan and his armor-bearer to draw them closer.
    - ii. In Zech. 9:8, God tells Hadrach (which includes Damascus) that He would camp around His house like a *garrison* (or, *guard*).
6. Feminine noun: matstsêbâh (מַצְבָּה) [pronounced *mahtz-tzay<sup>b</sup>-VAWH*] and we find it when a pillar or monument is left to commemorate personal contact with God (Gen. 26:18, 22 35:14); or it can be a pillar commemorating a relationship with idols, which are Satan's demons, as in Ex. 23:24 Deut. 7:5 2Kings 3:2;

## A Summary of the Doctrine of Matstsâbâh, Mûtstsâb, Matstsêbâh, Matstsebeh, Mitstsâbâh, Matstsâb, N<sup>e</sup>tsîyb, and Nâtsab

these pillars can have specific shapes (usually when used of demon images as in Hos. 10:1 Micah 5:13) or not (Gen. 31:13, 45, 51–52). My impression here is that these are generally larger than the *sculpted images* and they are not always *sculpted*. Mostly found in the Torah, Kings and the prophets. The two Strong's numbers are slightly different spellings; however, they are both feminine and probably the exact same word. Strong's #4676 & #4678 BDB #663.

- a. Proper definitions: *statue, pillar, monument, personal memorial; stone* (set up and anointed as memorial of divine appearance), *stones* and *pillars* in connection with altars; *trunk, stock of a tree*
- b. Scripture: Gen. 28:18, 22 31:13, 45, 51, 52 35:14, 20 Ex. 23:24 24:4 34:13 Lev. 26:1 Deut. 7:5 12:3 16:22 2Sam. 18:18 1Kings 14:23 2Kings 3:2 10:26–27 17:10 18:4 23:14 2Chron. 14:2 31:1 Isa. 6:13 19:19 Jer. 43:13 Ezek. 26:11 Hosea 3:4 10:1–2 Micah 5:13
- c. Because this definition is somewhat different than what we are examining, we will simply accept the meanings given by BDB and Gesenius and move on. However, you may want to note that this pair of words are spelled almost exactly as matstsâbâh (מַצְבָּה) [pronounced *matz-tzaw-VAH*] (Strong's #4675 BDB #663) above. The only difference is one vowel point. This would suggest to me that these are actually the same words, with slightly different meanings.

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We do not know how many men are involved here—how many are on watch—and we do not know their motivations, although I suspect that they have evil intentions toward Jonathan and his armor bearer. This will be clearly borne out by the next verse.

### 1Samuel 14:12b

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
`amar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
`el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>eI</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669

## 1Samuel 14:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
k <sup>o</sup> lîy (כָּלִי) [pronounced k <sup>o</sup> lee]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, areicle, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʾachar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #310 BDB #29
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yis <sup>e</sup> râʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

**Translation:** Then Jonathan said to his armor bearer, “Come up after me for Y<sup>e</sup>howah has given them into the hand of Israel.” Jonathan reiterates what he had already said to his armor bearer—if the Philistines call them up, then God has given the Philistines into the hands of the Israelites (v. 10). At this point, Jonathan and his armor bearer are far enough away from these soldiers to speak quietly and not be heard.

And so goes up Jonathan upon his [two] hands and upon his [two] feet and a bearer of his manufactured goods after him. And so they fall to faces of Jonathan and his bearer of manufactured goods killing after him.

1Samuel  
14:13

So Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, his armor bearer behind him. Then they [the Philistines] fell before Jonathan, his armor bearer killing [Philistines] behind him.

Jonathan and his armor bearer had to climb up to the Philistines on their hands and feet. However, as soon as they faced the Philistines, they began to slaughter them.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so goes up Jonathan upon his [two] hands and upon his [two] feet and a bearer of his manufactured goods after him. And so they fall to faces of Jonathan and his bearer of manufactured goods killing after him.
Septuagint	And Jonathan went up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer with him; and they looked on the face of Jonathan, and he struck them, and his armor-bearer struck after him.
Significant differences:	The first difference is probably one of translation; the second difference is unclear as to its reason.

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

CEV	Jonathan crawled up the hillside with the soldier right behind him. When they got to the top, Jonathan killed the Philistines who attacked from the front, and the soldier killed those who attacked from behind.
NLT	So they climbed up using both hands and feet, and the Philistines fell back as Jonathan and his armor bearer killed them right and left.

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

God's Word™	Jonathan climbed up [the cliff] and his armorbearer followed him. Jonathan struck down the Philistines. His armorbearer, who was behind him, finished killing them.
JPS (Tanakh)	And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, his arms-bearer behind him; [the Philistines] fell before Jonathan, and his arms-bearer finished them off behind him.

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

NASB	Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him.
Young's Updated LT	And Jonathan goes up on his hands and on his feet and the bearer of his weapons after him; and they fall before Jonathan and the bearer of his weapons is putting to death after him.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan and his armor bearer obviously had to descend from between the cliffs to a point below the Philistine camp, and then go up from there, actually climbing up the side of a hill. The Philistines apparently allowed them to come up. Once Jonathan and his armor bearer had their feet on solid ground, they attacked the Philistine perimeter guard and killed them. Given the number of those killed in the next verse, we may assume that this is simply the perimeter guard and that they are some distance from the encampment of Philistines.

1Samuel 14:13a			
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
ʿâlâh (אָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i> ]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748



## 1Samuel 14:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yôwnâthân (יֹנָתָן) [pronounced yoh-naw-THAWN]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ǵahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine dual noun (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
wê (or vê) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ǵahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
regel (רֶגֶל) [pronounced REH-gehl]	<i>foot, feet</i>	feminine dual noun (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #7272 BDB #919
wê (or vê) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâsâʾ (נָסָא) [pronounced naw-SAW]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
Owen designates that nâsâʾ is a Qal active participle construct here; <sup>18</sup> however, this simply follows the form of the masculine singular, Qal active participle. Its proximity to kēlîy certainly makes it act like a construct; however, there is nothing specific in its form which distinguishes nâsâʾ from its construct. Nâsâʾ is simply one of the many nouns which exhibits no difference between the construct and the absolute states.			
kēlîy (כֶּלִּי) [pronounced kēlee]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
ʾachar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #310 BDB #29

**Translation:** So Jonathan went up on his hand and his feet, and his armor bearer followed him. Apparently, the Philistines were in a camp that Jonathan could look down on; however, to get to it, Jonathan and his armor bearer had to first go down into a valley and then climb up to get to.

They were originally close enough to yell to one another; and far enough away to where Jonathan and the armor bearer could speak without being heard.

<sup>18</sup> *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*; John Joseph Owens; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; ©1989; Vol. 2, p. 183.



## 1Samuel 14:13b

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
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i> ]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> .			
Yôwnâthân (יֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
k <sup>e</sup> lîy (כֶּלִּי) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>lee</i> ]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to kill, to cause to die, to execute</i>	Polel participle	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
The Polel is equivalent to the Piel (intensive) stem (while neither Mansoor nor Zodhiates acknowledge it, both Owen and Seow do). Although there is an intensification of the verb, the Piel also carries with it a sense of causation.			
ʾachar (אַחֲרַיִם) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #310 BDB #29

**Translation:** And they fell before Jonathan and his armor bearer, who was] killing [others] behind him. Once Jonathan climbed up to the Philistines, he began to kill them, with his armor bearer killing those behind him, from whence comes the saying *I've got your back*. What Jonathan is doing is claiming a promise of God's; in Lev. 26:7–8, we read: "But you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword; five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword." Or, as was promised in the blessings at Gerizim: "Jehovah will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and they will flee from your presence in seven ways."

(Deut. 28:7). Or, as Joshua said in his farewell address: “One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for Jehovah your God is He Who fights for you, just as He promised you.” (Joshua 23:10).

The first thing that comes to my mind is, just how many of these Philistines did they kill? The next verse will tell us that.

**And so was the slaughter the first which caused to be slaughtered Jonathan and his bearer of manufactured goods—about twenty a man as in half a furrow a pair of a field.**

1Samuel  
14:14

**And the first of the slaughters which Jonathan and his armor bearer caused to slaughter was about twenty men in approximately half a furrow [by] two fields.**

**In the first massacre, Jonathan and his armor bearer killed about twenty men on a precipice which was about two feet wide and the length of two fields.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was of about twenty men, within half an acre of land, which a yoke of oxen is would plough in a day.

Masoretic Text

And so was the slaughter the first which caused to be slaughtered Jonathan and his bearer of manufactured goods—about twenty a man as in half a furrow a pair of a field.

Peshitta

And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about 20 men; they cut them to pieces like stone-cutters and like men who plough a field.

Septuagint

And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor-bearer effected was twenty men, with darts and slings, and pebbles of the field. [Despite the reasonableness of this rendering, I have not found any English translations which follow the Greek rather than the Hebrew]

Significant differences:

The first difference may be one of translation/interpretation. The second difference either indicates very different text or strong confusion for the translators. I feel that the Hebrew text is reasonable. Do you recall that we first ran into Saul when he was looking for his father's donkeys? His father was probably a farmer/rancher and no doubt Saul and Jonathan learned much of this themselves. In the ancient world, it was common to live on a farm/ranch, just as that was very common among the people in the early states who moved westward. Therefore, for Jonathan to give an idea as to the size of the battleground and to relate it to a field which would be plowed is reasonable. He sees lengths and widths in this manner and those who would originally read this account would also see things in the same way. By the time of the Septuagint, we have fewer farmers/ranchers, more large cities, and what is being said here was possibly lost on the intellects who translated the Septuagint (or, at least this portion of it).

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

CEV  
NLT

Before they had gone a hundred feet, they had killed about twenty Philistines. They killed about twenty men in all, and their bodies were scattered over about half an acre.

REB

In that first attack Jonathan and his armour-bearer killed about twenty of them, like men cutting a furrow across a half-acre field. [*like men cutting* is from the Syriac; Heb: *as in half of...*]

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

*God's Word™* In their first slaughter Jonathan and his armorbearer killed about twenty men within about a hundred yards.

*JPS (Tanakh)* The initial attack that Jonathan and his arms-bearer made accounted for some twenty men, within a space of about half a furrow long [in] an acre of land. [The JPS translations footnotes that the meaning of the Hebrew of the final phrase is uncertain].

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

*NASB* And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land.

*NKJV* That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land [lit., *half the area plowed by a yoke of oxen in a day*].

*NRSV* In that first slaughter Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed about twenty men within an area about half a furrow long in an acre of land.

*Young's Updated LT* And the first striking which Jonathan and the bearer of his weapons have stricken is of about twenty men, in about half a furrow of a yoke of a field,...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan and his armor bearer kill twenty men of the Philistine perimeter guard within a very short space. In the Septuagint, the distance is not mentioned, but the weapons which they employ are.

**1Samuel 14:14a**

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
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced <i>mahk-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
rîshôwn (רִשׁוֹן) [pronounced <i>ree-SHOWN</i> ]	<i>first, chief, former, beginning</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #7223 BDB #911
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>to strike, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220

## 1Samuel 14:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
k <sup>e</sup> îy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>lee</i> ]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
es <sup>e</sup> rîym (עֶשְׂרִים) [pronounced <i>ges<sup>e</sup>-REEM</i> ]	<i>twenty</i>	plural numeral adjective	Strong's #6242 BDB #797
îysh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer did was about twenty men. The implication of the word *first* was that there were several more skirmishes which would occur. However, we know initially that Jonathan and his armor bearer took out twenty men. This would indicate to us that they struck the perimeter guard. Obviously, these twenty men did not feel that they needed to contact anyone from the main camp, as it was twenty against two.

## 1Samuel 14:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
b <sup>e</sup> (בּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
It is unclear from Gesenius and BDB what these two prepositions mean together. BDB says that this particular passage is apparently corrupt.			
chätsiy (חֲצִי) [pronounced <i>khuh-TSEE</i> ]	<i>half</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2677 BDB #345

## 1Samuel 14:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ma'ănâh (מַעֲנָה) [pronounced mah-guh-NAW]	<i>a place for a task, a field for plowing, a furrow</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4618 BDB #776
This noun is only found in 1Sam. 14:14 Psalm 129:3. A furrow is the trench made when one is preparing the land to be planted. If the text can be accepted as is, we are dealing with half the length of a furrow in a typical section of land. We would expect such an estimation to be made by someone who has plowed fields before. Although we have no record of Jonathan as having done so, his father did; we could surmise that Jonathan at least joined him on occasion in the field.			
tsemed (צֶמֶד) [pronounced TZEH-med]	<i>a couple, a pair</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6776 BDB #855
sâdeh (שָׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	<i>field, land, open field, open country</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7704 BDB #961

**Translation:** ...approximately within a half a furrow [in] a pair of fields. That we should have an approximate length given by the son of a farmer in the terms a farmer would use is not unusual. What I first read was we had the length covered, given by half of a furrow in two fields, which would be the length of one furrow, which made little sense to me. However, with Edersheim's picture of what occurred, I realize that what the author is giving us here is the length and the width both. The width is half a furrow, and the length is about two fields. Quite obviously, a furrow is pretty narrow, so I suspect that we are referring to the space taken up by the bull or bulls pulling the plow, making the furrow. This precipice was probably about 18 inches to 2 feet wide (possibly as wide as 4 or 5 feet?) and it went on for the length of two fields. .

Furthermore, we would expect another bēyth preposition prior to the final two nouns, as we normally do not string four nouns together like that unless three of them are constructs. So, is the text corrupt? Possibly. Is it so corrupt that we should expect the rendering that we find in the Septuagint? I don't know. I, a novice, can instantly determine where each of these words is found throughout the Hebrew Old Testament and can base several reasonable theories upon these findings. It is unlikely that a Hebrew concordance was available to the translators of the Septuagint. The weird combination of the two prepositions along with the word for *furrow* are rarely found in Scripture. Therefore, we should expect some confusion on the part of the ancient translators. However, the Septuagint version (*And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor-bearer effected was twenty men, with darts and slings, and pebbles of the field.*) is significantly different from the Hebrew text which we possess, the final phrase agreeing in only one word. The fact that many of the more recent translations went with the Hebrew indicates to me that the Hebrew is probably correct. Barnes calls the Hebrew of the latter half of this verse *extremely obscure*, noting that some have interpreted this as *in about half the time that a yoke of oxen draw a furrow in the field.*<sup>19</sup>

The width implied in this verse would indicate to us that it was not wide enough for everyone to engage in combat at the same time. It was more likely that it was two on two, as Jonathan and his armor bearer dispatched one pair of men after another.

As I have mentioned before, I originally saw these two cliffs as a pass through which Jonathan and his armorbearer went through. However, Edersheim paints a different picture, with Jonathan and the armorbearer standing on the opposite cliff from the Philistines. He describes what ensued: *Choosing the steepest ascent, where their approach would least be looked for, Jonathan and his armour-bearer crept up the ledge of the rock on their hands and feet. Up on the top it was so narrow that only one could*

<sup>19</sup> Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 34.

stand abreast. This we infer not only from the language of the text, but from the description of what ensued. As Jonathan reached the top, he threw down his foremost opponent, and the armour-bearer, coming up behind, killed him. There was not room for two to attack or defend in line. And so twenty men fell, as the text expresses it, within "half a furrow of a yoke of field,"—that is, as we understand it, within the length commonly ploughed by a yoke of oxen, and the width of about half a furrow, or more probably half the width that would be occupied in ploughing a furrow. All this time it would be impossible, from the nature of the terrain, to know how many assailants were supporting Jonathan and his armour-bearer. This difficulty would still be more felt in the camp and by those at a little farther distance, since it would be manifestly impossible for them to examine the steep sides of Bozez, or the neighbouring woods. The terror, probably communicated by fugitives, who would naturally magnify the danger, perhaps into a general assault, soon became a panic.<sup>20</sup> Our fight, rather than appearing to be one of those we see in the movies, where 20 men pounce upon 2 men, and the 2 are victorious; what we have is a narrow precipice, its width being so narrow that only one man could stand upon it. So we have a line of two Israelites on one side, and a line of 20 Philistine soldiers on the other. Because of the way the Israelites came up, the Philistines could not see behind them to see how many Israelites were coming up with them. Other than that, we essentially have one man fighting one man, and Jonathan and his armorbearer advance over the dead bodies.

In any case, the idea here is that Jonathan and his armor bearer were very successful in their initial advance against the Philistines. They killed about twenty guards on the perimeter of the camp.

Interestingly enough, Major Vivian Gilbert, a British army officer, used this description to benefit his own troops during World War I: *In the First World War a brigade major in Allenby's army in Palestine was on one occasion searching his Bible with the light of a candle, looking for a certain name. His brigade had received orders to take a village that stood on a rocky prominence on the other side of a deep valley. It was called Michmash and the name seemed somehow familiar. Eventually he found it in 1Sam. 13 and read there: "And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin but the Philistines encamped in Michmash."* It then went on to tell how Jonathan and his armour-bearer crossed over during the night "to the Philistines" garrison" on the other side, and how they passed two sharp rocks: "there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez and the name of the other Seneh" (1Sam. 14<sup>4</sup>). They clambered up the cliff and overpowered the garrison, "within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough". The main body of the enemy awakened by the mêlée thought they were surrounded by Saul's troops and "melted away and they went on beating down one another" (1Sam. 14<sup>14-16</sup>).

Thereupon Saul attacked with his whole force and beat the enemy. "So the Lord saved Israel that day."

The brigade major reflected that there must still be this narrow passage through the rocks, between the two spurs, and at the end of it the "half acre of land". He woke the commander and they read the passage through together once more. Patrols were sent out. They found the pass, which was thinly held by the Turks, and which led past two jagged rocks—obviously Bozez and Seneh. Up on top, beside the michmash, they could see by the light of the moon a small flat field. The brigadier altered his plan of attack. Instead of deploying the whole brigade, he sent one company through the pass under the cover of darkness. The few Turks whom they met were overpowered without a sound, the cliffs were scaled, and shortly before daybreak the company had taken up a position on "the half acre of land".

The Turks woke up and took to their heels in disorder since they thought that they were being surrounded by Allenby's army. They were all killed or taken prisoner.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 454.



*“And so”, conclude Major Gilbert, “after thousands of years British troops successfully copied the tactics of Saul and Jonathan.”<sup>21</sup>*

And was dread in the camp [and] in the field and all of the people [in] the garrison and the raiders trembled, even they [did not will to do *anything*]. And so quaking the earth and so [there] was a trembling of God.

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And dread was in the camp and in the field; furthermore, all of the people in the garrison and the raiders were trembling, and they were unwilling to act. Furthermore, the earth was quaking and [there] was a great trembling from God.

Then there was dread throughout the camp and the field; in fact, all of the people in the garrison and all of those who were raiding perimeter cities were trembling with fear and unwilling to fight back. Simultaneously, there was a great earthquake and a trembling sent by God.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And there was a miracle in the camp, in the fields: and all the people of their garrison, who had gone out to plunder, were amazed, and the earth trembled: and it happened as a miracle from God.
Masoretic Text	And was dread in the camp [and] in the field and all of the people [in] the garrison and the raiders trembled, even they [did not will to do <i>anything</i> ]. And so quaking the earth and so [there] was a trembling of God.
Peshitta	But there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people that stood by; and the raiders also trembled and the earth quaked; and the fear of the LORD fell upon them. .
Septuagint	And there was dismay in the camp, and in the field; and all the people in Messab, and the spoilers were amazed; and they would not act, and the land was terror-struck, and there was dismay from the Lord.

Significant differences: There are several differences between the Greek and the Hebrew; it is difficult to determine whether these are matters of translation or of the original text. Most appear to be translation differences. The Syriac and Latin are both closer in meaning to the Hebrew, but there are still some minor differences.

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

CEV	The Philistine army panicked—those in camp, those on guard duty, those in the fields, and those on raiding patrols. All of them were afraid and confused. Then God sent an earthquake, and the ground began to tremble. [or, <i>Then the ground began to tremble, and everyone was in a terrible panic; or, Then the ground began to tremble and God made them all panic.</i> ]
NLT	Suddenly, panic broke out in the Philistine army, including even the outposts and raiding parties. And just then an earthquake struck, and everyone was terrified.

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

God's Word™	There was panic among the army in the field and all the troops in the military post. The raiding party also trembled [in fear]. the earth shook, and there was a panic sent from God.
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<sup>21</sup> Werner Keller, *The Bible as History* (second revised edition); New York, 1981; p. 183.



## JPS (Tanakh)

Terror broke out among all the troops both in the camp [and] in the field; the outposts and the raiders were also terrified. The very earth quaked, and a terror from God ensued.

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

## The Emphasized Bible

And there came to be a trembling in the camp, in the field and among all the people, <the outposts and the spoilers> ||they too|| trembled, —and the earth quaked, so it became a preternatural trembling [more literally, *a trembling of God*].

## NASB

And there was a trembling in the cap, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling.

## Young's Updated LT

...and there is a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people, and the station and the destroyers have trembled—even they, and the earth shakes, and it becomes a trembling of God.

Now, I have made a concerted effort to keep most of the examination of the Hebrew within the Hebrew verse table. I realize that many see this as *blah blah blah, now what does the verse actually say?* Unfortunately, the Hebrew text is clearly corrupt, although it may not appear that way at first. The end result is that it is not clear when one sentence ends and when the next begins. On the plus side, the meaning of the verse will not be difficult to ascertain.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Despite serious concerns with the proper translation of this verse, it is reasonably clear that the Philistines were seized by a tremendous panic and dread, and this fear paralyzed them so that they could not respond to Jonathan's attack. The earth was shaken by an earthquake as well, which further frightened them (or, this might have been one of the things which did initially frighten them). Another point which is unclear (from the Hebrew and Greek) is whether the trembling of the earth and of the people was all from God. It appears, and this would be consistent with Christian theology, that God sent the earthquake at that time and caused a trembling both among the people and on the earth. Jonathan, being a man of sound theology and great faith, was not disturbed by what happened, but expected it.

## 1Samuel 14:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
chărādâh (חֲרָדָה) [pronounced <i>khuh-raw-DAW</i> ]	<i>trembling, fear, anxiety</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #2731 BDB #353
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh-NEH</i> ]	<i>camp, encampment; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334

## 1Samuel 14:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
There is no conjunction here in the Hebrew, although we would expect a wâw conjunction, as it is typical of Hebrew sentence structure in a phrase like this. However, we do find is a conjunction here in the Greek (which means, possibly, that the Hebrew conjunction may have fallen out of the text).			
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
sâdeh (הַשָּׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	<i>field, land, open field, open country</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced kaw],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

**Translation:** And fear was in the camp, in the field and in all the people. Over half of the battle is psychological. Dread filled the camp and the field. I can certainly provide a logical explanation—the Philistines had observed the Jews disappearing into the forest, and suddenly, out of the thicket comes two men who kill twenty of their soldiers. They do not know how many more Jews are hidden in the thick forest. And if they exhibit a 1 to 10 kill ratio, then the Philistines are sunk. We will find that the Philistines took in a great many Hebrew soldiers as deserters, and they are standing side-by-side. All of a sudden, it is possible that the man standing next to them is their enemy. We will see fighting break out within the camp of the Philistines where they turn on one another. They Philistines are also very aware of the God of Israel and aware that there are times in their history where this God intercedes and battles on behalf of Israel. However, more likely, what we have his is plain and simple fear and dread which has gripped the souls of the Philistines. They are too paralyzed with fear to attack, despite their huge numbers.

For most undiscerning types, what we have previously seems fine, and what follows seems fine. However, in the Hebrew, we have some serious problems. In v. 15a, we lack a wâw conjunction, which this verse demands (we don't notice that it is missing because the equivalent English translation does not require the wâw conjunction). Furthermore, the next portion of the verse also appears to be lacking something as well.

# 1Samuel 14:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
We would expect either a preposition here or we would expect <i>the people</i> to be in the construct without a preposition (that is, it would read <i>all the people of...</i> ). In the Greek, we find their equivalent to the bēyth preposition here instead of prior to <i>the people</i> . This would change the apparent sentence structure.			
matstsâb (מַצֵּב) [pronounced matz-TZA <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>standing-place, station, garrison, post</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4673 BDB #662
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâchas (שָׁחַשׁ) [pronounced shaw-KHAH <sup>TH</sup> ]	<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
This appears to be a verb used as a noun, referring back to the Philistine <i>raiders</i> of 1Sam. 13:17–18, and should perhaps be rendered <i>the raiders</i> or <i>the spoilers</i> . The fact that we have a verb which follows this gives more credence that this should be taken as a noun.			
chârad (חָרַד) [pronounced chaw-rah <sup>d</sup> ]	<i>to tremble, to be terrified, to be frightened</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2729 BDB #353
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gah <sup>m</sup> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
hëmmâh (הֵמָּה) [pronounced haym-maw <sup>h</sup> ]	<i>they, these</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241

**Translation:** *The garrison and the raiders were terrified, even these.* What I have done in v. 15a and v. 15b is set up translations which are in agreement with the Hebrew. However, even though v. 15b makes a good English sentence, this is not typical of the Hebrew. Hebrew sentences generally begin with a wâw conjunction or a wâw consecutive, and this begins with neither. To interpret it differently, would place the word *matstsâb* with the previous sentence. The problem with that is that this would require *people* to be in the construct, which it is not because it has a definite article. Constructs are not preceded by definite articles.

Another possibility is that there is a missing bēyth; that is, the *bēyth* which precedes *the people* should also precede *the camp*. This would give us: *And a dread was in the camp [and] in the field and with all the people [in] the garrison.* This would make perfect Hebraic sense. The Greek gives us a slightly different twist; the Greek places the *bēyth* (actually, their equivalent preposition ἐν) in front of *the garrison* **instead** of before *the people*. There is also a conjunction between *in the camp* and *in the field*. This would yield us a sentence which would be in complete agreement with typical Hebraic sentence structure: *And dread was in the camp and in the field, and all the people in the garrison and the raiders trembled.*

Of course, we then have the problem of the additional two words *even they*. This is solved in the Greek, as there are some additional words which give us a full sentence. In the Greek, we have: *And they would not will to do [anything].* This is the very nature of being paralyzed with fear. What we appear to have in the Greek is a very literal rendering of what we should find in the Hebrew, but do not. My very literal and literal renderings reflect the minor differences found in the Greek text.

Obviously, there are some problems with the text; I suspect that the Hebrew text is difficult to read here and some words are likely missing. However, the meaning of this passage is fairly easy to grasp. The Philistines, even though they have raided Israeli village after Israeli village with impunity, were also aware that there were a great many Israeli soldiers who were no longer stationed with Saul. Although it appeared as though they simply deserted Saul (which they did), it was clear that these soldiers were scattered throughout the land of Israel, perhaps surrounding them. A small portion of the camp sees that there are 20 dead guards and they are able to see a couple of Israeli soldiers (Jonathan and his armor bearer). Suddenly, the Philistines are seized with panic. They had assumed that they would be the aggressors and suddenly, out of nowhere, they are attacked. That this attack is merely two men never occurs to them. They may be aware that Saul's small army has not moved (they certainly had military intelligence), and suddenly, they are under attack. We can only speculate as to what they were thinking. They may think that, the Israeli soldiers which apparently deserted did not actually desert, but had them surrounded and were going to attack. Perhaps Israel entered into a military alliance and they are waiting in the wings. The Philistines were very well aware of the power of the God of Israel (recall that the Ark of God remained in Philistia for less than a year because of the number of deaths it caused), and now they are under surprise attack. Now, either simultaneous with this fear, or perhaps part of the cause of this great fear, is the next portion of this verse, the earthquake which shook the Philistines to their very souls.

### 1Samuel 14:15c

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
râgaz (רָגַז) [pronounced <i>rawg-GAHZ</i> ]	<i>to be agitated, to quiver, to quake, to become excited, perturbed, disquieted</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7264 BDB #919
`erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #776 BDB #75
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
There is no preposition here in the Greek; there is, however, the preposition παρά (which means <i>from</i> ) in the Greek prior to <i>God</i> .			
chârâdâh (חָרַדָּה) [pronounced <i>khuh-raw-DAW</i> ]	<i>trembling, fear, anxiety</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #2731 BDB #353
`êlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** *Then the earth quaked and [there] was great fear from God.* Again, I followed the Greek rather than the Hebrew for the latter half of v. 15c. Παρά is probably inserted to indicate a relationship between the construct and the masculine plural noun *God*. This is more linguistic license than anything else. However, the Hebrew lâmed

is ignored in the Greek, which I will do as well. Again, it made more sense from the standpoint of the Greek and Hebrew.

I think that both the Hebrew and Greek are unclear as to what was trembling—one could interpret this as applying to the earth as well as to the Philistines. I would think that this imprecision really tells us that both were trembling—both the earth upon which they stood and the people themselves. And the people trembled because they were in the middle of an earthquake and because their nerve was shaken as well. Essentially, they are terrifically unnerved, even though all that is before them from the standpoint of human thinking is a warrior and his armor bearer. From human viewpoint, an argument could certainly be made that the earthquake affected both the two Jews and the thousands of Philistines. However, Jonathan recognized that the earthquake was from the God of Israel and the Philistines recognized this as well. The result is in accordance with the promise of Bildad for the wicked: “All around terrors frighten him and move him to his feet.” (Job 18:11).

I was raised in California and most people react with little but giddiness at a small tremor; however, we are much more somber with regards to earthquakes of any real magnitude. As of this writing, I live in Texas, where we have several storms a year that often include tornados. And there is the occasional hurricane. Still, I have spoken to many people that reside in Texas who claim that they would never live in California because of all the earthquakes (I personally experienced 2 tremors over a period of 25 years). So, those who have never experienced an earthquake have an exaggerated dread of them. Therefore, in an area not known for earthquakes, an earthquake would have caused a great deal of panic. I have seen the ground move—even with a small tremor—and this knocked me off my feet. So I would guess that this was not a small tremor, but a terrific earthquake that made it clear, God was against the Philistines. Therefore, they certainly panicked.

The fears of the Philistines seemed to be rooted in 3 things: (1) the sudden earthquake,<sup>22</sup> (2) the possibility that a larger force than anticipated was making a surprise attack (the assumption would be that Saul was overseeing a mock force in Gilgal); and (3) a simple fear which God instilled in the Philistines—which fear might be very rational, by the way.

Since there are significant differences between the Greek and the Hebrew text, and since the Hebrew text which we have is suspect, as it does not follow the typical rules of Hebrew, let's look at this verse in the Greek. Although this is not exactly inspired Scripture, it is reasonably close.

### 1Samuel 14:15a Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
καί (καί) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
gínomai ( γίνομαι) [pronounced <i>GIN-oh-mī</i> ]	<i>to become [something it was not before]; to be born; to arise, come about; to be made, to be created; to happen, to take place</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist passive indicative	Strong's #1096

<sup>22</sup> Recall that Hebrew writing does not necessarily proceed in a chronological fashion. It is just as reasonable to assume that the cause of the Philistines' fear is being listed here.

### 1Samuel 14:15a Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
ekstasis (ἐκστασις, εως, ῆ) [pronounced EHKh-staw-siss]	<i>any casting down of a thing from its proper place or state, displacement; a throwing of the mind out of its normal state, alienation of mind; amazement, bewilderment, confusion, astonishment; terror; trance, ecstasy</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1611
en (ἐν) [pronounced en]	<i>in, by means of, with; among</i>	preposition with the locative, dative and instrumental cases	Strong's #1722
tê (τῇ) [pronounced tay]	<i>to the, for the; in the; by the, by means of the</i>	feminine singular definite article; dative, locative and instrumental case	Strong's #3588
parembolê (παρεμβολή) [pronounced pare-em-boh-LAY]	<i>a camp, encampment; barracks; army in line of battle; a throwing in beside (literal translation)</i>	feminine singular noun; dative, locative and instrumental case	Strong's #3925
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
en (ἐν) [pronounced en]	<i>in, by means of, with; among</i>	preposition with the locative, dative and instrumental cases	Strong's #1722
agros (ἄγρός) [pronounced ah-GROSS]	<i>the field, the country; a piece of land, bit of tillage; the farms, country seats, neighbouring hamlets</i>	masculine singular noun; in the locative, dative and instrumental case	Strong's #68

**Translation:** And [there] was bewilderment [and confusion] in the camp and in the field;... These Philistine soldiers were suddenly bewildered and confused. We are not given much by way of detail here as to why or how it came about. We don't know if this was divinely induced or, after seeing their honor guard wiped out by two men, they suddenly panicked. It would not occur to them that Jonathan and his armor bearer are the only two there.

### 1Samuel 14:15b Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
pás (πάς) [pronounced pahs]	<i>each, every, any; all, entire; anyone, all things, everything; some [of all types]</i>	nominative masculine singular adjective	Strong's #3956
ho (ὁ) [pronounced hoh]	<i>the; this, that, these</i>	definite article for a nominative masculine singular noun	Strong's #3588



### 1Samuel 14:15b Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
laos (λαός) [pronounced lah-OSS]	<i>people, people group, tribe, nation, all those who are of the same stock and language; of a great part of the population gathered together anywhere</i>	masculine singular noun; nominative case	Strong's #2992
hoi (οἱ) [pronounced hoy]	<i>the; this, that, these</i>	plural definite article; masculine singular nominative plural	Strong's #3588
en (ἐν) [pronounced en]	<i>in, by means of, with; among</i>	preposition with the locative, dative and instrumental cases	Strong's #1722
Messab (Μεσάβ) [pronounced meh-s-AHB]	transliterated <i>Messab</i>	indeclinable proper noun	Strong's #none
This is a transliteration of the Hebrew noun: matstsâb (מַצֵּבָה) [pronounced <i>matz-TZA<sup>B</sup>V</i> ], which means <i>standing-place, station, garrison, post</i> . Strong's #4673 BDB #662.			
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
hoi (οἱ) [pronounced hoy]	<i>the; this, that, these</i>	plural definite article; masculine singular nominative plural	Strong's #3588
diaphtheirô (διαφθείρω) [pronounced dee-ahf-THIGH-roh]	<i>to change for the worse, to corrupt; to destroy, to ruin; to consume [bodily vigor and strength]; to kill; to perish</i>	present active participle	Strong's #1311
existêmi (ἐξίστημι) [pronounced ex-ee-STAY-me]	<i>lit., to stand outside [oneself]; to remove out of a place or state; to be astonished [amazed, astounded]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, aorist active indicative	Strong's #1839

**Translation:** ...and all the people—these ones—in Messab [i.e., in the Philistine garrison] and those who ruined [consumed and killed] were astonished. The Philistines who were in the camp and those who routinely went out and attacked the nearby Jewish settlements were astonished, amazed and astounded.

### 1Samuel 14:15c Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
autoi (αὐτοί) [pronounced ow-TOY]	<i>they</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural pronoun; nominative case	Strong's #846



### 1Samuel 14:15c Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
ouk (οὐκ) [pronounced ook]	<i>no, not, nothing, none, no one</i>	negation; this form is used before a vowel	Strong's #3756
thélō (θέλω) [pronounced THEH-loh]	<i>to will, to have in mind, to wish, to desire, to purpose, to intend, to please; to take delight [pleasure] in</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, imperfect active indicative	Strong's #2309
poieō (ποιέω) [pronounced poi-EH-oh]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to produce; to carry out, to execute [a plan, an intention]; to act</i>	present active infinitive	Strong's #4160

**Translation:** And they were no willing to act [or, to execute (their plans)];... They saw Jonathan and his armor bearer, whom they would, at another time, simply attack and kill. However, they had no willingness to act in accordance with their standard operating procedures.

### 1Samuel 14:15d Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
thaubeō (θαυβέω) [pronounced thow-BEH-oh]	<i>to be astonished; to astonish, terrify; to be amazed; to be frightened</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative	Strong's #2284
hē (ή) [pronounced hey]	<i>the; this, that; these</i>	feminine singular definite article; nominative and vocative cases	Strong's #3588
gē (γῆ, γῆς, ή) [pronounced gay]	<i>earth; soil, ground; land; [inhabited] earth</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1093
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
gínomai ( γίνομαι) [pronounced GIN-oh-mī]	<i>to become [something it was not before]; to be born; to arise, come about; to be made, to be created; to happen, to take place</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist passive indicative	Strong's #1096
ekstasis (ἐκστασις, εως, ή) [pronounced EHKH-staw-siss]	<i>any casting down of a thing from its proper place or state, displacement; a throwing of the mind out of its normal state, alienation of mind; amazement, bewilderment, confusion, astonishment; terror; trance, ecstasy</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1611

### 1Samuel 14:15d Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
para (παρά) [pronounced paw-RAW]	<i>of, from [the side of, the person of]; by</i>	preposition of origin, source; with the genitive	Strong's #3844
kurios (κύριος) [pronounced KOO-ree-oss]	<i>lord, master; Lord; he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; the possessor and disposer of a thing; the owner; one who has control of the person; prince, chief, sovereign</i>	masculine singular noun in the genitive case	Strong's #2962

**Translation:** ...and the land was terrified... It is unclear whether *the land* here is a metonym standing in for the Philistine soldiers or whether the actual earth began to be displaced (i.e., there was possibly an earthquake which occurred at this point).

### 1Samuel 14:15e Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
gínomai (γίνομαι) [pronounced GIN-oh-mī]	<i>to become [something it was not before]; to be born; to arise, come about; to be made, to be created; to happen, to take place</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist passive indicative	Strong's #1096
ekstasis (ἔκστασις, εως, ή) [pronounced EHKH-staw-siss]	<i>any casting down of a thing from its proper place or state, displacement; a throwing of the mind out of its normal state, alienation of mind; amazement, bewilderment, confusion, astonishment; terror; trance, ecstasy</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1611
para (παρά) [pronounced paw-RAW]	<i>of, from [the side of, the person of]; by</i>	preposition of origin, source; with the genitive	Strong's #3844
kurios (κύριος) [pronounced KOO-ree-oss]	<i>lord, master; Lord; he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; the possessor and disposer of a thing; the owner; one who has control of the person; prince, chief, sovereign</i>	masculine singular noun in the genitive case	Strong's #2962

**Translation:** ...and [there] was bewilderment [or, a displacement, astonishment, confusion] from [the] Lord. At this point we are told that this bewilderment, confusion or displacement was from the Lord. That is, the confusion of the soldiers was from Jesus Christ; or the earthquake, if one occurred, was from Jesus Christ.

The end result is, these Philistine soldiers are moving without a definite pattern, like ants whose hill has been stomped.

There are a couple of things that I want you to notice here: first off, even though there are some definite differences between the MT and the LXX, the end result—the meaning of this verse—is essentially the same. Despite the textual difficulties (particularly in the Hebrew), there is no problem with choosing one text over the other—that is, you could hold onto the Septuagint text as God's Word, and you would not be far off from the meaning of the MT.

Now, there is a second thing I want you to notice: the text of the LXX is the smoothest and easiest to understand. This will be the case 90% of the time (maybe 98% of the time?). Why is this? The LXX is a literary work; it is a translation of the Holy Bible (the Old Testament). It is not the Word of God, per se, and, therefore, some liberties would be taken. That is, if Rex the translator is having a difficult time unraveling the Hebrew, he is more likely to put down Greek text which makes sense and is similar to the Hebrew rather than to simply string together a few words which do not make sense, even if it is a word for word rendering from the Hebrew. The mindset of the translator is much different than the mindset of the copyist. The scribe who copies the Hebrew text, century after century, is most concerned with copying this text accurately. There might be 4 words together which do not seem to make sense—they don't care—they want each and every letter in their copy to match each and every letter of the original. There may appear to be a discrepancy in two adjacent verses—this is not the problem of the copyist. No matter how they feel about this—upset, concerned, nonplused, apathetic—their job is to reproduce the text that they have been given. It is not their job to fix, improve, make sense of, etc. It was never the responsibility of the copyist to try to do anything apart from copy the Sacred text, word for word and letter for letter. Other considerations could be dealt with by a priest, prophet or teacher. So, for these reasons, the text of the LXX will almost always make sense whether the MT does or not.

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## Saul Observes the Commotion in the Philistine Camp and Pursues the Philistines

**And so look the watchers to Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin and, behold, the multitude melted and so they went here and [there] [or, were thrown into confusion on every side].** 1Samuel 14:16

**And the spies of Saul [who is] in Gibeah of Benjamin looked [out over the Philistines camp] and, observe, the multitude [of Philistines] was melting away and there was confusion on every side.**

**When Saul's watchmen looked out over the Philistine camp and they observed that the Philistine army was scattering and that there was great confusion in their retreat.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And the watchmen of Saul, who were in Gabaa of Benjamin looked, and behold a multitude overthrown, and fleeing this way and that.
Masoretic Text	And so look the watchers to Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin and, behold, the multitude melted and so they went here and [there] [or, were thrown into confusion on every side].
Peshitta	And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold the Philistine army was in confusion, going away defeated.
Septuagint	And the watchmen of Saul behold in Gabaa of Benjamin, and, behold, the army was thrown into confusion on every side.

Significant differences: The second and third phrases are quite inconsistent in their exact translation. They are specifically named in the Peshitta as the Philistine army (possibly just to clearly

identity them). They are identified as the army in the LXX, and simply as the multitude in the Latin and Hebrew. This is probably a result of simple interpretation.

The third phrase is not found in the LXX; the Latin and Hebrew are in agreement, and the Syriac has them going away defeated. Despite these differences, the texts essentially mean the same thing.

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

CEV	Saul's lookouts at Geba saw that the Philistine army was running in every direction, like melted wax.
NLT	Saul's lookouts in Gibeah saw a strange sight—the vast army of Philistines began to melt away in every direction.
REB	Saul's men on the watch in Gibeah of Benjamin saw the mob of Philistines surging to and fro in confusion. [ <i>To and fro</i> is from the Greek; Heb: <i>and he went thither</i> ]

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

God's Word™	Saul's watchmen at Gibeah in Benjamin could see the crowd [in the Philistine camp] dispersing in all directions.
JPS (Tanakh)	Saul's scouts in Gibeah of Benjamin saw that the multitude was scattering in all directions. [literally, <i>shaken and going thither</i> . Meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain].

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

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And the scouts of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked and lo!   the camp   melted away, hither and thither. Twice, Rotherham footnotes this verse with <i>so it should be; the camp</i> is as per the LXX and the Syriac; <i>hither and thither</i> is in agreement with the LXX. <sup>23</sup> My version of the LXX simply ends at the second statement ( <i>the army is thrown into confusion</i> ).
NASB	Now Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away; and they went here and there.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin see, and lo, the multitude has melted away, and it goes on, and is beaten down.

One point of confusion in this verse (which has caused some changes in the translation) is, it appears as though Saul's watchmen (or, *spies*, *scouts*) are the ones in Gibeah of Benjamin in some English translations. That cannot be, as one could not see Michmash from Gibeah (Geba would be in the way). However, it is Saul who is in Gibeah of Benjamin (see v. 2). When you understand that, this verse makes more sense.

**What is the gist of this verse?** With this verse, we return to the camp of Saul. Saul still had a small force of men with him and some functioned as spies or scouts. They hid in the hills and mountain forests probably south of Michmash and they watched the camp of the Philistines for movement. Suddenly, although they probably did not see the skirmish begun by Jonathan, they did observe an inexplicable scattering of the Philistine forces (inexplicable to Saul's lookout).

By comparing the NASB to the Septuagint, it is obvious that there is a problem with the last part of this verse.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 301. Bear in mind, there are different versions of the Septuagint. Furthermore, I generally rely upon Brenton's translation of the Septuagint, which may not be word-for-word accurate.

## 1Samuel 14:16a

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
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
tsâphâh (צָפָה) [pronounced <i>tsaw-FAW</i> ]	<i>look outs, spies, watchers, watchmen</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the definite article	Strong's #6822 BDB #859
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Shâ`ûl (שָׁאֻל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
Gib <sup>e</sup> âh (גִּבְעָה) [pronounced <i>g<sup>ih</sup>V<sup>eh</sup>-GAW</i> ]	transliterated <i>Gibeah</i> ; this same word means <i>hill</i>	proper feminine singular noun; construct form	Strong's #1390 BDB #149
Bin <sup>y</sup> âmîyn (בִּנְיָמִין) [pronounced <i>bin-yaw-MEEN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Benjamin</i> , it means <i>son of [my] right hand</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1144 BDB #122

**Translation:** Then the spies belonging to Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked out... Saul is the one in Gibeah of Benjamin. It is summer and he finds himself under the pomegranate tree, somewhat paralyzed with fear. However, he does have spies out there, observing what the Philistines are doing, and they apparently bring back an unexpected report.

## 1Samuel 14:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
hâmôwn (הֶמְוֹן) [pronounced <i>haw-MOHN</i> ]	<i>multitude, crowd, throng</i>	masculine singular noun (with the definite article)	Strong's #1995 BDB #242

## 1Samuel 14:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mûg (מִג) [pronounced <i>moog</i> ]	<i>to melt, to flow, to flow down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #4127 BDB #556

**Translation:** ...and, behold, the multitude [of Philistines] was melting away... Even in the Hebrew by itself, it is obvious that there is something wrong, as the literal rendering of the final phrase would be: *and so they [the multitude] departed and here*. At this time, it may be helpful to examine the **Doctrine of Mûg**.

And in case you did not look this up, I have summarized it below:

## Summary of the Doctrine of Mûg

1. The Hebrew verb mûg (מִג) [pronounced *moog*] essentially means *to melt*. It has no cognates. BDB gives these meanings: 1) *to melt, cause to melt*; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) *to melt, faint*; 1a2) *to cause to melt*; 1b) (Niphal) *to melt away*; 1c) (Polel) *to soften, dissolve, dissipate*; 1d) (Hithpolel) *to melt, flow*. Strong's adds the figurative use *to fear, to faint*; and Gesenius gives the basic meaning *to flow, to flow down*: and adds *to dissolve; to cause to pine and perish*. Strong's #4127 BDB #556. Mûg has no cognates.
2. It is found in the following passages. Ex. 15:15 Joshua 2:9, 24 1Sam. 14:16 Job. 30:22 Psalm 46:6 65:10 75:3 107:26 Isa. 14:31 64:7 Jer. 49:22–23 Ezek. 21:15 Amos 9:5, 13 Nah. 1:5 2:6
3. From these passages, we may conclude:
  - a. In all instances of this word, we could render it *to melt* without a loss of meaning, either to the verse or the context.
  - b. When something melts, it seems to disappear. That is, an ice cube on the ground which has melted, if on a porous surface, will be taken into that surface and seemingly disappear. The translations *to soften, to dissolve, to disappear, to flow* all are reasonable renderings of this word.
  - c. When a person melts, he becomes without form or substance.
  - d. When an army melts, as we have here, there are two probable meanings: their hearts have melted in fear; and they have seemingly melted into the ground—that is, they have scattered and hidden themselves and retreated. At one time they were very visible as any army; now they can barely be seen.
  - e. The earth melting can refer to a number of things: the most obvious is volcanic activity; however, I think the idea refers more to earthquakes, high winds, storms and whatever else which cause the landscape to collapse and to lose its height.

I certainly wish that I could have come up with something which was more of a revelation, but mûg turns out to mean, essentially, what the lexicons say it means (given the context and usage of this verb).

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## 1Samuel 14:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wê (or vê) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251



## 1Samuel 14:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
hâmôwn (הַמֹּון) [pronounced <i>haw-MOHN</i> ]	<i>multitude, crowd, throng</i>	masculine singular noun (with the definite article)	Strong's #1995 BDB #242
mûg (מוּג) [pronounced <i>moog</i> ]	<i>to melt, to flow, to flow down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #4127 BDB #556
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlôm (הֵלֶם) [pronounced <i>huh-LOHM</i> ]	<i>here, hither, to or towards [a place], near</i>	adverb	Strong's #1988 BDB #240

This obviously makes little sense. We would expect this verse to end with a phrase like *here and there, hither and yon*. However, one adverb is missing.

The Greek ends this verse quite differently; it reads: *...the army was thrown into confusion on every side*.

**Translation:** *Then the spies belonging to Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked out and, behold, the multitude [of Philistines] was melting away and they departed here and there [or, the army was thrown into confusion on every side].* Even in the Hebrew by itself, it is obvious that there is something wrong, as the literal rendering of the final phrase would be: *and so they [the multitude] departed and here*.

We do have to examine the Hebrew carefully. Saul's spies are not necessarily in Gibeah. In fact, this would make little sense, as they could not see the activity in Michmash from Gibeah. Your spies are sent out elsewhere—that is what makes them spies. Saul's spies are north of Gibeah, and even north of Geba. They notice very unusual activity in the Philistine camp, and messengers are sent back to Saul about this movement. By the way, it is *Saul*, and not his spies, who is *in* Gibeah (which is clear in the Hebrew and agrees completely with 14:2 and our corrected readings of 1Sam. 13:15–16).

What these spies or scouts are observing is the Philistine army quite suddenly dissipating. They cannot see why; they cannot see enough to realize that Jonathan and his armor bearer killed 20 guards and that God instilled fear into all of the Philistines. In fact, even that is difficult to say with certainty, as we really know little about what exactly happened due to the difficulty of v. 15. It appears as though the earth quaked and that is what struck fear into the hearts of these soldiers; however, even though this is what we find in the Hebrew (Syriac and Latin), it reads differently in the Greek. In any case, either an earthquake from God or a fear from God caused these soldiers to scatter, to melt into the earth, to suddenly dissipate. Saul's scouts are amazed by this sight.

You may wonder why I question the earth quaking—why I indicate that maybe that is not accurate—after all, that is what we find in the Hebrew. The problem is actually the next verse—the scouts do not come back and tell Saul



that these soldiers were routed by an earthquake; whatever they tell Saul, Saul will, in the next verse, review his troops to determine who is gone. Therefore, the scouts appeared to think that the Philistines soldiers did not just suddenly begin retreated—they believe that someone from their army caused these soldiers to dissipate, which is what would cause Saul to number his troops.

And so says Saul to the people who with him, “Have personal contact [with all the troops] and see who has gone out from with us.” And so they had personal contact [with all the troops] and behold, no Jonathan and bearer of manufactured goods.

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Then Samuel said to the people with him, “Number [the troops] and see who has gone out from among us.” And they numbered [the troops] and, observe, Jonathan and his armor bearer [were] not [there].

Then Samuel ordered the people with him, “Inventory the troops and see who has gone out from us.” So role was called and they observed that Jonathan and his armor bearer were missing.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so says Saul to the people who with him, “Have personal contact [with all the troops] and see who has gone out from with us.” And so they had personal contact [with all the troops] and behold, no Jonathan and bearer of manufactured goods.
Septuagint	And Saul said to the people with him, “Number yourselves now, and see who has gone out from you.” And they numbered themselves, and behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not found.
Significant differences:	No significant differences.

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

CEV	Saul told his officers, “Call the roll and find out who left our camp.” When they had finished, they found out that Jonathan and the soldier who carried his weapons were missing.
NLT	“Find out who isn’t here,” Saul ordered. And when they checked, they found that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone.

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

God’s Word™	“Look around,” Saul told the troops who were with him, “and see who has left [our camp].” They looked and found that Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there.
JPS (Tanakh)	And Saul said to the troops with him, “Take a count and see who has left us.” They took a count and found that Jonathan and his arms-bearer were missing.

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

NASB	And Saul said to the people who <i>were</i> with him, “Number [lit., <i>muster</i> ] now and see who has gone from us.” And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not <i>there</i> .
Young’s Updated LT	And Saul says to the people who <i>are</i> with him, “Inspect, I pray you, and see; who has gone from us?” and they inspect, and lo, Jonathan and the bearer of his weapons are not.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul either realizes or suspects that some Israelites have raided the Philistine camp (the only explanation for their forces dispersing as they were), so he calls roll to determine if anyone from

his camp has gone out. Once roll had been called, the only men who were missing were Jonathan and his weapons bearer.

Saul was not the one to observe the dissipation of the enemy troops—his scouts observed this. Therefore, we may reasonably assume what they observed was something which would have indicated to them that there was an attack on the Philistines from the south. More than likely, the direction that these Philistines moved would have indicated that to the scouts.

Before we begin exegeting this verse, maybe we can piece together what the scouts observed and what happened. Jonathan and his armor bearer appear to be on a fairly narrow trail, upon which they killed 20 Philistine soldiers. The few Philistines which would have moved in that direction would see their fallen brothers and then turned tail and run. The Philistines who begin to run certainly affect the other Philistines; and suddenly, it is every man running for his own safety. No longer is there a clear, recognizable army encamped in Mishmash, but they are running into the hills and forests and valleys, and the entire army appears to be melting. It is possible and reasonable that there was a very localized earthquake, which does not appear to have been mentioned by Saul's scouts (who would have been stationed on another mountain). Given the direction that the Philistine soldiers are running (which would have been mostly west; northwest; and a few might go north and east), that would have indicated to the scouts that there was an attack from the south. For this reason, Saul is going to number his troops, to try and figure out which of his men struck these Philistines.

### 1Samuel 14:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâʾûl (שָׂאֻל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced <i>paw-KAHD</i> ]	<i>to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to number, to take a census</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #6485 BDB #823

# 1Samuel 14:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâ' (אָנָּה) [pronounced naw]	<i>please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	<i>who</i>	pronominal interrogative	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
hâlakê (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHKê]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'îm (עִם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> persons plural suffix)	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Together, these prepositions mean: *from with, beside, from being with, away from, far from, from among, from the possession of, from the custody of, from the house of, from the vicinity of, out of the power of, from the mind of.*

**Translation:** Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Please take a census and see who has gone out from among us." Despite the earthquake<sup>24</sup> (which the men of Israel may or may not have felt, as they were a couple miles away), Saul assumed or guessed that there had been an attack upon the Philistines and he wanted to know who was responsible for that attack. Therefore, he instructs his men to take roll call. It is probably a fairly simple process where the captains are tallied first, then they then checked to see if their lieutenants were present, who then checked the officers beneath them, etc. Or, there may have been several men who were in charge of just this particular process. In any case, there was a relatively speedy procedure for determining who was there and who was not. Saul himself did not pick up a list of all of his soldiers and call roll.

It is interesting that a census is taken. By the numbers which have been given earlier, it appears as though Saul kept fairly close tabs on who was still with his army and who was not. Recall, a number of his soldiers had deserted him and we are given the size of his army back in v. 2. So this was normal for Saul to take roll call. What was probably the case is, his army was reduced to a size of his most fearless men, and that the 600 was a fairly steady number. In other words, he expected that this census would not result in finding out that there were more deserters, but that some had gone out and somehow routed the Philistines.

<sup>24</sup> Which may or may not have happened.

## 1Samuel 14:17b

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
pâqad (פָּקַד) [pronounced <i>paw-KAHD</i> ]	<i>to go to a person, to visit, to have personal contact with, to sort out, to visit a person, to commit, to charge to the care of, to fall upon, to attack, to number, to take a census</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6485 BDB #823
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʾayin (אֵין) [pronounced <i>AH-yin</i> ]	<i>naught, nothing; it can be a particle of negation: no, not</i>	negative/negative construct	Strong's #369 BDB #34
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâsâ' (נָסָא) [pronounced <i>naw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to lift up, to bear, to carry</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5375 (and #4984) BDB #669
kêlîy (כֶּלִּי) [pronounced <i>kêlee</i> ]	<i>manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture, receptacle; baggage, valuables</i>	masculine plural noun with a masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3627 BDB #479

**Translation:** So they took a census [or, they called roll] and, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer [were] not [there]. Now you may have thought, *how could Saul not notice immediately that his son Jonathan was not there?* It is quite apparently that Jonathan had his own company of soldiers and that he acted very independently of his father (see 1Sam. 13:3–4 14:1). Jonathan apparently had the authority to do what he did—and he did so apart from checking with his father, as his father would never approve. Secondly, Saul is not the one who is checking to see who is there and who is not; this is a delegated responsibility which filters down through the ranks from the highest level on down. It is possible that Saul himself does not even check his ranking generals but that they do that themselves (which immediately told them that Jonathan was missing). Of course, they did not stop with Jonathan, as, who would think that only Jonathan and his armor bearer would do this alone? In any case, taking roll of 600 men, if done in an organized fashion, would take place in about 10 minutes.

In the next several verses, we are going to struggle somewhat with the Masoretic text. There will be problems with the way that it reads; and there are going to be significant differences between the Hebrew and the Greek.

Regardless, the overall narrative remains essentially unchanged. Saul will call for the High Priest, and then choose not to ask God anything (at first) as he observes serious problems in the camp of the Philistines. As he moves closer to them, with his small army, Saul will observe both a mass desertion of the Philistine troops as well as fighting breaking out within and without the Philistine camp itself. There appear to be a contingent of Israelis within the camp who had changed their allegiance to the Philistines, and now they were changing back to their allegiance to their brothers. They take up their sword against the Philistine army. However, it also appears that there is a great deal of confusion within the Philistine camp among the Philistines themselves. No matter which way we read this passage, or whether we select the Greek or the Hebrew text, these narrative facts appear to stand.

**And so says Saul to Ahijah, "Bring an Ark of the Elohim" for was an Ark of the Elohim in the day the that and sons of Israel. [as per the MT]**

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14:18

**Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the Ephod" for he wore the ephod in that day before Israel. [as per the Septuagint]**

**Then Saul told Ahijah to bring the ephod for guidance, as Ahijah was the High Priest and wore the ephod in that day in Israel.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so says Saul to Ahijah, "Bring an Ark of the Elohim" for was an Ark of the Elohim in the day the that and sons of Israel. [as per the MT]
Peshitta	And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring here the ark of God." For the Ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.
Septuagint	And Saul said to Achin, "Bring the Ephod;" for he wore the Ephod in that day before Israel.
Significant differences:	The biggest, most obvious difference is, we find the <i>Ark of God</i> in the Latin, Hebrew and Syriac; and the <i>Ephod of God</i> in the Greek. This will be discussed in great detail below. There is a minor problem in the Hebrew at the end of this verse as well.

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

CEV	At that time, Ahijah was serving as priest for the army of Israel, and Saul told him, "Come over here! Let's ask God what we should do."
NAB	Saul then said to Ahijah, "Bring the ephod here." (Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites at that time.)
NJB	Saul then said to Ahijah, "Bring the <i>ephod</i> ," since he was the man who carried the <i>ephod</i> in Israel.
NLT	Then Saul shouted to Ahijah, "Bring the ephod here!" For at that time Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites.
REB	Sal said to Ahijah, "Bring forward the ephod." for it was he who at that time carried the ephod before Israel.
TEV	"Bring the ephod here," Saul said to Ahijah the priest. (On that day Ahijah was carrying it in front of the people of Israel.)

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

God's Word™	Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the priestly ephod," because Ahijah carried the ephod in front of Israel that day.
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JPS (Tanakh)                      Thereupon Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the Ark of God here”; for the Ark of God was at the time among [Hebrew: *and*] the Israelites. [Septuagint reads “ephod” (instead of *ark*); cf. Vv. 3, 23.9, 30.7]

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

*The Emphasized Bible*            Then said Saul unto Ahijah, Bring near the ark of God; for the ark of God was, on that day, in the midst of the sons of Israel. [Rotherham footnotes that *in the midst of* is in accordance with the Aramaic, Syriac and Vulgate codices].

NASB                                Then Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God here.” For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel.

NRSV                                Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark [Greek: *ephod*] here.” For at that time the ark [Greek: *ephod*] of God went with the Israelites.

*Young’s Updated LT*            And Saul says to Ahiah, “Bring near the ark of God;” for the ark of God has been on that day with the sons of Israel.

Quite obviously, we have two very different readings here; Saul either called for the Ark of God or he called for the ephod. In the Hebrew, it is *Ark* and in the Greek, it is *ephod*. Before we discuss the merits of each, here is how various translations treated this.

1Samuel 14:18—Which Translation Follow the Greek and Which Follow the Hebrew?	
Followed the Hebrew reading ( <i>Ark</i> ) but footnoted the Greek reading ( <i>ephod</i> ).	Tanakh, NRSV, NKJV, NIV (in their footnote, they clearly favored the Greek text)
Followed the Hebrew reading and did not footnote the Greek.	NASB, Owen’s Analytical Key, Young’s Literal Translation, KJV, Complete Jewish Bible, Scofield’s KJV. It is quite unfortunate to see this footnote missing from these translations.
Followed the Greek reading and footnoted what is found in the Hebrew (which is the best approach).	REB, God’s Word™, NEB, NLT, TEV
Followed the Greek reading and did not footnote this passage.	NAB, NJB, Moffatt’s translation
Ignored the Greek and the Hebrew in the translation; however, footnoted (roughly) the Hebrew text.	CEV (in their defense, it is perhaps because of the controversy that they did not take a stand; however, the CEV tends to be—how should I put it?—very <i>imaginative</i> in their rendering of Scripture)

It is fascinating to see what translation follows what. No matter what rendering is chosen, this passage should be footnoted.

There are several things which are affected by this verse. First of all, what exactly does Saul think he is doing? Secondly, the movement of the Ark is of great interest to me. There are very important events which took place related to the Ark, the Tent of God and Shiloh which are not recorded. If the Ark is moved here, that could be significant. In any case, what should be abundantly clear is that we have two substantially different readings here, and the interpretation of this chapter could rest upon which way we go. Therefore, we need to stop exegesis for a moment and examine the **Doctrine of Textual Criticism: the Old Testament**.

If I summarize this doctrine, I am going to do it a grave disservice, as I spent 40+ pages on Old Testament Textual Criticism. If I was teaching this, no way would I go with simply the shortened version. However, an abbreviated version is below:

## A Summary of Old Testament Textual Criticism

1. Introduction:
  - a. Textual criticism simply means that we attempt to determine the most accurate reading for any passage of Scripture.
  - b. Now you may wonder, why Textual Criticism: *the Old Testament*? Why not simply study *Textual Criticism*? We are talking two very different sciences. Whereas there are in excess of 24,000 Greek New Testament manuscripts, we have not even a tenth of that number of Hebrew manuscripts. Furthermore, we only have a handful of essentially complete Old Testament manuscripts. Whereas with the New Testament, we need only be concerned with one language, Greek; in the Old Testament, we have a relatively small number of Hebrew manuscripts which are much later than their translated counterparts. And the rules or customs associated with the copying of a manuscript were much more exacting for the Old Testament than the New. So, even though there are certainly overlaps between the science of textual criticism of both the Old and New Testament's, there are enough differences to warrant separate doctrines.
  - c. There are several important questions that we must study in relation to Old Testament textual criticism: 1. How much corruption of the original text took place? 2. Were there actual, intentional changes made to the text and do we have any idea as to what those changes were? 3. What kinds of errors were made in copying the original manuscripts and how do we know? 4. Which manuscripts do we have, in what languages, and what is their relative importance? How was the text of the Old Testament transmitted? 5. Of what importance are the Dead Sea Scrolls? 6. Of what importance are the ancient translations of the Old Testament? 7. Why did God allow His Word to become corrupt? 8. How or why do we choose one reading over another reading (which is the essence of textual criticism)?
  - d. It is important that you recognize that there have been some alterations to the original text, most of which were unintentional. A majority of variant readings go back to times when a scribe made an error in the transcription of a book; however, there are even a few times when the text was actually altered. The science and art of textual criticism is attempting to return to the original text. Because of the fact that there are alterations and mistakes, one must also consider this: how much of my Old Testament can I trust? Given that much of the Old Testament has been around for 3000 years, is there any resemblance between the original text and what we have today?
2. There were several groups of Jewish scribes who were charged with the responsibility of preserving the Old Testament over the centuries: The *Sopherim* (or *scribes*) (this word means *to count*) were the Jewish custodians of God's Word between 500 B.C. and 200 B.C. The *Zugoth* (or *pairs* of textual scholars) were custodians of God's Word in the second and first centuries B.C. The *Tannaim* (meaning *repeaters, teachers*) preserved the Old Testament up until 200 A.D. The *Talmudists* preserved the text between 100–500 A.D. The Masorites preserved the Old Testament text between 500–900 B.C. The name *Masoretes* comes from *masora*, which means *oral tradition*.
  - a. During the time of the Masorites, the Jews were scattered all over the earth (as the Bible had predicted).
  - b. Hebrew was a dead language, spoken primarily in synagogues.
  - c. The Masorites knew that the text must be standardized and that vowels were needed. There were at least 3 different systems which were produced, one of which became predominant.
  - d. There were a number of peculiarities in the Masoretic text: previous scribes had peculiar ways of writing some letters, there were marks here and there, and they had left notes in the margins. The Masorites were careful to reproduce all of these additions and distinctions. There are at least 1300 instances where the text is read aloud one way, but written in a different way. Some of these instances are trivial, so to speak. No one spoke the sacred name of God (YHWH; possibly *Y<sup>e</sup>howah*) when reading Scripture, they said *Lord* instead (*Adonai*). Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible* is outstanding in this regard—he notes the many places where what is said and what is written are



## A Summary of Old Testament Textual Criticism

- different.
- e. Interestingly enough, the Masorites did not attribute the same reverence to a manuscript because it was older. Their approach was just the opposite. Their method of transmission was so accurate that, once a new text was produced and approved, older texts would be destroyed.
    - i. I should point out that there are some who believe that the Bible was tampered with; that some religious organization got a hold of it and made wholesale changes in Scripture in order to get across this theological idea or that. When I was young, I was taught that all of the references to reincarnation were removed from Scripture and that there were all of these hidden books which should have been put into the Bible but were not.
    - ii. These assertions are generally made by people whose academic skills in this realm are sorely lacking. I've gone online and found people who assert the Catholic church made wholesale changes to Scripture in order to promulgate their own doctrines. This is completely false. We have the Old and New Testaments translated into a number of different languages sent out in a number of different directions, so that the Catholic church, even though it became large and even vicious, was not the only church in town. It may have dominated some areas and even some countries, but we have manuscripts of the Bible (primarily the New Testament) which pre-date the Catholic church; or were associated with completely different traditions and churches, which are barely different. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, we did not find out new, hidden information which scribes had destroyed over the years; we found out that the Old Testament Scriptures, as handed down by the Masorites, had changed very little over the period of 1000 years.
    - iii. What is important to know is, there has never been a discovery of any ancient Bible manuscript which differed fundamentally from existing manuscripts; and there has never been a discovery of an ancient Bible manuscript which differed in doctrine from what we have come to believe.
    - iv. This is particularly true of the New Testament (not our topic here), as we have 24,000+ partial and full ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. There is no way that you can assert that any organization, large or small, came along and made vast doctrinal changes to Scripture in order to support this viewpoint or that. There is absolutely no historical or archeological evidence to support such an opinion.
  3. An *autograph* is a completely accurate copy of the complete canon of Scripture of the Old Testament. An autograph of the complete Old Testament has never existed. At various times, autographs of particular books certainly did exist. We depend upon other manuscripts:
    - a. The Masoretic text: first of all, there is no such thing—there are several texts copied by several groups of Masorites, some of which we have and some of which we only have portions.
      - i. The Cairo Codex (895 A.D.), written and pointed by Moshe ben Asher, in three columns with Tiberian vowel pointing.
      - ii. The Leningrad Codex of the Prophets (dated by two scholars as 916 A.D.).
      - iii. The Aleppo Codex (930 A.D.). The manuscript was first kept in Jerusalem, then in Cairo, and finally it was taken to Aleppo, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in Syria. Most of this codex was destroyed in a fire in 1948.
      - iv. The British Museum Codex (Oriental 4445) (950 A.D.) contains only Gen. 39:20–Deut. 1:33.
      - v. The Leningrad Codex (1008 A.D.). It is the only complete manuscript of the Old Testament. It is believed to have been copied from a corrected manuscript which was prepared by Rabbi Aaron ben Moses ben Asher prior to 1000 A.D. This, at one time, was the primary source of *Biblia Hebraica*. This manuscript was apparently produced in Babylonia.
      - vi. The Reuchlin Codex of the Prophets (1105 A.D.), like the Leningrad Codex, was based upon a corrected manuscript prepared by ben Naphtali, a Tiberian Masorete.
      - vii. We have other manuscripts and the number of Old Testament manuscripts increases greatly after 1100 A.D.
      - viii. In comparing the MT to the Dead Sea Scrolls, we find that the Bible was transmitted much more accurately over this period of 1000 years than Shakespeare has been over the past few hundred

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years. Even though Shakespear wrote after the advent of the printing press, there are a whole host of disputed readings in Shakespear upon which whole plot turns and twists depend upon. There are barely a handful of secondary doctrines that one might call into question based upon differences of various Old and New Testament manuscripts. In fact, the only example I can come up with is, at the end of the book of Mark, there is about half of a chapter which was added which asserts that the disciples of Christ would pick up dead snakes and drink deadly poison and not be hurt. Textual criticism clearly has shown that this passage was an addition made several hundred years after the writing of the book of Mark.

- ix. Gleason Archer comments on the accuracy of the transmission of text by the Masorites: *In conclusion, we should accord to the Masoretes the highest praise for their meticulous care in preserving so sedulously the consonantal text of the Sopherim which had been entrusted to them. They, together with the Sopherim themselves, gave the most diligent attention to accurate preservation of the Hebrew Scriptures that has ever been devoted to any ancient literature, secular or religious, in the history of human civilization. So conscientious were they in their stewardship of the holy text that they did not even venture to make the most obvious corrections, so far as the consonants were concerned, but left their Vorlage exactly as it had been handed down to them. Because of their faithfulness, we have today a form of the Hebrew text which in all essentials duplicates the recension which was considered authoritative in the days of Christ and the apostles, if not a century earlier. And this in turn, judging from Qumran evidence, goes back to an authoritative revision of the Old Testament text which was drawn up on the basis of the most reliable manuscripts available for collation from previous centuries. These bring us very close in all essentials to the original autographs themselves, and furnish us with an authentic record of God's revelation. As W. F. Albright has said, "We may rest assured that the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible, though not infallible, has been preserved with an accuracy perhaps unparalleled in any other Near Eastern literature."*<sup>1</sup>
- x. The Samaritans are a group of Jews from the northern kingdom who split from southern kingdom around the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. There developed a great deal of animosity between the Samaritans and the traditional Jews (recall the stories of the good Samaritan or the Samaritan woman, both found in the gospels). It appears as though these Samaritans made a few changes to the Old Testament Scriptures to suit their particular location. The oldest Samaritan codex that we have dates back to about 1100 A.D. There are about 6000 variants between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic text of the books of Moses. Although most of these are trivial, there are 1900 places where the Samaritan text is in agreement with the LXX rather than with the Masoretic text. Although originally hailed as being superior to the MT, the Samaritan text was dismissed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as worthless, because of the few changes made to the text to favor northern Israel. We recognize it today as being an important source when it comes to determining the original text.
- xi. Of course, we have various manuscripts now of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament made between 300–100 B.C.) as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which date back to around 100 B.C. Just like the Massoretic texts, there are several Septuagint manuscripts and fragments; therefore, there is some disagreement from text to text. Interestingly enough, the manuscripts which we possess had actually been preserved by Christians rather than by Jews, who apparently lost interest in the Septuagint.
- xii. Because the Jews viewed the Christians with animosity, and because the Christians appeared to adopt the Greek Septuagint as their own, the Jewish community developed about a half-dozen Greek translations of the Old Testament. We do not have the complete manuscript of any of these versions. Also, lost to antiquity is Origen's Hexapla, which was a 6 column examination of the Old Testament, which included the original Hebrew text, a Greek *transliteration* of that text, and 4 Greek versions of the Old Testament. This would have been done around 240–250 A.D. and, unfortunately, we do not have any copies of this today. Such a manuscript would be invaluable in fixing the text of the Old Testament.

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- xiii. There were several versions of the Old and New Testaments produced in Latin beginning even before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. Of course, we have Jerome's scholarly work from around 400 A.D. Many, many non-scholars point to this version of the Bible and assert that it was at this point where the Catholics slipped in tons of Christian-specific doctrines. This ignores that fact that we have many manuscripts which pre-date Jerome's work. This ignores the fact that the early Catholic Church was relatively accurate in their doctrine. This ignores the fact that, the degeneration of the Catholic Church was a gradual one which took place over several centuries. Their addition of the Apocrypha and their doctrine that the pope can speak authoritatively and supercede Scripture is from whence we get Catholic-specific doctrines. Furthermore, the traditions of the Catholic Church have had an impact on Catholic doctrine. None of this can take from the excellent and accurate work which Jerome did; nor can anyone who has even an inkling of history ever point to Jerome and claim that he somehow altered the Bible to conform to some set of Christian doctrines which were not there to begin with. That sort of opinion cannot even be called *sloppy scholarship*, as there is absolutely no scholarship involved. By the way, there are about 8000 Latin Vulgate manuscripts, but there are problems with coming to an agreed upon text.
  - xiv. There are other translations which we have all or portions of: various Aramaic (Syriac), Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, Nestorian and Slavonic versions.
  - xv. What should become clear as we slog through each and every verse, examining the various readings is that 98% of the differences that we come across are trivial and have no effect on any orthodox doctrine. What we have in this passage is a significant difference between the MT and the LXX, which has caused us to examine this doctrine. In all of the book of 1Samuel, which is the book with possibly the greatest number of variant readings, this verse is the most significant difference between the MT and the LXX.
  - xvi. What we find in Scripture are much greater differences in the various English translations than we have between ancient manuscripts. For instance, some English translations appear to support Christian mysticism and ecstatic spiritual experiences (James Moffatt Translation, JPS—Tanakh, NAB, NJB, NRSV, REB, TEV), whereas, most do not.
4. Textual Abnormalities, Variants, Errors, and Alterations:
- a. A *variant* is where one manuscript differs from another; or where one passage of a version or another ancient manuscript of the Old Testament clearly came from a passage which read differently than the Masoretic text, e.g. our example from I Sam. 14:18 where the Hebrew text reads *ark* and the Greek text reads *ephod*. That is an example of a variant; and, in this case, a very significant one.
  - b. There are fewer variants in the Old Testament than in the New.
    - i. There are fewer manuscripts, which, generally speaking, would give us fewer variants.
    - ii. The rules which guided the scribes and masorites in making copies of the Old Testament were rigid, uncompromising and confining. A scribe was not to copy even a single letter from memory.
    - iii. We theorize that the scribes and masorites destroyed manuscripts which were old or contained errors.
  - c. An *abnormality* is some oddity about the text which indicates that, at one time, someone thought there might be a problem with the text or someone was leaving some obscure note concerning the text. For some of these abnormalities, the problem could have originally meant nothing and been simply the result of a damaged original manuscript or the slip of the pen of the scribe. A textual abnormality is generally not a variation in text. We find these abnormalities consistently throughout our history of manuscripts.
  - d. Then, there are places where we are certain that the original text was altered. In many cases, you will probably be surprised as to why the text was changed.
  - e. Under the Sopherim, there occurred a number of textual abnormalities. These were not necessarily mistakes and it is possible that they were meaningless; however, throughout the ages, marginal notes would be inserted, along with marks and dots, and even letters would be written in an unusual way. These abnormalities, most of which date back to the time of the Sopherim, would then be preserved

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- in subsequent manuscripts, even though their original intent is often unknown. To get a better handle on this, it may be instructive to know exactly what some of these abnormalities were:
- i. There were 37 times in the Old Testament where certain letters were written larger than normal. There are 23 places where certain Hebrew letters are written smaller than normal. Some letters were written slightly above the line. ISBE suggests that there are several places in Scripture where abbreviations were used. A *paseq* (ֿ) or perpendicular divider was inserted in 48 places between two words. There are 15 places where dots were placed over certain letters or words. There are 9 times when there is a mark in the manuscript which looks like an inverted nûwn.
  - f. There are some 18 places<sup>2</sup> in Scripture where the text was thought to be changed by Ezra or a later scribe because they found the content objectionable. Some examples:
    - i. In Gen. 18:22, we have Moses standing before God. However, it is theorized that the original text had God standing before Moses (which the scribe viewed as blasphemous).
    - ii. The text of I Sam. 3:13 reads *Because his sons made themselves vile (or, accursed), he restrained them not*. However, it is thought that the primitive text reads *Because his sons cursed God...* The scribe simply did not want to have the phrase *curse God* in Scripture (he didn't want to write it and did not want to read it aloud in the synagogue).
    - iii. Hosea 4:7 "*They have turned My glory into shame*" is probably the original, rather than "*I will change their glory into shame.*"
  - g. *Itture Sopherim*: these are 7 places in Scripture named in the Talmud where a word not written in the text should be read (e.g., Judges 20:13 II Sam. 18:20); 5 instances where a word written should not be read (II Sam. 15:21 II Kings 5:18); and 5 places where the scribes omitted the word *and*. Some of these passages are: Gen. 18:5 24:55 Num. 31:2 Psalm 36:6 68:25. There were places where the letters of a word were transposed in reading (Joshua 6:13). Most of these changes were a matter of grammar or logic.
  - h. Similarly, there are a number of passages which are written differently than they are read aloud. Many examples are innocuous—the difference is the spelling of an individual's name (Gen. 14:8 36:4, 14). However, there are a considerable number of places where *Adonai* was read, but *Jehovah* was written.
  - i. As we examine this, you might be thinking *this stuff seems to be pretty trivial on the whole*. In a sense, you are right. These variants do not represent some large scale change from fundamental doctrine A to fundamental doctrine B. These variants are trivial when it comes to establishing the fundamental doctrines of our faith; however, this is the Word of God and scholars therefore are attempting to most accurately determine for us what the original text is.
  - j. There are approximately 350 times when a word appears to be added to the text for the purpose of clarification or explanation. This word is preceded by the Aramaic word *sebir*, which means *suppose*. The collection of these clarifications is called *Sebirim*.
  - k. The next thing to consider are the actual scribal errors. Although many of these probably took place during the time of the *Sopherim*, they could have occurred at any time during the transmission of the Old Testament text.
    - i. Visual errors.
      - (1) The Hebrew text was originally written with no vowels and no spaces (the Greek was written in all capitals with no spaces). The illustration given by Geisler and Nix is *heisnowhere* could be read *he is now here* or *he is nowhere*. When the vowels are removed, then it makes the reading even more difficult (*hsnwhr*).
      - (2) It is not unusual in the Hebrew to confused one letter for another—particularly when an old manuscript is the source that is being copied. ב, כ, ג and נ (bêyth, kaph, gimel and nun) are four letters which are very similar. Mem (מ) can look like the combination of yodh (י) or wâw (ו) and one of those letters. Mem, at the end of a word (ם), can also be confounded with o. Daleth (ד) and resh (ר) are often confounded in Scripture. These is easily confirmed by comparing certain proper names in Kings with those found in Chronicles. A copyist can easily see one letter and copy the other.

## A Summary of Old Testament Textual Criticism

- (3) Occasionally, a scribe would omit a letter, a word or even an entire line. The noun *Gibeah* might occur twice in the same verse; the scribe writes down the first *Gibeah*, looks up to the second *Gibeah*, and begins writing there, leaving out all of the words that are between the two *Gibeah*'s. We had an example of this in I Sam. 13:15. This is called a *homoeoteleuton* (which translates *similar ending*). When one letter is omitted, it is called a *haplography* (which means *single writing*).
- (4) Sometimes a word is repeated; the scribe looks up, sees the word, writes it; and then looks up again, one or more words later, and writes the word a second time. This is called *dittography*.
- (5) Transposition of letters or words, which is called *metathesis*. In II Chron. 3:4, the transposition of two letters results in the porch of Solomon's temple being 120 cubits (roughly 60 ft.) rather than 20 cubits, as is found in the Septuagint. This gives the porch measurements as 20 cubits wide and 120 cubits high, which is wack. ISBE mentions the passages Joshua 6:13 Isa. 8:12.
- (6) Sometimes a letter in one word, finds itself in another word: ISBE's examples: Judges 10:12 I Sam. 14:50–51 Psalm 139:20 Jer. 18:23.
- (7) There are word transpositions in I Kings 6:17 Psalm 35:7 95:7.
- (8) Verse transpositions: Gen. 24:29b follows v. 30a; Isa. 40:19–20 belongs with 41:6.
- (9) Various confusions of spellings, abbreviations or insertions account for the other scribal errors. Since a Hebrew letter can also stand for a number, sometimes the numbers found in the Old Testament are confounded.
  - (a) The 40,000 stalls mentioned in I Kings 4:26 should actually be 4000, as per II Chron. 9:25.
  - (b) The 42 years alluded to in II Chron. 22:2 should actually be 22 years, as we find in II Kings 8:26.
- ii. Errors of the ear: it is possible that some manuscripts were copied via dictation. There are 15 places (according to ISBE)<sup>3</sup> where *lô'* (*not*) and *lô* (*to him*) are confounded (Psalm 100:3). Jehovah and Adonai would have been said alike, giving us *Adoram* in I Kings 12:18 and *Hadoram* in II Chron. 10:18.
- iii. Errors in writing:
  - (1) A scribe may write something poorly or indistinctly, which could result in the leaving out of the age and length of rule of Saul in I Sam. 13:1. The text could also have been unreadable in the manuscript which was copied.
  - (2) There are some errors which were a result of simple carelessness. In Gen. 36:2, the last *daughter* should read *son*. In Num. 26:8 I Chron. 3:22 6:13, we have *sons* rather than *son* (a common error). In II Sam. 23:18–19, the first *three* should be *thirty*.
  - (3) A scribe could have intentionally changed the wording, even from good intentions. A scribe might change the spelling of a proper noun to a more popular spelling or to a more localized spelling. A scribe might smooth out rough grammar, e.g., change a masculine noun into a feminine one to agree with the verb. This is not unlike the changes made in the NKJV, which carefully follows the KJV, but updates the language. A scribe may change a word or two in order to correct what he sees as an error. All I have here are the New Testament illustrations of John 19:14, where *sixth hour* was changed to *third hour*; Mark 8:31, where *after three days* was changed to *on the third day*; and Rev. 1:5, where *loosed from our sins* was changed to *washed us from our sins* (the two verbs are very similar).
  - (4) Interestingly enough, ISBE says that the most poorly copied manuscript was Samuel. This book is 90% action and narrative; prior to this study, I would have thought the middle chapters of Joshua (with the names of a million cities) or the first eight books of Chronicles (with the names of a million people) would be the least likely sections to be copied correctly. You have certainly noted, even though we are half way through the book of 1Samuel, that the differences have been, for the most part, trivial.



## A Summary of Old Testament Textual Criticism

- iv. Differences between what is written and what is read: there are several places where the public readings of Scripture varied slightly from the written text. Sometimes this was done to fix the grammar; however, often this was done so that the speaker did not blaspheme the name of God by what he read.
  - v. Intentional alterations. Although it makes me grimace to say this, there are some apparently intentional changes made to Scripture. There are times when we find the word *bôsheth*, and it should be *Baal* instead (Jer. 3:24 Hosea 9:10); *bless* was inserted, where the text should have read *curse* (1Kings 21:10). In the complete doctrine, by the way, I give a much more detailed explanation with many more examples.
  - vi. Now, you may wonder, *how could I get a definitive list of all the variants?* Quite frankly, you won't. However, probably the best reference tool in this regard is Rotherham's **Emphasized Bible**. He makes more references to variants between the various manuscripts and targums and translations than any other translation which I have come across. On the negative side, Rotherham made his translation 1902, long before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. For a less complete list, but which includes the Dead Sea Scrolls, I suggest the **NRSV**. There are many infuriating instances where the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls should be mentioned, but are not—however, it is the most complete listing that I am aware of. We have mentioned the two Isaiah manuscripts from the caves of Qumran and compared them to the Septuagint and Masoretic text. Just how much variation are there between these manuscripts? Gleason Archer answers this: *Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscripts previously known (A.D. 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. Even those Dead Sea fragments of Deuteronomy and Samuel which point to a different manuscript family from that which underlies our received Hebrew text do not indicate any differences in doctrine or teaching. They do not affect the message of revelation in the slightest.*<sup>4</sup>
  - vii. **Conclusion:** Given all that we have covered up until now, what you should be fully cognizant of is how precisely the MT has been combed through for every possible error and possible alteration. Obviously, there are a few problem passages and there have been some alterations—however, we are speaking only of a very small portion of Scripture. The fact that the Old Testament has been so carefully examined should give us great confidence in the received text.
5. There is no comparison between the Bible and other ancient documents. The typical ancient manuscript is often a thousand years removed from the original; and there are rarely more than a handful of manuscripts (there is a chart in the original document which deals with this in detail).
  6. You should have the question, *why did God allow His Word to become corrupted?* Even though, the Bible stands head and shoulders above all other ancient literature with regards to accuracy, there are certainly some textual problems, as we have discussed. Why does God allow that? Our spiritual growth is never an individual thing. Our growth is generally tied to one or two pastors who have gone through a seminary and who study and teach regularly. Their training is based upon the work of thousands upon thousands of men, each of whom grew spiritually through a handful of pastors as well. There are a host of scholars who study these variants, who compare the readings of hundreds of manuscripts and give their learned opinion as to which reading is the most accurate. We grow through this interrelationship and complete dependence on the work of others. None of us are islands; we cannot spiritually grow apart from the body of Christ. God has allowed minor errors to creep into His Word, and He has provided the men to determine the correct readings. As we have found, even though there is often not enough evidence to determine the precise reading of this or that passage, the resultant disparity of text has no effect on any major doctrine. That is, we can grow spiritually despite the relatively few problems and errors.
  7. What I have not covered yet are the actual rules of Textual Criticism:
    - a. The older the text, the more accurate the manuscript.

## A Summary of Old Testament Textual Criticism

- b. The reading which is found throughout the widest geographical area is preferred.
  - c. A text in the original language will take precedence over a translation.
  - d. The more difficult text (for the scribe) is preferred. It is more likely that a scribe would, if he were going to change the text, change from a more difficult to understand passage to an easier to understand rendering. I should point out that these rules are not necessarily absolute, nor is there necessarily a hierarchy that we can depend upon, as to when one rule overrules another rule. In this example, a scribe could accidentally insert some letters or words which do not fit (by looking up at the wrong text and writing in what follows), and the result would be text that is more difficult to understand. A manuscript could become difficult to read, and a scribe could copy as best as he can, and still confound a couple of letters, the result being a more difficult text. My point is, each rule impacts the importance of the other rules; and each rule must not be seen as absolute, but tempered by good judgment.
  - e. The shorter reading is preferred with the exceptions of (1) the accidental omission of words or lines; (2) words which were deleted on the basis of grammatical, liturgical or doctrinal grounds.
  - f. Different readings from parallel passages are preferred from similar readings of the same passages. A scribe is more likely to change a reading to match a parallel passage than he would be to change a reading so that it is disharmonious with a parallel passage.
  - g. Poor grammar and less refined writing is to be preferred over a smooth reading, as a scribe is more likely to change poor grammar into good grammar (even unintentionally).
  - h. The reading which best explains the variants is the preferred reading.
  - i. When dealing with alternative writings, the passage which most closely matches the style of the author is to be preferred.
  - j. The reading which most closely matches the immediate context is to be preferred.
  - k. The reading which is in agreement with the author's teachings elsewhere or with the canon of Scripture elsewhere is to be preferred.
  - l. The reading which is most in line with the author's background is to be preferred.
  - m. Being able to determine the correct reading for any passage is as much of an art form as it is a science.
8. In my doctrine of textual criticism, I end with some illustrations, as well as a glossary of terms.
9. And that is about an 8 page summary of a 40+ page doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville; ©1999, pp. 81–82. Josh took this from Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*; Chicago, Moody Press; 1964, 1974; p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> The actual number varies from manuscript to manuscript where these are noted.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; Vol. IV; p. 2961. All the stuff from ISBE in this section comes from that page.

<sup>4</sup> Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990; p. 49; taken from Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of the Old Testament*; Chicago: Moody Press, 1964; p. 25.

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**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul turned to the High Priest at that time, Ahijah, and asked him to bring the Ark of God to him. There are two problems inherent to interpreting this verse: (1) some versions of Scripture have *Ephod* and others have *Ark*; (2) at the end of this verse, we have an *and* where we would anticipate a *with*. However, prior to the examination of the verse, let me cut to the chase: Saul wants guidance from God, so he calls the High Priest with the *Ephod* to ask of God what he should do.



## 1Samuel 14:18

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâʾûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾăchîyyâh (אָחִיָּהּ) [pronounced <i>uh-khee-YAW</i> ]	<i>brother of Yah (God), and is transliterated Ahijah</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #281 BDB #26
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>bring near, to bring hither</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative (with a voluntative hê)	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
ʾărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i> ]	<i>ark, chest</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾêlôhîym (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
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʾărôwn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>uh-ROHN</i> ]	<i>ark, chest</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
Some Hebrew manuscripts have the word ʾêphôwd here, rather than <i>ark</i> (אָרוֹן) [pronounced <i>ay-FOHD</i> ], which is transliterated <i>ephod</i> . Although the words differ in two letters, one can see how, without the vowel points, that one could possibly be confounded for the other—that is, אָרוֹן rather than אָפוֹד. The LXX also has <i>ephod</i> here, rather than <i>ark</i> . There will be more discussion below.			
ʾêlôhîym (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
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yôwd (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day, today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

## 1Samuel 14:18

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
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bên (בְּנֵי) [pronounced bane]	<i>sons, descendants</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Yis <sup>e</sup> râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

These final three words are difficult to understand. Edersheim calls this a copyist error and Rotherham points out that *in the midst of* is found in the Aramaic, the Syriac and the Vulgate codices. Notice that the Greek text ends: ...for he wore the Ephod in that day before Israel. This makes the most sense of all.

First of all, it should be clear to those who read the previous table that there are problems at the end of this verse in the Hebrew. There is a Hebrew word for *with* and Saul has used it many times, as has the writer of this portion of Samuel. Where we should find the word *with*, we find the word *and* instead.

**Translation:** Then Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the Ark of God” for the Ark of God was in that day with [lit., and] the sons of Israel. The other rendering would be: Then Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the Ephod of God” for the Ephod of God was in that day with [lit., and] the sons of Israel.

You might say, “Ephod, Ark; what’s the difference? They are both religious artifacts.” The difference is Saul’s approach to this problem. We have already seen that the Ark has been called into battle for good luck—and with disastrous results (1Sam. 4). The Ark is not designed to be an object of good luck. That would be a complete misinterpretation of Joshua 6.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the Ark of God is now under private care in Kiriath-jearim, as we studied in 1Sam. 7:2. Because of the many men who died by either touching or looking into the Ark previous to that verse, the Ark was not really dealt with for awhile. Saul certainly would not want to bring the Ark into camp if it was directly connected with the deaths of thousands of Israelites. Not only that, but Saul would have to send for the Ark. It would have to be brought from a nearby city. The Ephod, on the other hand, would be called in if Saul had to pose a question to God. And the Ephod is in camp (1Sam. 14:3). In other words, the Ephod is the smart move. Saul sees all this chaos in the Philistine camp and wonders what to do. When in doubt, ask God.

Which do we choose? Since we have studied Textual Criticism, you are aware that the Greek Septuagint was translated circa the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., which is older than our Hebrew manuscripts that we use. However, we have the problem that the book of Samuel in general was poorly rendered. Let’s look at a chart:

<sup>25</sup> Allow me this tangent: going to Joshua 6 and using that to justify taking the Ark into battle is like the charismatic going to Acts 2 to justify speaking in gibberish. One has to distinguish between doctrine and history, and one must be able to rightly interpret history.

## Based upon Textual Criticism, which is the Preferred Reading for 1Samuel 14:18?

Source	Septuagint	Massoretic Text
Translation	<i>Ephod</i>	<i>Ark of God</i>
<b>Pros</b>	<p>The Septuagint is based upon older manuscripts.</p> <p>The Septuagint was translated from manuscripts over a half century older than those used by Jerome to translate the Vulgate.</p> <p>What would explain the <i>Ark of God</i> would be a corrupt, unreadable passage, causing the scribe to go back to 1Sam. 4 for inspiration.</p> <p>Some Hebrew manuscripts have <i>ephod</i> rather than <i>ark</i>.</p> <p>It is easy to see how one (אפוד) might be confounded with the other (ארון).</p>	<p>There is every indication that great care was given to the transcribing of Old Testament manuscripts.</p> <p>This agrees with the Vulgate, which was translated 405 A.D.</p> <p>This is in agreement with Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament.</p> <p>The Syriac and Arabic paraphrases also both support the rendering <i>Ark</i>.</p>
<b>Cons</b>	<p>The Greek translation of Samuel is generally weak.</p>	<p>The Masoretic text is, at best, 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.</p> <p>Jerome did not have manuscripts which were that much better than the Masorites.</p> <p>The various Aramæan targums date back to only the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D., even though their history goes back further. Again, those translating the Septuagint would have been using much older manuscripts.</p>
<b>Rebuttal</b>	<p>This is not a matter of a weak translation; it is a matter of whether this is accurate or not.</p>	<p>There is great accuracy in the copying process.</p>
<b>Conclusion:</b>	<p>Based upon the information that I have, it is most reasonable to favor <i>Ephod</i> as the correct word here. Since this is early in Saul's career, before he flipped out too much, I would think that he would opt for the better of the two choices—he would call for the Ephod of God in order to determine what he is supposed to do next.<sup>26</sup></p> <p>Finally, given that a portion of the LXX is accurate, it is not a stretch to assume the remainder of the verse (<i>for he wore the ephod in that day before Israel</i>) is accurate as well. Even though the Aramaic, Vulgate and Syriac codices are not in agreement with the Greek text, they all came after the LXX, and they are from the same family of manuscripts, meaning that they will be in agreement most of the time.</p> <p>The most reasonable conclusion that would support the Septuagint's reading is that for some reason (a corrupt or unreadable text), the scribe had to guess what was here. In that situation, he would have gone back to 1Sam. 4 for an object.</p>	

<sup>26</sup> Surprisingly enough, when I first went through this passage, I was undecided. However, in retrospect, and having completed this chapter, it seems clear to me that only one position is reasonable to take.

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## Which is the Preferred Reading for 1Samuel 14:18 from a Theological and Logical Standpoint?

Hebrew	אֶפֹּד	אֲרוֹן
Translation	<i>Ephod</i>	<i>Ark</i>
<b>Pros</b>	<p>The ephod was used to determine God's will (compare 1Sam. 23:9 30:7). Given the situation that Saul was in, this information would be important.</p> <p>The Ephod was right there in camp. It would have been easy to get to. Saul would simply call for the priest and for the Ephod, and within ten minutes, there they would be.</p> <p>Saul would have been faced with possibly more desertions if he sent several men to a nearby city to get the Ark.</p> <p>The end of the next verse makes more sense if Saul has called in the priest and the ephod. The impression is that the priest has lifted his hands toward God in a plea for guidance.</p> <p>Saul will clearly seek God's guidance via the priest in 1Sam. 14:36–37. One would use the Ephod of God in order to do this.</p> <p>The Ark is not mentioned again in this chapter, nor is it mentioned again until David brings the Ark from Kiriath-jearim (where it is at the time of this passage) to Jerusalem.</p> <p>There are two other instances of the king calling for the priest to bring the Ephod to him (1Sam. 23:9 30:7), where the same verb in the same morphology (Hiphil imperative) is used. Compare this to Num. 27:21, where Moses says that Joshua will be able to call in the priest with the Ephod for guidance.</p>	<p>The Ark was already used in battle on two occasions.</p> <p>The Ark had been kept in Kiriath-jearim, which was not too far from where they were.</p> <p>Saul is one flipped-out dude; he might do anything.</p> <p>Although Barnes argues that <i>Ephod</i> is the correct rendering here, he points out that possibly Saul was fetching the Ark so that it would be safe with him in camp (a weak argument; however, as I said, Barnes believed <i>ephod</i> to be correct).</p>

## Which is the Preferred Reading for 1Samuel 14:18 from a Theological and Logical Standpoint?

Hebrew	אֶפֹד	אֲרוֹן
Translation	<i>Ephod</i>	<i>Ark</i>
<b>Cons</b>	<p>The biggest con is that we have <i>Ark</i> in the Masoretic text.</p> <p>The king who clearly calls for the Ephod in the passages mentioned was King David and not Saul. We would expect David to make better and more logical choices than Saul.</p>	<p>The second time the Ark was used in battle, the results were disastrous. It did not aide the Israelites in battle, and when it was returned, many died as a result of close contact with the Ark. Therefore, no one would consider the Ark good luck in battle.</p> <p>The last people who capriciously touched the Ark or peered inside died. As far as some were concerned, simply going out and getting the Ark may have been considered a death sentence in itself. It is very reasonable that if Saul sent any men to get it, they might desert at that time. Furthermore, time was precious.</p> <p>No Scripture documents the Ark being returned to Kiriath-jearim; however, when David fetches the Ark and brings it to Jerusalem, the Ark is still in Kiriath-jearim.</p> <p>Saul was mental in his final dozen or so years; not in the beginning.</p>
<b>Rebuttal</b>	<i>Ephod</i> is found in some Hebrew texts and in the Septuagint.	Saul still made several poor choices, even with all of his mental faculties present.
<b>Conclusion:</b>	Based upon the situation and the theology, again, one must choose <i>Ephod</i> as the correct reading here. Saul is in dire straights, he wants guidance, and he would get this from the ephod, not from the Ark (which is never used for guidance).	

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Saul is in a panic (or, if not in a panic, then he is confused). Only two men are gone from his 600 troops. For reasons that he cannot understand, there is great chaos in the camp of the Philistines and they seem to be retreating. None of this makes much sense to Saul, so he goes to the High Priest, Ahijah, and asks him to bring with him the Ephod of God. The Ephod was used to determine God's will and to ask God questions. Saul had a lot of questions about the current state of affairs and what he should do.

And so he is until had spoken Saul unto the priest and the multitude which [was] in a camp of Philistines and he departed a departing and so more [or, great]. And so says Saul unto the priest, "Take away your hand [or, hands]."

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And it was as Saul spoke [animatedly] to the priest that the multitude in the camp of the Philistines was clearly departing in great numbers [lit., and so more]. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hands [from summoning God]."

**And, as Saul spoke to the priest, the multitude that was in the Philistine camp began to depart in large numbers. So Saul told the priest to temporarily cease from attempting to inquire of God.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so he is until had spoken Saul unto the priest and the multitude which [was] in a camp of Philistines and he departed a departing and so more [or, <i>great</i> ]. And so says Saul unto the priest, "Take away your hand [or, <i>hands</i> ]."
Septuagint	And it came to pass while Saul is speaking to the priest, that the sound in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase greatly; and Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hands."
Significant differences:	In the MT, the multitude of the Philistines continues to flee; in the Greek, the sound from their camp continues to increase.

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

CEV	Just as Saul finished saying this, he could see that the Philistine army camp was getting more and more confused, and he said, "Ahijah, never mind!"
NLT	But while Saul was talking to the priest, the shouting and confusion in the Philistine camp grew louder and louder. So Saul said to Ahijah, "Never mind; let's get going!"

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

God's Word™	While Saul was talking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp grew worse and worse. Then Saul said to the priest, "Remove your hand [from the ephod]."
JPS (Tanakh)	But while Saul was speaking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp kept increasing; and Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

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

NASB	And it happened while Saul talked to the priest, that the commotion in the camp of the Philistines continued and increased; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."
Young's Updated LT	And it comes to pass, while Saul speaks unto the priest, that the noise which <i>is</i> in the camp of the Philistines goes on, going on and becoming great, and Saul says unto the priest, "Remove your hand."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul is confused; possibly even panicked. There is a great deal of movement in the Philistine camp, which would indicate to him that they are moving out to attack him. However, while speaking to the priest, asking him to get the Ephod, the noise from the Philistine camp (which was several miles away) has gotten loud enough and close enough for Saul and the priest to hear. Consequently, Saul asks the priest to *remove his hand*. My assumption is, from asking God to tell Saul what to do.

Bearing in mind the confusion from the previous verse—my thinking is that we have lost the actual context of this verse or we are missing some words or even an extra verse or two. This is speculation; my only point is the previous verse is questionable and this verse does not make a lot of sense as it stands.

## 1Samuel 14:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i> ]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
dâḇvar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>dawḇ-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
Shâʾûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced <i>koh-HANE</i> ]	<i>priest</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâmôwn (הַמּוֹן) [pronounced <i>haw-MOHN</i> ]	<i>multitude, crowd, throng</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1995 BDB #242
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh-NEH</i> ]	<i>camp, encampment; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>h</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229



## 1Samuel 14:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
A Qal infinitive absolute is a verb which can act like noun, a verb or an adverb. Generally it takes the place of a noun and serves to intensify meanings. When used as a complement of affirmation, it may be rendered <i>surely, indeed</i> ; and when it is a complement of improbability and condition, we render it <i>at all, freely, indeed</i> . The Qal infinitive absolute can also serve as an adverbial complement; or, as a verb, it can replace finite verbs, imperatives, participles, and the infinitive constructs. <sup>27</sup> What we have here, literally, is <i>a departure departs</i> ; there is a strong emphasis upon what is occurring.			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
rab (רַב) [pronounced <i>rahv</i> ]	<i>many, much, great</i> (in the sense of <i>large</i> or <i>significant</i> , not acclaimed)	adjective, pausal	Strong's #7227 BDB #912

**Translation:** And then it was as Saul was speaking [animatedly] with the priest that the multitude which [was] in the camp of the Philistines and there was a great departure and more... What's the saying? *You're no longer in Kansas, Dorothy*. There is such a change of vocabulary and use of the Hebrew language and style as compared to the first few chapters of Samuel, that it almost does not feel like the same language. At the beginning of this book, we have speaking in very simple terms, along the lines of *See Jane*. *See Jane run*. This is very nearly at the other end of the scale.

First of all, what the author is telling us is that Saul and the priest are having an animated discussion, given the Piel or intensive stem of the verb. Even though the priest was not necessarily designed to be a political or military leader, it is clear in Scripture that the military or political leader of Israel was to keep in close contact with the priest for guidance. When Moses said that Joshua would succeed him, he said, *"Furthermore, he [Joshua] will stand before Eleazar the priest, who will inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Jehovah. At His command, they will go out and at his command they shall come in, he [Joshua] and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation."* (Num. 27:21). When Joshua called in the priest, it was to determine God's will via Urim, and that Joshua and the armies would do what God ordered them to do through the priest.

Also we are told here that there is a great departure from the Philistine camp; they are leaving in droves. And he adds the adjective, *and a great [departure]*. So, as Saul is barking orders to the High Priest, they observe this incredible departure of Philistines from their camp.

## 1Samuel 14:19b

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

<sup>27</sup> Taken from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

## 1Samuel 14:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâʾûl (שָׂאֹול) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced koh-HANE]	<i>priest</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
ʾâṣaph (אָסַף) [pronounced aw-SAHF]	<i>collect, assemble, gather; take away, draw back, take out of the way; kill, destroy</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #622 BDB #62
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

*Hand* is in the plural in the Septuagint and in 3 early printed editions.

**Translation:** Then Saul said to the priest, “Take back your hand.” At this point, I can only conjecture. My educated guess is that the priest had his hand in the air toward God to ask for guidance with reference as to what to do (the priest would be wearing the Ephod of God at this time). Saul is asking him questions—probably too many. Then, either from their vantage point or from messages from their spies, not only is it clear that Philistines are moving, but they are retreating. They are not assembling to go to war, but they are making a run for it. So Saul no longer has any questions for God via the priest (although he will later on in vv. 36–37).

The footnote in the NIV Study Bible is very good here: *Due to the urgency of the moment, Saul decides that to wait for the word of the Lord might jeopardize his military advantage. As in 1Sam. 13:8–12, his decision rests on his own insight rather than on dependence upon the Lord and a commitment to obey him.*<sup>28</sup> Barnes says pretty much the same thing: *Saul in his impatience to join the battle would not wait for the answer from God, which he had desired Ahijah to inquire for; just as later (v. 35) he would not wait to finish the altar which he had begun to build. Had he now waited he would doubtless have avoided the error into which he fell.*<sup>29</sup>

Gordon suggested that Saul simply became *flustered* when under pressure.<sup>30</sup> This is quite reasonable, and does not detract from Saul's bravery, for which he cannot be faulted. When Saul realizes what is happening, he is very excited to jump into the fray. At one point, he thought that he was going to die, and now he realizes that he can be a part of routing these Philistines. In his own opinion, he did not need to inquire from God what to do. The result is that Saul will do one of the many stupid things that he is known for. Saul needed to wait upon God for direction.

**Application:** the problem with application at this point is, we are now in a different dispensation. We do not have access to the Ephod of God. We cannot inquire of God and be told clearly whether to go to the left or to the right.

<sup>28</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 391.

<sup>29</sup> *Barnes' Notes; 1 Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 138.

No amount of prayer will necessarily bring an urgent telegram from God letting us know what to do. Now, don't misunderstand me, I am not disparaging prayer nor am I even disparaging prayer for guidance. However, it is not the best tool for the job. The other day, I was breaking up some 2 inch thick concrete. A hand-held hammer might have done the job, but it would have made for a long and arduous task. I had a sledge hammer, and that was the tool for the job. Our guidance? The Word of God and the filling of the Holy Spirit. If you have recently become a Christian, do not make any major decisions. Stay where you are and stay with what you are doing until teaching from the Word of God guides you to do things differently (I Cor. 7:26–27). Now, certainly, some things are obvious. If you are a prostitute, or if you are doing drugs, then those things obviously violate Scripture, and your life is going to go much more smoothly if you trust God and cease those practices. However, what about in the case of getting married? The Scripture quoted speaks to that directly. **It is good for a man to remain as he is...If you are recently divorced, then do not seek a wife** (I Cor. 7:26b, 27b). Given the state of affairs that Paul saw, we are not to make these life-changing kinds of decisions—at least, not immediately. The key is guidance and direction from God, and that is found in God's Word.

**And so were assembled [or, *shouted*] Saul and all the people who [were] with him and so they went as far as the battle; and, behold, was a sword of each [man] against his associate—a confusion, great, very!**

1Samuel  
14:20

**Then Saul assembled all the people with him [or, *Then Saul and all the people who were with him shouted*] and they went as far as [the outskirts of] the battle and observed that each man's sword [was turned] against his comrade [in arms]—[there was] incredible confusion [and chaos].**

**After Saul and his men assembled themselves for battle, they advanced and, before engaging in battle, observed that the Philistines were warring amongst each other—there was terrific confusion and chaos.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so were assembled [or, <i>shouted</i> ] Saul and all the people who [were] with him and so they went as far as the battle; and, behold, was a sword of each [man] against his associate—a confusion, great, very!
Septuagint	And Saul went up and all the people that were with him, and they come to the battle; and, behold, every man's sword was against his neighbor, a very great confusion.

Significant differences: The first verb is considerably different; it is possible that the translators used literary license at this point.

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

CEV	Saul quickly called his army together, then led them to the Philistine camp. By this time the Philistines were so confused that they were killing each other.
NLT	Then Saul and his six hundred men rushed out to the battle and found the Philistines killing each other. There was terrible confusion everywhere.

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

God's Word™	Saul and all the troops with him assembled and went into battle. They found Philistine soldiers killing their fellow soldiers in wild confusion.
JPS (Tanakh)	Saul and the troops with him assembled and rushed into battle; they found [the Philistines] in very great confusion, every man's sword turned against his fellow.

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

NASB	Then Saul and all the people who <i>were</i> with him rallied and came to the battle; and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, <i>and there was</i> very great confusion.
Owen	Then rallied Saul and all the people who were with him and went into the battle and behold was every man's sword against his fellow—very great confusion.
Young's Updated LT	And Saul is called, and all the people who <i>are</i> with him, and they come in unto the battle, and, lo, the sword of each has been against his neighbor—a very great destruction.

**What is the gist of this verse?** in the previous verse, it was obvious that Saul saw no reason to ask God anything. He told the priest to withdraw his hand. Here, he gathers all his soldiers and attacks the confused multitude of the Philistines. It turns out that they are engaged in battle, but, in the confusion, with themselves. Certainly, this could be a supernatural confusion which God caused. However, there will be a different explanation given in the next verse.

I should add that this does not contradict the previous verse. In the previous verse, the Philistines are moving out in all directions—not retreating, as they haven't really been attacked—but more deserting the army and the situation in which they found themselves.

### 1Samuel 14:20a

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
zâ'âq (קָאָץ) [pronounced <i>zaw-ĠAHK</i> ]	<i>to call together, to assemble, to be assembled</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #2199 BDB #277

Barnes tells us that a different punctuation (vowel pointing, word separation?) would result in the verb *shouted*, which he sees as preferable.<sup>31</sup> Here, we would expect to have an direct object—who or what Saul assembles—which would preclude the wâw conjunction which follows. In either case, the end result would be about the same. Neither interpretation solves the textual problems here; and neither affects the meaning so much as to imply there is a completely different scenario here.

Most translators have Saul and the people being assembled—this would seem to me to require a masculine plural verb. Barnes would have them shouting (in excitement), which could have partially caused the confusion within the camp of the Philistines (v. 20b).

Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kaw</i> ],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'am (עַם) [pronounced <i>ġahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

<sup>31</sup> Barnes' Notes; 1 Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 34.

## 1Samuel 14:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăšher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i> ]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
mil <sup>o</sup> châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced <i>mil-khâw-MAW</i> ]	<i>battle, war</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536

**Translation:** *Then assembled Saul and all of the people who were with him and they went in to the battle.* The Niphal stem (passive voice) and the masculine singular verb could indicate that someone else had called these men to assemble. The Niphal stem also looks at an action in a state of progress or development and it emphasizes the individual affect of each member on the whole. The key is the wâw conjunction, which tells us that Saul did not call his men to assemble for battle, but Saul and his army simply assembled as a group. It was automatic.

Recall, the other interpretation is: *Then Saul and all the people who were with him shouted, and then went into battle.* This is a smoother transition; however, I have only found one person (Barnes) who makes mention of this possible alternate rendition.

## 1Samuel 14:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>o</sup> (or v <sup>o</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i> ]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
chereb (חֶרֶב) [pronounced <i>khe-RE<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>sword, knife, dagger; any sharp tool</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #2719 BDB #352
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

## 1Samuel 14:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בֶּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
rêa' (רֵעַ) [pronounced RAY-ahg]	<i>associate, neighbor, colleague, fellow, acquaintance</i>	masculine singular noun (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #7453 BDB #945
m <sup>h</sup> ûmâh (מְהוּמָה) [pronounced m <sup>eh</sup> hoo-MAWH]	<i>chaos, widespread panic, tumult</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4103 BDB #223
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, mighty, vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152
m <sup>e</sup> ôd (מְאוֹד) [pronounced m <sup>eh</sup> -ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

**Translation:** And observe, each man's sword was against his colleague—an incredibly great chaos [and panic]. Men do not simply charge right into battle—particular when they are outnumbered as Israel was. As an army, they approach the camp of the Philistines and they see the Philistines fighting one another. These few brave soldiers who had remained with Saul looked down upon the Philistines and were astonished at what they saw. The chaos and panic was spectacular and overwhelming. Now realize that absolutely none of this was a result of anything that Saul had done; these events came to pass because of Jonathan.

This was not the first time that such a thing had happened. When Gideon had a small force (which is what God required from him), his attack (if you can call it that) resulted in tremendous chaos in the camp of the Midianites. They also turned on one another in the confusion (Judges 7:16–22). In the final great war in Jerusalem, the same thing will occur (Zech. 14:12–13).

And the Hebrews were with the Philistines as yesterday three-days-ago who had gone up with them in the camp around and also they to be with Israel which [was] with Saul and Jonathan.

1Samuel  
14:21

And the Hebrews [who] had been previously with the Philistines [and] who had gone up with them around the camp, even they [chose] to be [or, even they turned around to be...] with Israel along with Saul and Jonathan.

Even the Hebrews who had previously camped with the Philistines as allies—even they chose to re-ally with Saul and Jonathan and the troops of Israel.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And the Hebrews were with the Philistines as yesterday three-days-ago who had gone up with them in the camp around and also they to be with Israel which [was] with Saul and Jonathan.



Septuagint And the servants who had been previously [lit., *yesterday and the third day*] with the Philistines, who had gone up to the army, turned themselves also to be with the Israelites [lit., *Israel*] who were with Saul and Jonathan.

Significant differences: The primary difference is, the Hebrew identifies these men as Israelites (as does the Latin and Syriac); and the Greek simply calls them servants.

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

CEV There were also some hired soldiers in the Philistine camp, who now switched to Israel's side and fought for Saul and Jonathan. [*hired soldiers* is apparently another meaning of *still others*].

NAB In addition, the Hebrews who had previously sided with the Philistines and had gone up with them to the camp, turned to join the Israelites under Saul and Jonathan.

NJB Those Hebrews who had earlier taken service with the Philistines and had accompanied them into camp, now defected to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

NLT Even the Hebrews who had gone over to the Philistine army revolted and joined in with Saul, Jonathan, and the rest of the Israelites.

REB Those Hebrews who up to now had been under the Philistines, and had been with them in camp, changed sides and joined the Israelites under Saul and Jonathan. [Greek: *changed sides*; Hebrew: *round and also*]

TEV Some Hebrews, who had been on the Philistine side and had gone with them to the camp, changed sides again and joined Saul and Jonathan.

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

God's Word™ The Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before this and had been stationed in the camp now joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

JPS (Tanakh) And the Hebrews who had previously sided with the Philistines, who had come up with them in the army [from] round about—they too joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. [Note on *And the Hebrews...Israelites*: Meaning of Hebrew uncertain]

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

*The Emphasized Bible* And <the Hebrews> who had aforetime belonged to the Philistines, who had come up with them in the host> ||even they|| turned round so as to be with Israel who were with Saul and Jonathan. [the translation *turned round* is apparently from a different grouping of letters, as per Rotherham; the LXX and the Vulgate also bear witness to this].<sup>32</sup>

NASB Now the Hebrews *who* were with the Philistines previously, who went up with them all around in the camp, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan.

NKJV Moreover the Hebrews *who* were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp *from* the surrounding *country*, they also joined the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan.

NRSV Now the Hebrews who previously had been with the Philistines and had gone up with them into the camp turned and joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 301.



## Young's Updated LT

And the Hebrews, *who have been for the Philistines as heretofore, who had gone up with them into the camp, have turned around, even they, to be with Israel who are with Saul and Jonathan...*

When you see this many translations and when you observe that the NKJV added 4 words in order for the text to make sense, you know there are going to be some difficulties with this translation.

**What is the gist of this verse?** in the past couple verses we find many of the Philistines deserting their camp (v. 19) and others warring amongst themselves. In this verse, we either get the result or the cause of the fighting among themselves. The Hebrews (or hired soldiers) who are with the Philistines, in the confusion, turned against the Philistines (which makes this an explanatory verse for the previous verse); or, because the Philistines were fighting one another, these non-Philistine types decided, *what the hell, if I am going to fight against the Philistines, I might as well ally myself with Israel*. If your compatriot turns against you, you can either fight him as an individual, or you can ally yourself with his opposition in general. If this was the case, this would have been a result of the previous verse.

## 1Samuel 14:21

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
עֲבָרִים (ʿbārim) [pronounced <i>gr<sup>be</sup>-VREEM</i> ]	<i>those from beyond;</i> transliterated <i>Hebrews</i> , <i>Eberites</i>	proper masculine plural gentis/noun with the definite article	Strong's #5680 BDB #720
Only the CEV renders this <i>hired soldiers</i> (or, <i>mercenaries</i> ); the Septuagint does not identify these men other than refer to them as <i>servants</i> . All other translations call them Hebrews. There is a possibility that this refers to those who have <i>crossed over [the river]</i> , which would allow for the translation <i>mercenaries</i> . However, what makes the most sense is to leave this word as is, <i>Hebrews</i> , as that was generally the term that others applied to the Jews.			
הָיָאָה (הִיאָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
לִאֵלֶם (ל) (pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to,</i> <i>with reference to, as to, with</i> <i>regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
פִּלִּשְׁתִּי (פִּלְשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
כֹּף or כֶּ (כ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about,</i> <i>approximately; combined with</i> <i>an infinitive, it can also take on</i> <i>the meaning as, often, when,</i> <i>as soon as</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
תְּמוֹל (תִּמּוֹל) [pronounced <i>t<sup>e</sup>MOHL</i> ]	<i>yesterday; and is used</i> <i>figuratively for recently,</i> <i>formerly</i>	adverb	Strong's #8543 (and #865) BDB #1069

## 1Samuel 14:21

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shil <sup>e</sup> shôwm (שִׁלְשׁוֹם) [pronounced shil-SHOHM]	three days ago, the day before yesterday	adverb	Strong's #8032 BDB #1026
Together, this preposition and two adverbs mean <i>as before, previously, formerly</i> .			
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿălâh (עָלָה) [pronounced ġaw-LAWH]	to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	with, at, near, by, among, directly from	preposition (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #854 BDB #85
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
machăneh (מַחֲנֶה) [pronounced mah-khuh-NEH]	camp, encampment; the courts [of Jehovah]; the heavenly host	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4264 BDB #334
ġâbîyb (גָּבַיַב) [pronounced saw <sup>b</sup> -VEE <sup>b</sup> V]	around, surrounding, circuit, round about, encircle	adverb	Strong's #5439 BDB #686
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	and	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
hêmmâh (הֵמָּה) [pronounced haym-mawh]	they, these	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
Apparently, a different grouping of letters yields, “ <b>And even they turned around to be with Israel...</b> ” This is in agreement with the Septuagint and Vulgate text as well.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	to be	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	with, at, by, near	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

## 1Samuel 14:21

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-row-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
ʾăšher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
Shâʾûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220

**Translation:** *And the Hebrews are belonging to the Philistines previously who had gone up with them in the camp around—even those [who] were with Israel; with Saul and Jonathan.* The grammar is a bit convoluted; however, what appears to be the case is that there were those who were previously allied with the Philistines (who, according to most witnesses, were Hebrews); these men deserted the Philistines and took their stand with Saul, Jonathan and the army of Israel. The sentence structure at the end is not messtup. These men chose to be with Israel and Israel was with Saul and Jonathan, its leaders. This does not mean that Saul and Jonathan are now physically in the same place. Saul is with his men overlooking this camp and Jonathan has attacked it. The entire area of the Philistine camp is in great confusion.

You may be wondering, *why do we have Hebrews in the camp of the Philistines?* In almost any military encounter, there will be those who go over to the other side. Sometimes this is a political or religious conviction and sometimes it is the result of a simple desire to live. We already know that Saul's army has gone from 3000 to 600 (1Sam. 13:2 14:2). No doubt when the Philistines entered into Israel in these great numbers, it appeared to some that Philistine rule was inevitable. Therefore, why bother to fight against this great force which was going to first subdue Israel, and then do who knows what to the soldiers who are still alive. Smart money was on the Philistines; some Hebrews decided that they might as well be on the winning side—in order to preserve their own lives and the lives of their families. When it appears as though the winning side was going to be Israel, then certainly they would realign themselves with Israel.

Now, if these are mercenaries, which is a possible interpretation, then they are simply going to fight on the winning side. In any case, there were those who were allied with the Philistines in the Philistine camp, and they chose to align themselves with the Israelites. However, the final phrase—*...even those [who] were with Israel; with Saul and Jonathan*—seems to indicate that these men who had allied themselves with the Philistines were previously with Saul and Jonathan's armies.

What we have here is great confusion within the Philistine camp. Saul's army has not reached them yet; Saul's army is simply advancing in the direction and observing, as they go, what is transpiring before them. The Philistine army is heading off in several directions; they are confused; and they are fighting amongst themselves—not simply arguing, but warring against one another. Those who were previously associated with Saul and Jonathan, but went over to the Philistines, now took up their own swords against the Philistines who they were with.

There is one slightly different interpretation: the Philistines may not be warring with one another. They might be frightened and confused, but not at war with one another. However, the Israelites who were scattered among them in their camp now turned against them and what Saul was observing was simply the Israelites fighting against the Philistines.

**And every man of Israel—the ones hiding themselves in hill country of Ephraim—heard that had fled Philistines, and so were following hard even those after them in the battle.**

1Samuel  
14:22

**And every man of Israel—[specifically] the ones who hid themselves in the hill country of Ephraim—heard that the Philistines had fled, so even they followed hard after them in the war.**

**And every man of Israel who had hidden himself in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines were fleeing, pursued them in this battle.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Latin Vulgate	And all the Israelites that had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, hearing that the Philistines fled, joined themselves with their countrymen in the fight.
Masoretic Text	And every man of Israel—the ones hiding themselves in hill country of Ephraim—heard that had fled Philistines, and so were following hard even those after them in the battle.
Peshitta	Likewise, all the men of Israel who had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled before the Israelites, even they armed themselves and followed hard after them in the battle.
Septuagint	And all the Israelites who were hidden in mount Ephraim heard also that the Philistines fled; and they also gather themselves after them to battle;.. [in the Septuagint, the verse keeps going; we will have a v. 23 which will be much longer from the Greek and is actually vv. 22b–23 in the Greek].

Significant differences: The first difference can be seen as a phrase with equivalent meaning. The verbs which are different may have been literary license again—however, the verbs are so different in the various translations, that it indicates difficulty with the Hebrew verb to begin with.

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

CEV	Many Israelites had been hiding in the hill country of Ephraim. And when they heard that the Philistines were running away, they came out of hiding and joined in chasing the Philistines.
NLT	Likewise, the men who were hiding in the hills joined the chase when they saw the Philistines running away.
TEV	Others, who had been hiding in the hills of Ephraim, heard that the Philistines were running away, so they also joined in and attacked the Philistines,...

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

<i>God's Word™</i>	When the men of Israel who had been hiding in the mountains of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they also pursued the Philistines in battle.
JPS (Tanakh)	When all the men of Israel who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too pursued them in battle.

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

NASB

Young's Updated LT

When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, even they also pursued them closely in the battle. ...and all the men of Israel, who are hiding themselves in the hill-country of Ephraim, have heard that the Philistines have fled, and they pursue—even they—after them in battle.

**What is the gist of this verse?** As you will recall, a large number of Saul's men deserted him when the situation was bleak and they hid themselves anywhere they could (1Sam. 13:6). Those who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim were fairly close to this event (I hesitate to call it a battle) and they heard that the Philistines were on the run. So they came out of hiding and to help pursue the Philistines.

## 1Samuel 14:22

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kaw</i> ],	<i>every, each</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾîysh (יִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-row-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
châbâʾ (חָבָא) [pronounced <i>khawp-VAW</i> ]	<i>to withdraw, to hide; to hide themselves (in the plural Hithpael)</i>	masculine plural, Hithpael participle with the definite article	Strong's #2244 BDB #285
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
har (הַר) [pronounced <i>har</i> ]	<i>hill, mountain, hill-country</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
ʿephʿrayim (אֶפְרַיִם) [pronounced <i>ef-RAH-yim</i> ]	transliterated <i>Ephraim</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #669 BDB #68
shâmaʿ (שָׁמָע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHÇ</i> ]	<i>to listen, to hear, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
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

## 1Samuel 14:22

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nûwç (נוּחַ) [pronounced noose]	<i>to flee, to flee from, to escape, to depart, to haveen quickly [away]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5127 BDB #630
P <sup>h</sup> lish <sup>tîy</sup> (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
dâbaq (דָּבַק) [pronounced daw <sup>b</sup> -VAHK]	<i>to cause to adhere, to make to cleave; to follow hard; to come upon, to reach, to be caused to reach</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #1692 BDB #179
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
hêmmâh (הֵמָּה) [pronounced haym-mawh]	<i>they, these</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
ʿachar (אַחֲרַיִם) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #310 BDB #29
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
mil <sup>e</sup> châmâh (מִלְחָמָהּ) [pronounced mil-khâw-MAW]	<i>battle, war</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536

**Translation:** And every man of Israel—[specifically] the ones who hid themselves in the hill country of Ephraim—heard that the Philistines had fled, so even they followed hard after them in the war.

Are you familiar with avalanches? They may begin with a small twig which breaks off a branch of a tree in the cold. This twig lands on the snow below and starts to tumble down the hill. This picks up some snow, which begins to tumble down with it. More snow and more momentum and suddenly, there is this terrifically destructive avalanche of snow. This is what has happened. Jonathan and his sword bearer were the small twigs which landed on the snow. For whatever reason—and we are never completely clear exactly as to what happened, except that this was caused by God—the Philistines are thrown into a panic. It is not even clear whether this was directly related to Jonathan's attack or not. We have made some logical guesses—the Philistines were aware that the Jewish soldiers had disappeared into the hills (1Sam. 13:6); and, although they might have generally assumed that this was a retreat, always in the back of every Philistine soldier's mind was the idea that these Jewish warriors could be surrounding them. They also were aware of the God of the Jews, Who was even more frightening to them. After all, even though the Philistines captured the Ark of God from the Jews, the result of great internal destruction until



they sent the Ark back to the Jews (1Sam. 5–6). There were Israelites who had joined themselves to the Philistines, and now had turned on them

In some respects, we do not know exactly what happened; however, in others, it is clear as to what happened. Therefore, let's discuss:

### The Events which Took Place

1. Jonathan and his armorbearer slaughter 20 Philistine guards (vv. 13–14).
2. The Philistines clearly became afraid (v. 15).
3. The Philistines begin to run, and apparently in a rather disorganized fashion (vv. 16, 19).
4. The Philistines are fighting among themselves. This may have been God confusing them; however, it was probably the fact that the Israelites who joined up with them now turned against them. That Philistines may have fought against one another is not out of the question, given the size of their army (vv. 20b–21).
5. There were a number of Israelites who had deserted Saul and were simply hiding in the hills of Ephraim, and they suddenly joined in the fray (v. 22).
6. What appears to be the case is, Saul and his army do not join in the fray, but appear to be fray-adjacent. They observe, but there is no text which indicates that they actually attack. It is only said that they come to the battle—whether they actually participate is not clearly said (vv. 19–20). By the way, Saul's later actions will be consistent with not actually going into battle himself.

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### What We Think Might Have Happened to Cause the Philistines to Panic

1. Some Philistines awoke to see Jonathan and his armorbearer standing above 20 dead Philistine guards. This may have caused the initial panic.
2. God instilled fear into the souls of the Philistine soldiers. However, given all of the other events which take place, I don't think there is any necessity for God to do this directly.
3. There was a sudden earthquake at the time that the Philistines observed Jonathan and his armorbearer standing over 20 dead Philistine bodies.
4. The Philistines realized that there were many Israelites hidden throughout the hills, and they realized that they could be literally surrounded by Israelites (compare vv. 11 and 22).
5. The Philistines realize that there are a number of Israelites who are actually a part of their own army who turn on them (vv. 20b–21). Now, the order of the verses seems to indicate that the Philistines began to melt away and then the Israelites from the hills and from among the Philistines began to fight them.
6. Now, recall that the Hebrew mind does not always think in a chronological way. Therefore, many of these things could have occurred simultaneously. That is, when the Philistines saw that Jonathan had killed some of their own, one or two Israeli deserters may have, in the moment, struck down the Philistine soldier standing next to them. Some deserters in the hills may have seen some of this, and they began to come out of the hills (possibly racked with guilt for deserting).
7. All of these things could have continued to build. More and more Israeli soldiers within the Philistine army began to fight. The Philistines began to fight amongst themselves (those who said that the Israelis should become a part of their army could be seen as traitors now, and they may have been attacked by those who opposed them). More soldiers from the hills could emerge and join in the fray as well.

Whatever things actually caused the panic within the Philistines, it appears certain that Jonathan's attack set their panic in motion.

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With Jonathan's incredibly brave attack, a panic broke out among the Philistines. Whether God caused this panic directly, we do not know for certain. However, as the Philistines fell into this panic, they began to war against one another; Hebrews who had allied themselves with the Philistines and were in the camp allied themselves again with



Israel and fought against the Philistines as well. This has caused all of the Hebrews who had deserted Saul's army to join with Israel in pursuing the Philistines, who were now fleeing their campsite in full-on retreat.

This means that the Philistine army are being struck from several positions. There are the soldiers of Saul who had deserted and gone over to the Philistine camp—they fought the Philistines from within. There are also the soldiers who deserted Saul, but hid themselves in the surrounding forests and hills, not leaving the area completely; and when they see what is happening, they strike the Philistine army from the perimeter.

**And so caused to deliver Y<sup>e</sup>howah in the day the that Israel. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.**

1Samuel  
14:23

**So Y<sup>e</sup>howah delivered Israel in that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.**

**So Jehovah delivered Israel on that day. The battle itself moved beyond Beth-aven.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Latin Vulgate                      And there were with Saul about ten thousand men. And the Lord saved Israel that day. And the fight went on as far as Bethaven. [This is actually vv. 22b–23 in the Latin].

Masoretic Text                      And so caused to deliver Y<sup>e</sup>howah in the day the that Israel. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.

Septuagint                          ...and the Lord saved Israel in that day; and the war passed through Bamoth; and all the people with Saul were about 10,000 men. And the battle extended itself to every city in the mount Ephraim. [in the LXX, this is actually vv. 22b–23]

Significant differences:              The LXX adds a lot of material to this verse, which we do not find in the Hebrew. The Syriac essentially agree with the Hebrew, but that Latin agrees with the Greek in the number of soldiers who are with Saul (which is not mentioned in the Hebrew text).

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

CEV                                      So the LORD helped Israel win the battle that day.

NLT                                      So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle continued to rage even out beyond Beth-aven.

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

God's Word™                          So the LORD saved Israel that day. Now the battle moved beyond Bes Aven.  
JPS (Tanakh)                          Thus the LORD brought victory to Israel that day.

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

*The Emphasized Bible*              Thus did Yahweh on that day save Israel, —and ||the battle|| [or *warring host*] passed over by [or, *as far as* (as per Aramaic and Vulgate)] Beth-aven. [the Septuagint adds: And ||all the people|| were with Saul, about ten thousand men, —howbeit the battle was spread throughout every city in the hill-country of Ephraim. But ||Saul|| committed a great error on that day.]

NASB                                      So the LORD delivered Israel that day, and the battle spread [lit., *passed over*] beyond Beth-aven.

*Young's Updated LT*                  And Jehovah saves Israel on that day, and the battle has passed over to Beth-Aven.

**What is the gist of this verse?** It is finally clear in this verse that God delivered Israel—to what degree and exactly in what way is not told to us in this verse. Was it simply because God gave Jonathan the bravery to move against the Philistines as he did? Was it God who caused the camp of the Philistines to explode into chaos and panic? Probably both were God's doing.

### 1Samuel 14:23

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
yâsha' (יָשַׁע) [pronounced yaw-SHAHG]	<i>to deliver, to save</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yôm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day, today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i> ]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
Yis'râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mil'châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced <i>mil-khâw-MAW</i> ]	<i>battle, war</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
'âbar (עָבַר) [pronounced <i>gaw<sup>b</sup>-VAHR</i> ]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bêth 'âwen (בֵּית אֲוֵן) [pronounced <i>bayth-AW-wen</i> or <i>bayth-AW-ven</i> ]	transliterated <i>Beth-aven</i> ; it means <i>house of iniquity</i>	proper noun locality	Strong's #1007 BDB #110

**Translation:** So Y<sup>e</sup>howah delivered Israel in that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven. Several translations begin the second line as a new paragraph.

That God delivered Israel is recorded in a number of passages—Ex. 14:30 1Sam. 11:13 2Chron. 32:22 Hosea 1:7. Here, the author also attributes victory to God, and not to Saul or Jonathan. So that you does not concern yourself because of Jonathan, Jonathan himself recognized that God would deliver them (1Sam. 14:6, 10).

Recall that we spoke of Beth-aven back in 1Sam. 13:5. This is a city in Benjamin on the northern border of Benjamin and Ephraim. Since the Philistines were camped in Benjamin, this means that they would be retreating north. The distance mentioned here does not appear to be particularly a long one. Jonathan and his sword-bearer came up to the Philistine camp from the south. Saul and his army would also have approached from that direction (I don't know that we have a clear indication that Saul and his men even entered into this battle, although they certainly approached it from the south—1Sam. 14:20). As the Philistines are fighting amongst themselves, being attacked by Hebrews who re-allied themselves with Israel, were scattering to the north. The soldiers who deserted Saul's army are in the north hidden in the hills of Ephraim. It becomes clear that the Philistines were in great disarray, so the soldiers who deserted Saul now attacked the Philistines from the north and probably from the east and west.

Let me add in what is found in the Greek at this point:

### 1Samuel 14:22b Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
pás (πάς) [pronounced <i>pahs</i> ]	<i>each, every, any; all, entire; anyone, all things, everything; some [of all types]</i>	nominative singular neuter adjective	Strong's #3956
ho (ὁ) [pronounced <i>hoh</i> ]	<i>the; this, that, these</i>	definite article for a nominative masculine singular noun	Strong's #3588
laos (λαός) [pronounced <i>lah-OSS</i> ]	<i>people, people group, tribe, nation, all those who are of the same stock and language; of a great part of the population gathered together anywhere</i>	masculine singular noun; nominative case	Strong's #2992
ên (ἦν) [pronounced <i>ayn</i> ]	<i>was, were, has been; to have existed; to have stayed; had occurred, took place; was present [available]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, imperfect active indicative	Strong's #2258 (imperfect of Strong's #1510)
meta (μετά) [pronounced <i>meht-AH</i> ]	<i>with, among, in the company of, in the midst of</i>	preposition with the genitive	Strong's #3326
Saoul (Σαούλ) [pronounced <i>sah-OOL</i> ]	<i>desired and is transliterated Saul</i>	indeclinable masculine proper noun	Strong's #4549
hōs (ὥς) [pronounced <i>hohç</i> ]	<i>like, as; in such a way; even as</i>	comparative particle	Strong's #5613

When used with numerals, hōs means *about, approximately, nearly*.

### 1Samuel 14:22b Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
deka (δέκα) [pronounced DEH-kah]	<i>ten</i>	Indeclinable noun	Strong's #1176
chilias (χιλιάς) [pronounced khiih-lee-ASS]	<i>a thousand, one thousand</i>	feminine plural noun; nominative case	Strong's #5505
anêr (ἀνὴρ) [pronounced ah-NAIR]	<i>man, male; adult male; husband, betrothed; [a group of] men and women [generic use]</i>	masculine plural noun; genitive/ablative case	Strong's #435

**Translation:** *And all the people with Saul were approximately 10,000 men...* This phrase is unlikely to be something which is simply added into the text by an imaginative translator. No doubt, this was found in the Hebrew text used by the Greek translators. Given what numbers we have been given before, this seems reasonable. Saul originally had 3000 troops in all—this was his standing army/bodyguard. When the Philistine army moved into Michmash, Saul made a call to his countrymen to join him. Now, even though his army was said to have been reduced to 600, this does not mean that no one answered his call. There was probably a large influx of men who, when faced with dying in battle against the feared Philistines, deserted; and many others of Saul's army deserted as well. However, understand this: these men cannot simply go back home. They can't walk back into their homes and said, "The Philistines were just too mean; the whole situation was too intense; I decided not to fight." They would be disgraced. So, even though these men deserted Saul, where to go from there was not a simple matter of just returning home. Apparently, a huge number of them simply hid in the hills and forests of that area. It is also possible that some men, on their way to join up with Saul, became too alarmed to even join up with him in the first place. They would have also hid themselves in the hills and mountains. When it was apparent that the Philistine soldiers had suddenly become routed, these men rejoined Saul in huge numbers. A reasonable question is, *why were these men not executed as deserters?* That is simple: you had a returned of 9,400 men to Saul's men who remained, 600; furthermore, their common enemy, the Philistines, are suddenly scattering. You can execute a handful of deserters; you cannot execute the bulk of your army.

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### 1Samuel 14:23a Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced kī]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
ên (ἦν) [pronounced ayn]	<i>was, were, has been; to have existed; to have stayed; had occurred, took place; was present [available]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, imperfect active indicative	Strong's #2258 (imperfect of Strong's #1510)
ho (ὁ) [pronounced hoh]	<i>the; this, that, these</i>	definite article for a nominative masculine singular noun	Strong's #3588
polemos (πόλεμος, ου, ὁ) [pronounced POHL-em-oss]	<i>a war, fight, battle; strife, warfare; dispute, quarrel</i>	masculine singular noun, nominative case	Strong's #4171

## 1Samuel 14:23a Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
diaspeirô (διασπείρω) [pronounced <i>dee-ah-SPY-roh</i> ]	<i>to scatter [abroad], to disperse; to distribute</i>	perfect middle participle, masculine singular	Strong's #1289
eis (εἰς) [pronounced <i>ICE</i> ]	<i>to, toward; into; unto, in order to, for, for the purpose of, for the sake of, on account of</i>	directional preposition	Strong's #1519
holos (ὅλος, η, ον) [pronounced <i>HOH-loss</i> ]	<i>whole, entire, complete; altogether, wholly, all</i>	feminine singular adjective; accusative case	Strong's #3650
tên (τὴν) [pronounced <i>tayn</i> ]	<i>the</i>	feminine singular definite article; accusative case	Strong's #3588
polis (πόλις, εως, ή) [pronounced <i>POH-liss</i> ]	<i>city, city-state; inhabitants of a city</i>	feminine singular noun; accusative case	Strong's #4172
en (ἐν) [pronounced <i>en</i> ]	<i>in, by means of, with; among</i>	preposition with the locative, dative and instrumental cases	Strong's #1722
tô (τῷ) [pronounced <i>toe</i> ]	<i>to the, for the; in the; by the, by means of the</i>	neuter singular definite article; dative, locative and instrumental cases	Strong's #3588
oros (ὄρος, ους, τό) [pronounced <i>OH-ross</i> ]	<i>mountain, hill</i>	neuter singular noun; dative, locative and instrumental cases	Strong's #3735
Ephraim (Ἐφραΐμ) [pronounced <i>eh-fra-IM</i> ]	<i>double fruitfulness and is transliterated Ephraim</i>	indeclinable proper singular noun	Strong's #2187

**Translation:** *And the battle was scattered into every city in the mountain of Ephraim.* The Philistine soldiers are going to retreat west, northwest and north, primarily. The verb used to describe this is the verb *to melt* (v. 16), which means there was no organized retreat in one particular direction. The Philistines went in all directions, as they apparently had no plan for retreat. They were possibly fighting amongst one another; they were fighting the soldiers of Israel who had allied themselves with them; they were spooked by the earthquake; and, as they ran into the hills, they would have come across Israelites who had hidden themselves there. Essentially, in this entire mountain (mountain range?), these Philistines retreated and yet, still were locked into battle.

Whether you accept this as part of the Word of God or not does not affect the overall meaning of this chapter.

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It appears as though two men attacked the Philistines, and somehow put the Philistines on the run. However, there is a lot more to it than that.

### How Did the Israelites Defeat the Philistines?

1. First, there was the attack of Jonathan and his armorbearer against some guards on the perimeter of the

## How Did the Israelites Defeat the Philistines?

- Philistine camp. The Philistines had no idea that the attack was only by 2 men.
- God caused an earthquake, which caused fear throughout the Philistine camp and gave confidence to the Israelites. That there is an earthquake is found in the Hebrew, but not in the Greek.
  - There were over a thousand men hidden in the hills of Ephraim and near the camp who recognized that Israel actually stood a chance, and they joined in.
  - There were Israelites within the camp of the Philistines who had deserted Israel; the battle gave them the impetus and courage to change sides again.
  - Out of nowhere, the Septuagint tells us that there were 10,000 Israelite soldiers in all. Although I don't find support for this reading, it is not a bad estimate. Recall that, even though Saul's original army was 3000 men, he had sent a call throughout Israel for reinforcements. These reinforcements did come and, apparently, they also deserted Saul as well. When the Philistines were thrown into chaos, these men returned to fight with Israel.
  - Given the Israelites descending upon the Philistines from all around and given that there were Israelites within the camp of the Philistines who suddenly turned against the Philistines, the Philistine camp was in great confusion. They even turned against one another in this confusion. It is possible that this refers to the Israelites who were within the camp of the Philistines; however, it is reasonable that the Philistines, in their confusion, began to fight against one another, as well as against the Jews who were within their camp.
  - There was a good deal of psychology involved. The Philistines did not think that they were being attacked by only two men. They assumed that the Israelites who appeared to desert were probably surrounding them. The earthquake gave them great reason to panic, knowing that the God of Israel was mightier than any of their gods.
  - Notice how I did not mention Saul or his 600 men in this list? It does not appear that they did anything but help pursue the Philistines after the battle had been clearly won. Don't misunderstand me—I am not knocking their bravery or contribution, but it appears that the Philistines were on the run when the 600 joined in (if they joined in at all).
  - Altogether, there were as many as 10,000 Israelis who attacked the Philistines, and from every direction—they were within the Philistine camp, and they were scattered throughout the hills surrounding the Philistine camp.

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## Saul's Foolish Oath; Jonathan Unknowingly Breaks this Oath

As we begin the next verse, recognize that Saul, essentially, has not done a damn thing. We have a clear indication that three groups attacked the Philistines: (1) Jonathan and his armor bearer; (2) traitor Hebrews who had allied themselves with the Philistines and then realigned themselves with Israel; and (3) the deserters. Thus far, Saul, and his crack army of 598 men are just standing there watching all of this unfold. Well, Saul just can't stand there looking like an impotent idiot—he is the king, after all; he's the commander-in-chief. So he has to throw in his two cents. That is the gist of what leads us to this next verse:

**And [each] man of Israel was harassed in the day the that and so causes to take an oath Saul the people to say, "Cursing the man who eats bread until the evening and I have been avenged from my enemies." And had not tasted all the people bread.**

1Samuel  
14:24

**And [each] man of Israel was hard-pressed that day [because] Saul [publically] made a binding oath, "Cursed is the man who eats [any] food until the evening and I have been avenged against my enemies." Therefore, none of the people tasted [any] food.**

**The soldiers under Saul were under the pressure of an oath which Saul had placed them under, namely, "Any man who eats food before this evening, before I have gotten vengeance upon my enemies—he is cursed!" For this reason, no one even tasted any food.**



Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And the men of Israel were joined together that day: and Saul adjured the people, saying: Cursed be the man that shall eat food till evening, till I be revenged of my enemies. So none of the people tasted any food.
Masoretic Text	And [each] man of Israel was harassed in the day the that and so causes to take an oath Saul the people to say, "Cursing the man who eats bread until the evening and I have been avenged from my enemies." And had not tasted all the people bread.
Peshitta	And Saul drew near that day and said to the people, "Cursed be the man who eats food until evening, until I am avenged on my enemies." So none of the people tasted any food.
Septuagint	And Saul committed a great trespass of ignorance in that day, and he lays a curse on the people saying, "Cursed <i>is</i> the man who eats bread before the evening; so I will avenge myself on my enemy." And none of the people tasted bread, though all the land was dining.

Significant differences: In the Hebrew, we look at Saul's lame curse as a burden on the people; the Greek calls it a *trespass of ignorance* (which is very apt). In the Syriac, Saul draws near to his people. In the Latin, the men of Israel are joined together—apparently by this oath. These 4 different takes on the first line, to the point of having a different subject, indicates that there were problems even at that time with the Hebrew text.

The Greek adds the confusing phrase *...though all the land was dining*. Perhaps what is meant is, Saul makes this curse right in the middle of dinner.

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

CEV	Saul had earlier told his soldiers, "I want to get even with those Philistines by sunset. If any of you eat before then, you will be under a curse!" So he made the swear not to eat. By the time the fighting moved past Beth-Aven, the Israelite troops were weak from hunger. [vv. 23–24 were combined in the CEV; so this has elements of v. 23 in it]
NAB	The battle continued past Beth-horon; <sup>24</sup> the whole people, about ten thousand combatants, were with Saul, and there was scattered fighting in every town in the hill country of Ephraim. And Saul swore a very rash oath that day, putting the people under this ban: "Cursed by the man who takes food before evening, before I am able to avenge myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. [vv. 23b–24 in the NJB]
NJB	As the men of Israel were hard pressed that day, Saul pronounced this imprecation over ht people, "A curst on anyone who eats food before evening, before I have taken revenge on my enemies!" So none of the people so much as tasted food.
NLT	Now the men of Israel were worn out that day, because Saul had made them take an oath, saying, "Let a curse fall on anyone who eats before evening—before I have full revenge on my enemies." So no one ate a thing all day.
REB	The Israelites had been driven to exhaustion on that day. Saul had issued this warning to the troops: "A curse on any man who takes food before nightfall and before I have taken vengeance on my enemies."

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

## God's Word™

Israel's soldiers were driven hard that day. Saul made the troops swear, "Cursed is anyone who eats food before the evening comes and before I've gotten revenge on my enemies." So none of his troops tasted any food.

## JPS (Tanakh)

The men of Israel were distressed that day. For Saul had laid an oath upon the troops: "Cursed be the man who eats any food before night falls and I take revenge on my enemies." So none of the troops ate anything. [In the LXX, *The men of Israel were distressed* is *And all the troops, about 10,000 men, were with Saul; and the battle spread into the hill country of Ephraim. Now Saul committed a rash act.*]

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

## NASB

Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food before [lit., *until*] evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.

## NRSV

Now Saul committed a very rash act on that day [as per the Greek; Hebrew: *The Israelites were distressed that day*]. He had laid an oath on the troops, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before it is evening and I have been avenged on my enemies." So none of the troops tasted food.

## Young's Updated LT

And the men of Israel have been distressed on that day, and Saul adjures the people, saying, "Cursed *is* the man who eats food till the evening, and I have been avenged of my enemies." And none of the people have tasted food.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul is kind of at a loss as to what to do. He had already called in the High Priest for guidance, when he found out that the camp of the Philistines was in complete disarray. He did not initiate the battle, nor does it appear as though he was even taking part in this battle; therefore, Saul felt he had to do something, so he decides to institute a fast which would continue until the Philistines had been defeated. This is going to be a problem.

## 1Samuel 14:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîysh (יִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
nâgas (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GAS</i> ]	<i>to be pressed, harassed, to press or harass one another, to be harassed with toil, to be wearied out</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #5065 BDB #620
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yôm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day, today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

## 1Samuel 14:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hûw' (הוא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
wa or va (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâlâh (אֱלֹה) [pronounced aw-LAW]	<i>to swear, to curse, to take an oath</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #422 BDB #46
Shâ'ûwl (שׂאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾârar (אָרַר) [pronounced aw-RAHR]	<i>to bitterly curse</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #779 BDB #76
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37
lechem (לֶחֶם) [pronounced LEH-khem]	<i>bread</i> literally; reasonably translated <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced gahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʿereb (עֶרֶב) [pronounced ĠEH-reb]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâqam (נָקַם) [pronounced naw-KAHM]	<i>to avenge, to take vengeance, to be avenged</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #5358 BDB #667

## 1Samuel 14:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʾāya <sup>b</sup> v (אֵיָו) [pronounced aw-YA <sup>B</sup> V]	<i>my enemies, the ones being at enmity with you</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #340 BDB #33

**Translation:** And [each] man of Israel was hard-pressed that day [because] Saul [publically] made a binding oath, "Cursed is the man who eats [any] food until the evening and I have been avenged against my enemies..."

Saul was a brave man—even under great pressure. However, under pressure, his decisions were lame. Recall, that when he first observed the commotion in the Philistine camp, he called upon the High Priest (or, at least the camp priest) to produce the Ephod and to guide him. Then Saul, seeing that the Philistine camp was in chaos, rather than in transit to destroy Saul's army, he did not have any time to waste. He told the priest to stop asking God what to do, and Saul springs into action. But, his springing into action appears to be still standing above the fray, looking into it, and then just standing there with his proverbial thumb up his ass. Then he gets this thought: *why not make an oath about this?* Saul has not even attacked yet, and the Philistines are 90% beaten, and Saul decides his best move here is to make a binding oath. Saul has nothing to do with this deliverance. If anything, this places the army of Israel under a serious and unnecessary disadvantage.

You see, what Saul had done was he called upon the High Priest to try to figure on what to do, then noticed that it was being done. And then, so he did not look like a complete doofus, he decided to be holy and swear all of his soldiers to an oath—no one would eat until evening or this battle had been clearly completed. This act brings God into the picture, even though Saul did not have enough time to ask God what His will was. This was not simply some oath that he made between himself and the soldiers of Israel—it will be clear by the end of this chapter that this is an oath that Saul made before God and bound both himself and his men to this oath before God. Probably the priest was still standing there, his hands lowered as per Saul's orders, and then Saul makes this vow. No doubt that this pronouncement caused the priest to cringe every time he heard Saul's voice. It is bad enough when you must spend time with someone who has absolutely nothing intelligent to say; however, that is multiplied a hundredfold when that person is your ruler. Both the priest and those present when this oath was made must have begun to reflect upon Samuel's warnings against putting a king over Israel.

It wouldn't hurt to take a few moments and note...

### What's Wong with Saul's Oath?

1. Saul made this oath having no direction from God. Although he had called for the priest and the Ephod, the passage seems to indicate that nothing came of that and that he told the priest to put his hands down.
2. Similarly, Saul had no guidance from Samuel or from the camp priest, Ahijah (who may have been the High Priest).
3. Saul made this oath without all of the troops present. Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there; those who had deserted Israel and allied themselves with the Philistines were not there; those who had deserted Saul and had hidden themselves were not there. In fact, the majority of those who were pursuing the Philistines and therefore would be under this oath were not there when Saul made this oath. Although nothing is said about it, obviously the content of the oath had to be disseminated by word of mouth.

## What's Wong with Saul's Oath?

4. The oath really accomplished nothing. There was no reason to think that God would provide more for Israel if such an oath were given.
5. Here's the most important aspect of this oath: Saul made this oath from his own ego. He had just been upbraided by Samuel for not waiting on him (1Sam. 13:8–14). He had given no commands or showed little initiative, and, suddenly, right within their view, they could see that the camp of the Philistines was in chaos. Saul simply felt as though he needed to do something in order to take charge here. Thus far he had done nothing with regards to defeating these Philistines, other than to inspire most of his men to desert, so this was his play. This was Saul's move to show that he was in charge.

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**Application:** What Saul needed to do was to stop, take a breath, ask God for guidance, and then he needed to listen. He did not create this emergency situation nor had he done anything to warrant it. In other words, Saul was not under any sort of discipline here. The problem was that he was speaking when he needed to be listening. You no doubt know of Paul's order, *women, keep silent in church*. For all intents and purposes, Saul was in church, the High Priest stood before him, and was about to guide him. And then Saul stops him and starts talking. When you have a pastor-teacher guiding you from the pulpit, it is not time to talk, to write notes to friends, or to daydream. I went to church with one person and they prayed the entire time while the pastor was speaking—such incredible arrogance! As if, what you have to say to God is more important than what He has to say to you. When you allow God to guide you, there is less chance that you will do something which is really stupid.

Let's discuss *"...and I have been avenged against my enemies..."* The Philistines were God's enemies. God had ordered Israel to remove the heathen from the Land of Promise. The wars fought represented war between God's people, the Jews, and evil. Now, obviously, the Philistines were Saul's enemies as were they the enemies of all Israel. However, that was Saul's emphasis. Not one time do we hear him say that they are the enemies of Jehovah, God of Israel. This was not a slip up on Saul's part, or a situation where what he said was edited to make him sound egotistical. In 1Sam. 15:12, Saul will have a monument to himself set up.

### 1Samuel 14:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (ל' or לו') [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ṭâ'am (טעם) [pronounced <i>taw-GAHM</i> ]	<i>to taste, to perceive</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2938 BDB #380
Here is another oddity of this portion of Samuel—this particular word has never been used before. However, in the first few chapters of Samuel, almost every word used was an extremely common word.			
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kaw</i> ],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

## 1Samuel 14:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿam (אָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lechem (לֶחֶם) [pronounced <i>LEH-khem</i> ]	<i>bread</i> literally; reasonably translated <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536

**Translation:** ...so all of the people did not taste bread. Saul was the king and their Commander-in-Chief, so the people recognized his authority and did not eat. Fighting a war takes a tremendous amount of energy. The Israelites were assured of victory, by the looks of things, and what remained for them to do was to pursue their enemies and slaughter as many of them as possible. This oath did nothing except handicap the soldiers of Israel. It did not make them better soldiers, it did not insure victory. What the oath did do was not allow them to eat during that day of battle, so that they could not pursue the Philistines as quickly nor could they kill as many Philistines as they ought. Samuel took something which was not broken and then tried to fix it. What is his motivation? Saul wanted to take some credit for this victory or contribute in some way to the victory.

And all the land had come into the wood [or, had come upon a honeycomb] and so is honey upon faces of the field.

1Samuel  
14:25

And all the land [i.e., *the Israelites?*] had come upon a honeycomb and [there] was honey upon the face of the ground.

Then the Israelite soldiers came upon a honeycomb and honey was dripping down upon the ground.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

## Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And all the common people came into a forest, in which there was honey upon the ground.
Masoretic Text	And all the land had come into the wood [or, <i>had come upon a honeycomb</i> ] and so is honey upon faces of the field.
Peshitta	And they went throughout all the land and came into a forest; and, behold, there was honey in the forest on the ground.
Septuagint	And Jaal was a wood abounding [lit., <i>of a swarm</i> ] in swarms of bees on the face of the ground.

## Significant differences:

There are a great many differences in these verses, so I did not mark them. In the first phrase, the LXX uses a proper name to indicate a particular place; in the Latin, it is the common people who come into this forest; in the MT, we have the metonym *all the land* came into the forest (the phrase refers to the people of Israel). In the Peshitta, we simply have *they*.

In the second phrase, the LXX has swarms of bees on the ground; the other three languages have honey.

As usual, the differences do not cast any doubt on this or that essential doctrine; however, the LXX is somewhat difficult to understand at this point.

## Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	The army and the people who lived nearby had gone into a forest, and they came to a place where honey was dripping on the ground. But no one ate any of it, because they were afraid of being put under the curse. [the CEV combines vv. 25–26 here]
NAB	Indeed, there was a honeycomb lying on the ground,...
NJB	Now there was a honeycomb out in the open.
NLT	So no one ate a thing all day, even though they found honeycomb on the ground in the forest. [this is vv. 24–25 in the NLT]
REB	There was honeycomb in the countryside,... [probable reading; Hebrew: <i>All the land went into the forest, and there was honey</i> ]

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

God's Word™	The entire land had honeycombs, and there was honey on the ground. [or, <i>the entire land came into the woods, and there was honey on the ground</i> ]
JPS (Tanakh)	Everybody came to a stack of beehives where some honey had spilled on the ground. [the meaning of <i>stack of beehives</i> is uncertain; compare Song of Songs 5:1]

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

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And   all the land   had entered into the forest,—and there was honey upon the face of the ground.
NASB	And all <i>the people of</i> the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground.
NKJV	Now all <i>the people of</i> the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground.
NRSV	And all the troops came upon a honeycomb; and there was honey on the ground.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	And all <i>they of</i> the land have come into a forest, and there is honey on the face of the field;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Again, we have a tremendous amount of disagreement; however, it is clear that the people came across a huge amount of honey in the forest, but did not eat from it because of Saul's pronouncement.

Quite obviously, this is quite unfortunate—the honey would have given his troops a quick burst of energy. If anything, it had been set there by God for them for that purpose. However, Saul, in his arrogance, or perhaps just out of ineffectual indecision, makes this useless oath which, if anything, hamstring his troops.

## 1Samuel 14:25

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kaw</i> ],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #776 BDB #75
bôw' (בּוֹאוֹ) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97



## 1Samuel 14:25

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בֶּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
y <sup>a</sup> ar (יַעַר) [pronounced YAH- <i>gahr</i> ]	<i>wood, forest, thicket</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3293 and #3264 (plural form) BDB #420
A 2 <sup>nd</sup> meaning of this word is <i>honeycomb</i> and the JPS reasonably suggests <i>beehive</i> (BDB names 1Sam. 14:25–26 SOS 5:1 as the only places where this rendering would be reasonable). This helps to explain the varying translations at this point.			
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
d <sup>eb</sup> vash (דְּבַשׁ) [pronounced d <sup>eb</sup> VAHSH]	<i>honey</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1706 BDB #185
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah</i> ]	<i>upon, against, above</i>	preposition	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
pânîym (פְּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, ʿâl and pânîym mean <i>upon the face of, facing, in front of, before (as in preference to), in addition to, overlooking</i>			
sâdeh (שָׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	<i>field, land, open field, open country</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961

**Translation:** And all the land [i.e., the Israelites] had come upon a honeycomb and [there] was honey upon the face of the ground. *Land* is just a metonym for Israel; we have a similar metonym in Matt. 3:5 where **Jerusalem went out to him** [i.e., to see John the Baptizer], **and then all Judea and then all the district around the Jordan**. Obviously, the actual city (the buildings and roads) did not go out to see John, but the people of the city went out to see him. This is actually somewhat tongue-in-cheek by the author of this portion of Samuel. The men of Israel scattered to the caves, cliffs, forest, etc. (1Sam. 13:6 14:22). Now, as they begin to emerge, it is as though all the land is in pursuit of the Philistines.

As Jonathan and his men pursued the Philistines, the land they were in just opened up to a field where there was a huge honeycomb. That there was honey throughout the land was to be expected, as Israel was known as a **land flowing with milk and honey** (Ex. 3:8b; see also Num. 13:27). I quoted Matt. 3:5; it's interesting—John the Baptizer was known for his unusual meals of locusts and honey (see Matt. 3:4).

Gordon points out that there is a Ugaritic text which reads *The heavens rain oil, the valleys [flow with] honey*.<sup>33</sup> My point being is that there were a lot of bees and a lot of honey in that area (Israel of 3000 years ago was nothing like the Israel today).

That the honey was on the ground indicated that the honeycomb was so filled with honey that a large amount of it had dripped down, actually making a pool/stream of honey between the rocks on the ground.

And so go in the people unto the wood [or, honeycomb] and, behold, a going of honey and none reaching his hand unto his mouth because feared the people the solemn oath [or, curse].

1Samuel  
14:26

And the people went to the honeycomb [possibly, beehive] and, observe, [there was] a dripping of honey; however, no one was reaching his hand to his mouth [to feed himself] because the people feared the curse.

The people walked up to the honeycomb, and, even though it was dripping with honey, no one would feed from it because they feared Saul's curse.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And when the people came into the forest, behold the honey dropped, but no man put his hand to his mouth. For the people feared the oath.
Masoretic Text	And so go in the people unto the wood [or, honeycomb] and, behold, a going of honey and none reaching his hand unto his mouth because feared the people the solemn oath [or, curse].
Septuagint	And the people went into the place of the bees, and, behold, they continued speaking; and, behold, there was none that put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath to the Lord.

Significant differences: The first difference is where the people go, and that appears to simply be a matter of translation.

In the second difference, the MT refers to a stream of honey and the LXX refers to the people continually talking (apparently to keep from eating the honey?). In the Latin and Syriac, the honey is dripping from the trees—the soldiers could open their mouths and tilt their heads back to eat honey.

The third difference is, the LXX adds that this oath is *to the Lord*.

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

CEV	The army and the people who lived nearby had gone into a forest, and they came to a place where honey was dripping on the ground. But no one ate any of it, because they were afraid of being put under the curse. [vv. 25–26 combined]
NLT	They didn't even touch the honey because they all feared the oath they had taken.

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

God's Word™	When the troops entered the woods, the honey was flowing. But no one put his hand to his mouth, because the troops were afraid of violating their oath.
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<sup>33</sup> Robert Gordon, *I & II Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 343. He lists the Ugaritic text as CTA 6. 3. 6f. (//12f.).

## JPS (Tanakh)

When the troops came to the beehives and found the flow of honey there, no one put his hand to his mouth, for the troops feared the oath. [*beehives*—meaning uncertain]

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

## NASB

When the people entered the forest, behold, *there was* a flow of honey; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

## NKJV

And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

## Young's Updated LT

...and the people come in unto the forest, and lo, the honey dropped, and none is moving his hand unto his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

To ease us into this verse, what has happened was Jonathan and his aide attacked the Philistine camp and this, along with several other events, put the Philistines on the run. So, Jonathan and his armorbearer began to pursue the Philistines. Some of those Jews who had gone over to the Philistines changed their alliances once more and joined in, along with those who had hidden themselves throughout the land, along with some of the 600 soldiers who were faithful to God and had remained with Saul. So Jonathan and his aide are no longer fighting alone. They have been joined by these various groups in their pursuit of the Philistines (probably, most who have joined Jonathan were under his command to begin with). Because Jonathan and his armorbearer were not in camp when Saul made the oath, neither of them were aware of the oath. However, those they were with were cognizant of Saul's foolish oath.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The soldiers approach this area of beehive(s) and observe that the honey is dripping from the honeycombs onto the ground. However, no one dares to feed from the honey, despite the burst of energy it would give them. They fear Saul's foolish curse.

## 1Samuel 14:26

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' (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
y <sup>a</sup> ar (יָעַר) [pronounced <i>YAH-gahr</i> ]	<i>wood, forest, thicket</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3293 and #3264 (plural form) BDB #420
A 2 <sup>nd</sup> meaning of this word is <i>honeycomb</i> and the JPS reasonably suggests <i>beehive</i> (BDB names 1Sam. 14:25–26 SOS 5:1 as the only places where this rendering would be reasonable). This alternate meaning helps to explain the varying translations at this point.			
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## 1Samuel 14:26

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
hêlek (הֵלֵךְ) [pronounced HAY-lek]	<i>a dropping, traveler, wayfarer; literally, a going of, possibly a stream of</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1982 BDB #237
d <sup>eb</sup> vash (דְּבַשׁ) [pronounced d <sup>eb</sup> VAHSH]	<i>honey</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1706 BDB #185
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾayin (אֵין) [pronounced AH-yin]	<i>naught, nothing; it can be a particle of negation: no, not</i>	negative/negative construct	Strong's #369 BDB #34
nâsag (נָשַׁג) [pronounced naw-SAHG]	<i>to reach, to overtake</i>	Hiphil participle	Strong's #5381 BDB #673
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun (with 3 <sup>rd</sup> masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth, edge</i>	masculine singular noun (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yârêʾ (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431.
ʾam (אָם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shebûʾâh (שְׁבוּעָה) [pronounced she <sup>b</sup> -voo-GAH]	<i>a solemn oath, a curse</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7621 BDB #989

**Translation:** *And the people went to the honeycomb [possibly, beehive] and, observe, there was a dripping of honey; however, no one was reaching his hand to his mouth [to feed himself] because the people feared the curse [of Saul's].* Recall that this could also mean *And the people came into the wood and observe, there was a stream of honey...* Barnes suggests that this does refer to an actual stream of honey, pointing out *The same thing may be seen in Spain, where in woody and rocky ground copious streams of honey are often found.*<sup>34</sup> Because Jonathan will use his staff to get the honey, we would assume that this is a beehive, rather than a stream of honey on the ground (the staff would have made a mess of the honey, if it were on the ground; however, conversely, it would have been safer for Jonathan to use his staff rather than his hand when it came to reaching into a honeycomb). Also, the simplest explanation and the most natural is that this is simply a honeycomb from which honey is dripping.

There are a lot of people who desire to be president of the United States and we are so damn lucky that there is no way that they will ever be. People have no clue as to the importance of wielding authority. I observed a department head effectively end the career of an outstanding new teacher over trivial matters. In this situation, what Saul's soldiers could use is some nourishment and energy. There are few things as stupid as Saul's solemn oath that he makes in this chapter. It had absolutely no positive effects whatsoever—it was a spontaneous and completely ill-conceived idea. And notice, does Saul suffer? Not at all. There are certain types who do not mind binding you to an oath; they do not mind setting the standards for you life—however, they would never think of turning around and applying these same standards to themselves. I have a perfect secular example of this: our Congress passes a myriad of laws and resolutions, and it is very common for them to exempt themselves from the enforcement of these laws and resolutions. Congressmen argue vehemently about Social Security and what should be done about it—but, are they under Social Security? Hell, no! Their personal retirement plan makes the rest of us look like a bunch of chumps. Saul is the same way—he places all of his soldiers under an oath, an oath which makes little or no difference to him.

**And Jonathan had not heard in an swearing of his father [to] the people and so put forth an end of his staff and so he dipped it into a honeycomb of the honey and so he [caused to] return his hand unto his mouth and so became light his eyes.**

1Samuel  
14:27

**However, Jonathan had not heard his father swearing the people [to an oath] so he stuck out the end of his staff and dipped it into the honeycomb of honey and brought his hand back to his mouth and his eyes shown.**

**However, Jonathan had not heard about the oath that his father placed the people under, so he stuck the end of his staff into the honeycomb and brought the honey back to his mouth, causing his eyes to shine (with delight).**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And Jonathan had not heard in an swearing of his father [to] the people and so put forth an end of his staff and so he dipped it into a honeycomb of the honey and so he [caused to] return his hand unto his mouth and so became light his eyes.

##### Septuagint

And Jonathan had not heard when his father adjured the people; and he reached forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and dipped it into the honeycomb, and returned his hand to his mouth, and his eyes recovered their sight.

Significant differences: Finally—no significant differences.

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

<sup>34</sup> Barnes' Notes; 1 Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 35.

- CEV** Jonathan did not know about Saul's warning to the soldiers. So he dipped the end of his walkingstick in the honey and ate some with his fingers. He felt stronger and more alert.
- NLT** But Jonathan had not heard his father's command, and he dipped a stick into a piece of honeycomb and ate the honey. After he had eaten it, he felt much better.

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

- God's Word™** Jonathan hadn't heard that his father forced the troops to take an oath. So he stretched out the tip of the staff he had in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb. When he put it to his mouth, his eyes lit up.
- JPS (Tanakh)** Jonathan, however, had not heard his father adjure the troops. So he put out the stick he had with him, dipped it into the beehive of honey, and brought his hand back to his mouth; and his eyes lit up.

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

- NASB** But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.
- Young's Updated LT** And Jonathan had not heard of his father's adjuring the people, and puts forth the end of the rod, which *is* in his hand, and dips it in the honeycomb, and brings back his hand to his mouth—and his eyes see!

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan never heard the oath of his father, as he was in the camp of the Philistines at that time, one of the sources of all the commotion in that camp. While pursuing Philistines who are on the run, having been joined by other Israelites, Jonathan sees a honeycomb dripping with honey and he sticks his staff into it and eats the honey on the end of his staff (I would presume that he uses his staff rather than to place his hand into the beehive).

1Samuel 14:27			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâma' (שָׁמָע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i> ]	<i>to listen, to hear, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033

## 1Samuel 14:27

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
shâ <sup>b</sup> va' (שָׁבַע) [pronounced shaw <sup>b</sup> -VAH]	<i>to swear, so seven oneself, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, and often to extract an oath (from someone else)</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
ʾâ <sup>b</sup> v (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>father, both as the head of a household or clan</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>to send, to send for, to send forth, to send away, to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
qâtseh (קָצֵה) [pronounced kaw-TSEH]	<i>end, extremity, outskirts</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7097 BDB #892
matteh (מַטֵּה) [pronounced maht-TEH]	<i>staff, branch, scepter, rod; branch; tribe</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4294 BDB #641
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388



## 1Samuel 14:27

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
ṭâbal (טבל) [pronounced taw <sup>b</sup> -VAHL]	<i>to dip, to moisten, to place partway into blood</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #2881 BDB #371
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular suffix)	Strong's #853 BDB #84
One would expect the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix, which would refer back to the <i>end of the staff</i> (both masculine nouns).			
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yaʿrâh (יערה) [pronounced yah-ġuh-RAW]	<i>honeycomb; forests</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3295 BDB #421
It appears as though this word is confounded with yaʿar (יער) [pronounced YAH-ġahr], which means <i>wood, forest, thicket</i> ; and possibly <i>honeycomb, beehive</i> . Strong's #3293 and #3264 (plural form) BDB #420.			
d <sup>eb</sup> vash (דבש) [pronounced d <sup>eh</sup> B <sup>h</sup> VAHSH]	<i>honey</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1706 BDB #185
wa or va (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûw <sup>b</sup> v (שוב) [pronounced shoo <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>to be caused to return, to bring, to be caused to turn back mentally, reminisce, to return something, to restore</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
yâd (יד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
ʿel (אל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
peh (פה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth, edge</i>	masculine singular noun (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
wa or va (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

## 1Samuel 14:27

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Owen forgot to mention this wâw consecutive (my work is based upon <i>Owen's Analytical Key to the Old Testament</i> ).			
ʾôwr (אוֹר) [pronounced <i>ohr</i> ]	<i>to be light, to become light</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #215 BDB #21
Although the MT reads with the active verb here, 3 early printed editions, the Aramaic, Syriac and Vulgate all have the verb in the passive— <i>were brightened, were lightened, were made light</i> . Actually, it is more complicated than that. According to Owen, what we find here is chârô <sup>o</sup> nâh but it should read (according to Owen and Keil and Delitzsch) chir <sup>o</sup> enâh, which means that the eyes became seeing, receiving their power of vision. Keil and Delitzsch mention something about an alternate spelling, with two letters transposed, but it was difficult, by the way they phrased it, to figure out where this transposed version was found. In any case, the verb found in v. 29 is certainly the verb we find in this verse.			
ʾayin (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ĠAH-yin</i> ]	<i>spring, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes, spring</i>	feminine dual noun	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

**Translation:** However, Jonathan had not heard his father swearing the people [to an oath] so he stuck out the end of his staff and dipped it into the honeycomb of honey and brought his hand back to his mouth and his eyes shown. We do not know how long all of this has gone on, but I would assume that Jonathan has gone for most of the day without eating, and has engaged in vigorous physical exercise, seeing that he and his armorbearer killed about 20 men to begin with and now are in pursuit of more Philistines (besides whatever additional Philistines they killed after the initial attack). That Jonathan and his troops are hungry is an understatement. Jonathan sees the honeycomb and dips his staff into it for a quick burst of energy. The reason that Jonathan used the staff could have been twofold: if there were bees anywhere near this honey, the staff would have given Jonathan some small distance from the bees; also, Jonathan may have been on the run, pursuing the Philistines, and this was something which he did quickly—he dipped his staff into the honey while on the run, and then ate the honey the same way.

And so says a man from the people and so to say, “A solemn swearing [or, curse] swore your father the people, to say, ‘Cursed the man who eats bread the day;’ ” and so faint the people.”

1Samuel  
14:28

Then said a soldier [lit., a man] from the people saying, “Your father swore the people to a solemn oath: ‘Cursed is the man who eats food today!’ ” Therefore, the people are faint.”

Then a soldier approached Jonathan, saying, “Your father swore the people to a solemn oath, which was, ‘Any man who eats food today is cursed!’ ” For this reason, the people are worn out and faint.”

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so says a man from the people and so to say, “A solemn swearing [or, curse] swore your father the people, to say, ‘Cursed the man who eats bread the day;’ ” and so faint the people.”

##### Septuagint

And one of the people answered and said, “Your father solemnly adjured the people, saying, ‘Cursed [is] the man who eats bread today.’ ” And the people were very faint,...

Significant differences: No significant differences.

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

CEV Then a soldier told him, "Your father swore that anyone who ate food today would be put under a curse, and we agreed not to eat. That's why we're so weak."

NLT But one of the men saw him and said, "Your father made the army take a strict oath that anyone who eats food today will be cursed. That is why everyone is weary and faint."

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

God's Word™ Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father forced the troops to take a solemn oath: "Cursed is anyone who eats food today." Now, the army was exhausted.

JPS (Tanakh) At this one of the soldiers spoke up, "Your father adjured the troops: "Cursed be the man who eats anything this day." And so the troops are faint."

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

NASB Then one of the people answered and said, "Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food today." " And the people were weary.

Young's Updated LT And a man of the people answers and says, "Your father certainly adjured the people, saying,"Cursed *is* the man who eats food today;" and the people are weary."

Before we get into this verse, you may wonder how everyone is aware of Saul's oath, since many of the men were deserters and just joined in after the Philistines went on the run. First of all, it is not clear that everyone did know of the oath; however, those with Jonathan had. First of all, how did these men get with Jonathan? Some of his troops came from the south, from being with Saul and the army (probably a few hundred); and others who had deserted either joined in the fray or joined with Jonathan from their places of hiding. Many of these soldiers from Saul's camp were aware of how lame Saul's oath was, and this information was relayed from person to person. "Did you hear about that way-lame oath that Saul put us all under? I can't believe this guy is running our country." Okay, no doubt they were much more diplomatic than that. It is even reasonable that various intermediate leaders informed those below them, who, in turn informed those below them. This is how information is generally disseminated in an army. Jonathan, being the absolute leader of his command would not be in that loop. In other words, no one is going to approach Jonathan and tell him that his father just made this lame oath, because that would be presumptuous. They may have reasonably assumed that Jonathan already knew or that someone had told Jonathan of this oath. He is Saul's son; certainly he knew of this oath. This is why most everyone knew of Saul's oath except for Jonathan. So, if the information was disseminated from the top down, which is what we would expect, Jonathan would have been outside that loop.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Since Jonathan was unaware of the oath made by his father, one of the soldiers told him. "Your father placed the people under an oath: 'Cursed is the man who eats food today.'" The soldier then adds, partially as an explanation, partly as a plea/complaint and partly as proof of this—"And the men are worn out and hungry." This is stated in such a way as to not be accusatory to Saul—that is, the soldier simply displays some tact.

## 1Samuel 14:28

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

## 1Samuel 14:28

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced ʿaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
shâ <sup>b</sup> vaʿ (שָׁבַע) [pronounced shaw <sup>b</sup> -VAH]	<i>to swear, so seven oneself, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, and often to extract an oath (from someone else)</i>	Hiphil infinitive absolute	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
shâ <sup>b</sup> vaʿ (שָׁבַע) [pronounced shaw <sup>b</sup> -VAH]	<i>to swear, so seven oneself, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, and often to extract an oath (from someone else)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
ʾâ <sup>b</sup> v (אָב) [pronounced aw <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>father, both as the head of a household or clan</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55

## 1Samuel 14:28

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾârar (אָרַר) [pronounced aw-RAHR]	<i>to bitterly curse</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #779 BDB #76
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37
lechem (לֶחֶם) [pronounced LEH-khem]	<i>bread</i> literally; reasonably translated <i>food</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3899 BDB #536
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day, today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾîyph (עָיַף) [pronounced geef]	<i>to become weary, to faint</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5888 BDB #746

Zodhiates lists this word as Strong's #5888; *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* lists this word as Strong's #5774, claiming that Strong's #5888 occurs only in Jer. 4:31 (and is in complete agreement with Gesenius with regards to these two words). BDB calls them the same word. Strong's #5888 is ʾîyph (עָיַף) [pronounced *geef*]; Strong's #5774 is ʾûwph (עוּף) [pronounced *gool*]. In the original Hebrew, when there were no vowel points, these two words could have sounded alike and it would have been an easy matter to confuse one with the other. There are several possibilities: (1) they could be the same word with two different meanings and Jer. 4:31 is simply an anomaly of the text; (2) they could be two different words such that Strong's #5774 has two different meanings and Strong's #5888 occurs but once in Scripture (this would be the view of *The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* and Gesenius); (3) these could be two different words with two separate meanings such that Strong's #5888 was occasionally miscopied and confounded with Strong's #5774 4–5 times (Judges 4:21 1Sam. 14:29, 31 2Sam. 21:15 22:11; Job 11:17 and Ezek. 32:10 is the exception passage). This seems to be BDB's take on this matter. That Strong's #5774 means *to fly* has ample evidence: 25 passages and one unquestionable cognate. Strong's #5888 has only one unquestionable reference in Scripture (BDB lists 5), but it possesses one unquestionable cognate. I am going to treat these as two separate words with two completely separate meanings and assume what we have here is Strong's #5888.

Now let me give you what I believe to be the correct explanation. The original word basically means *to flutter*; so it can take on several meanings: *to fly*, as wings flutter; and *to sleep*, as we have the REM of the eyelids. The closing of the eyelids brings on darkness (to the person who has them closed), allowing for a third meaning (which does exist). In other words, we begin with one word which branches out into three different meanings. An alternate spelling is developed for that word for one meaning, which shows up in Jer. 4:31 and for all instances of its similar word. Although it appeals to my mind to treat these as two separate words, it is most reasonable to assume that they arose from the same root.

ʾam (אָם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
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**Translation:** Then said a soldier [lit., a man] from the people saying, “Your father swore the people to a solemn oath: ‘Cursed is the man who eats food today!’ ” Therefore, the people are faint.” You may not realize how diplomatic this man is. Jonathan has just unknowingly placed himself under his father’s curse (We’ve already discussed why Jonathan does not know about this oath). This can’t be ignored and someone has to tell Jonathan. So a soldier steps forward and tells Jonathan about the curse that his father put upon anyone who ate that day. Saul obligated all of his soldiers to a pact where none of them would eat until their enemies, the Philistines, are destroyed. This soldier spares the editorializing. He does not say, “That was only the stupidest idea that I have ever heard of.” He also mentions another fact, carefully without giving his opinion. The people are weak from lack of nourishment. These men were first under great emotional strain; then there is this emotional release of the Philistines being mysteriously routed. It is their job to continue the fight; however, given all these factors, these men are worn out, tired, and ready to fall over in their boots. Obviously, there are many factors, the greatest of these is lack of food.

**And so says Jonathan, “Stirred up my father the land. See, please that have become lit my eyes that I tasted a little of the honey the this.**

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14:29

**So Jonathan remarked, “My father has disturbed the land. Please observe how my eyes lit up when I tasted a little of this honey.**

**This caused Jonathan to remark, “My father made a mistake here; you have seen how alert my eyes became when I tasted a little of this honey.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so says Jonathan, “Stirred up my father the land. See, please that have become lit my eyes that I tasted a little of the honey the this.

Septuagint

...and Jonathan knew it, and said, “My father has destroyed the land; see how my eyes have received sight [now] that I have tasted a little of this honey.

Significant differences:

There are some minor differences in the beginning, with reference to the verbs; however, the translation may be simply one of interpretation.

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

CEV

Jonathan said, “My father has caused you a lot of trouble. Look at me! I had only a little of this honey, but already I feel strong and alert.

NLT

“My father has made trouble for us all!” Jonathan exclaimed. “A command like that only hurts us. See how much better I feel now that I have eaten this little bit of honey.

TEV

Jonathan answered, “What a terrible thing my father has done to our people! See how much better I feel because I ate some honey!

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

God’s Word™

Jonathan answered, “My father has brought trouble to the country. See how my eyes lit up when I tasted a little of this honey?

JPS (Tanakh)

Jonathan answered, “My father has brought trouble on the people. See for yourselves how my eyes lit up when I tasted that bit of honey.

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

NASB

Then Jonathan said, “My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

Young’s Updated LT

And Jonathan says, “My father has troubled the land; see, I pray you, that my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan responds to what the soldier said, speaking much more freely, and with much less tact. He flat out says that his father Saul made a mistake: “My father disturbed the land.” Then, for those near him, he orders them to see how a little honey brightened his eyes. The eyes, being the window of the soul, indicates that he was invigorated by eating a little honey—in war, this is a good thing. It is possible that the reference to brightened eyes is a euphemism for renewed vigor. In either case, this was a good thing that Jonathan took a little honey. It strengthened and invigorated him, giving him a second burst of wind, making him more alert.

### 1Samuel 14:29

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
ʾakar (עָכַר) [pronounced <i>gaw-KAHR</i> ]	<i>to stir up, to disturb, to cause trouble</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5916 BDB #747
ʾâv (אָב, אֲבִי) [pronounced <i>aw<sup>AV</sup></i> ]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household or clan	masculine singular noun with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
ʾeth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʾerets (עֵרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun (with a definite article); pausal form	Strong's #776 BDB #75
râʾah (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
nâʾ (נָא) [pronounced <i>naw</i> ]	<i>please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
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
ʾôwr (אוֹר) [pronounced <i>ohr</i> ]	<i>to be light, to become light</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #215 BDB #21
ʾayin (עֵין) [pronounced <i>GAH-yin</i> ]	<i>spring, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes, spring</i>	feminine dual noun (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
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



## 1Samuel 14:29

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
m <sup>er</sup> aṭ (ט ע מ) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -GAHT]	<i>a little, fewness, few</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4592 BDB #589
d <sup>eb</sup> vash (ט ב ש) [pronounced d <sup>eb</sup> VAHSH]	<i>honey</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1706 BDB #185
zeh (ה ז) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

**Translation:** So Jonathan remarked, “My father has disturbed the land. Please observe how my eyes lit up when I tasted a little of this honey. Although the soldier who informed Jonathan about Saul’s oath was quite tactful, Jonathan did not have to be as tactful, Saul being his father. Today, Jonathan might have said, “My father’s oath is a bunch of horse\_\_\_!” Being the son, he could speak more freely.

The damage is already done. The gist of this passage is that Jonathan ate the honey and then was informed of the oath. When he states that Saul disturbed the land, this means that Saul’s oath did not help the state of Israel. For proof, he offers himself. He just ate some honey and the result was that he became invigorated and more alert, which testimony was in his eyes.

We have a remarkable parallel to an oath made by Joshua. The first city for Joshua to conquer was Jericho and this city was given over to God entirely, which meant it was to be burned completely to the ground with nothing saved. This was as per Joshua’s oath that he placed all of his soldiers under (see Joshua 6:26). The person who violated this oath was a man named Achan, who kept aside some silver and gold from Jericho. Joshua said to Achan that he *troubled* Israel that day (Joshua 7:25), and here Jonathan says that Saul has *troubled* the land. The same verb ,’âkar (ע כ ר) [pronounced gaw-KAHR], in the same morphology, is used in both passages. Achan troubled the land by breaking the oath and Saul troubled the land by making an oath. We will examine these parallels in greater detail in [v. 45](#).

**In fact that would that an eating had eaten the day the people from spoil of his enemies which they had found that now has not been great a slaughter in the Philistines.”**

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14:30

**In fact, if only the people had eaten freely today from the food [lit., *spoil*] of their enemies which they had found; for in this case, the slaughter of the Philistines has not been great.”**

**Furthermore, if only the people had taken freely of the abandoned food that they found today which had been left behind by their enemies—unfortunately, the slaughter of Philistines was not as great as it could have been.”**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

In fact that would that an eating had eaten the day the people from spoil of his enemies which they had found that now has not been great a slaughter in the Philistines.”

##### Peshitta

Moreover, because the people had not eaten today of the spoil of their enemies which they found, therefore there was not a greater slaughter of the Philistines.

Septuagint Surely if the people had this day eaten freely of the spoils of their enemies which they found, the slaughter among the Philistines would have been greater.”

Significant differences: There is a different personal pronoun (which the Latin, Greek and Syriac agree upon), and the second half of the verse sounds as though the LXX is attempting to convey the same idea.

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

CEV I wish you had eaten some of the food the Philistines left behind. We would have been able to kill a lot more of them.”

NLT If the men had been allowed to eat freely from the food they found among our enemies, think how many more we could have killed!”

TEV How much better it would have been today if our people had eaten the food they took when they defeated the enemy. Just think how many more Philistines they would have killed!”

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

God's Word™ If only the troops had eaten some of the enemies' food, which they found today. We would have killed more Philistines.”

JPS (Tanakh) If only the troops had eaten today of the spoil captured from the enemy, the defeat of the Philistines would have been greater still!”

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

NASB “How much more, if only the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great.”

Young's Updated LT How much more if the people had well eaten today of the spoil of its enemies which it has found, for now, the striking has not been great among the Philistines.”

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines broke camp quickly, falling into a war among themselves. Jonathan points out that, had the Israelites been allowed to grab some chow from the Philistines' deserted camp, the Israelites would have been able to kill more Philistines.

1Samuel 14:30			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾaph (אֲפ) [pronounced <i>ah</i> ]	<i>in fact, furthermore, also, yea, even, indeed</i>	conjunction	Strong's #637 BDB #64
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
Together, these two conjunctions mean <i>in fact, more than; but also; but even; much more; how much more</i> [when an affirmation precedes]; <i>how much less</i> [when a negation precedes]. <sup>35</sup>			
lû (לוּ) [also written lûʾ (לוֹ)] [pronounced <i>lue</i> ]	<i>O that, would that, if only, if</i>	conjunction	Strong's #3863 BDB #530

<sup>35</sup> H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 69.

## 1Samuel 14:30

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #398 BDB #37
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day, today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
shâlal (שָׁלַל) [pronounced shaw-LAWL]	<i>booty, spoil, plunder, recompense, reward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7998 BDB #1021
ʾâya <sup>b</sup> v (אֲיָבָיו) [pronounced aw-YA <sup>B</sup> V]	<i>my enemies, the ones being at enmity with you</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #340 BDB #33
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
mâtsâʾ (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced ʿaht-TAWH]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
Together, they mean <i>for in this case, for then; and after a protasis, surely then, indeed.</i>			
lôʾ (לֹא or לֹא־) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

## 1Samuel 14:30

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râbâh (רָבָה) [pronounced raw <sup>b</sup> -VAWH]	<i>to become much, to become many, to multiply, to increase in population and in whatever else</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7235 BDB #915
makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced mahk-KAW]	<i>a blow, a wounding, a wound, a slaughter, a beating, a scourging</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4347 BDB #646
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

I want you to notice the peculiar speech pattern here. Jonathan likes to use a lot of prepositions—particularly, the explanatory preposition *kîy*. Recall from the early portion of Samuel, one of the striking characteristics of the writing was the continued use of the *wâw* consecutive. It is interesting to note who wrote and who said what, and various characteristics like these are clues to indicate who wrote this chapter or that; and at what point did the style of writing change.

**Translation:** In fact, if only the people had eaten freely today from the food [lit., *spoil*] of their enemies which they had found; for in this case, the slaughter of the Philistines has not been great.” Jonathan, having noted the increased alertness of his own eyes from eating a little honey, adds that the Israelites would have been able to kill more Philistines had they taken a little nourishment as well.

I've mentioned how some people desire great authority. Saul's oath that no one would eat that day (or, until the Philistines had been completely routed) was something he just threw out there without much thought. He was in charge, he had not done anything, so he had to do something. A quick, holy-sounding remark was what he felt was needed to establish his pre-eminence once again. So, essentially without thinking, he binds his people to a lame oath, and as a result, there were a large number of Philistine soldiers who got away. Saul will continue to experience trouble with the Philistines in the many years ahead, and partially because of this one, bone-head remark.

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## The Famished Soldiers Eat Without Properly Acknowledging God

And so they strike down in the day the that in the Philistines from Michmash [to] Aijalon-ward; and so weary are the people very.

1Samuel  
14:31

So they struck down the Philistines in that day from Michmash to Aijalon; even so, the people were very worn out.

So they struck down the Philistines in that day, from Michmash to Aijalon despite the fact that the people were extremely exhausted and hungry.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so they strike down in the day the that in the Philistines from Michmash [to] Aijalon-ward; and so weary are the people very.
Septuagint	And on that day he struck some of the Philistines in Machmas; and the people were very weary.
Significant differences:	The LXX has the Jews striking down <i>some</i> of the Philistines, and indicates that they did this in Michmash. The MT indicates that the Jews struck down the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon (given their retreat, they would not have all been struck down in Michmash).

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

CEV	By evening the Israelite army was exhausted from killing Philistines all the way from Michmash to Aijalon.
NLT	But hungry as they were, they chased and killed the Philistines all day from Michmash to Aijalon, growing more and more faint.

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

God's Word™	That day they struck down the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, but the troops were thoroughly exhausted.
JPS (Tanakh)	They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmas to Aijalon, and the troops were famished.

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

NASB	And they struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very weary.
Young's Updated LT	And they strike on that day among the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people are very weary,...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Despite how tired the Israelite army was, they pursued and killed a great many of the Philistine army. However, they were totally exhausted. Clearly they won this battle and this war, but the victory could have been much more decisive and much more permanent had they been able to take some nourishment as they attacked the Philistines.

1Samuel 14:31			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâkâh (נָכָה) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>to strike, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645

## 1Samuel 14:31

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day, today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>h</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun), masculine plural with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Mik <sup>e</sup> mas (מִכְמָשׁ) [pronounced mik <sup>e</sup> -MAHS]	transliterated <i>Michmash</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4363 BDB #485
'ayyâlôwn (אֵי יֶלֶן) [pronounced ay-yaw-LOHN]	<i>deer-field</i> and is transliterated <i>Aijalon</i>	masculine proper noun (with a directional hê)	Strong's #357 BDB #19
wa or va (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'îyph (עִיֵּף) [pronounced geef]	<i>to become weary, to faint</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5888 BDB #746
'am (אָם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
m <sup>e</sup> ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -ODE]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547

**Translation:** So they struck down the Philistines in that day from Michmash to Aijalon; even so, the people were very worn out. In other words, an entire day was spent in battle, sunrise to sunset, without eating. The soldiers were famished.

The Philistines were originally encamped in Michmash (or on the outskirts of Michmash). Aijalon was originally assigned to the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:42, where we covered the city Aijalon in some detail); however, they failed to take this city as their own (Judges 1:35) and eventually abandoned that area for far northern territory (see Judges 18). To get an idea of where Aijalon was, Gibeon was almost evenly between Aijalon and the Jordan River. Aijalon was approximately 15–20 miles east of Michmash. The Philistines had apparently taken great chunks out of the territory formerly assigned to the tribe of



This rather busy map shows us the major cities of Benjamin and includes some portions of Dan and Judah. Aijalon and Michmash are both found in the map. We are looking at the northern tip of the Dead Sea. This is a small portion of <http://www.anova.org/sev/atlas/hm/038a.htm>

Dan, easing into that area from the southwest. This was the typical route of the Philistines to go between their territory and the Jews land. They simply advanced from Philistia north-northeast to the valley of Aijalon, through Aijalon, and then east to Michmash. To retreat, they would simply reverse this route. That fact that Israel chased the Philistines this far indicates that they could have once again taken back all their territory and probably eliminated the Philistine menace during the lifetime of Saul—however, because of Saul's stupid oath, this was not to be. Certainly you have been involved in some form of physical exertion and, after some point, you could do no more. I've done a lot of blue collar work, and as I get older, the length of time that I am able to spend on such projects decreases significantly. Without any nourishment, the Israelites could only pursue the Philistines so far until they ran out of gas. Essentially, they chased them about halfway back to Philistia proper.

We need to preface this next verse—had the people been allowed to grab a snack from the Philistine campsite, and then continue to pursue the Philistines, there would have been two results: (1) they would have pursued the Philistines further and killed far more of them; and (2) the Israelites would not have been so ravenous following the battle. Rather than having a leisurely victory celebration where God was honored and sacrifices were properly offered, the people were starved and began to eat if this were their last meal. You certainly have heard the old adage, “don't go grocery shopping hungry.” The Israelites were simply too hungry to honor God; which is pretty much the polar opposite of the idea behind an oath.

**And so dart upon [some versions of the MT read *prepare*] the people unto the spoil and so they take sheep and cattle and sons of cattle and so slaughter ground-ward and so the people eat upon the blood.**

1Samuel  
14:32

**Then the people flew upon the spoil and they took the sheep, cattle and calves and slaughtered [them] on the ground and the people ate [them] above the blood.**

**The people quickly returned and pounced upon the cattle, sheep and calves remaining at the Philistine campsite. They slaughtered these animals right there upon the ground and ate them standing over their drained blood.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

**Ancient texts:**



Masoretic Text	And so dart upon [some versions of the MT read <i>prepare</i> ] the people unto the spoil and so they take sheep and cattle and sons of cattle and so slaughter ground-ward and so the people eat upon the blood.
Septuagint	And the people turned to the spoil; and the people took flocks, and herds, and calves, and slew them on their ground, and the people ate with the blood.

Significant differences: The MT has words for groups of animals which is in the singular, and that is what we find here; the Greek uses similar words, but which are plural. Essentially, there is no difference between these verses.

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

CEV	They grabbed the food they had captured from the Philistines and started eating. They even killed sheep and cows and calves right on the ground and ate the meat without draining the blood.
NLT	That evening they flew upon the battle plunder and butchered the sheep, cattle, and calves, but they ate them without draining the blood.

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

God's Word™	So the troops seized the Philistines' belongings. They took sheep, cows, and calves, and butchered them on the ground. The troops ate the meat with blood still in it.
JPS (Tanakh)	The troops pounced on the spoil; they took the sheep and cows and calves and slaughtered them on the ground, and the troops ate with the blood.

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

NASB	And the people rushed [lit., <i>did with regard to the spoil</i> ] greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew <i>them</i> on the ground; and the people ate <i>them</i> with the blood.
NKJV	And the people rushed on the spoil [ <i>plunder</i> ], and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered <i>them</i> on the ground; and the people ate <i>them</i> with the blood.
Young's Updated LT	...and the people make unto the spoil, and take sheep, and oxen, and sons of the herd, and slaughter on the earth, and the people eat with the blood.

To understand the great hunger of the soldiers, we would do well to look at which Israelites fought. There would have been those who deserted Israel and stood with the Philistines. Given the attack of Jonathan and his armorbearer against the perimeter guard, we would guess that this attack began early in the morning, so that all those in camp had not even gotten up or eaten yet. This would apply to the Philistine soldiers and the Jewish traitors in the camp. Then we have the soldiers with Saul—it is possible that, by the time that they heard about the commotion in the Philistine camp, that they had had breakfast. Given Saul's oath, it is possible that their meal had been put off in order to determine what was going on in the Philistine camp, and then Saul makes this oath, so they might have been hungry at the outset of the battle. In any case, this is a smaller percentage of the Hebrew soldiers (600—recall that thousands deserted Saul). The hungriest would have been those soldiers who had recently deserted Saul and were hiding in caves, cellars, thick forests—they may have escaped with some provisions, but those provisions would have been long gone. Because of the situation, they kept a low profile. Going out and freely foraging for food was not an option. Therefore these soldiers, who are going to make up the bulk of the fighting force, are going to be pretty damned hungry even at the beginning of the battle.

As we have previously discussed, as the soldiers regroup and pursue the Philistines, their ranking comes into play and they are informed from the top down of Saul's oath. And, as we have seen, the only person who appears to have missed this oath was Jonathan, who, being in command, would not have had someone over him informing him of Saul's command.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The starving Israelite soldiers pushed the Philistines all the way to Aijalon, but their incredible hunger kept them from going further. Many of them had been in the Philistine camp and realized that the Philistines left behind lots of live food. They made a mad dash back to camp and began eating these animals. There is a point of confusion: were they so hungry that they ate the meat without draining the blood or did they drain the blood and eat the animals all in the same place? I believe the Hebrew words used suggest the latter scenario.

### 1Samuel 14:32a

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
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
This is read <i>to dart greedily upon</i> , but written <i>to prepare</i> (ʿâsâh as above). 3 early printed editions, the Aramaic, Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate all have <i>darted greedily upon</i> . <sup>36</sup> Apparently, the reading should be ʿîyṭ (עֵיט) [pronounced <i>geet</i> ], which means <i>to dart greedily (like a bird of prey), to swoop down, to fly upon, to flit upon, to pounce upon</i> . This same word is also found in 1Sam. 15:19 25:14, and <i>The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance</i> lists this passage as well. Strong's #5860 BDB #743.			
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
shâlal (שָׁלַל) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAWL</i> ]	<i>booty, spoil, plunder, recompense, reward</i>	masculine singular construct (with the definite article?)	Strong's #7998 BDB #1021
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
tsôn (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i> ]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced <i>baw-KAWR</i> ]	<i>ox, herd, cattle</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #1241 BDB #133
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>36</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 302.

## 1Samuel 14:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>sons, descendants</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
bâqâr (בקר) [pronounced <i>baw-KAWR</i> ]	<i>ox, herd, cattle</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #1241 BDB #133
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâchaṭ (שחט) [pronounced <i>shaw-KHAT</i> ]	<i>to slaughter [animals]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7819 and 7820 BDB #1006
ʿerets (ארץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun (with a directional hê)	Strong's #776 BDB #75
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâkal (אכל) [pronounced <i>aw-KAHL</i> ]	<i>to eat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37
ʿam (עם) [pronounced <i>ġahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʿal (על) [pronounced <i>ġahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Simply note here that ʿal is <i>not</i> the preposition for <i>with</i> .			
dâm (דם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i> ]	<i>blood, often visible blood</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1818 BDB #196

**Translation:** *Then the people rushed [lit., did, made] upon the spoil and they took the sheep, cattle and calves and slaughtered [them] on the ground and the people ate [them] above the blood.* This is an oddly constructed sentence. First of all, there were very common words whose meanings were ignored or modified by even the most literal of the translations. The NASB and the NKJV both had the people *rushing* upon the spoil (although the NASB does footnote the literal rendering). Only Young attempts a literal rendering here, and even he gets the final portion of the verse wrong.

Before we go there, let's examine some of the passages which various Bibles refer us to:

## Passages Relating to the Eating of Blood

Scripture	Literal Rendering	Comments
Gen. 9:4	"Every moving thing that [is] living for you is for food as green plants I have given to you all, except flesh in [or, <i>with</i> ] its life—its blood—you do not eat."	The preposition used with <i>its life, its blood</i> is the bēyth preposition, which means <i>in, into, with, at, by, against, among</i> . Strong's #none BDB #88.
Lev. 3:17	"It is a perpetual statute to your generations in all your dwellings: all fat and all blood you will not eat."	Here, blood is used as the object of the verb, which is negated.
Lev. 17:10	"And a man from the house of Israel and from the immigrants, the one temporarily living among them who eats all [or, <i>any</i> ] blood, and I have set my face against the soul, the one eating blood and I have cut him off from among his people."	<i>All blood</i> is the object of the verb <i>to eat</i> ; the sign of the direct object is used the second phrase <i>the one eating blood</i> .
Lev. 17:12	"Therefore I have said to the sons of Israel all souls from you will not eat blood and the immigrant the one temporarily staying among you will not eat blood."	Again, <i>blood</i> is the object of the verb <i>to eat</i> .
Lev. 19:26	"You will not eat over the blood; you will not practice augury and you will not practice witchcraft."	Now, this is the actual pertinent passage, which is generally mistranslated. God is not repeating Himself here. This is a different law than we find in Lev. 3:10–12 above. Note how the context is completely different. In this latter half of the chapter, the context is witchcraft, soothsaying, mediums, etc.
Deut. 12:16	"Only the blood you will not eat; upon the earth you will pour it as water."	Clearly, the animal is to be drained of blood prior to eating it.
Ezek. 33:25	Thus says Jehovah God, "You eat above [or, <i>over</i> ] the blood and you lift up your eyes to your idols and blood is shed, and you possess the land?"	Again, we have the same verbiage as found in our passage, and again, eating <i>over</i> or <i>above</i> the blood is stated in the same breath as idolatry.
Acts 15:19–20	"Therefore, it is my judgment that we do not trouble [with the Jewish law] those Gentiles who are turning to God but we will write them to abstain from things contaminated with idolatry, from sexual sins, from that which is strangled and from blood."	This passage in itself could require a great deal of interpretation. First of all, we see here more the general topics of discussion rather than the exact result of the discussion. Secondly, was this even valid? Certainly, this conclusion was made by James, but we cannot conclude that everything in Acts is done correctly. Luckily, this, because it is in the New Testament, is inapplicable to our passage.

Additional passages: Deut. 12:23–24 is a repeat of Lev. 17:10–12 and Deut. 12:16.

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Now, let's examine our verse and properly interpret it. At the end of this verse, the final preposition is 'al. 'al does not mean *with*; it means *upon, over, against, above, beside*. It is a position relational preposition. The indication is not that the people are eating animals while the blood is still in them; nor is there an indication that they are drinking a couple of glasses of blood—that is not being said at all. They were simply so hungry that they slaughtered the animals, and began to eat them standing right over the spot where the animals blood was. They haven't taken any time to do anything besides quickly slaughter, prepare and eat; and the preparation was obviously hurried as they are eating right above the blood of the animal. Let me give you a modern-day equivalent—have you ever eaten over the sink, rather than grab a plate and meander on over to your dining room table? Have you ever stood in front of an open refrigerator and grabbed a handful of this or that and ate it with the refrigerator door still open? That's what they are doing, and it is a matter of grievous hunger. They are ravenous and simply are standing right over the ground where they slaughtered the animal which they are eating.

Now, in the two passages named, eating *over* the blood is mentioned in conjunction with idolatry and witchcraft. In our passage, there does not appear to be any of those things occurring. What we have are extremely hungry soldiers eating as quickly as they could, without a thought or thanks to God. In a way, this is a form of idolatry, as the blood of an animal is always presented as a sacred thing, as the life of the animal is in the blood (see Lev. 17:10–12). The blood of the animal is representative of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for us. Therefore, the blood is always treated with great reverence; and military victories often are then associated with God's grace and provision. Therefore, what we should expect is a ceremony, not unlike that found in 1Sam. 14, which recognizes God's provision and that the victory was dependent upon God. However, what we have instead are men who eat their food like dogs, without thanks, without any religious preparation. This is not the fault of the soldiers—the ultimate fault lies with Saul and his stupid vow, which resulted in the ravenous hunger of his soldiers.

And so they told to Saul to say, "Behold, the people are sinning to Y<sup>e</sup>howah to eat over the blood." And so he said, "You have behaved deceitfully [or, *faithlessly*]. Roll unto me the day a stone great.

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So they informed Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning with reference to Y<sup>e</sup>howah by eating above the blood." Then he answered, "You have behaved faithlessly. Roll over to me a great stone today.

So they informed Saul about this, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against Jehovah by eating right over the blood!" So Saul responded, speaking to those eating over the blood, "You have acted without faith. Now, roll a large stone over towards me.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so they told to Saul to say, "Behold, the people are sinning to Y <sup>e</sup> howah to eat over the blood." And so he said, "You have behaved deceitfully [or, <i>faithlessly</i> ]. Roll unto me the day a stone great.
Septuagint	And it was reported to Saul, saying, "The people have sinned against the Lord, eating with the blood; and Saul said, "Out of Getthaim roll a great stone to me here."
Significant differences:	The LXX apparently transliterated instead of translated. The Latin and the Syriac both translate that particular phrase <i>you have transgressed</i> .

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

CEV	Someone told Saul, "Look! The army is disobeying the LORD by eating meat before the blood drains out." "You're right," Saul answered. "They are being unfaithful to the LORD! Hurry! Roll a big rock over here."
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NLT Someone reported to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that still has blood in it." "That is very wrong," Saul said. "Find a large stone and roll it over here."

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

God's Word™ Some [soldiers] told Saul, "The troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with blood in it." Saul replied, "You have been unfaithful. Roll a large rock over to me now."

JPS (Tanakh) When it was reported to Saul that the troops were sinning against the LORD, eating with the blood he said, "You have acted faithlessly. Roll a large stone over to me today."

NIV Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it." "You have broken faith," he said, "Roll a large stone over here at once."

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

NASB Then they told Saul, saying, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today."

NKJV Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!" So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day."

NRSV Then it was reported to Saul, "Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone before me here." [Greek: *me here*; Hebrew: *me this day*]

Young's Updated LT And they declare to Saul, saying, "Lo, the people are sinning against Jehovah, to eat with the blood." And he says, "You have dealt treacherously; roll to me today a great stone."

**What is the gist of this verse?** During the time of Saul, there is not a great understanding of doctrine. The people have always associated the blood of the animals with God, so when they see the soldiers standing over the blood of the animal eating it, they become concerned and report this to Saul, who also is no theological genius (see 1Sam. 13:8–13).

1Samuel 14:33a			
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
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

## 1Samuel 14:33a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ'ûl (שׂאול) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾamar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הנה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʿam (עם) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
châṭâʾ (חטא) [pronounced khaw-TAW]	<i>to sin, to miss, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err; to do wrong, to commit a transgression</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #2398 BDB #306
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾâkal (אכל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #398 BDB #37
ʿal (על) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
dâm (דם) [pronounced dawm]	<i>blood, often visible blood</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1818 BDB #196

**Translation:** So they informed Saul, saying, “Look, the people are sinning with reference to Y<sup>e</sup>howah by eating above the blood.” I am not convinced that there was any problem with the people eating meat and blood. Again, the preposition used generally has to do with standing over something or being above something. There was certainly a connection between the blood of the animals and God, although it was not clear to Israel what this was (the blood was used in many of their ceremonies). My thinking, again, is that these men are standing in the pool of blood of the animal that they are eating—or, they are eating right where they slaughtered the animals. That is, they did not take the animals to one side of the field and slaughter and drain them; and then move to another side of the field to eat them. Realize that this is not 100 guys having a bbq; this is a gathering of 1000's of soldiers who are too hungry to clean the animals at point A and then move to point B to cook and eat them. This would also



indicate that there was no ceremony thanking God by sacrificing to Him—and, as we have seen, God oversaw the entire battle, delivering the Israelites.

### 1Samuel 14:33b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
bâgad (בָּגַד) [pronounced <i>baw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to behave deceitfully, to act covertly, to act fraudulently, to act in bad faith, to behave faithlessly; to oppress</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #898 BDB #93
gâlal (גָּלַל) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAHL</i> ]	<i>to roll, to roll away</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1556 BDB #164
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day, today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
The Septuagint reads <i>here</i> rather than <i>today</i> .			
ʾeben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH<sup>B</sup>-ven</i> ]	<i>stone</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #68 BDB #6
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i> ]	<i>great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, mighty, vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

**Translation:** Then he answered, “You have behaved faithlessly. Roll over to me a great stone today. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural of the verb *to behave faithlessly* is somewhat problematic. Is Saul speaking to the people who reported this to him? In this case, they would have been soldiers and he speaks to them as a group, saying “You have behaved faithlessly” to those who reported this information to him; and this small group of men stand for all the soldiers of Israel. Or, the other possibility is that he has gone out into the field where the soldiers are eating (the soldiers would be scattered quite a bit), along with those who brought him the report, he gets the attention of the soldiers, and then he starts speaking to them, telling them that they behaved faithlessly.

You must recognize that Saul is somewhat schizophrenic (or, bipolar). One moment he is like this, and another, he is like that. Prior to this battle, Saul, although brave, was confused, and possibly even resigned to die. When he observed the Philistine camp, he had no idea what to do, so he makes this goofy binding oath. However, now that the pressure is off, he is thinking clearly once again. He observes the people in the field (which were reported to him), and he knows that this is wrong behavior. As was mentioned, idolatry, per se, is not the issue, but the actions of these men show a complete lack of doctrine (faith). God has just miraculously allowed Israel to dispel the Philistines from their borders, and now the soldiers are behaving like animals, slaughtering and killing their food, standing in the blood, and making no offering to God and giving no thought to God. Given that this probably applies

to those who deserted Saul in the first place, we would not expect them to act appropriately, as they behaved faithlessly when they deserted Saul. Therefore, even when no longer under pressure, they continue to behave faithlessly. Again, this is certainly in part attributable to Saul and his oath.

Do you recall the book of Judges where it seemed as though very few people ever did 3 or 4 right things in a row? In fact, there were chapters when it appeared as though no one acted with Godly faith. Here Saul screwed up and his troops screwed up. Regardless, God delivered Israel. That is grace. Now, at this point, Saul seems to begin to act as a man of faith, and he clearly recognizes that his troops are acting without faith. However, the key is more that these soldiers had not given proper recognition to God.

And so says Saul, “Scatter [yourselves] in the people and you have said to them, ‘Bring unto me a man his ox and a man his sheep and you have slaughtered [them] in this and you have eaten and you do not sin to Y<sup>e</sup>howah to eat unto the blood.’ ” And so they brought all of the people a man his ox in his hand the night and so they slaughtered [them] there.

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Then Saul said, “Scatter [yourselves] among the people and you will say to them, ‘Bring to me each one his ox and each one his sheep and you will slaughter [them] here [lit., *in this*] and you will not sin with respect to Y<sup>e</sup>howah by eating regarding the blood.’ ” So all of the people brought each one that which [was] [or, *his ox*] in his hand that night and slaughtered [them] there.

Then Saul ordered his staff, “Scatter yourselves among the people and say to them, ‘Each one of you will bring me his ox or his sheep and you will slaughter them at the rock and therefore, you will not trespass Jehovah’s commandments by eating regarding the blood.’ ” Therefore, each person people brought whatever animal they owned and slaughtered it there at the rock.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so says Saul, “Scatter [yourselves] in the people and you have said to them, “Bring unto me a man his ox and a man his sheep and you have slaughtered [them] in this and you have eaten and you do not sin to Y<sup>e</sup>howah to eat unto the blood.” ” And so they brought all of the people a man his ox in his hand the night and so they slaughtered [them] there.

##### Septuagint

And Saul said, “Disperse yourselves among the people, and tell them to bring here every one his calf, and every one his sheep; and let them slay it on this *stone* and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood.” And the people brought each one that which was in his hand, and they slaughtered [them] there.

##### Significant differences:

No significant differences.

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

##### CEV

Then tell everyone in camp to bring their cattle and lambs to me. They can kill the animals on this rock, then eat the meat. That way no one will disobey the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it.” That night the soldiers brought their cattle over to the big rock and killed them there.

##### NLT

Then go out among the troops and tell them, “Bring the cattle and sheep here to kill them and drain the blood. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it.” So that night all the troops brought their animals and slaughtered them there.

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

## God's Word™

Then Saul said, "Spread out through the troops, and tell them, "Each of you, bring me your ox or your sheep, and butcher it here, and eat. But don't sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood in it." " So each of the soldiers brought his ox with him that night and butchered it there.

## JPS (Tanakh)

And Saul ordered, "Spread out among the troops and tell them that everyone must bring me his ox or his sheep and slaughter it here, and then eat. You must not sin against the LORD and eat with the blood." Every one of the troops brought his own ox with him [Septuagint: *whatever he had in his possession*] that night and slaughtered it there.

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

## The Emphasized Bible

And Saul said— Disperse yourselves among the people and say unto them— Bring near unto me every man his ox and every man his lamb and slay them here and then eat, so shall ye not sin against Yahweh by eating with the blood. And all the people brought near—every man that which was in his hand, that night, and they slew them there.

## NASB

And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, "Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter *it* here and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood." So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him [lit. *in his hand*], and slaughtered *it* there.

## Young's Updated LT

And Saul says, "Be scattered among the people, and you have said to them, "Bring near to me each his ox, and each his sheep; and you have slain *them* in this place, and eaten, and you do not sin against Jehovah to eat with the blood." " And all the people bring near each his ox, in his hand, that night, and slaughter *them* there.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul has gone out to the soldiers and has already spoken directly to them in the previous verse. Then he turns to his personal staff (including those who brought him the news about the soldiers eating over the blood), and he tells them what they will do. These men are to disperse themselves throughout the crowd of soldiers and bring them a direct order from Saul. That order will be for each man to get a sheep or an ox and report directly to Saul. The ox or sheep will be slaughtered before Saul (and he will have set up an altar by then), and in eating this animal, they will not be sinning against God. Although there is no time frame given here, the men obviously had just completed a great meal; so, very likely, for their evening meal, the soldiers brought an ox to Saul and his altar (the huge rock), and properly offered these animals to God.

## 1Samuel 14:34a

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>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâʾûl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
pûwts (פּוּצַ) [pronounced <i>poots</i> ]	<i>to be dispersed, scattered</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #6327 BDB #806

## 1Samuel 14:34a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿam (עם) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾamar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâgash (נגש) [pronounced naw-GASH]	<i>bring near, to bring hither</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
ʿel (אל) [pronounced el]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾiysh (יש) [pronounced eesh]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced shohr]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7794 BDB #1004
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾiysh (יש) [pronounced eesh]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35
seh (שֶׁ) [pronounced seh]	<i>one of a flock, a sheep, a goat</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7716 BDB #961
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâchaṭ (שַׁחַט) [pronounced shaw-KHAT]	<i>to slaughter [animals]</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7819 and 7820 BDB #1006

## 1Samuel 14:34a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #398 BDB #37
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lôʾ (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
châṭâʾ (חָטָא) [pronounced khaw-TAW]	<i>to sin, to miss, to miss the mark, to violate the law, to err; to do wrong, to commit a transgression</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2398 BDB #306
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾâkal (אָכַל) [pronounced aw-KAHL]	<i>to eat</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #398 BDB #37
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
You will note that this is a change of preposition. Instead of saying ʾal, Saul says ʾel. These words sound similar, but they have different meanings.			
dâm (דָּם) [pronounced dawm]	<i>blood, often visible blood</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1818 BDB #196

**Translation:** Then Saul said, “Scatter [yourselves] among the people and you will say to them, ‘Bring to me each one his ox and each one his sheep and you will slaughter [them] here [lit., *in this*] and you will not sin with respect to Y<sup>e</sup>howah by eating regarding the blood.’ ” The exact scenario is difficult to determine based on these verses alone. It appears as though Saul is speaking to the troops in the previous verse, and to his personal staff in this verse. The stories of the people’s sin had been brought to Saul’s attention. So Saul appears to go directly out to the soldiers and to tell them that they have sinned (“**You [all] have acted faithlessly today**”). It is possible that he said this to the soldiers who told him of the sin of his troops (the idea being that they stood for all the soldiers in the field who were behaving faithlessly). This latter scenario seems to make the most sense, as then he apparently turns to his staff and tells them to go out among the people, and for his staff to speak to them individually. The order will be for the people to bring a sheep or ox to Saul, where the animal will be properly slaughtered, offered to God, and then eaten.

Now, I mentioned the change of preposition in Saul’s order. What does this mean? It means that Saul does not know exactly what has been violated here. He is not a theological expert and, generally when he tried anything, Samuel would poo-poo it. So, here, he thinks there has been a transgression, but he simply states that this is a transgression *regarding* the blood. This is actually very accurate, and you would have missed it in your translation. The Israelites were not to eat animals with the blood still in them nor were they to eat above the blood, which is apparently related to witchcraft and sorcery. Here, the people simply slaughtered and cooked the animals and ate right there where the animals were bled, which appears to be a violation, although it does not clearly match Scriptures with the same preposition, given their context; therefore, the preposition *with reference to* is apropos. What is clear, in any case, is that no deference has been shown towards God, Who delivered them.

### 1Samuel 14:34b

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
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>bring near, to bring hither</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong’s #5066 BDB #620
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kaw</i> ],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong’s #3605 BDB #481
‘am (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong’s #5971 BDB #766
‘îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong’s #376 BDB #35
shôwr (שׁוֹר) [pronounced <i>shohr</i> ]	<i>an ox, a bull, a head of cattle</i>	masculine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #7794 BDB #1004
The Septuagint does not repeat the word <i>ox</i> , but apparently has the equivalent of the Hebrew relative pronoun ‘ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]. The two Hebrew words are similar sounding and similar in spelling.			
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong’s #none BDB #88

## 1Samuel 14:34b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	hand	feminine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
laylâh (לַיְלָה) [pronounced LAY-law]	night; nightly, at night, in the night, during the night	masculine singular noun with the definite article; this word can take on adverbial qualities	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâchaṭ (שַׁחַט) [pronounced shaw-KHAT]	to slaughter [animals]	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7819 and 7820 BDB #1006
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	there, thither, whither	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

**Translation:** So all of the people brought each one his ox in his hand that night and slaughtered [them] there. Saul had gotten some of his army to roll over a large rock, which acted as the altar, and then the animals which were brought to him to slaughtered there, properly offered, and then eaten.

To be honest, I have had some problems with the altar in general, but there appears to be two legitimate types of altars in the Old Testament: the bronze altar (the *Brazen altar*) which was just outside the Tent of God; and then there would be altars made spur of the moment, which consisted of stacked stones or a large stone, with no human construction associated with it. There was only one bronze altar allowed; however, there did not seem to be a limit on the spur of the moment altars which various saints made.<sup>37</sup>

**And so builds Saul an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah [to] Him [him?]; he had begun to build an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah.**

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14:35

**So Saul built an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah; with it [this altar], he began to build altars to Y<sup>e</sup>howah.**

**So Saul built this altar to Jehovah. In fact, along with this one, he began to build other altars to Jehovah.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate  
Masoretic Text

And Saul built an altar to the Lord: and he then first began to build an altar to the Lord. And so builds Saul an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah [to] Him [him?]; he had begun to build an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah.

Septuagint

And Saul built an altar there to the Lord; this was the first altar that Saul built to the Lord.

Significant differences:

The LXX emphasizes that this is the first altar which Saul builds to God (which is what we find in the Syriac and, more or less, in the Latin). That appears to be the gist of the Hebrew, although it is not stated exactly in that way.

<sup>37</sup> And I am not trying to get Saul off the hook here. Several great believers did the same thing.



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

CEV It was the first altar Saul had built for offering sacrifices to the LORD.  
 NLT And Saul built an altar to the LORD, the first one he had ever built.

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

God's Word™ Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had built an altar to the LORD.  
 JPS (Tanakh) Thus Saul set up an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar he erected to the LORD.

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

NASB And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.  
 Young's Updated LT And Saul builds an altar to Jehovah with it he has begun to build altars to Jehovah.

Now, you should right away notice a difference between Young's rendering and the other translations. This generally means one of two things: (1) Young is right and everyone else is wrong; or, (2) there is a difficulty with rendering the verse; Young attempted to be literal yet readable; and the other translations took the easy way out, attempting to be readable, but not necessarily dead-solid accurate.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The clear understanding of this verse is that Saul built this particular altar at this time to Jehovah. It is also clear that he began to build other altars to Jehovah as well. What appears to be the case is that the confusing direct object notation/preposition simply indicates that, along with this first altar, Saul began to build others. This explains Young's rendering of this verse.

**1Samuel 14:35**

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
bânâh (בָּנָה) [pronounced baw-NAWH]	<i>to build, to rebuild, to restore</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1129 BDB #124
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
miz <sup>e</sup> bêach (מִזְבֵּחַ) [pronounced miz-BAY-ahkh]	<i>altar</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4196 BDB #258
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

## 1Samuel 14:35

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
`êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
If you will notice, most of the translation flows except for this simple, generally untranslated particle. `êth can also be a preposition, which does not necessarily make this an easier translation, but simply offers another possible rendering.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
bânâh (בָּנָה) [pronounced <i>baw-NAWH</i> ]	<i>to build, to rebuild, to restore</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1129 BDB #124
miz <sup>e</sup> bêach (מִזְבֵּחַ) [pronounced <i>miz-BAY-ahkh</i> ]	<i>altar</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4196 BDB #258
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine plural suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** So Saul built an altar to Y<sup>e</sup>howah; with it [*this altar*], he began to build altars to Y<sup>e</sup>howah. This is the first of many altars that Saul would build to Jehovah.

As was mentioned before, there were several altars built to God apart from the Brazen Altar of Ex. 38:1–7. This was to be the only altar of this nature built to God, as a civil war almost broke out over the eastern tribes building a non-functioning altar of their own (see Joshua 22:19–29).

### Other Altars in Scripture

Saint (s)	Scripture	General Information About the Altar and Circumstances
Israel under Joshua	Deut. 27:4–7 Joshua 8:30–31	When Israel crossed over the Jordan, they were to set up uncut stones at Mount Ebal and offer sacrifices. This was to offer thanks to God for giving them the land.
The eastern tribes of Israel	Joshua 22:10–34	Those tribes east of the Jordan River erected a large altar, not to use, but to look upon, near the former city of Jericho. They would be able to see this altar from the eastern side of the Jordan River.

Other Altars in Scripture		
Saint (s)	Scripture	General Information About the Altar and Circumstances
Gideon	Judges 6:24–27	It is unclear in this passage whether Gideon built one or two altars. It appears as though he built one altar in v. 24, and then, having torn down the adulterous altars of his father, built another in their place, offering an animal sacrifice on the new altar.
Manoah and his wife	Judges 13:16, 19–20	Manoah's wife was barren; the Angel of Jehovah (Jesus Christ) came to him and told them what to do when a son was born to Manoah's wife. Then they offered a sacrifice on a rock altar to God.
Eleven tribes of Israel	Judges 21:4	When eleven of the tribes of Israel realized that they had almost wiped out the tribe of Benjamin, they mourned and offered sacrifices to God.
Samuel	1Sam. 7:17	Although Samuel had a circuit of three cities in which he judged Israel, in his own hometown, Ramah, he built an altar to God.
Saul	1Sam. 14:35	When Israel defeated the Philistines, despite unseemly odds, the soldiers began to eat without any sort of acknowledgment of God. Saul built an altar and had the soldiers bring a sheep or an ox to sacrifice.
David	2Sam. 24:18–25 1Chron. 21:18–29	One of David's great sins was numbering the people (his motivation is the key to why this was a sin). He was told to erect an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. The Brazen Altar was up in the high places of Gibeon at that time.

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## When God Does Not Answer Saul, Saul Determines to Find Who Broke the Oath

And so says Saul, "Let us go down after Philistines [by] night and let us pillage in them as far as light of the morning and we will not leave in them a man." And so they say, "All the good in your eyes do." And so says the priest, "Let us draw near here unto the God."

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14:36

Then Saul said, "Let's go down after the Philistines by night and let us pillage them until the morning light and we will not leave to them a man." And they responded, "Do all that is right in your eyes." And the priest suggested, "Let us draw near to God here."

Then Saul said, "Let's go down after the Philistines this very night and we will pillage them until morning and not leave one man alive." His staff responded, "Do whatever you believe to be right." But the priest suggested, "Let us first draw near to God."

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

And so says Saul, "Let us go down after Philistines [by] night and let us pillage in them as far as light of the morning and we will not leave in them a man." And so they say, "All the good in your eyes do." And so says the priest, "Let us draw near here unto the God."

#### Septuagint

And Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines this night, and let us plunder among them till the day break, and let us not leave a man among them." And they

said, “Do all that is good in our sight.” And the Priest said, “Let us draw near here to God.”

Significant differences: None.

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

CEV	Saul said, “Let’s attack the Philistines again while it’s still dark. We can fight them all night. Let’s kill them and take everything they own!” The people answered, “We will do whatever you want.” “Wait!” Ahijah the priest said. “Let’s ask God what we should do.”
NLT	Then Saul said, “Let’s chase the Philistines all night and destroy every last one of them.” His men replied, “We’ll do whatever you think is best.” But the priest said, “Let’s ask God first.”
TEV	Saul said to his men, “Let’s go down and attack the Philistines in the night, plunder them until dawn, and kill them all.” “Do whatever you think best,” they answered. But the priest said, “Let’s consult God first.”

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

God’s Word™	Saul said [to his men], “Let’s attack the Philistines tonight and take their possessions until the light of dawn. And let’s not leave any of them [alive].” “Do whatever you think is best,” They responded. But the priest said, “let’s consult God first.”
JPS (Tanakh)	Saul said, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder among them until the light of morning; and let us not leave a single survivor among them.” “Do whatever you please,” they replied. But the priest said, “Let us approach God here.”

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

NASB	Then Saul said, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them.” And they said, “Do whatever seems good to you [lit., <i>in your eyes</i> ].” So the priest said, “Let us draw near to God here.”
Young’s Updated LT	And Saul says, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and we prey upon them till the light of the morning, and leave not a man of them.” And they say, “All that is good in your eyes do.” And the priest says, “Let us draw near here to God.”

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Philistines have been pushed back to Aijalon and Saul and his troops are rested and satiated, probably back in the area of Geba and Gibeon. The Israelites have offered sacrifices to God. Now Saul wants to go back to Aijalon and destroy all of the Philistines. The people of Israel go along with his idea, although it does not appear as though they do it with enthusiasm (“Do all that is good in your eyes”). The on-call priest (vv. 3, 18–19), who was called over some time ago to gain guidance from God, grabs Saul and says, “Let’s ask God what we should do first.” Saul apparently agrees to that.

### 1Samuel 14:36a

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
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55

## 1Samuel 14:36a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ'ûl (שׂאול) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect, voluntative hê	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
Although Owen indicates that this is a directional hê, that is generally reserved for nouns. When a 1 <sup>st</sup> person verb has the additional hê at the end, it is called a voluntative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let</i> .			
ʾachar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Pʿlishîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced pʿ-lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
laylâh (לַיְלָה) [pronounced LAY-law]	<i>night; nightly, at night, in the night, during the night</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article; this word can take on adverbial qualities	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bâzaz (בָּזַז) [pronounced baw-ZAHZ]	<i>to pillage, to spoil, to plunder, to despoil, to depredate, to freeboot, to ransack</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect, voluntative hê	Strong's #962 BDB #102
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced ʿahd]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʾôwr (אוֹר) [pronounced ohr]	<i>light</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #216 BDB #21
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced BOH-ker]	<i>morning</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1242 BDB #133
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lôʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

## 1Samuel 14:36a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâ`ar (שָׂאֵר) [pronounced shaw-AHR]	in the Hiphil, <i>to let remain, to leave over, to leave behind</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, apocopated, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7604 BDB #983
b <sup>e</sup> (בֵּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
`iysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** Then Saul said, “Let’s go down after the Philistines by night and let us pillage them until the morning light and we will not leave to them a man.” Now Saul is jazzed. The Philistines are on the run; the Israeli soldiers have brought the animals to the altar that he made and sacrificed them. Saul wants to capitalize on this victory. Given the continued animosity between the Philistines and the Jews, this is a rational approach on Saul’s part.

## 1Samuel 14:36b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
`amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced kaw],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
tôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced toe <sup>b</sup> ]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive with the definite article	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
b <sup>e</sup> (בֵּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
`ayin (עַיִן) [pronounced ĠAH-yin]	<i>spring, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes, spring</i>	feminine dual noun	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
`âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

**Translation:** *And they responded, “Do all that is right in your eyes.”* Again, we have a very tactful response. The soldiers (or his staff) do not respond, “We will do this.” Saul is told, “You [singular] do what is right, in your opinion.” It is not an insult; however, it is not an unqualified endorsement of his idea.

### 1Samuel 14:36c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced <i>koh-HANE</i> ]	<i>priest</i>	masculine singular noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
qâra <sup>b</sup> v (קָרַב) [pronounced <i>kaw-RA<sup>B</sup>V</i> ]	<i>to come near, to approach, to draw near</i> in the Qal stem	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect (with a voluntative hê)	Strong #7126 BDB #897
hălôm (הֵלֵם) [pronounced <i>huh-LOHM</i> ]	<i>here, hither, to or towards [a place], near</i>	adverb	Strong's #1988 BDB #240
ʾel (אֵל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohîm</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** *And the priest suggested, “Let us draw near to God here.”* My guess is that it is possible that the priest Ahijah recognizes that Saul is not the leader he pretends to be, and before they do anything else which is half-assed and/or outside the will of God, the priest suggests that they first look into that.

Now, I have made a few references to Ahijah as being the High Priest, so I guess that I need to straighten this out. Israel appears to be separated from the Tent of God. The Tent and the furniture of God have not been mentioned in some time. As you may recall, we have dealt with the probability that Shiloh, the city of the Tent of God, has been razed, but the Tent and the furniture have been saved. However, it does not appear as though we have a functioning Tent of God as we did in the past. Ahijah is in the correct line to be considered the High Priest, but he is not so named in this chapter (nor is he so designated in 1Sam. 22:9, 11, 20). The fact that he has access to the Ephod of God is the only thing which would indicate that he is the High Priest, or that he has the equivalent rank. My thinking is, because there is no functioning Tabernacle of God and because Samuel is still alive, this man has not taken it upon himself to be the High Priest. Essentially, he is the acting High Priest.

At this point in his life, Samuel is still alive, and Samuel, although not genetically related to Eli, assumed his office and responsibilities. Samuel is not called the High Priest and, after time had passed, was no longer associated with the Tent of God (see 1Sam. 7:15–17). Samuel functioned as a priest, prophet and judge, a man raised as a son of Eli, the High Priest, but not actually related to Eli. What appears to be the case is that the Tent of God became inoperative for a time, so that the office of High Priest was moot. While Samuel was alive, it did not seem right to have a High Priest. However, even after his death, if the Tent was not functioning, then there does not appear to be a need for a High Priest. However, this priest, Ahijah, did wear the ephod and did communicate with God via the Ephod, which was a function of the High Priest. Now, you may think, *this sounds pretty screwed up—I*



can't figure out who is the High Priest. Here is the short explanation: Samuel is a shadow of Jesus Christ to come, as priest, prophet and judge. When Jesus had come in his first incarnation, there was a High Priest, although God did not recognize him as the High Priest, because Jesus was the true High Priest, who function outside of the Tent (or, at that time, Temple) of God, which also spoke of the true High Priest to come. So, what we have here is a shadow parallel to the incarnation of our Lord. Samuel is raised by Eli but not related to Eli, and he assumes Eli's priesthood and responsibilities. So our Lord is in the line of David, but He is unrelated to David in His Divinity. He coexisted with probably two High Priests whose authority was generally accepted by the people, but clearly their authority was below the authority of our Lord's. So this is what we have here. Now, even though Ahijah wears the Ephod and seems to be genuinely in contact with God (we will discuss this as well), it would seem blasphemous to call him the High Priest while Samuel is alive.<sup>38</sup>

Next on the list is the leadership dynamic of Ahijah and Saul. Note, that when Saul gave the order to pursue the Philistines, the generally response was, *you're the king, so whatever you want to do...* However, Ahijah stops Saul in his tracks and says, **"Let us draw near to God here."** In other words, "We are not going to traipse after the Philistines until we know what God's will is." Ahijah very tactfully stood up to Saul, recognizing that (1) Saul has already passed on knowing God's will (v. 19) when it is clear that (2) Saul cannot make a good decision on his own while under pressure (v. 24).

Barnes writes: *Ahijah, with equal courage and faithfulness, worth of his office as "the priest," when every one else yielded to Saul's humour, proposed that they should draw near to God to enquire of Him.*<sup>39</sup> This is rather gutsy.

**And so asks Saul in God, "Should I go down after Philistines? Will You give them in a hand of Israel?" And He did not answer him in the day the that.**

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**So Saul asked God, "Should I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him in that day.**

**So Saul asked of God, "Should I go after the Philistines? Will You give Israel victory over them?" But God did not answer Saul that day.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text      And so asks Saul in God, "Should I go down after Philistines? Will You give them in a hand of Israel?" And He did not answer him in the day the that.

Septuagint      And Saul inquired of God, "If I go down after the Philistines, will You deliver them into the hands of Israel?" And He answered him not in that day.

Significant differences:      None.

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

CEV      Saul asked God, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you help us win?" This time God did not answer.

*The Message*      So Saul prayed to God, "Shall I go after the Philistines? Will you put them in Israel's hand?" God didn't answer him on that occasion.

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

<sup>38</sup> As a footnote, I should mentioned that there are nearly 10 other men in Scripture named Ahijah.

<sup>39</sup> *Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 36. Barnes spells as per the English.

## God's Word™

Then Saul asked God, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to Israel?" But he received no answer that day.

## JPS (Tanakh)

So Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hands of Israel?" But this time He did not respond to him.

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

## NASB

And Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt You give them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him on that day.

## Young's Updated LT

And Sal asks of God, "Do I go down after the Philistines? Do You give them into the hand of Israel?" And He has not answered him on that day.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Although the Ephod and Urim and Thummim are not mentioned, apparently Saul spoke to the priest, who used these tools to ascertain God's will (the Ephod has already been mentioned in vv. 3 and 18). However, God did not answer Saul, presumably because Saul's binding oath was not followed.

## 1Samuel 14:37

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
shâ'al (שָׁאַל) [pronounced <i>shaw-AHL</i> ]	<i>to ask, to petition, to request, to inquire, to question, to interrogate</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>Gods or God</i> ; transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #430 BDB #43
hă (הַ) [pronounced <i>heh</i> ]	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
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i> ]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
ʾachar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Pʿlishîṭîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
hă (הַ) [pronounced <i>heh</i> ]	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 14:37

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Yis <sup>e</sup> râ <sup>l</sup> êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced gaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day, today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw <sup>ʾ</sup> (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:** So Saul asked God, “Should I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?” But He did not answer him in that day. Saul will have a similar situation in 1Sam. 28:6, where he will go out and consult a medium.

I want you to notice the questions which Saul asks—they are simple *yes* or *no* questions. That is an important consideration, which will help to explain vv. 40–42. Apparently, however Urim and Thummim worked, there was such a way for a response to be inconclusive, even to a *yes* or *no* question.

Here we have a fascinating situation. Fellowship with God has been broken and it appears to be broken due to a very slight, almost meaningless sin. Jonathan did not know that he had violated Saul's oath until after he violated it. And his actual sin, tasting a bit of honey, seems rather innocuous. The application is simple: no matter how small the sin, no matter how inoffensive, even if we are not aware that it is a sin—that sin breaks our fellowship with God. What should be of further interest is that God still allowed Saul to have victory over the Philistines, although

it was apparently incomplete (and mostly due to his stupid oath, which Jonathan violated, which is why God is not communicating with Saul).

Did you ever get the feeling that things would run a lot smoother if you kept your mouth shut? Preview of coming attractions (okay, actually the story of Saul's life).

And so says Saul, "Come near here, all cornerstones of the people and [you all] know and [you all] see in the what was the sin the this the day.

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Then Saul said, "Come here, all [you] leaders of the people and know and see how this sin has come today.

Then Saul said, "Let's assemble the leaders of the people and we will determine how this sin has come upon us today.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so says Saul, "Come near here, all cornerstones of the people and [you all] know and [you all] see in the what was the sin the this the day.
Septuagint	And Saul said, "Bring here all the chiefs of Israel, and know and see by whom this sin has been committed this day.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

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

CEV	Saul called his army officers together and said, "We have to find out what sin has kept God from answering.
NLT	Then Saul said to the leaders, "Something's wrong! I want all my army commanders to come here. We must find out what sin was committed today.

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

God's Word™	So Saul ordered all the leaders of the troops, "Come here! Find out what sin was committed today.
JPS (Tanakh)	Then Saul said, "Come forward, all chief officers of the troops, and find out how this guilt was incurred today.

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

NASB	And Saul said, "Draw near here, all you chiefs [lit., <i>corners</i> ] of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today.
Young's Updated LT	And Saul says, "Draw near here all, the chiefs of the people, and know and see in what this sin has been today;..."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul is unaware that Jonathan ate the honey, and no one was about to tell on him. So Saul calls together his military leaders and asks them what sin was committed. I would guess that Saul realized that it was the oath that had been violated and that he simply needed to flush out the violator. Saul, remaining true to his character, will overreact in the verses to come.

## 1Samuel 14:38

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâ'ûwl (שׂאֻל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>to come near, to draw near, to approach, to come hither</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
hălôm (הֵלֹם) [pronounced <i>huh-LOHM</i> ]	<i>here, hither, to or towards [a place], near</i>	adverb	Strong's #1988 BDB #240
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kaw</i> ],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
phînhâh (פִּנְיָה) [pronounced <i>pin-NAW</i> ]	<i>corner figuratively for a chief, ruler, a cornerstone of a people.</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #6438 BDB #819
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâdaʿ (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHṢ</i> ]	<i>to know</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
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>			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

## 1Samuel 14:38

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chatṭâ`th (חַטָּאת) [pronounced <i>khat-TAWTH</i> ]	<i>sin or sin-offering</i>	feminine plural noun with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #2403 BDB #308
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day, today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

**Translation:** Then Saul said, “Come here, all [you] leaders of the people and know and see how this sin has come today. Suddenly, Saul has agreed to approach things correctly and ask God what should Israel do. When no answer is received, he recognizes that there is a problem. The Old Testament mirrors our life in the New. Whereas God dealt with Israel as a nation in the Old, He deals with us as individuals in the New. All of a sudden, it is clear that there is a problem. We have the same experience when we are out of fellowship. All lines of communication are cut off. Israel experienced this as a nation; we experience it as individuals. When Israel sinned, then God dealt with Israel as a nation and no longer afforded her direction and special blessing. When we are out of fellowship, God does not give us His guidance or special blessings either. Unfortunately, the leader of Israel is Saul, who will say and act without thinking. What better way to make things worse than with another oath?

We have to be careful when it comes to interpreting this and the subsequent verses. First of all, it is a fact that God has not answered Saul through the priest. Saul and Jonathan will assume that the problem is Saul's oath and Jonathan's eating of the honey.

McGee assumes that it is the fact that Saul is a big idiot, that God does not guide and direct him. In fact, he writes: *Saul, you see, is not willing to take the blame himself. He says that someone else has sinned. The army stood silently. They knew the victory was Jonathan's. and now Saul was saying, “The reason God did not answer me was because someone did not obey me and broke the oath.” The army knew that Jonathan had tasted the honey, and they knew that Saul was putting up a tremendous front at this time. They stood in silence because he was the king.*<sup>40</sup> When it comes to a quick and dirty interpretation, this seems to be okay. However, this is one of the few places where McGee has misunderstood this passage. I'll give more information as to why a few verses down.

**For living of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Savior of Israel, for if his being in Jonathan my son, for a dying, he dies.” And none was answering him from all the people.**

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**For [as] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Savior of Israel, lives, for though it is in my son Jonathan, at that time [when the sin is discovered], he will certainly die!” However, no one from all the people answered him.**

**As Jehovah, the Savior of Israel, lives, even if the sin is found in my son, Jonathan, he will certainly die!” However, none of the soldiers answered him.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

<sup>40</sup> J. Vernon McGee; *I & 1Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 78.

Latin Vulgate	As GOD lives, Israel's Savior God, whoever sinned will die, even if it should turn out to be Jonathan, my son!" Nobody said a word.
Masoretic Text	For living of Y <sup>e</sup> howah, the Savior of Israel, for if his being in Jonathan my son, for a dying, he dies." And none was answering him from all the people.
Peshitta	For, as the LORD lives, who saved Israel, though it [the sin] be in Jonathan my son, he will certainly die." But there was no one of all the people that answered him.
Septuagint	For as the Lord lives who has saved Israel, if answer should be against my son Jonathan, he will certainly die." And there was no one that answered out of all the people.

Significant differences: There is difficulty in interpreting what we have in the Hebrew. The idea is, even if this *sin* is in Jonathan, then Saul will execute his own son to solve the sin problem. I believe that the Greek translators just did the best they could with this difficult phrase. You will notice the same idea, expressed in different words, is what we find in the Latin. The Syriac is almost identical to the Hebrew here.

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

CEV	I swear by the living LORD that whoever sinned must die, even if it turns out to be my own son Jonathan." No one said a word.
NLT	I vow by the name of the LORD who rescued Israel that the sinner will surely die, even if it is my own son Jonathan!" But no one would tell him what the trouble was.
TEV	I promise by the living LORD, who gives Israel victory, that the guilty one will be put to death, even if he is my son Jonathan." But no one said anything.

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

God's Word™	I solemnly swear, as the LORD and Savior of Israel lives, even if it is my son Jonathan [who did it], he must die." But not one of the soldiers replied.
JPS (Tanakh)	For as the LORD lives who brings victory to Israel, even if it was through my son Jonathan, he shall be put to death!" Not one soldier answered him.

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

Keil and Delitzsch	"As truly as Jehovah lives, who has brought salvation to Israel, that even if it were upon my son, that he should die." And of all the people, no one answered him.
NASB	"For as the LORD lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not one of all the people answered him.
Young's Updated LT	...for, Jehovah lives, Who is saving Israel; surely if it be in Jonathan my son, surely he will certainly die." And none answers him out of all the people.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul had an incredibly large mouth. In this verse, he puts his other foot in it. He swears that even if the sin is in Jonathan, this person troubling Israel will die. He does not have a clue that Jonathan is the person who broke Israel's fellowship with God. Many of the soldiers knew that the problem was Saul's stupid oath to God by which he bound all Israel, and that Jonathan inadvertently violated this oath. Now, obviously, Saul does not imagine that there is any chance that his son, Jonathan, the hero of the moment, is the culprit. Now what he says is moderately difficult, as a small combination of particles can be rendered with two very different senses. Essentially, Saul says, "*Even if the sin is in my son Jonathan, at that time [when the sin is discovered], he will die!*"



## 1Samuel 14:39a

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
chay (חַי) [pronounced <i>KHAH-ee</i> ]	<i>living, alive</i>	adjective construct	Strong's #2416 BDB #311
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
yâsha' (יָשָׁא) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAHG</i> ]	<i>to deliver, to save; in this form, the deliverer, the savior, the one saving</i>	Hiphil participle with the definite article	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>gis-row-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
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
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i> ]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
Together, kîy ʾîm (אִם כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee-eem</i> ] act as a limitation on the preceding thought, and therefore should be rendered <i>but, except, unless</i> and possibly <i>only</i> . However, these particles are not used in a limiting way <i>if</i> they follow an oath, a question or a negative. Then they can be rendered <i>that if, for if, for though, that since, for if, but if, indeed if, even if</i> .			
yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced <i>yaysh</i> ]	<i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); to be present, to be ready, to exist</i>	substantive with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3426 BDB #441
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
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

## 1Samuel 14:39a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Kîy...kîy can refer to a list of things which have reasons attached to them; it can be used disjunctively, as in <i>for...or...or...</i> ; together, they can mean <i>for not...but...</i> , <i>for...and...</i> , <i>because...and...</i>			
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
When the same verb is used twice in a row, it intensifies the verb's meaning. This means, " <a href="#">He will certainly die!</a> "			

**Translation:** For [as] Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Savior of Israel, lives, for though it is in my son Jonathan, at that time [when the sin is discovered], he will certainly die!" Jonathan is the hero of the day. It is because of him that the Philistines are in retreat. It never occurred to Saul that his son actually broke the fellowship between Israel and God by any inadvertent action. He says what he says for effect, knowing full well (or, thinking that he knows) that Jonathan did not do anything wrong. When Saul says, "[For \[as\] Y<sup>e</sup>howah Savior of Israel lives,...](#)" he is making another oath (compare with 1Sam. 19:6 2Sam. 12:5 Jer. 4:2 Hosea 4:15). To his own credit, he does not realize how stupid the first oath was, so making this second oath is merely stupid, but not more stupid, just equally stupid.

Realize that Saul has no idea what happened. Jonathan is the hero of the day. Jonathan started the ball rolling which ended with the defeat of the Philistines. It would never occur to Saul that maybe Jonathan is the one who broke national fellowship by disobeying Saul's first vow. This should give you an idea as to just how ineffectual Saul is as a leader—he follows one purposeless vow with another purposeless vow. Since he did not really participate in the battle here, then he feels like he must contribute something.

My roommate and I were once talking and somehow, we got onto the subject of naming animals found only in Australia. We had a 3<sup>rd</sup> roommate who was there, Don, whose intellect level was a tad bit lower than ours. In fact, Don could basically describe everything that he had ever seen, heard or experienced with one of three adjectives: *good*, *bad* and *interesting* (meaning that he had not yet been willing to land either on *good* or *bad* yet). So, insofar as Don was concerned, this was a high-powered intellectual conversation that he wanted to become a part of. However, since the only animal he might have guessed (the kangaroo) had already been mentioned, he felt like he had to somehow make his contribution to our conversation. Furthermore, his contribution had to be intellectual; it could not be something like, "Kangaroos are interesting." So, when Don spotted a lull in our conversation, he said, "Do you think that *supercallafragelisticxpialidocious* is a real word or one that they made up for the movie?" This is Saul—this is the sort of contribution that Saul had made to this battle against the Philistines.

## 1Samuel 14:39b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾayin (אֵין) [pronounced <i>AH-yin</i> ]	<i>naught, nothing</i> ; it can be a particle of negation: <i>no, not</i>	negative/negative construct	Strong's #369 BDB #34
ʾânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i> ]	<i>to answer, to respond</i>	Qal active participle (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #6030 BDB #772

## 1Samuel 14:39b

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, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kawf</i> ],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766

**Translation:** *However, no one from all the people answered him.* Many of the soldiers were very aware of what Jonathan did, and they were not about to break the news to Saul. Saul had said enough goofy things already; who knows how he would react. Furthermore, no one wants to be the bearer of bad news.

One of the commandments is not to take God's name in vain—that is, we are not to use His name rashly or trivially. There are various combinations of swearing which do this, which we are all cognizant of. However, what Saul does here is take God's name in vain as well. His oaths are lame, and his desire to take oath after oath, invoking God's name, is another form of trivializing God's name. Saul should have kept his mouth shut. Besides, there were sacrifices which could be offered for offences against God which were inadvertent.

*And so he says unto all of Israel, "You [all] [even] you are to side one and I and Jonathan my son are to side one." And say the people unto Saul, "The good in your eyes do."*

1Samuel  
14:40

*Then he said to all Israel, "You will be to one side and Jonathan and I will be to the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do [whatever is] right in your eyes."*

*Then he said to all Israel, "You will be on one side while Jonathan and I will stand on the other." And the people responded, "Do what you believe to be right."*

Here is how others have handled this verse:

## Ancient texts:

## Masoretic Text

*And so he says unto all of Israel, "You [all] [even] you are to side one and I and Jonathan my son are to side one." And say the people unto Saul, "The good in your eyes do."*

## Septuagint

*And he said to all the men of Israel, "You [all] will be under subjection, and I and Jonathan my son will be under subjection." And the people said to Saul, "Do that which is good in your sight."*

## Significant differences:

In order to ask God who is out of line, Saul and Jonathan stand on one side, and the people on the other. The translators of the LXX may not have understood that (I double-checked the Greek, and Brenton's translation is correct). There is a reason why the LXX is rendered as it is, which will be explained below in the Hebrew exegesis. The Latin and Syriac are in complete agreement with the Hebrew.

## Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Saul told his army, "You stand on that side of the priest, and Jonathan and I will stand on the other side." Everyone agreed.
NLT	Then Saul said, "Jonathan and I will stand over here, and all of you stand over there." And the people agreed.

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

God's Word™	Saul told all Israel, "You stand on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will stand on the other side." "Do whatever you think is best," the troops responded to Saul.
JPS (Tanakh)	And he said to all the Israelites, "You stand on one side, and my son Jonathan and I shall stand on the other." The troops said to Saul, "Do as you please."

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

NASB	Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you [lit., in your eyes]."
Young's Updated LT	And he says to all Israel, "You—you [all] are on one side, and I and Jonathan my son are on another side." And the people say to Saul, "That which is good in your eyes do."

Obviously, there is a major discrepancy between the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bibles here—however, even the two translations which tend to support the Septuagint, the NRSV and Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible*, agree with the Hebrew. The source of disagreement is the Hebrew itself, which will be discussed below in the Hebrew verse table.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Since Saul has singled out Jonathan, thinking that there is no way that he sinned, he puts Jonathan and himself on one side, and the people on the other. The people respond with, "Whatever, Saul." Saul is their king, and even though most of them recognize that Saul was a bad choice, they have to go along with him.

## 1Samuel 14:40a

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
`amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
`el (אֶל) [pronounced el/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced kaw/]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Yis'raêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

## 1Samuel 14:40a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾattem (אַתֶּם) [pronounced aht-TEM]	<i>you all, you guys, you</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ) [pronounced ʿ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿêber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced ʿAYB-ver]	<i>region across, beyond, side</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5676 BDB #719

Here is the simple reason for the rendering *servitude* in the LXX: ʿebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ʿEB-ved] means *slave, servant*. Since there were no vowel points in the Hebrew manuscript at the time that the LXX was translated, the only difference between these two words is that one ends in ר (r) and the other in ד (d), which consonants were often confounded. As we have discussed in Old Testament textual criticism, the best discrepancy is one that can be explained easily where the mistake that was made is obvious (the mistake, by the way, could have just as easily been in the Hebrew manuscript used by the translators, rather than one made by the translators themselves—although, this book Samuel is not known for being a good translation)..

ʾechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	numeral	Strong's #259 BDB #25
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced aw-NEE]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced yoh-naw-THAWN]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ) [pronounced ʿ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿêber (עֵבֶר) [pronounced ʿAYB-ver]	<i>region across, beyond, side</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5676 BDB #719
ʾechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; but it can also mean a composite unity</i>	numeral	Strong's #259 BDB #25

**Translation:** Then he said to all Israel, “You will be to one side and Jonathan and I will be to the other side.” Saul always feels as though he must do something. He has maneuvered himself into this position. Obviously, someone has sinned against God in his army, which is why God is not answering him. Therefore, this person who has broken the fellowship must be found out. The biggest problem is what Saul has already said: “Even if that person is my son Jonathan, he will die!”

1Samuel 14:40b			
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
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ġahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced el/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Shâʾûl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced toe <sup>b</sup> ]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive with the definite article	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿayin (עַיִן) [pronounced ĠAH-yin]	<i>spring, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes, spring</i>	feminine dual noun	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ġaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

**Translation:** And the people said to Saul, “Do [whatever is] right in your eyes.” These soldiers already know what’s up. The problem is Jonathan, and none of them want to admit to that. Therefore, their response to Saul is, “Whatever...” Or, “Saul, you just do whatever you have to do; leave us out of it, if that is possible.” You must understand that Saul was totally unpredictable to the people. One moment, he was heeding good advice (e.g., when the priest said, “Before we chase down the Philistines, let’s inquire God for direction,” Saul went along with it); and the next moment, Saul is making another rash oath (“As God lives, even if my son Jonathan has transgressed against God, he will be summarily executed.”). You want to be careful about what you say to an irrational person; if Saul can, in just a moment, condemn his son to death, then no one wants to risk their own lives by offending him. The common response today might be, “It’s your world, Saul; we just live in it.”

Now, don't get me wrong on this. Saul is faced with life and death decisions throughout most of his reign. Not everyone could make those kinds of decisions. I know that most school kids have the notion, *This is America; even I could be president*. No, you couldn't. Still, there are a huge number of people who think they would be a good, if not great, president. That's nonsense! During whatever moment you had that notion, you were a moron in that moment. Yes, it's true that we have had a lot of mediocre presidents, but the idea that you could do better? You are living in a dream world. The president balances so many things at the same time; the president has, if you will allow the analogy, hundreds of balls in the air at any given time, any one of which could come crashing down and change things as we know it. It takes a great man to be president—even to be a mediocre president; and there are very few Americans who have the right stuff. The next time you are in a plane, call the flight attendant over and let her know that you could fly that plane just as well as the pilots and you're ready to take over. Being in charge of a country requires a lot more training and there are an incredible number of pressures associated with this than we could even imagine. My point in all this is that, Saul, despite his mediocrity, is probably doing the best that he can. Of all Israel, he was, at that time, the best man for the job. So, certainly, it is easy for me to sit on the sidelines and criticize, and point out this problem and that; but I don't think for a moment that I could have done a better job. When it comes from the standpoint of sheer courage, few people could match Saul. He may have been indecisive and he may have made a boneheaded oath or two, but Saul did not run away along with most of his army. He expected to fight and he expected to die, and yet he remained with the very small percentage of faithful men.

And so says Saul unto Y<sup>e</sup>howah, God of Israel,  
 “Give completion [or, *unblemished truth*].” 1Samuel  
 And so were captured Jonathan and Saul and 14:41  
 the people have gone out.

Then Saul said to Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the God of Israel,  
 “Why have You not answered Your servant  
 today? If this iniquity is in me or my son  
 Jonathan, O Y<sup>e</sup>howah, God of Israel, then put  
 forth Urim; (or, *Lights*) however, if this iniquity  
 is in Your people Israel, [then set forth  
 Thummim (or, *perfections*)]. Give [us]  
 unblemished truth.” So Jonathan and Saul  
 were taken and the people escaped [lit., *went  
 out*].<sup>41</sup>

Then Saul called upon Jehovah, the God of Israel, “Why have You not answered Your servant today? If this sin is in me or in my son Jonathan, O Jehovah, then indicate this with Urim; however, if this iniquity is in Your people Israel, then indicate this with Thummim. Now give us the unblemished truth. So God put the lot upon Jonathan and Saul, which cleared the rest of Israel of this sin.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	And Saul said to the Lord: “O Lord God of Israel, give a sign, by which we may know, what the meaning is, that you answer not your servant today: If this iniquity be in me, or in my son Jonathan, give a proof: or if this iniquity be in your people, give holiness.” And Jonathan and Saul were taken, and the people escaped.
Masoretic Text	And so says Saul unto Y <sup>e</sup> howah, God of Israel, “Give completion [or, <i>unblemished truth</i> ].” And so were captured Jonathan and Saul and the people have gone out.
Peshitta	Therefore Saul said, “O LORD God of Israel, give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken; but the people were not taken.
Septuagint	And Saul said, “O Lord God of Israel, why have You not answered Your servant this day? [Is] the Iniquity in me or in Jonathan my son? Lord God of Israel, give clear [manifestations]; and if [the lot] should declare this, give, I pray You, to You people Israel, give, I pray, holiness. And Jonathan and Saul are taken and the people escaped. According to Rotherham, the Septuagint and the Vulgate both read: And Saul said unto Yahweh, “O God of Israel! Why have You not answered Your servant

<sup>41</sup> The additional text from the LXX is inserted in a different blue. See the various translations of the Septuagint below.



today? <If this iniquity is in me or in Jonathan my son>, O Yahweh God of Israel, set forth Lights [Hebrew equivalent: *Urim*]; but <if this iniquity is in Your people Israel> set forth Perfections.” [Hebrew equivalent: *Thummim*].<sup>42</sup>

Significant differences: This particular verse is too much of a mess to attempt to mark off what is not in agreement. The MT and the Peshitta are in perfect accord, which is often the case. The Latin is closer to the text of the LXX (which is not usually the case), although it is not exactly the same. I will exegete both the Greek and Hebrew below.

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

CEV	Then Saul prayed, “Our LORD, God of Israel, why haven’t you answered me today? Please show us who sinned. Was it my son Jonathan and I, or was it your people Israel?” The answer came back that Jonathan or Saul had sinned, not the army.
NJB	Saul then said, “Yahweh, God of Israel, why did you not answer your servant today? Yahweh, God of Israel, if the fault lies with me or with my son Jonathan, give <i>urim</i> : if the fault lies with your people Israel, give <i>thummim</i> .” Jonathan and Saul were indicated and the people went free.
NLT	Then Saul prayed, “O LORD, God of Israel, please show us who is guilty and who is innocent. Are Jonathan and I guilty, or is the sin among the others?” [Greek version adds <i>if the fault is with me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim; but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim</i> ] And Jonathan and Saul were chosen [Hebrew, <i>chosen by lot</i> ] as the guilty ones, and the people were declared innocent.
REB	Saul said to the LORD the God of Israel, “Why have you not answered your servant today? LORD God of Israel, if this guilt lies in me or in my son Jonathan, let the lot be Urim; if it lies in your people Israel, let it be Thummim.” Jonathan and Saul were taken, and the people were cleared. [Portion in dark blue in the Greek only; omitted by the Hebrew]
TEV	Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, “LORD, why have you not answered me today? LORD, God of Israel, answer me by the sacred stones. If the guilt is Jonathan’s or mine, answer by the Urim; but if it belongs to your people Israel, answer by the Thummim.” The answer indicated Jonathan and Saul; and the people were cleared.

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

God’s Word™	Then Saul said to the LORD, “O God of Israel, why didn’t you answer me today? If this sin is mine or my son Jonathan’s, LORD God of Israel, [let the priest] draw Urim. But if it is in your people Israel, [let him] draw Thummim.” Jonathan and Saul were chosen, and the people were freed [from guilt]. [14:41 “Why didn’t you...your people Israel” Greek, Latin; Masoretic Text omits these words] I indicated this section with a darker blue.
JPS (Tanakh)	Saul then said to the LORD, the God of Israel, “Show Thammim.” Jonathan and Saul were indicated by lot, and the troops were cleared. [the meaning of <i>Show Thammim</i> is uncertain; the Septuagint reads: “Why have You not responded to Your servant today? If this iniquity was due to my son Jonathan or to me, O LORD God of Israel, show Urim; and if You say it was due to Your people Israel, show Thummim.”]
NIV	Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, “Give me that right answer.” And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared. [So reads the Hebrew; the Septuagint reads: “Why have you not answered your servant today? If

<sup>42</sup> This came from Joseph Bryant Rotherham’s *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 302: I updated the translated, however.

the fault is in me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim, but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim.”]

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

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	And Saul said unto Yahweh— O God of Israel! [Septuagint and Vulgate <sup>43</sup> here read: “O God of Israel! wherefore have you not answered your servant today? <If this iniquity is in me or in Jonathan my son> O Yahweh God of Israel, set forth Lights (Heb.: <i>Urim</i> ); but <if this iniquity is in your people Israel> set forth Perfections” (Heb.: <i>Thummim</i> ) now set forth the truth. Then were  Jonathan and Saul  taken, and   the people   escaped.
NASB	Therefore, Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, “Give a perfect <i>lot</i> .” And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.
NKJV	Therefore Saul aid to the LORD God of Israel, “Give a perfect <i>lot</i> .” So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. [Expanded footnote: So with Masoretic text and Aramaic targum; LXX and Vulgate read: <i>Why do You not answer Your servant today? If the injustice is with me or Jonathan my son, O LORD God of Israel, give proof; and if You say it is with Your people Israel, give holiness.</i> ].
NRSV	Then Saul said, “O LORD God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant today? If this guilt is in me or in my son Jonathan, O LORD God of Israel, give Urim; but if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim.” And Jonathan and Saul were indicated by the lot, but the people were cleared.
<i>Young’s Updated LT</i>	And Saul says to Jehovah, God of Israel, “Give perfection;” and Jonathan and Saul are captured, and the people went out.

Obviously, there is another greater discrepancy between the Hebrew and the Greek (and the Latin) in this verse. The latter two translations have a great deal more material than is found in the Hebrew. My sources are silent on whether this supplemental text is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul does the praying. He asks God to indicate whether he or his son are at fault or whether the remainder of Israel is at fault. The answer is that the fault lies with either his son or himself. Like every means of discerning God’s will from the Old Testament, we will not fully understand how they know that God actually chooses one or the other. However, the Septuagint gives us a better idea than anything else.

## 1Samuel 14:41a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
Shâʾûl (שָׂאֻל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #7586 BDB #982
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong’s #413 BDB #39

<sup>43</sup> My copy of the Vulgate does not have this extended reading.

## 1Samuel 14:41a

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<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>Gods</i> or <i>God</i> ; transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yisʿrâʾēl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
yâhaḇ (יָהַב) [pronounced yaw-HAWB <sup>v</sup> ]	<i>to give, to give here; to place, to put to set</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative with a voluntative hê	Strong's #3051 BDB #396
tâmîym (תָּמִים) [pronounced <i>taw-MEEM</i> ]	<i>complete, whole, entire, sufficient, without blemish</i>	adjective	Strong's #8549 BDB #1071

What we find here is *tâmîym* (תָּמִים), but Keil and Delitzsch suggest that it could read *tûmmîym* (תִּמְמִים) [pronounced *toom-MEEM*], which can be transliterated *Thummim*. They present this and quickly dismiss the idea, as the two verbs used here are never elsewhere found with *Urim and Thummim*. However, this argument is fallacious, as we do not find *Urim and Thummim* in very many passages. This is also about the point at which the LXX text diverges considerably, which will be covered in great detail below.

**Translation:** And Saul said unto Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the God of Israel, “Give completion [or, perfection, or the unblemished truth].” The final word is close to *Thummim*, but not necessarily close enough to be a transliteration. This is not just a little abstruse; I mean, we get a general idea, but it is not stated clearly enough to grasp without adding in information.

You will notice in my quotations from various translations, that their translations of the Septuagint diverge quite a bit. Obviously, the Septuagint has a whole different take on this portion of the verse, and there are different versions of the Septuagint (which we covered in the **Doctrine of Textual Criticism in the Old Testament**—these versions are covered in detail in the doctrine, but not in the Summary of this doctrine). Unfortunately, it is not a simple bit of text which the LXX has that is missing from the MT. This portion of the Hebrew is equivalent to the second to the last Greek portion below (v. 41c). Now, we will look at the complete Greek text for this verse:

## 1Samuel 14:41a from the Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Kai (Καὶ) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
eipe (εἶπε) [pronounced <i>ī-pe</i> ]	<i>to say</i>	verb	Strong's #2036
Saoul (Σαούλ) [pronounced <i>sah-OUL</i> ],	<i>Saul</i>	proper noun	Strong's #4549

## 1Samuel 14:41a from the Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Kurie (Κύριε) [pronounced <i>KU-ree</i> ]	<i>Lord</i>	masculine vocative noun	Strong's #2962
ho (ὁ) [pronounced <i>hoh</i> ]	<i>the</i>	definite article	Strong's #3588
Theos (θεός) [pronounced <i>THEH-oss</i> ]	<i>God of</i>	masculine nominative noun	Strong's #2316
Israêl (Ἰσραήλ) [pronounced <i>iss-rah-ALE</i> ],	<i>Israel</i>	proper noun	Strong's #2474
ti (τί) [pronounced <i>tee</i> ]	<i>who, which, what?</i>	Interrogative pronoun	Strong's #5101
hoti (ὅτι) [pronounced <i>HOH-tee</i> ]	<i>that, for, since, because, for that</i>	explanatory conjunction	Strong's #3754
Together, the previous two words appear to mean <i>for why, why</i>			
ouk (οὐκ) [pronounced <i>ook</i> ]	<i>no, not, nothing, none, no one</i>	negation; this form is used before a vowel	Strong's #3756
apokrinomai (ἀποκρίνομαι) [pronounced <i>ahp-oh-KREE-noh-mai</i> ]	<i>to answer, to reply; to speak [after someone else]; to continue [speaking, a discourse]</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular, aorist passive indicative	Strong's #611
tô (τῷ) [pronounced <i>toh</i> ]	<i>in the; by the; by means of the</i>	masculine singular definite article; locative, dative, or instrumental case	Strong's #3588
doulô (δούλῳ) [pronounced <i>DOO-loh</i> ]	<i>slave</i>	masculine dative singular noun	Strong's #1401
sou (σου) [pronounced <i>sû</i> ]	<i>your</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular genitive/ablative pronoun	Strong's #4771
sêmeron (σήμερον) [pronounced <i>SAY-meh-ron</i> ];	<i>this day, today</i>	adverb	Strong's #4594

### Translation from the LXX: And Saul says, “Lord, the God of Israel, why have you not answered your slave today?”

These are radically different verses, even if the questionable words are changed somewhat. What we will find in the Septuagint is a more fully developed thought. It is highly unlikely that some translator on the LXX team decided, “Why not fill this in with a little detail.” It is similarly unlikely that some scribe hundreds of years previous to this had a similar notion when copying this verse from one Hebrew manuscript to another. What is very likely is, at some point in time after the translating of the LXX and before our 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. manuscripts of the Masoretic text, that this portion of v. 41 dropped out because of a faulty manuscript or a mistake in copying (which can result in missing text). It is also possible that a manuscript had become so worn that the text was unreadable to the

Masorites, who would never consider embellishing a chapter with some explanatory notes. This would suggest to us that what we find in the LXX at this point is accurate and a part of the autographs.

In this portion of the verse, Saul looks up to God and cries out, “Why don’t you answer your slave today?” Bear in mind that Saul has already exercised Samuel’s prerogative with reference to the offering of animals (1Sam. 13:11–14). Saul has made two oaths to God before his men, one requiring every man to abstain from food until he has been completely avenged against the Philistines; and a second one promising to execute even his own son if he has violated his first vow to God. God is not answering Saul because Saul and the nation Israel are, for all intents and purposes, out of fellowship.

Saul represents the nation Israel to God; do you grasp what an awesome responsibility this is? If you had even the slightest clue as to what I am saying, the last thing you would say is, “I should be president of the United States because I could sure do things a lot better.” At the time the Israel demanded a king, Saul was the best that could be found in the entire land of Israel. God did not just choose some hokey, lame dude to make a point. God chose a man acceptable to Israel; brave; but, just like everyone else, Saul has an old sin nature and Saul did not show faith toward God—Saul did not believe God; Saul disobeyed God. And, when it looked as though he might be seen as ineffectual, then Saul makes two stupid vows right in a row—so, hell no, God is not going to answer Saul about anything at this point.

This suggests to me that the Ephod of God and the answers that it gave were very visible. When the priest wearing the Ephod stands before Saul, it should be obvious to Saul and everyone else around him that God is not giving him any answers—nothing lights up on the Ephod.

### 1Samuel 14:41b from the Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
ei (εἰ) [pronounced ī]	<i>if</i>	conditional particle, conjunction	Strong’s #1487
en (ἐν) [pronounced en]	<i>in, into, by means of</i>	preposition	Strong’s #1722
emoi (ἐμοὶ) [pronounced eh-moh-EE]	<i>me</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person, masculine singular locative/dative personal pronoun	Strong’s #1473
ê (ἤ) [pronounced ā]	<i>or; either, rather; than; but; save</i>	disjunctive particle	Strong’s #2228
The online Bible mistakenly lists this as the definite article ὁ, but what we find here instead is ἤ, which is the disjunctive particle.			
en (ἐν) [pronounced en]	<i>in, by means of, with; among</i>	preposition (with the locative, dative and instrumental cases)	Strong’s #1722
lōnathan (Ἰωνάθαν) [pronounced ee-OH-nah-than]	<i>Jonathan</i>	proper noun	none
tō (τῷ) [pronounced toh]	<i>in the; by the; by means of the</i>	masculine singular definite article; locative, dative, or instrumental case	Strong’s #3588

### 1Samuel 14:41b from the Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
huios (υἱός, οὐ, ό) [pronounced <i>hwee-OSS</i> ]	<i>son, child, descendant; pupil; follower</i>	masculine singular genitive/ablative noun	Strong's #5207
mou (μου) [pronounced <i>moo</i> ]	<i>my</i>	possessive pronoun	Strong's #3450
hê (ή) [pronounced <i>hey</i> ]	<i>the</i>	definite article	Strong's #3588
adikia (ἀδικία) [pronounced <i>ah-di-KEE-ah</i> ];	<i>injustice, unrighteousness, iniquity, misdeed</i>	feminine singular nominative noun	Strong's #93

**Translation from the LXX: If in me or in Jonathan the son of mine the unrighteousness?** Saul asks if the unrighteousness is in himself or in Jonathan, his son. This suggests to me that Saul caught whiff of a rumor of Jonathan disobeying Saul's oath. Now, Saul does not believe this, and knows it cannot be true, so he makes a big deal of whether there is any unrighteousness in himself or in Jonathan. Saul is looking to get Jonathan and himself out of the running right from the beginning. He knows there cannot be any fault in his son or himself, so he casts lots to show that the sin must be in the people of Israel—or, so is Saul's intention.

### 1Samuel 14:41c from the Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Kurie (Κύριε) [pronounced <i>KOO-ree</i> ]	<i>Lord</i>	masculine vocative noun	Strong's #2962
ho (ό) [pronounced <i>ho</i> ]	<i>the</i>	definite article	Strong's #3588
Theos (θεός) [pronounced <i>theh-OSS</i> ]	<i>God of</i>	masculine nominative noun	Strong's #2316
Israel (Ἰσραήλ) [pronounced <i>iss-rah-ALE</i> ]	<i>Israel</i>	proper noun	Strong's #2474
didōmi (δίδωμι) [pronounced <i>dihd-OH-mee</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant; to supply, to furnish; to entrust; to pay wages; to appoint to office; to permit; to give up, to yield; to give back; to sacrifice</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular, aorist active imperative	Strong's #1325
dêlous (δήλους) [pronounced <i>DAY-loose</i> ]	<i>clear, manifest, evident, certain, lights?</i>	adjective; possibly equivalent to Urim?	Strong's #1212
kai (καὶ) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
ean (ἐάν) [pronounced <i>eh-AHN</i> ]	<i>if</i>	conditional particle	Strong's #1437



## 1Samuel 14:41c from the Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tade (τάδε) [pronounced TAH-deh]	<i>these ones [here]; those ones; them, these, thus</i>	neuter plural near demonstrative; nominative case	Strong's #3592
eipê (εἶπη) [pronounced Ī-pay],	<i>to say</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular, aorist active subjunctive	Strong's #2036
en (ἐν) [pronounced en]	<i>in, by means of, with; among</i>	preposition (with the locative, dative and instrumental cases)	Strong's #1722
tô (τῷ) [pronounced toh]	<i>in the; by the; by means of the</i>	masculine singular definite article; locative, dative, or instrumental case	Strong's #3588
laô (λαῶ) [pronounced lah-OH]	<i>people</i>	masculine locative/dative noun	Strong's #2992
sou (σου) [pronounced sue]	<i>your</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular genitive/ablative pronoun	Strong's #4771
Israêl (Ἰσραήλ,) [pronounced iss-rah-ALE]	<i>Israel</i>	proper noun	Strong's #2474
didômi (δίδωμι) [pronounced dihd-OH-mee]	<i>to give, to grant; to supply, to furnish; to entrust; to pay wages; to appoint to office; to permit; to give up, to yield; to give back; to sacrifice</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular, aorist active imperative	Strong's #1325
dê (δὲ) [pronounced DAY]	<i>now therefore, verily, in truth</i>	postpositive particle	Strong's #1211
hosiotês (ὁσιότης, τητος, ῆ) [pronounced ho-see-OH-tayç], which	<i>devoutness, holiness, piety, piety towards God, faithful [in observing the obligations of piety], set apart to God</i>	feminine singular noun; accusative case	Strong's #3742

**Translation from the LXX:** Lord, the God of Israel, give a clear manifestation; and if should declare, give, therefore, the people of yours, Israel, give therefore, holiness [or, lights]." Saul asks for a clear manifestation of who should identified as the group with sin, and there will be an answer this time. This is essentially equivalent to the Hebrew (which was already covered), as will be the next portion of the Greek (which is yet to be covered in the Hebrew).

What should be clear is there is no *Urim and Thummim* transliterated in the Greek or found in the Hebrew (although we do have *Thammim* in the Hebrew); however, the Greek equivalent to those words may be there. In any case, what is even more important is that, the essentially meanings are the same: Saul looks to God and asks God to reveal who is guilty in Israel's transgression against God.



## 1Samuel 14:41d from the Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kai (καὶ) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
klêroō (κληρώω) [pronounced <i>klay-ROH-oh</i> ]	<i>to cast lots, to appoint [determine, choose] by lot; to allot; to make a private possession [or inheritance]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, present passive indicative	Strong's #2820
Iōnathan (Ἰωνάθαν) [pronounced <i>ee-oh-NAY-thahn</i> ]	<i>Jonathan</i>	indeclinable proper noun	Strong's #none
kai (καὶ) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
Saoul (Σαούλ) [pronounced <i>sah-OOL</i> ]	<i>desired and is transliterated Saul</i>	indeclinable masculine proper noun	Strong's #4549
kai (καὶ) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
ho (ὁ) [pronounced <i>ho</i> ]	<i>the</i>	definite article	Strong's #3588
laos (λαὸς) [pronounced <i>lah-OSS</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular noun; nominative case	Strong's #2992
exerchomai (ἐξέρχομαι) [pronounced <i>ex-EHR-khoh-mai</i> ]	<i>to go out, to come out, to go away; to retire; to proceed from, to be descended from</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative	Strong's #1831

**Translation from the LXX:** [And cast lots—Jonathan and Saul and the people went out.](#) This final portion from the Septuagint is identical to what we have in the Hebrew (which follows).

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## 1Samuel 14:41b

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
lâkad (לָקַד) [pronounced <i>law-KAHD</i> ]	<i>was captured, was seized, was taken, was chosen [by lot]; trapped</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3920 BDB #539
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## 1Samuel 14:41b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'am (אָם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect, pausal form	Strong's #3318 BDB #422

**Translation:** *So Jonathan and Saul were taken and the people escaped* [lit., *went out*]. The verbiage here is very similar to that found in Joshua 7:14–18. When one man had taken some items from Jericho (which items were to be burned as an offering to God), some similar system of lots were thrown in order to determine who was the culprit (that is, who kept Israel from being able to conquer Ai). In v. 14 of Joshua 7, we have that God would first *take* the tribe, then He would *take* the family from that tribe, etc., until He *took* the man responsible for the broken fellowship between Israel and God. We have the exact same verb used here (albeit a different morphology, which would be expected).

Okay, now why do you suppose that Saul separates himself and Jonathan out from the people? Saul makes a rather unequivocal statement in v. 39 about putting to death the culprit, even if it is Jonathan; and the people do not say anything. Why do you think that Saul made that statement? Why do you think he separated Jonathan and himself apart from the people and cast lots between those two groups? Obviously, there were rumors; obviously, this person or that spoke up and Saul overheard the rumor that Jonathan was to blame. No one answered Saul directly. No one unequivocally pointed the finger at Jonathan. However, from this verse and from v. 39, it was pretty clear that Saul overheard that Jonathan was the cause of God's not guiding Israel. This is why Saul and Jonathan are put together in one group, and all the people in another.

## Textual Criticism and 1Sam. 14:41

We have discussed textual criticism, so let me give you a typical approach to this verse. *Jehovah, God of Israel*, occurs twice in the Greek. What we would assume first is that the Hebrew Scribe copied down the initial *Jehovah, God of Israel*, looked back up, saw the second one, and began copying the Hebrew from that point. So, what we should expect to find is additional verbiage between those two identical phrases in the Greek; however, what is said prior to the first phrase and immediately after the second should be identical in the Greek and the Hebrew. Unfortunately, this is not the case as all.

Another option is that the Masoretic text was based upon manuscripts where, at some point, there was a very faulty manuscript where a significant portion of text was unreadable.

Text	English Translation	Comments
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## Textual Criticism and 1Sam. 14:41

<b>Greek Septuagint</b>	And Saul says, "Lord, the God of Israel, why have you not answered your slave today? If in me or in Jonathan the son of mine the unrighteousness? Lord, the God of Israel, give a clear manifestation; and if should declare, give, therefore, the people of yours, Israel, give therefore, holiness and cast lots: Jonathan and Saul and the people made guilty."	In the dark blue, we have the text of the Septuagint which falls between the two <i>Jehovah, God of Israel's</i> .
<b>Hebrew</b>	Then Saul said to Yehowah, the God of Israel, "Give [us] the unblemished truth." So Jonathan and Saul were taken and the people escaped [lit., <i>went out</i> ].	Although, given the spin of the interpretation that I have given this verse, it can stand alone. Still, it does appear to be missing some text.
<b>Hebrew with Septuagint portion inserted</b>	Then Saul said to Yehowah, the God of Israel, "Why have you not answered your slave today? If in me or in Jonathan the son of mine the unrighteousness? Lord, the God of Israel, "Give [us] the unblemished truth." So Jonathan and Saul were taken and the people escaped [lit., <i>went out</i> ].	What we would expect is for the Septuagint to be almost identical to this translation with the insertion; however, that is not the case.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text cannot be explained by a common scribal error. We would like to be able to point to the additions in the LXX and say, <i>clearly, this was left out of the MT for this reason or that</i> . However, we cannot say that, and, lacking an explanation makes determining the correct text all the more difficult. It is clear that the Hebrew is missing text, as it makes little sense; does this mean that the text found in the LXX is the missing text, or was it added to help understand what is missing? Nevertheless, what is most important is that the general meaning of these two divergent texts is essentially the same.	

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It appears as though Urim and Thummim might have been used here to determine God's will, although it would be presumptuous to state that as an unequivocal fact. There have been many theories as to what Urim and Thummim are. What appears to be most likely is that there were two things, perhaps rocks or discs, kept in the pouch of the ephod, that, when taken out and possibly thrown, the answer could be read by how they landed. Another theory is similar, and the answer was determined by reaching into the pouch and taking out one or the other. We covered this as the **Doctrine of Urim and Thummim** in Deut. 33:8, already referred to in this chapter, which [brief summary](#) can be found back in [1Sam. 14:3](#).

What is far more important than understanding exactly how Urim and Thummim worked (or, how the casting of lots worked) is the fact that this is not appropriate for believers to use today. Let me offer you two reasons, which I believe to be valid and persuasive: (1) Nowhere in the Old Testament (or New) can we determine exactly what was done by way of casting lots or using Urim and Thummim to determine God's will. There are a plethora of theories, but the mechanics have been lost to us over the centuries. If God wanted us to inquire concerning His will via Urim and Thummim, then He would have left us clear instructions as to what these things were and how we are to use them. Instead, what we have are Satan's counterfeits, e.g., palm readers, psychics, astrologers. (2) We have one instance of the Apostles attempting to determine God's will by casting lots to determine who should replace Judas. They presumed that Judas needed to be replaced, that there must be 12 Apostles and that it was their job to find his replacement. All of these presumptions were made prior to receiving the Holy Spirit and therefore presumptuous. The person on whom the lots fell were Matthias, who was no doubt a guy who seemed fit for the job. However, we never hear from Matthias again; and, partway through the book of Acts, it becomes

pretty clear that God chose the next Apostle, who was Paul, the greatest Apostle of them all. If you had to determine whether Matthias or Paul took the place of Judas, who would you choose? A man who is never mentioned again in Scripture or a man's whose life fills the book of Acts and whose epistles fill the New Testament? So that I am crystal clear on this, no church or denomination or group has throughout history contiguously chosen a group of twelve Apostles to carry on the work of the Church in the New Testament, because that was one of the many early spiritual gifts which died out when the Apostles died.

Let me give you an illustration of what the Apostles actually did. Let's say you are ready to get married, and you pick 6 women (my illustration is obviously for a man) from your city that you are attracted to, you get a die and roll it, and whatever number comes up will tell you God's will as to which of these 6 women you should marry. Does that sound perhaps a little psycho to you? Certainly, it is! If you didn't, then let me try another illustration: find 1000 women in your city to whom you are attracted and assigned each of them a number and then draw a number out of a hat (where there are 1000 numbers in the hat). Whatever woman that corresponds to, you need to marry—and, if she will not marry you, then you pursue her until she will. Does that sound even more psycho? Of course it does because it is psycho. I hope that you are discerning enough to grasp the handful of reasons why this is not the way to determine God's will for you with regards to getting married. God has not given us this means by which to determine His will. And this is exactly what the Apostles did. Conclusion, we do not cast lots, we do not draw Urim and Thummim, we do not consult mediums or psychics in order to determine God's will. We have instead God's Word and God the Holy Spirit to guide us. The book of Acts gives us examples of the Apostles making choices, some right and some wrong, during the formative years of the Church Age.

Okay, so you are sweating out, *what is God's will? How can I determine God's will for my life?* It is simple: you first need to be filled with God the Holy Spirit on a regular basis. This means that every time you knowingly sin, then you must name that sin to God. Secondly, you do what you know to be right and you don't do what you know to be wrong; how do you figure those things out? From God's Word. Your pastor teacher should teach you God's Word. If you are careful to go with those two things, then your other concerns will fall into place.

**And so says Saul, "Cast [the lot] between me and Jonathan my son." And was captured Jonathan.**

1Samuel  
14:42

**Then Saul ordered, "Cast [the lot] between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken [by lot].**

**Then Saul ordered, "Cast the lots to decide between me and my son Jonathan." The lot fell on Jonathan.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so says Saul, "Cast [the lot] between me and Jonathan my son." And was captured Jonathan.

##### Septuagint

And Saul said, "Cast [lots] between me and my son Jonathan; whoever the Lord shall cause to be taken by lot, let him die." And the people said to Saul, "This thing is not [a good idea]." And Saul prevailed against the people, and they cast [lots] between him and Jonathan his son, and Jonathan is taken by lot.

##### Significant differences:

The MT, Latin Vulgate and Syriac text are almost identical. The Septuagint has a fairly large insertion of text. Interestingly enough, even though we find several modern versions of Scripture which at least footnote that LXX in the previous verse; I cannot find a single modern version which footnotes the LXX for this verse.

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

##### CEV

Saul told Ahijah, "Now ask the LORD to decide between Jonathan and me." The answer came back that Jonathan had sinned.

NAB	Saul then said, "Cast lots between me and my son hon." And Jonathan was designated.
NLT	Then Saul said, "Now choose between me and Jonathan." And Jonathan was shown to be the guilty one.

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

God's Word™	"Choose between me and my son Jonathan," Saul said. Then Jonathan was chosen.
JPS (Tanakh)	And Saul said, "Cast the lots between my son and me"; and Jonathan was indicated.

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

NASB	And Saul said, "Cast <i>lots</i> between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.
Young's Updated LT	And Saul says, "Cast between me and Jonathan my son;" and Jonathan is captured.

Obviously, again the Septuagint is rather chatty, and the Masoretic text (which most translators followed) is quite sparse by comparison. Even Rotherham's translation, the NRSV and the REB followed the Hebrew in this verse (these versions often follow the Greek).

**What is the gist of this verse?** It was clear that the lot of Saul and Jonathan was taken, meaning that it was their sin which kept God from communicating to Israel. In this verse, lots are cast again, and Jonathan is shown to be the cause of God's non-communication with Israel.

1Samuel 14:42a			
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
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâ'ûl (שָׁאֻל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	Qal meanings: <i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death</i> ; Hiphil meanings: <i>to cast lots, to cause to fall, to be brought down</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
bayin (בֵּין) [pronounced bah-YIN]	<i>in the midst of, between, among</i> ; when found twice, it means <i>between</i>	preposition (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #996 BDB #107
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced yoh-naw-THAWN]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220

## 1Samuel 14:42a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

**Translation:** Then Saul ordered, "Cast [the lot] between me and my son Jonathan." I suspect that Saul is rather surprised that he and Jonathan are determined to be the problem. At this point, he is committed; he has to continue to find out whose sin has separated Israel from God.

Again, despite the huge difference between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text, the gist of the two renderings is the same. In between 1Sam. 14:42a and b we have the Septuagint text, which I will exegete below:

Since the Hebrew is listed as v. 42a and 42b, and since the Greek inserts text between, what is listed previously will be considered at v. 42a in the Hebrew and v. 42a<sub>1</sub>, etc. in the Greek.

### 1Samuel 14:42a<sub>2</sub> Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
hon (ὅν) [pronounced <i>hawn</i> ]	<i>whom, which, what, that; to whom, to that</i>	masculine singular relative pronoun; accusative case	Strong's #3739
án (ὅν) [pronounced <i>ahn</i> ]	<i>whomever, whichever, whatever</i>	particle often found with the relative pronoun	Strong's #302
kataklêroō (κατακληρώω) [pronounced <i>kaw-taw-clay-ROH-oh</i> ]	<i>to receive as one's portion; to draw the lot, to be taken by lot</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist middle subjunctive	Strong's #none
Kurie (Κύριε) [pronounced <i>KOO-ree</i> ]	<i>Lord</i>	masculine singular noun; nominative case	Strong's #2962
apothnêskō (ἀποθνήσκω) [pronounced <i>op-ohth-NACE-koh</i> ]	<i>to die [naturally or violently], to perish. Used of temporal death, eternal death and the death of plants and animals.</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active imperative	Strong's #599

**Translation:** ...whomever the Lord has taken by lot, he must die! Saul is backed into a corner here, not quite believing what is happening (if, indeed, this is a part of the original verse). When Saul has time to brood over a matter, then he comes up with a well thought-out rationalization for the stupid thing that he has done; however, when talking off the top of his head, Saul is likely to say almost anything. This is confirmed by the two stupid vows which he has made. He further backs himself into a corner.

### 1Samuel 14:42a<sub>3</sub> Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532



### 1Samuel 14:42a, Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
epô (ἐπω) [pronounced EHP-oh]	<i>to speak, to say [in word or writing]; to answer, to bring word, to call, to command, to grant, to tell</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative	Strong's #2036
ho (ὁ) [pronounced hoh]	<i>the; this, that, these</i>	definite article for a masculine singular noun	Strong's #3588
laos (λαὸς) [pronounced lah-OSS]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular noun; nominative case	Strong's #2992
prós (πρός) [pronounced prahç]	<i>facing, face to face with; near, near to, by, by the side of; to the advantage of</i>	directional preposition with the dative	Strong's #4314
Saoul (Σαούλ) [pronounced sah-OOL]	<i>desired and is transliterated Saul</i>	indeclinable masculine proper noun	Strong's #4549
ouk (οὐκ) [pronounced ook]	<i>no, not, nothing, none, no one</i>	negation; this form is used before a vowel	Strong's #3756
eimi (εἰμί) [pronounced eye-ME]	<i>to be, is, was, will be; am; to exist; to stay; to occur, to take place; to be present [available]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, present active indicative	Strong's #1510 (here equivalent to Strong's #2076)
to (τό) [pronounced toh]	<i>the; this that</i>	neuter singular definite article; accusative case	Strong's #3588
hrēma (ῥῆμα, ατος, τό) [pronounced HRAY-mah]	<i>speech, discourse, utterance; words, that which is spoken; command, order, direction proclamation; thing, object, matter, event; idea</i>	neuter singular noun; accusative case	Strong's #4487
touto (τοῦτο) [pronounced TOO-toh]	<i>this, this one, this thing</i>	intermediate demonstrative pronoun; accusative singular neuter form	Strong's #3778 (also known as Strong's #5124)

**Translation:** And the people with Saul said, "This utterance will not be!" Either death would be a great loss to the people. This is one of the very few times when those around Saul speak up concerning his mandates. They will continue to do so throughout this chapter in the Hebrew text as well.

### 1Samuel 14:42a, Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
kaí (καί) [pronounced kɪ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532



### 1Samuel 14:42a<sub>4</sub> Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
katakrateō (κατακρατέω) [pronounced <i>kah-tah-krah-THE-oh</i> ]	<i>to prevail over</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular, aorist active indicative	Strong's #none
Saoul (Σαούλ) [pronounced <i>sah-OOL</i> ]	<i>desired</i> and is transliterated <i>Saul</i>	indeclinable masculine proper noun	Strong's #4549
του (τοῦ) [pronounced <i>tu</i> ]	<i>of the; from the, [away, out] from the; from the source of; by the; than the</i>	masculine singular definite article, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #3588
laos (λαὸς) [pronounced <i>lah-OSS</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular noun; genitive/ablative case	Strong's #2992

**Translation:** *And Saul prevailed over the people...* What Saul actual says is not told to us, but he apparently reasserts his position. This is not at all out of character for Saul (which would be a consideration when trying to determine if this text belongs in our translation or not).

### 1Samuel 14:42a<sub>5</sub> Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
καί (καί) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
bállō (βάλλω) [pronounced <i>BAWL-low</i> ]	<i>to throw, to cast, to place, to put, to lay, to bring</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, present active indicative	Strong's #906
ανά (ἀνά) [pronounced <i>aw-NAW</i> ]	<i>among, in [into] the midst of; in the middle of, between; in; each, apiece</i>	preposition (sometimes used in a distributive sense)	Strong's #303
mesos (μέσος) [pronounced <i>MEH-soss</i> ]	<i>middle, midst, in the middle, among</i>	neuter singular adjective; accusative case	Strong's #3319
αυτου (αὐτοῦ) [pronounced <i>ow-TOO</i> ]	<i>his, of him; for him, to him</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular pronoun; genitive/ ablative case	Strong's #846
καί (καί) [pronounced <i>kī</i> ]	<i>and, even, also; so, too, then, that; indeed, but</i>	conjunction	Strong's #2532
ανά (ἀνά) [pronounced <i>aw-NAW</i> ]	<i>among, in [into] the midst of; in the middle of, between; in; each, apiece</i>	preposition (sometimes used in a distributive sense)	Strong's #303
mesos (μέσος) [pronounced <i>MEH-soss</i> ]	<i>middle, midst, in the middle, among</i>	neuter singular adjective; accusative case	Strong's #3319

The phrase ἀνά μέσος Sam καὶ ἀνά μέσος Dave simply means *between Sam and Dave*.

### 1Samuel 14:42a<sub>5</sub> Text from the Greek Septuagint

Greek/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	Strong's Number
lōnathan (Ἰωνάθαν) [pronounced ee-oh-NAY-thahn]	<i>Jonathan</i>	indeclinable proper noun	Strong's #none
tou (τοῦ) [pronounced tu]	<i>of the; from the, [away, out] from the; from the source of; by the; than the</i>	masculine singular definite article, genitive/ablative case	Strong's #3588
huios (υἱός, οὗ, ὁ) [pronounced hwee-OSS]	<i>son, child, descendant; pupil; follower</i>	masculine singular genitive/ablative noun	Strong's #5207
autou (αὐτοῦ) [pronounced ow-TOO]	<i>his, of him; for him, to him</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular pronoun; genitive/ablative case	Strong's #846

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**Translation:** [And they threw \[lots\] between Saul and Jonathan his son,...](#) Since Saul has prevailed, this throwing lots (or whatever it happens to be) continues. *They* apparently refers back to *the people* (which is a masculine singular noun). Also, it seems as though only one person would cast lots. Another explanation would be that, Saul and Jonathan somehow threw the lots. Since we do not know exactly what that means, it is harder to pin this down for meaning. However, my thinking would be that, Saul and Jonathan both do something in order to indicate who has sinned against God.

Now, does this additional portion of the LXX belong in Scripture? Even after the extensive analysis which I have done, I could not tell you. I lean toward this being a part of Scripture, but without much dogmatism. Whether it is or not does not materially affect our chapter.

### 1Samuel 14:42b

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
lâkad (לָקַד) [pronounced law-KAHD]	<i>was captured, was seized, was taken, was chosen [by lot]; trapped</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3920 BDB #539
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced yoh-naw-THAWN]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220

**Translation:** [And Jonathan was taken \[by lot\].](#) Despite the huge difference between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text, the gist of the two renderings is the same. The LXX fills in a few details, but these details are not absolutely necessary, nor are there any great doctrines to be found hidden in the verbiage of the LXX.

Now, do you recall [McGee's interpretation](#)? God was not answering Saul because Saul was the problem, not Jonathan. What this would mean is that the lot fell by chance on Jonathan here and that God was not in the

throwing of the lots (or, whatever other thing was done to determine God's will). Now, here's the thing—if Saul can get some sort of an answer on this question, be it right or wrong, then he should have been able to get the original guidance that he asked for, be it right or wrong. This may hurt your brain, because we have to apply some logic. We have gotten to this place because Saul was asking God what he should do and God did not answer him. Now, Saul asks God, *who is the problem?* And God answers, *Jonathan*. There is no reason to suppose that we had no guidance at first and now false guidance to throw everyone off the track. It makes the most sense for God not to answer Saul because of the oath, which apparently was before God and took in all of Israel's soldiers; and that, when He was asked who was at fault, then God responded with Jonathan.<sup>44</sup>

Okay, I know that hurt your brain, so let's take this in points:

### Options Regarding God's Answer to Saul

1. Saul has asked the guidance of God here and back in v. 37.
2. In v. 37, Saul asked God if he should continue to pursue the Philistines and if God would give them into his hand; however, God did not answer him at that time.
3. Now, Saul is attempting to figure out why God is not answering him. So, Saul attempts to figure out what the problem is in vv. 39–42 by asking God *where is the sin?*
4. We have several logical options here:
  - a. God did not answer Saul at all the first time, but God answers him here.
  - b. God did not answer Saul the first time and this second question was simply a fluke answer—given to Saul by chance (this would mean that there were different means employed to determine God's will each time—as Saul received no answer for the first question, but he received an answer for the second).
  - c. God did not answer Saul the first time, but He intentionally gives Saul a false answer the second time.
5. Let's examine these one at a time and the pros and cons of each. Let's start with the second: God did not answer Saul the first time and this second question was simply a fluke answer—given to Saul by chance (this would mean that there were different means employed to determine God's will each time—as Saul received no answer for the first question, but he received an answer for the second).
  - a. First of all, we have to have a different means of determining God's will, as we cannot have no answer followed by some answer **if this is strictly by chance**.
  - b. If we employed the same means each time, then there would have been an answer for the first question.
  - c. Therefore, Saul had to determine God's will in a different manner the second time, even though, both instances essentially demanded *yes or no* answers.
  - d. Saul is asking a question as to why God did not answer him the first time; which indicates that these questions had to be pretty close together in time. Using a different means makes no sense.
  - e. No matter how we approach this theory, each time, we are led to conclusions which make little or no sense.
6. The third approach: God did not answer Saul the first time, but He intentionally gives Saul a false answer the second time.
  - a. This makes little sense for God to be messing with Saul's head like this. Why would God give Saul no answer the first time, and then give Saul a false answer the second? Why would God lie to Saul? Again, this is an approach which makes no sense.
7. The first theory is: God did not answer Saul at all the first time, but God answers him here.
  - a. The other theories do not make sense; and I don't believe there are any other possible theories. For this reason, this theory wins by default. However, let's follow this theory out further.

<sup>44</sup> Now, I hesitate to offer another viewpoint here, but...Saul could have been asking directional questions of God previously, which required more of an answer than a simple *yes* or *no*, and was here asking simple *yes* or *no* questions, which the lots would have answered with or without God. Therefore, given that the lot was thrown twice, there was simply a  $\frac{1}{4}$  chance that the lot fell on Jonathan. After all, it had to fall on someone. This would indicate that God was not answering any question of Saul's. However, in taking this position, we are assuming that the lots always gave a *yes* or *no* answer, which is not necessarily the case.

## Options Regarding God's Answer to Saul

- b. One reason that God would not answer Saul is because of sin. God treats Israel as a national entity and treats Saul as the corporate head of this entity. Therefore, what Saul says and does stands for the entire nation. For instance, when George W. Bush went to war in Afghanistan and in Iraq, he did not ask me or any of my liberal friends if this should be done. However, he put our entire nation at war within these two other nations. This is what Bush did as the corporate leader of our nation. Our entire nation is involved, essentially, because of his volition. Saul is the corporate head of Israel, and Saul has a relationship, of sorts, with God; as Israel is God's chosen nation (the Jews are God's chosen people).
- c. Therefore, if there was sin, either on the part of Israel or on the part of Saul and his staff; this would affect Saul receiving an answer from God.
- d. Saul has been out of fellowship for sometime, although he probably does not realize it.
- e. However, the most recent problem is his vow (actually, he made two vows) and Jonathan did not obey that vow, having not heard it. Now you may want to give Jonathan a free pass here, but if the IRS passes a new tax law which affects me directly, but I file my taxes as if I never heard about the new law, well, the IRS is not going to give me a free pass. What Saul says is the law of the land because he is the king of Israel. Therefore, these vows actually have some meaning and these vows are directly related to Saul's relationship to God.
- f. Was Saul's vow stupid? Of course. However, Saul, as the corporate head of the nation Israel has the power and the authority to make stupid vows—that does not make his vow sinful.
- g. The most recent sin of Israel against God was Jonathan not obeying this vow of Saul's. There were probably other previous sins, but this was the most recent. When you commit a bunch of sins, and suddenly realize that you are out of fellowship, you name the sins which you are aware, and you are cleansed from all unrighteousness. This will be a sin which everyone is aware of; it can be confessed; and a sacrifice made.
- h. However, Saul has made a second vow to kill anyone who broke his first vow, even if it is his own son Jonathan. That is stupid vow #2.
- i. Had Saul not made this second vow, the appropriate animal sacrifice would have restored Saul and Israel to fellowship with God, and God would have answered him concerning the first question.
- j. It is not God's problem that Saul has made two stupid vows. God will let Saul sort these out.
- k. However, God does let Saul know what the latest sin is, which is Jonathan breaking Saul's vow.
- 8. Now, you may or may not like the conclusions here; but they are the only valid conclusions that we can draw.

If all of this was just too painful, the conclusion is this: God did not answer Saul his first questions ("Should we pursue the Philistines? Will we defeat them?") because Saul and the nation Israel were out of fellowship with Him. The most recent sin was, Saul made a vow to God and Jonathan broke this vow. This does not mean that there were not other sins. However, a confession of the first sin would have restored fellowship to God and God would have answered Saul's first questions. Now, we must deal with God's answer to Saul, which is, "Jonathan is the one who has sinned."

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**Application:** Again, this is simple; all it takes is one unknown sin to separate us from God. As soon as we commit a known sin (which we will), and then confess that sin to God, our known and unknown sins will be forgiven. **If we name our sins, He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins** [the known sins that we confess] **and to cleanse us from all wrongdoing** [the unknown sins that we have committed] (1 John 1:9). Until you know a great deal of Scripture, there are a lot of things that you may not realize are sins. In the past several years, I can't tell you how many people I have known or have read about who are believers who think that sex outside of marriage is not a sin. Many believers commit a host of mental and verbal sins that they do not confess until they finally commit some act that they recognize is a sin. The result is that their fellowship with God is broken more often, and you cannot grow apart from fellowship with God (and knowledge of the Word of God—I Peter 3:18a I John 2:11).

The most recent known sin here—which would be known to Saul and to Jonathan—would be that Jonathan violated, albeit unknowingly, Saul's oath. As per the words that flowed so easily out of Saul's mouth, whoever sinned will die—words he spoke before he had any idea that Jonathan was the culprit. Now, properly, had we come to this point, the idea of Saul saying all of these stupid things is absurd; once we came to this point, the proper sacrifices should be made and they should move on. It is Saul's second oath demanding death which has backed him into a corner.

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## Saul Determines to Execute Jonathan, Who Broke the Oath; the People Deliver Jonathan

And so says Saul unto Jonathan, "Make known to me what you have done." And so made known to him Jonathan and so he says, "A tasting I had tasted in an end of the staff which [was] in my hand a little of honey. Behold me, I will die."

1Samuel  
14:43

So Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done!" And Jonathan told him, saying, "I certainly tasted a little honey [using] the end of [my] staff that [was] in my hand. Observe, I will die!"

So then Saul ordered Jonathan. "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan explained, "I was the one who tasted a little honey using the end of my staff that I carry. Look, I am willing to die!"

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so says Saul unto Jonathan, "Make known to me what you have done." And so made known to him Jonathan and so he says, "A tasting I had tasted in an end of the staff which [was] in my hand a little of honey. Behold me, I will die."
Septuagint	And Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I did indeed taste a little honey, with the end of my staff that was in my hand, and behold, I die!"
Significant differences:	No significant differences.

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

CEV	"Jonathan," Saul exclaimed, "tell me what you did!" "I dipped the end of my walking stick in some honey and ate a little. Now you say I have to die!"
NAB	Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." Jonathan replied, "I only tasted a little honey from the end of the staff I was holding. Am I to die for this?"
NJB	"I only tasted a mouthful of honey off the end of the stick which I was carrying. But I am ready to die."
NLT	"Tell me what you have done," Saul demanded of Jonathan. "I tasted a little honey," Jonathan admitted. "It was only a little bit on the end of a stick. Does that deserve death?"
REB	Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." Jonathan told him, "True, I did taste a little honey on the tip of my stick. Here I am; I am ready to die."

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

<i>God's Word™</i>	"Tell me," Saul asked Jonathan. "What did you do?" So Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey on the tip of the staff I had in my hand. And for that I am to die?"
--------------------	--

JPS (Tanakh)

Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me, what have you done?" And Jonathan told him, "I only tasted a bit of honey with the tip of the stick in my hand. I am ready to die."

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

NASB

Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him and said, "I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!"

NRSV

Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand; here I am, I will die."

Young's Updated LT

And Saul says to Jonathan, "Declare to me, what have you done?" and Jonathan declares to him, and says, "I certainly tasted with the end of the rod that is in my hand a little honey; lo, I die!"

You will note that there are two different takes on this verse: (1) Jonathan bravely offers himself up to be killed as the one who violated the fellowship between Israel and God. Or, (2) Jonathan indicates that all he did was eat a small portion of honey, and demands to know, "And I am to die for that?"

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul asks Jonathan what he did which caused the break down of communication between God and Israel. Jonathan tells his father Saul exactly what happened—he dipped his stick into some honey and tasted it. However, he left off the part about not knowing of Saul's oath. Again, an unknown sin breaks fellowship with God just as a known sin does.

**1Samuel 14:43**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאָל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e/</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with the voluntative hê	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510

## 1Samuel 14:43

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâh (ה מ) [pronounced <i>maw</i> ]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
ʿâsâh (ה ע ש) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (ג נ) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
Yôwnâthân (י ו נ ט ן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
wa or va (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (ר מ א) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ṭâʿam (ע ט א) [pronounced <i>taw-ḠAHM</i> ]	<i>to taste, to perceive</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #2938 BDB #380
ṭâʿam (ע ט א) [pronounced <i>taw-ḠAHM</i> ]	<i>to taste, to perceive</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2938 BDB #380
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
qâtseh (ה ק צ) [pronounced <i>kaw-TSEH</i> ]	<i>end, extremity, outskirts</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7097 BDB #892
maṭṭeh (ה מ ט) [pronounced <i>mah-THE</i> ]	<i>staff, branch, tribe</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4294 BDB #641
ʾâsher (ר ש א) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81



## 1Samuel 14:43

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בֵּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
m <sup>e</sup> at (מֵעַט) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -GAHT]	<i>a little, fewness, few</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4592 BDB #589
d <sup>eb</sup> vash (דְּבַשׁ) [pronounced d <sup>eb</sup> -VAHSH]	<i>honey</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1706 BDB #185
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle (with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** So Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done!” And Jonathan told him, saying, “I certainly tasted a little honey [using] the end of [my] staff that [was] in my hand. Observe, I will die!” Saul is aghast; Jonathan is the hero of the hour. Jonathan is his great son. Jonathan offers his life. Since we do not have an interrogatives used in what Jonathan says, that means that this is not a question, but a statement of fact. Jonathan is obviously not afraid of death, nor is he attempting to push his father's buttons. He was willing to attack the Philistine camp with only his armor bearer, so he has no problem with fear of death.

Theologically, where does this put us? Jonathan appears to be innocent, except of committing this sin that was only a sin because of this ill-conceived oath of Saul's. Here, he is willing to die—in fact, as an innocent, Jonathan is willing to die for all Israel. So, even though it appears as though we are in some murky waters, we aren't really. God has just set up for us another shadow of our Lord to come, who, as the Innocent One, would be willing to die for all Israel. Like all analogies, we can only push this so far, and that is as far as we can take this particular one.

And so says Saul, “So does to me God and so he causes to add for a dying you die, Jonathan.”

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Then Saul said, “So [may] God do to me, and more also, for you will certainly die, Jonathan.”

Saul said, “So may God do to me, if not more, for you will certainly have to die, Jonathan.”

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so says Saul, “So does to me God and so he causes to add for a dying you die, Jonathan.”

Septuagint

And Saul said to him, “God do so to me, and more also; you will certainly die today.”

Significant differences: No significant differences. The doubling of a verb in the Hebrew simply gives greater emphasis to the action of the verb.

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

CEV "Yes, Jonathan; I swear to God that you must die."  
 NLT "Yes, Jonathan," Saul said, "you must die! May God strike me dead if you are not executed for this."  
 TEV Saul said to him, "May God strike me dead if you are not put to death!"

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

God's Word™ Saul said, "May God do worse things to me than are in this curse if you do not die, Jonathan!"  
 JPS (Tanakh) Saul said, "Thus and more may God do; You shall be put to death, Jonathan!"

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

The Emphasized Bible Then said Saul: <||So|| may God do, and ||so|| may he add> surely you must ||die||, Jonathan!  
 NASB And Saul said, "May God do this *to me* and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."  
 NRSV Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan!"  
 Young's Updated LT And Saul says, "Thus does God do, and thus does He add, for you certainly will die."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul has taken a vow or an oath before God that no one would eat until God gave them complete victory over the Philistines (or, until nightfall). It is clear by their success of Israel and the seriousness of this oath, that it was made in such a way as to be considered an oath before God, although *that* is not specifically stated in v. 24. Because of this oath, Saul tells Jonathan that he must die, in accordance with the oath; and that may God do the same to Saul or worse for having to fulfil the conditions of his oath (recall that Saul made a second vow that the person who committed the fellowship-breaking sin would have to die—v. 39).

## 1Samuel 14:44

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>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâʾûl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced <i>koh</i> ]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

You will note that several translations read, *so God will do to me* or words to that effect. Rotherham points out that 3 early printed editions, the Aramaic, Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate all add *unto me*.

## 1Samuel 14:44

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>Gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced <i>koh</i> ]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
yâçaph (וַיַּצֵּף) [pronounced <i>yaw-SAHPH</i> ]	<i>to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
The previous three words can be rendered <i>and more also</i> . See 1Sam. 3:17 20:13 25:12 2Sam. 3:9 etc.			
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
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i> ]	<i>to die</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220

**Translation:** Then Saul said, “So [may] God do to me, and more also, for you will certainly die, Jonathan.” Part of what has to be understood here is the phrase *so God does to me and more also*. We find that same phrase in Ruth 1:17 1Sam. 3:17 14:44 20:13 25:22 2Sam. 3:9. In 1Sam. 3:17, Samuel has a vision and Eli demands to know the details of that vision, and says, “What [was] the thing which He made known unto you. Please, do not hide it [what God said] from me, so God will do to you and more also if you hide the thing from me from all that He made known to you.” (1Sam. 3:17). Eli knew that a judgment had been lodged by God, and he says that God will do the same and more to Samuel unless the Word of God is made known to him. We have a similar use in 1Sam. 20:13. I think by comparing these passages, we can determine that the speaker is not saying, “God will do this to me and more” but “May God do this to me and more.” The end result is another vow; this vow states, that unless Saul executes Jonathan, then Saul says, “May God execute me as well.”

First question—why can't we just simply forget the oath. What if Saul said, “You know, that was a really stupid vow that I made, and we are just going to proceed with life as though I never made it.” Can't do that. He's the king. Do you recall the earlier analogy where President George Bush, when he took us to war against the Iraqi government, that we were taken into the war with him? It's like the vow—it doesn't matter how we feel, and it does not matter as to the strength of our reasoning or resolve—we are still at war with Iraqi. Bush cannot just say, “You know, I've changed my mind. Forget this war, because it is unpopular.” Bush can no more negate the war than Saul can negate his oath. The problem is that Saul made this oath by God (we may reasonably assume that, even though it is not so explicitly stated, as Jonathan's sin broke fellowship with God). If Saul somehow negates this oath, then he has taken God's name in vain. He has treated God's name trivially, as though it was a meaningless word or two inserted onto a phrase for effect. So, the oath cannot be taken back or ignored. The result would have been another and greater sin. What if George Bush suddenly withdrew all the US troops and publically stated, “Okay, you other nations are right. Maybe I was too impulsive to go to war”? Argue all that you want to about the validity

of his original position—but simply going back on this decision would be a much greater wrong (that is, assuming that going to war was wrong in the first place).<sup>45</sup>

What has no doubt occurred to you, as it has to me is, *just what is the right thing to do?* Saul has made mistake after mistake. The oath was a mistake in the first place. Then, calling for the death of whoever broke the oath was another mistake. Obviously, Saul does not want to kill Jonathan, nor does Jonathan really want to die. The soldiers of Israel do not want to see Jonathan executed either. However, it is Saul's proclamations which have taken them to this point. Would killing Jonathan be right? I don't think so. Would simply not killing him be right? That isn't really the proper way to go either, even though this is what Saul, Jonathan and the people want (even though Saul and Jonathan were both resigned to go through with it). What we need here is the Law of God, which provides a sacrifice for an unknown sin. The first few chapters of Leviticus provide us with a number of sacrifices for many different situations. In Lev. 4:2–12, we have what should be done in the case of an unknown sin. This would have been the right thing to do. Saul does not execute Jonathan, but he does not look the other way either. The sin is paid for; the death of the animal pays for the sin which Jonathan unknowingly committed. If Saul or the priest of God in camp had known the Law of God, there would have been a way to properly deal with this situation. However, what they will do is simply walk away from the situation, not taking any real action.

And so say the people unto Saul, "Will Jonathan die, who had done the deliverance, the great, the this, in Israel? A profanity! A living of Jehovah, if falls from a hair of his head grown-ward, for with Elohim he has done the day the this!" And so ransomed the people Jonathan and he did not die.

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14:45

The people then said to Saul, "Will Jonathan die, [The same Jonathan] who had caused this great deliverance in Israel? [That is] blasphemy [to] a living Jehovah if [anything] falls to the ground from the hair of his head, for he has accomplished [this salvation] with Elohim this day!" So the people ransomed [or, *rescued*] Jonathan so that he did not die.

The people then said to Saul, "Will Jonathan die? The same Jonathan who brought to Israel this great deliverance? That would be blasphemous to the living Jehovah, if even a hair fell from his head, given what he has done with God!" So, in this way, the people rescued Jonathan from a certain execution.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Latin Vulgate

And the people said to Saul: Shall Jonathan then die, who has brought about this great salvation in Israel? This must not be! As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has brought about [a deliverance] with God this day. So the people delivered Jonathan, that he should not die.

##### Masoretic Text

And so say the people unto Saul, "Will Jonathan die, who had done the deliverance, the great, the this, in Israel? A profanity! A living of Jehovah, if falls from a hair of his head grown-ward, for with Elohim he has done the day the this!" And so ransomed the people Jonathan and he did not die.

##### Septuagint

And the people said to Saul, "Shall he that has brought this great salvation in Israel be put to death this day? The Lord lives, there will not fall to the ground one of the hairs of his head; for the people of God have wrought successfully this day." And the people prayed [or, *petitioned*] for Jonathan in that day, and he did not die.

<sup>45</sup> I am loathe to veer off into politics, but our war in Viet Nam was handled this way. We were at war, but without clear objectives and clear support. It was as though we went to war, changed our minds, but kept our troops there fighting. You cannot simply change your mind about some things, and the point is that, regardless of the lameness of Saul's oath, it could not simply be withdrawn. Also, as an aside, I wrote this long before there were democrats calling for the immediate withdrawal of our troops, damn the consequences. That is an approach that, when I originally wrote this, was unimaginable.

Significant differences: Most of the differences are minor—we have Jonathan’s name in the MT; the pronoun *he* in the Greek. There appears to be an addition to the oath of the people (*A profanity!*) in the MT. However, after this, we have one of the very few differences which could be seen as an actual doctrinal difference (as we had with the *Ephod* in one text and the *ark* in another): in the Hebrew, it is *with the Lord* that Jonathan did what he did; in the Greek, the *people of God* were *successful* in that day. If these sorts of changes were found regularly throughout, then one would have an argument that someone got into the text of the Old Testament and made some doctrinal changes. However, in the book of Samuel, where we have possibly the greatest differences between the Greek and Hebrew, so far, up to this chapter, we have had only two instances where there is a minor doctrinal difference between the texts—and both are in this chapter, which is clearly a chapter where we find some of the greatest differences between the texts (note all the additional material found in the Greek!). These two instances are minor, they stand out, and this one can be dealt with simply: the people make this statement, so whether they speak accurately or not is not an issue—this is simply what the people said to Saul.

We have only a few words here and there of the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter in the Dead Sea Scrolls; barely enough to come to any sort of a conclusion. However, even given the minor doctrinal difference which we find here, it is not important enough to suggest that anyone got into Scripture and fooled with the text.

Finally, in the Hebrew, the people *ransom* Jonathan, which is a legitimate course of action; and, in the Greek, they simply petition Saul for Jonathan’s life.

As usual, the Latin and Syriac are pretty much in agreement with the Masoretic text.

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

CEV	“No!” the soldiers shouted. “God helped Jonathan win the battle for us; we won’t let you kill him. We swear to the LORD that we won’t let you kill him or even lay a hand on him!” So the army kept Saul from killing Jonathan.
REB	But his men said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, Jonathan who has won this great victory in Israel? God forbid! As the LORD lives, not a hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has been at work with God today.” So the army delivered Jonathan and he did not die.

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

<i>God’s Word</i> <sup>TM</sup>	The troops asked Saul, “Should Jonathan die after he has won this great victory in Israel? That would be unthinkable! We solemnly swear, as the LORD lives, not a single hair of his head will fall to the ground, because he has done this with God’s help today.” So the troops rescued Jonathan from death.
JPS (Tanakh)	But the troops said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, after bringing this great victory to Israel? Never! As the LORD lives, not a hair of his head shall fall to the ground! For he brought this day to pass with the help of God.” Thus the troops saved Jonathan and he did not die.

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

NASB	But the people said to Saul, “Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die.
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NKJV	But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.
NLT	But the people broke in and said to Saul, "Should Jonathan, who saved Israel today, die? Far from it! As surely as the LORD lives, not one hair on his head will be touched, for he has been used of God to do a mighty miracle today." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.
NRSV	Then the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great victory in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground; for he has worked with God today." So the people ransomed Jonathan, and he did not die.
Young's Updated LT	And the people say to Saul, "Does Jonathan die, who wrought this great salvation in Israel?—a profanation [or, a sacrilege]! Jehovah lives, if there falls from the hair of his head to the earth, for with God, he has wrought this day." And the people rescue Jonathan and he did not die.

Most of these translations (CEV, God's Word™, JPS, NASB, NKJV, NLT, REB, LXX and even Young's translation) are unfortunate here, as they do not convey what actually happened. In all of those translations, the people *rescue* Jonathan, but that is not accurate.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul made the point that his oath was to God and it included everyone; and therefore, God was not giving them direction because of this sin. The point the people made was that Jonathan delivered Israel with God; therefore, the greater blasphemy would be that if any harm came to Jonathan. Essentially, the people are taking an oath here, without stating any consequences. Of course, Saul loved Jonathan and pretty much any argument would have convinced him. But, it was not simply an argument which delivered Jonathan; the people offered a ransom, as per the Law, and that is what got Jonathan off the hook.

### 1Samuel 14:45a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Shâʾûl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
hă (הֲ) [pronounced <i>heh</i> ]	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 14:45a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yôwnâthân (יֹונָתָן) [pronounced yoh-naw-THAWN]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
y <sup>ə</sup> shûwʿâh (יְשׁוּעָה) [pronounced y <sup>ə</sup> shoo-GAW]	<i>deliverance, salvation</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3444 BDB #447
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced gaw-DOHL]	<i>great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, mighty, 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 a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
châlîylâh (חָלִילָה) [pronounced khaw-LEE-law]	<i>far be it [from me or you], to profane [something], a profanity!, a blasphemy!</i>	adverb, substantive, interjection	Strong's #2486 BDB #321
chay (חַי) [pronounced KHAH-ee]	<i>living, alive</i>	adjective construct	Strong's #2416 BDB #311
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
These previous three words and the one that follows should not be separated; the idea is, <i>this is blasphemy to the living Jehovah, if...!</i>			
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49



## 1Samuel 14:45a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i> ]	<i>to fall, to lie, to die a violent death, to be brought down, to settle, to sleep deeply</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
sa'ârâh (שַׁעֲרָה) [pronounced <i>sah-ghuh-RAW</i> ]	<i>hair</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8185 BDB #972
rô'sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced <i>rohsh</i> ]	<i>head, top, chief, front, choicest</i>	masculine plural noun (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	Strong's #7218 BDB #910
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i> ]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun (with a directional hê)	Strong's #776 BDB #75
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
'îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
'êlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>Gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>day, today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260

**Translation:** The people then said to Saul, “Will Jonathan die, [The same Jonathan] who had caused this great deliverance in Israel? [That is] blasphemy [to] a living Jehovah if [anything] falls to the ground from the hair of his head, for he has accomplished [this salvation] with Elohim this day!” The key to understanding what the people are saying is the word *if*. We do not have a *then* unless we include the words *a blasphemy [against] the living Jehovah* with the final sentence of the people’s speech. This is *not* the common saying, *As Jehovah lives...*

Although not popularly used today, for many years there has been the common saying, “*If you harm even a hair on his head...*” (or words to that effect). Its origin is the Bible (1Sam. 14:45 1Kings 1:52 Luke 21:18 Acts 27:34).

The people of Saul's army recognize how inappropriate it would be to take the life of the lead soldier of Israel, the one who essentially, through God, delivered Israel from the hand of the Philistines. What we need is an animal sacrifice on behalf of Jonathan, and if Samuel were on the scene, that is what would happen.

1Samuel 14:45b			
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
pâdâh (פָּדָה) [pronounced paw-DAWH]	<i>to ransom, to purchase, to redeem</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6299 BDB #804
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ʿahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun (with a definite article)	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
ʾêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced yoh-naw-THAWN]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	generally negates the word immediately following; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced mooth]	<i>to die</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

**Translation:** *So the people ransomed [or, rescued] Jonathan and he did not die.* That Jonathan was ransomed (and therefore rescued), indicates that the people paid for his transgression (see Lev. 4:27–35 27:2–13 Num. 15:24). Jonathan rescued Israel from the certain death that they faced so they rescued him from the certain death that he faced.

The NIV Study Bible comments on these previous 20 or so verses: *Saul's actions...strikingly illustrate his lack of fitness to be king. This foolish curse before the battle...brought "distress" to the army and, as Jonathan tellingly observed, "made trouble for the country (v. 29) rather than contributing to the victory. And later, when hindered from taking advantage of the battle's outcome by the Lord's refusal to answer (v. 37), Saul was ready to execute Jonathan as the cause, though Jonathan had contributed most of the victory, as everyone else recognized (v. 45). Saul's growing egocentrism was turning into an all-consuming passion that threatened the very welfare of the nation. Rather than serving the cause of the Lord and his people, he was in fact becoming a king "such as all the other nations have" (8:5).*<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 391. The first sentence was slightly paraphrased.

Although it is not so explicitly stated in our passage, a ransom would involve the giving of money (Ex. 21:30 30:12–16). The sin of murder could not be paid off with a ransom (Num. 35:31–32), but the issue is not murder, but a broken vow. So, my educated guess is that the people gave money in order to save Jonathan from death.

Keil and Delitzsch offer a completely different take on this. *In the present instance, Saul had issued the authorized or empowered by God. In the presence instance, Saul had issued the prohibition without divine authority, and had made it obligatory upon the people by a solemn oath. The people had conscientiously obeyed the command, but Jonathan had transgressed it without being aware of it. For this Saul was about to punish him with death, in order to keep his oath. But the people opposed it. They not only pronounced Jonathan innocent, because he had broken the king's command unconsciously, but they also exclaimed that he had gained the victory for Israel "with God." In this fact (Jonathan's victory) there was a divine verdict. And Saul could not fail to recognize now, that it was not Jonathan, but he himself, who had sinned, and through his arbitrary and despotic command had brought guilt upon Israel, on account of which God had given him no reply.*<sup>47</sup> If you recall, but McGee took quite the same position in [v. 38](#).

What Keil and Delitzsch say almost makes sense. Obviously, they struggled with what I struggled with. What would have been the right thing to do? It seems obvious that Jonathan's transgression is rather trivial and that the real problem is with Saul and his ill-conceived vow. The problem with that interpretation is this: if Saul was the ultimate problem, and the one who had sinned, then the lot would have fallen upon him for coming up with such a lame oath. But technically, Saul was not at fault here. As the leader of Israel, it was his prerogative to make binding oaths, and these vows obligated the people. The oaths could not be ignored or simply set aside. Since we do not live in a time when vows are made with any seriousness, let me see if I can offer you an analogous situation. At this point in time, George Bush has taken us to war against Iraq and there are thousands of people in the United States who oppose this war (if fact, they would oppose almost any war). That doesn't make any difference. Their tax dollars still pay for the war; even they do not approve of this war, they are still at war with Iraq because the president placed them at war with Iraq. He made a binding decision that, regardless of their viewpoint, still placed them at war with the government of Iraq. Saul, when he made this vow, obligated all of Israel's fighting men to this vow. It doesn't matter how they felt about the vow, or whether they opposed it. They were still under the vow. Now, given the victory of Jonathan (all of which occurred *prior* to the eating of the honey), it still seems illogical for the hero of the battle, Jonathan, to be summarily executed by the one who did the least in the battle (Saul). The proper response, again, was for the people to pay off this sin with a ransom. It appears as though they did in the MT. In the Greek text, it sounds more like Saul simply allowed the people to talk him out of doing what he did not want to do in the first place.

I have twice alluded to Achan, who violated an oath made by Joshua. We need to stop for a moment, and take a look at this. Scripture is filled with parallel situations. There are many similarities between our passage and Joshua 7:10–26.

### Jonathan and Achan, a Comparison

Jonathan	Achan
Jonathan committed an unknown sin (the eating of the honey) which put Israel out of fellowship with God (1Sam. 14:27–30).	Achan committed the known sin of putting aside some things which he took from the city of Jericho (Joshua 7:21).
This violated the oath where Saul, the king of Israel, said that no one would eat anything until the Philistines had been completely defeated (1Sam. 14:24).	Achan's action violated Joshua's order that the silver, gold and articles of bronze and iron would go into the treasury of Jehovah and that the rest would be burned as a sacrifice to God (Joshua 6:18–19).

<sup>47</sup> Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 462.

## Jonathan and Achan, a Comparison

Jonathan	Achan
What Saul did <i>troubled the land</i> , Israel (1Sam. 14:29).	What Achan did <i>troubled</i> Israel (Joshua 7:25). It is the same verb and same morphology: 'âkar (אָכַר) [pronounced <i>gaw-KAHR</i> ] in the Qal perfect.
Saul's oath was a result of him just not getting enough involvement in the victory over the Philistines. He had to do something, so he makes this lame oath.	Joshua made this oath not for his own glory or to placate God, but to recognize that God had delivered them.
In order to determine who committed the sin, lots were cast (1Sam. 14:40–42).	In order to determine who committed the sin, lots were cast (Joshua 7:16–18).
Jonathan publically acknowledged his sin (having been told of Saul's oath after the fact) and Jonathan was ready to die (1Sam. 14:28, 43).	Achan publically acknowledged his sin (Joshua 7:20–21).
The soldiers of Israel interceded on Jonathan's behalf, demanding that Saul not kill him, as Jonathan worked in conjunction with God to deliver Israel (1Sam. 14:45).	Achan had no one to intercede for him. Not only was he executed, but his entire family was executed with him. As the head of their household, he had stained his entire family (1Sam. 7:24–26). I should mentioned that his family would have been aware of what he had done.
The lesson is that no matter how slight the sin, a sin breaks fellowship with God and makes a man worthy of death. However, Jonathan was ransomed by the people; they interceded on his behalf.	The lesson here is much more sobering. An unbelieving father can take his entire family to eternal death by his actions. There are many men who love their wives and children; however, without giving them the gospel, his considerable influence can influence them right to the Lake of Fire (apart from the grace of God).

Throughout Scripture, we find many similar and even parallel situations, just as we do in history. This does not mean that a particular legend was so fantastic as to have several stories about the same thing (as we have in mythology); they are simply similar situations, and sometimes, as in this case, they have entirely different endings and lessons.

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**And so went up Saul from after Philistines and Philistines went to their place.** 1Samuel 14:46

**So Saul went up from following the Philistines while the Philistines returned [lit., *went*] to their home.**

**So Saul ceased following the Philistines while they returned to their own territory.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text  
Septuagint

And so went up Saul from after Philistines and Philistines went to their place.  
And Saul went up from following the Philistines; and the Philistines departed to their place.

Significant differences: None.

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

CEV Saul stopped hunting down the Philistines, and they went home.  
 NLT Then Saul called back the army from chasing the Philistines, and the Philistines returned home.

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

God's Word™ Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines. So the Philistines returned to their own land.  
 JPS (Tanakh) Saul broke off his pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines returned to their homes.

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

NASB Then Saul went up from pursuing [lit., *after*] the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.  
 Young's Updated LT And Saul goes up from after the Philistines, and the Philistines have gone to their place;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Although Jonathan was rescued from death, still Saul's relationship and Israel's relationship with the living God Jehovah was uncertain. Since God had not given Saul any clear sign concerning the Philistines, he withdrew his troops (if there were any still out there chasing the Philistines) while the Philistines returned to their home land.

## 1Samuel 14:46

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
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i> ]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
ʿachar (אַחֵר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition (with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Pʿlishʿtîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>pʰ-lîsh-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

## 1Samuel 14:46

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
P <sup>h</sup> ilish <sup>tîy</sup> (פִּלִּשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>h</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix)	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHH</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 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix)	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

**Translation:** So Saul went up from following the Philistines while the Philistines returned [lit., *went*] to their home. Saul did not have a lot of choice here. For obvious reasons, he expected that an attack upon the Philistines would be a suicidal attack. That his son Jonathan and one armor bearer could pull this off with the help of God was unbelievable. However, Saul was back to calling the shots and he was uncertain as to whether God would be in this chase or not. So he pulled back, and the Philistines kept going to their territory. The momentum of the early victory was lost.

Notice how Saul, in one instant, changed history for Israel for decades. This oath that he made kept his men from achieving a complete victory over the Philistines. Then, once the Philistines were on the run, Saul had to stop to determine why God was not guiding him—again, a result of his original oath. Then, once things were finally straightened out in camp, the momentum was lost. We don't know if Saul again tried to get God's guidance or whether he decided, "The Philistines are there; we are here, and we have our land back. That's a good enough ending for any day." As a result, the Philistines would remain a thorn in the side of the Israelites until David finally defeats them pretty much once and for all. In fact, we don't hear much about the Philistines after 2Sam. 21 23 1Chron. 18:1 20:4–5; they are only mentioned in passing in 1Kings 4:21 5:1 15:27 16:15 and a few places after that. That sort of solid defeat could have been Saul's legacy. However, in all fairness, I must point out that Saul led Israel against a great many nations and was almost always victorious (as his mental illness increases, his function as a king goes downhill). David will provide a time a peace and prosperity for all Israel; however, this is something which Saul could have done.

**Application:** As a believer in Jesus Christ, you are on a winning team. Saul, as a believer, is enjoying great happiness right now, but not necessarily great rewards. I recall one football game that I played in 7<sup>th</sup> grade during P.E. Now, in my high school and junior high life, I was not a very athletic person. However, the team's quarterback sent me out for a pass, as I would be the last person in the world that anyone would guard. Now, it is over 40 years later and I still recall Nagle (the quarterback) hitting me with that pass. It wasn't the winning touchdown; it was not some important game—it was simply a game played during P.E. It was a very cool thing for this to happen to me, a person of very limited athletic abilities. Our team was going to win whether I was a part of the play or not; however, in retrospect, over 40 years later, I was really glad to be a part of the team and to have scored a touchdown (probably the only touchdown I ever scored). I suspect that our eternity in heaven will be analogous to



this. We who have believed in Jesus Christ will spend eternity with God, and our lives in eternity will be great. However, it will be even cooler to be able to look back at our sorry Christian lives and being chosen to catch that one touchdown pass. Just as that experience has stayed with me a lifetime, so our eternal rewards will be, which stay with us throughout all eternity.

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## Saul's Victories over the Surrounding Heathen

The next two verses give us a brief overview of all Saul's military victories, which we will summarize in v. 48.

It is likely that vv. 47–52 was a summary of Saul's military career which had been recorded long after these other events were recorded and then slipped into this context. That is, the war against the Philistines in this and the previous chapter was possibly recorded soon after the war; and what follows in the next chapter could have also been recorded soon after the events of that chapter. However, these next 6 verses are a summary, something which could have only been written after Saul's reign (or near the end of his reign). Barnes mentions that some suggest this passage is properly inserted at the end of chapters 11 or 12. This does give us a clue as to the assembling of the book of Samuel. It appears as though an editor assembled it after the fact, utilizing several resources. This editor may have written this summary himself. This would put this book in contrast with the book of Genesis, which seems to have several authors, one who would pick up wherever the previous author left off.

**And Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel. And so he wages war round about in all his enemies: in Moab and in sons of Ammon and in Edom and in kings of Zobah and in Philistines; and in all where he turned, he condemns [and overcomes].**

1Samuel  
14:47

**So Saul seized the kingship over Israel. And he waged war against all his enemies round about: against Moab, against the sons of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings [or, king] of Zobah and against the Philistines; and against whomever he turned, he [righteously] overcame.**

**So Saul gained complete control over Israel. Then he was forced to wage war against all of his enemies on every side: against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines; and whomever he turned against, he was victorious.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

#### Masoretic Text

And Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel. And so he wages war round about in all his enemies: in Moab and in sons of Ammon and in Edom and in kings of Zobah and in Philistines; and in all where he turned, he condemns [and overcomes].

#### Septuagint

And Saul received the kingdom, by lot he inherits the office over Israel; and he fought against all his enemies round about, against Moab, and against the sons of Ammon, and against the sons of Edom, and against Bæthæor, and against the king of Suba, and against the Philistines; wherever he turned, he was victorious.

#### Significant differences:

Primarily, we have additional text in the Greek, which is not found in the Hebrew, Latin or Syriac (which generally are in agreement). As in previous verses, a poor Hebrew manuscript could account for the missing text. The first missing text is, that Saul became the ruler of Israel *by lot*. The second addition has Saul being victorious over an area not named in the MT.

There is a difference between the singular and plural of the noun *king*; it is singular in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Greek, and apparently in the Syriac (it is rendered



*kingdom* in the English rendering of the Syriac). We find *kings* in the Hebrew and Latin. Although I would side with the singular, there is nothing which would prevent Saul from being victorious over more than one ruler from Zobah.

As is generally the case, even though there are some significant differences in the text, there is nothing which could cause a doctrinal disputation.

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

NLT	Now when Saul had secured his grasp on Israel's throne, he fought against his enemies in every direction—against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. And wherever he turned, he was victorious.
TEV	After Saul became king of Israel, he fought all his enemies everywhere: the people of Moab, of Ammon, and of Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he fought he was victorious. [One ancient translation was victorious; Hebrew acted wickedly.] <sup>48</sup>

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

God's Word™	When Saul had taken over the kingdom of Israel, he fought against his enemies on every side—against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he was victorious.
JPS (Tanakh)	After Saul had secured his kingship over Israel, he waged war on every side against all his enemies; against the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, the Philistines, and the kings of Zobah; and wherever he turned he worsted [them].

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

NASB	Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted [or, <i>condemned</i> ] punishment.
Young's Updated LT	...and Saul captured the kingdom over Israel, and he fights round about against all his enemies, against Moab, and against the Bene-Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines, and wherever he turns, he does vex <i>them</i> .

**What is the gist of this verse?** Despite Saul's missteps concerning Jonathan and the oath, God still prospered Israel over the surrounding nations. It is important to note that Israel under Saul apparently was at war a great deal (which is not what we would consider full-on prosperity. However, he was victorious against all these Arab groups.

## 1Samuel 14:47a

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
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

<sup>48</sup> One of my main gripes with the TEV is that it is oversimplified. The Hebrew does not say *acted wickedly*. We will examine that in detail in the Hebrew text box.

## 1Samuel 14:47a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâkad (לָקַד) [pronounced law-KAHD]	<i>to capture, to seize, to take, to choose [by lot]; trapped</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3920 BDB #539
m <sup>e</sup> lûwkâh (מְלוּכָה) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> loo-KAW]	<i>kingdom, kingship, kingly office, monarchy, royalty</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4410 BDB #574
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Yis <sup>e</sup> râʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-row-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâcham (לָחַם) [pronounced law-KHAHM]	<i>engage in battle, engage in war, to wage war</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3898 BDB #535

Since this verb does occur in the Qal (active) stem, we may reasonably assume that Saul was attacked as often as he attacked—that is, we may take this as a passive verb, where Saul (and Israel) receive the action of the verb.

ṣâbîyb (סָבִיב) [pronounced saw <sup>b</sup> -VEE <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>around, surrounding, circuit, round about, encircle</i>	adverb	Strong's #5439 BDB #686
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced kaw],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every; any of</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾâyab (אֵיבָ) [pronounced aw-YA <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>my enemies, the ones being at enmity with you</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #340 BDB #33

**Translation:** *So Saul seized the kingship over Israel. And he waged war against all his enemies round about [or, on every side]:...* It is difficult to translate this final phrase as a passive voice without violating other aspects of the translation. We might render this: *And all his enemies that surrounded Saul waged war against him.* Obviously, the problem is that, in the Hebrew, *against* goes with *all his enemies* and the subject of the verb is *Saul* rather than *all his enemies*. However, this allows the idea of the passive stem of the verb to be conveyed—Saul is now at the receiving end. What is meant to be conveyed is that Saul did not go out looking to war against those surrounding Israel. They brought the battle to him. Israel today is the center of a great deal of conflict; one would imagine that there are thousands of Arabs who would like to see a grease spot where the Israelis live today. Times were no different then. Israel was God's nation; certainly, Satan was going to inspire various mid-eastern types to viciously attack Israel.

That Israel's enemies are all those nations surrounding her will be quite evident in the remainder of the verse. The enemies of Israel who are to the east, to the west, to the north and to the south will all attack Israel during the reign of Saul and Saul will reveal great bravery in his successful defense of Israel.

### 1Samuel 14:47b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
Môw'âb (מֹוֹאָב) [pronounced moh-AW <sup>eb</sup> V]	transliterated <i>Moab</i>	Masculine proper noun; gentis and territory	Strong's #4124 BDB #555
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
bên (בְּנֵי) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʿammôwn (עַמּוֹן) [pronounced gâhm-MOHN]	transliterated <i>Ammon</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #5983 BDB #769
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
ʿĒdôwm (עֲדֹוֹם) [pronounced eh-DOHM]	<i>reddish; and is transliterated Edom, Edomites</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #123 BDB #10
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
melek <sup>e</sup> (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced MĒH-lek]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

*King* is in the singular in the Greek and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

## 1Samuel 14:47b

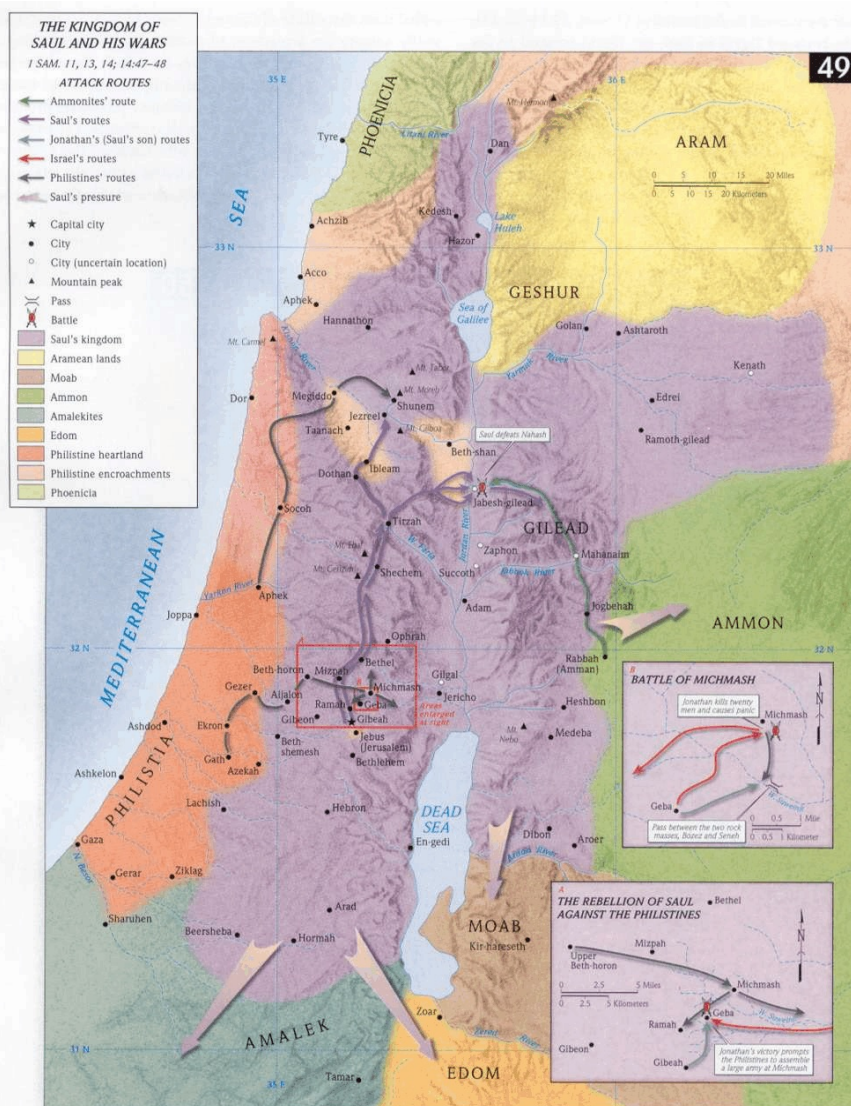
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Tsôwbâh (צוּבָה) [pronounced <i>tzoh<sup>b</sup>-VAW</i> ]	transliterated <i>Zobah</i>	Proper noun, territory	Strong's #6678 BDB #844
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
P <sup>l</sup> ish <sup>ti</sup> y (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** ...against Moab, against the sons of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings [or, king] of Zobah and against the Philistines; ...

Moab occupied the southern half of the eastern side of the Dead Sea, directly below the tribe of Reuben. Ammon was on the east side of Reuben and Gad. They were descended from the incestuous union of Lot and his two daughters (Gen. 19:30–38). These are Israel's enemies to the east, area today occupied by Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Edom is due south of the Dead Sea with Judah above and to its left as you face the Dead Sea from Edom. The Edomites are descended from Esau. Edom is Israel's enemy to the south. Jordan also takes in the area which once belonged to Edom.

Zobah was an Aramæan kingdom which existed during the reigns of Saul and David. They are associated with the raw material copper in 2Sam. 8:8 and we know the names of some of their cities (which are named in Egyptian texts as well). However, we do not know exactly where they were located. Maps I have seen place Zobah northeast of northern Dan (which would be above Aram on the map). Smith's Bible dictionary has Zobah as being a part of the Syrian empire. ZPEB places them due north of the Land of Canaan (with a question mark).




Taken from <http://www.anova.org/sev/atlas/hm/049.htm>

Barnes agrees, calling them *one of the petty Aramæan kingdoms flourishing at this time...situated between Damascus and the Euphrates*.<sup>49</sup> This location is reasonable, as Israel's enemies here are said to surround her, and Zobah is the only candidate for the north. Today, this would be Syria and Lebanon.

We have already dealt in great detail with the Philistines. They are Israel's enemies from the west, which is the Gaza Strip today. A little further south of the Gaza Strip is the Sinai Peninsula, occupied by Egypt.

Today, just as then, Israel has enemies on every side. It might be helpful just to see what a large area Saul defended as king of Israel.

### Saul's Wars

Scripture	Incident
Prior to becoming king, Saul defeated the Ammonites in Jabesh-gilead (1Sam. 11). They will express their undying gratitude after his death (1Sam. 31:10–13).	
After becoming ruler over Israel, Saul defeated a garrison of Philistines in Geba (which you will notice is in central Israel in Benjamin). This would be a logical place for Saul to begin as king, as he is a Benjamite. 1Sam. 13–14	
Saul also had successful campaigns against the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites (1Sam. 14:47). This appears to be a summary statement, sort of a footnote in 1Sam. 13–14.	
Although Saul defeated the Amalekites south of Judah (and perhaps they were in Judah), he will disobey God and not destroy them completely as God expected them to. 1Sam. 15	
Saul's final battle will be against the Philistines in north central Israel, at Mount Gilboa. It is apparent that the Philistines had made great inroads against Israel, given the areas where Saul fought them. 1Sam. 31	

It should be obvious that Saul traveled all over Israel to fight against Israel's enemies. Saul's biggest problem was his lack of obedience to God and God's chosen spiritual authorities.

Map taken from [http://home.att.net/~natespics/1sam\\_map.jpg](http://home.att.net/~natespics/1sam_map.jpg)

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<sup>49</sup> Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 36.



## 1Samuel 14:47c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88
kâl (כָּל) [pronounced <i>kaw</i> ],	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all, every</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Together, kâl ʾăsher mean *all whom, whomever, all whose, all where, wherever*. In this context, without the bēyth preposition, we would render this *wherever*; however, the bēyth preposition is used here in the sense of *against*, so we render this *and all whom he turned against or against whomever he turned*.

pânâh (פָּנָה) [pronounced <i>paw-NAWH</i> ]	<i>to turn, to turn away from, to turn toward, to turn one's face away from, to turn one's face to</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6437 BDB #815
râsha' (רָשָׁע) [pronounced <i>raw-SHAHQ</i> ]	<i>in the Hiphil, this word has a judicial edge to it, and means to declare guilty, to declare unrighteous, to condemn, to overcome [as the righteous over the wicked]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #7561 BDB #957

For the last word, the LXX has instead, *he was victorious* (as per Rotherham; there is not really a lot of difference between the Septuagint and the Hebrew here).

**Translation:** ...and whomever he turned against, he [righteously] overcame. Israel was surrounded by hostile countries (not unlike today); and even though Saul was not a man after God's own heart, making mistake after mistake, God still gave him victory in battle as the righteous over the unrighteous (which is the meaning of râsha' in the Hiphil). As I have pointed out before, Saul did not always capitalize on his victories, so that David had to face these same people again during his reign.

And so he does [with the] army and so he strikes Amalekites and so he delivers Israel from a hand of his plundering.

1Samuel  
14:48

So he did valiantly: he struck down Amalekites and he delivered Israel from the hand of [those] looting her.

And Saul acted with great military savvy and might, striking down Amalekites and delivering Israel from all those who attempted to plunder her.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so he does [with the] army and so he strikes Amalekites and so he delivers Israel from a hand of his plundering.
Septuagint	And he did valiantly, and struck Amalec, and rescued Israel out of the hand of them that trampled on him.

Significant differences: The minor difference noted may simply be a matter of translating.

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

CEV	When Saul became king, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the kings of Zobah, the Philistines, and the Amalekites had all been robbing Israel. He was a brave commander and always won his battles. [vv. 47–48 combined]
NLT	He did great deeds and conquered the Amalekites, saving Israel from all those who had plundered them.

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

God's Word™	He acted forcefully and defeated Amalek. He rescued Israel from the enemies who looted their possessions.
JPS (Tanakh)	He was triumphant, defeating the Amalekites and saving Israel from those who plundered it.

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

NASB	And he acted valiantly and defeated [lit., <i>smote</i> ] the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them [lit., <i>its plunderers</i> ].
Young's Updated LT	And he makes a force, and strikes amalek, and delivers Israel out of the hand of its spoiler.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul shows great fearlessness in battle and his troops defend Israel from all sides. In this verse, it is from the Amalekites and any other groups who attempt to rob Israel. It is not clear whether this is a reference to the next chapter (where we have a detailed report of Saul's attack upon the Amalekites) or whether we are simply speaking of mounting a temporary defensive against them, which would later be followed by the offensive attack in the next chapter.

### 1Samuel 14:48

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
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i> ]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced <i>CHAH-yil</i> ]	<i>efficiency, army, strength, valour, power, might; and that which is gotten through strength—wealth, substance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2428 BDB #298
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253



## 1Samuel 14:48

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>to strike, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿamâlêq (עֲמֹלֵק) [pronounced ʿah-maw-LAYK]	transliterated <i>Amalek</i>	masculine proper noun (used infrequently as an gentilic adjective)	Strong's #6002 BDB #766
wa or va (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâtsal (נָצַל) [pronounced naw-TSAHL]	<i>to snatch away, to deliver, to rescue, to snatch out of danger, to preserve</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5337 BDB #664
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	sign of the direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yisʿrâʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	<i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
shâçâh (שָׁחַח) [pronounced shaw-SAW]	<i>plundering, spoiling, pillaging, looting during war</i>	Qal active participle with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8154 BDB #1042

**Translation:** So he did valiantly: he struck down Amalekites and he delivered Israel from the hand of [those] looting her. Saul made a lot of mistakes and his historical legacy is tarnished greatly. However, he did lead Israel against all of her surrounding enemies, defeating them soundly. We would suspect that Jonathan had a lot to do with these victories alluded to. What was apparently common in those days was for neighboring groups of peoples to storm into Israel through the borders and steal their livestock or their manufactured goods, and then to slip back into their own countries where they are safer. Saul went after these types and lessened the amount of international crime against Israel. Saul had a lot of character flaws, particularly later in his life; however, he showed great heroic strength and fortitude in this chapter—particularly the final few verses. When God gave Saul to Israel to be their king, it was not God being pissed off and thinking, “So Israel wants a king? Well, I’ve give them their damn king!” For a portion of Saul’s reign, he was fearless (most of the time) and successful against Israel’s enemies, which is what the Israelites desired in a king.

Against all the Philistines, Saul could only muster 600 poorly armed men from all Israel—most of the Israelites deserted Saul and some even went over to the side of the Philistines. Despite how Saul must have felt to see the majority of his forces desert, he did not militarily desert Israel—ever. We can fault Saul for many things; however, we cannot contest his great bravery, revealed in his first conflict against the Ammonites all the way until he and his sons are killed by the Philistines, when Saul is probably in his 60"s. For this reason, Scripture unequivocally states that [Saul behaved valiantly...against all his enemies on every side](#).

Now, later on in his life, Saul will show fear, and it is, I guess one could say, a very reasonable fear. First of all, psychologically, many of us gain more of a feel for our mortality as we get older (teens, on the other hand, can exhibit very little fear<sup>50</sup>). However, Saul's later fears were justified because God will leave him. When God is with you as a believer, you should fear nothing, which does not mean you start jumping off of buildings; however, when God is not with you, then you should be reasonably afraid because of your mortality and God's reduced protection (God may still have a reason for you to live).

I have drawn parallels between Israel and her enemies then to Israel and her enemies today. The Amalekites then are the Palestinians of today, who live, more or less, within the borders of Israel. Given the amount of hatred which has been demonstrated against Israel over these many centuries, it is a testimony to God's grace and to the power of prophecy that there are any Israelites anywhere today.

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Let's review these victories of Saul and cross reference them when possible:

### A Summary of Saul's Military Victories

Enemies	Scripture	Compass	Summary
Moab	1Sam. 14:47	East of Israel	Descendants of Lot who live directly below the tribe of Reuben on the other side of the Dead Sea from Judah and Simeon. The actual war(s) between Saul and Moab is not recorded.
Sons of Ammon	1Sam. 11:1–13	East of Israel	The initial war between Saul and the sons of Ammon was the victory which endeared Saul to the people of Israel. Nahash the Ammonite was a particular surly type who threatened to gouge out the right eye of all those under his subjection. Saul was organized, the victory was clean and decisive, and the victory caused Israel to recognize that Saul was their proper king.
Edom	1Sam. 14:47	South of Israel	These descendants of Esau live directly below the Dead Sea. We have no other record of the conflict between Israel and Edom during the reign of Saul.
Kings of Zobah	1Sam. 14:47	North of Israel	The various clues of Scripture indicate that Zobah is a relatively new coalition north-northeast of Israel. The conflict between Saul and the kings of Zobah is only mentioned here. However, we will see David war against them in 2Sam. 8:3–10.

<sup>50</sup> An ex student of mine recently told me about her sky diving, which, would probably cause me to faint. She, on the other hand, was pretty jazzed about the whole thing.

A Summary of Saul’s Military Victories			
Enemies	Scripture	Compass	Summary
The Philistines	1Sam. 13:3–14:46	West of Israel	We have three recorded conflicts between Saul and the Philistines in Scripture. We have just studied the first where a decisive victory over the Philistines came about despite Saul.
	1Sam. 17:1–57		The second is the famous standoff between the armies of Israel and the army of the Philistines where Goliath challenges any Israelite to fight him. Here, a young David is victorious in killing Goliath.
	1Sam. 31:1–10		The final battle listed is the one wherein Saul and his sons lose their lives fighting against the Philistines. Saul would have been relatively old by that time (60–72), although strong enough to go to war.
Amalekites	1Sam. 15:1–7	South and southwest of Israel	We will study the war of Saul against the Amalekites in the next chapter. God will remark that He regrets making Saul king because of his leniency toward the leader of the Amalekites.
	1Sam. 30:1–20		The other recorded victory over the Amalekites during the reign of Saul is credited to David. The Amalekite attack against Israel affected David personally and he took care of the matter pretty much as a private citizen. Since 1Sam. 14:48 mentions Saul acting valiantly, we would assume that there was another battle against the armies of Saul.
We have seen Saul when he has shown great military savvy against the Ammonites as well as when he showed a great many missteps against the Philistines, which Israel defeated despite Saul. We may reasonably assume that the conflicts mentioned very likely were victories of Jonathan’s as much as their were Saul’s.			
As a postscript, it is interesting to note that these are the same nations which David is said to have subdued and who pay Israel tribute in 2Sam. 8:11–12. Saul’s victories were not complete; however, they did pave the wave for David’s dominance over those same nations.			

In some ways, vv. 47–48 are a summary of Saul’s career, as well as a summation of the previous few chapters. In chapter 11, Saul defeats the Ammonites; in chapter 12, he takes over the reigns of the kingdom; in chapters 13–14, he defeats the Philistines. Vv. 47–48 tell us that Saul has taken the kingdom of Israel and has defeated Israel’s enemies who surround her. This is unusual for Hebrew literature. Often the summary is stated at the beginning and then it is developed and expanded in subsequent chapters. For this reason, it is thought that these few verses should be at the end of chapter 11 or 12.<sup>51</sup> It is for this reason that I see these two verses and the few that follow as something which was later inserted into this context (however, not too much later, as only Saul’s sons are named in the following verses).

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Saul’s Genealogical Line; Saul’s Army

<sup>51</sup> *Barnes’ Notes; 1 Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 36.

And so are sons of Saul: Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchi-shua; and a name of a pair of his daughters: a name of the firstborn, Merab, and a name of the younger, Michal.

1Samuel  
14:49

And [these] are the sons of Saul: Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua. And the names of his two daughters: the name of firstborn [was] Merab and the name of the younger [daughter was] Michal.

Saul's sons were named Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua. His eldest daughter was named Merab and her younger sister was named Michal.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so are sons of Saul: Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchi-shua; and a name of a pair of his daughters: a name of the firstborn, Merab, and a name of the younger, Michal.
Septuagint	And the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Jessiu, and Melchisa; and the names of his two daughters: the name of the first-born, Merob; and the name of the second Melchol.

Significant differences: None.

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

NLT	Saul's sons included Jonathan, Ishbosheth [Hebrew <i>Ishvi</i> , a variant name for Ishbosheth; also known as Eshbaal], and Malkishua. He also had two daughters: Merab, who wa older, and Michael.
REB	Saul's sons were: Jonathan, Ishyo, and Malchishua. These were the names of his two daughters: Merab the elder and Michal the younger. [Greek: <i>Ishyo</i> (Lucian's edition of the Septuagint); Hebrew: <i>Ishvi</i> ( <i>Ishbosheth</i> in 2Sam. 2:8 and <i>Eshbaal</i> in 1Chron. 8:33)].

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

<i>God's Word™</i>	Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. The names of his two daughters were Merab (the firstborn daughter) and Michal (the younger daughter).
JPS (Tanakh)	Saul's sons were: Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua; and the names of his two daughters were Merab, the older, and Michal, the younger. [the JPS footnotes that Ishvi is the same as Ishbosheth (2Sam. 2:8) and Eshbaal (1Chron. 8:33)].

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

NASB	Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchishua; and the names of his two daughters <i>were these</i> : the name of the first-born Merab and the name of the younger Michal.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And the sons of Saul are Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchi-Shua; as to the name of his two daughters, the name of the first-born <i>is</i> Merab, and the name of the younger Michal;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Three of Saul's sons—Jonathan, Ishvi and Malchishua—are named, along with his daughters, Merab and Michal.

## 1Samuel 14:49a

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
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
bên (בְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁאֻל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
Yôwnâthân (יוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>yoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3129 (& #3083) BDB #220
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yish <sup>e</sup> rîy (יִשְׁרָיִ) [pronounced <i>yish<sup>e</sup>-REE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Ishvi</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3440 BDB #1001
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mal <sup>e</sup> kîyshûwâ' (מַלְכִּישׁוּעַ) [pronounced <i>mah<sup>e</sup>-kee-SHOO-ahg</i> ]	<i>my king is opulence</i> and is transliterated <i>Malchishua</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #4444 BDB #575

**Translation:** [And \[these\] are the sons of Saul: Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua.](#) We have already studied the line of Saul back in 1Chron. 8. However, we should look at the different lines of Saul that we find in Scripture:

Saul's Varied Line	
Passage:	Scripture:
1Sam. 14:49a	<a href="#">And [these] are the sons of Saul: Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua.</a>
1Sam. 31:2	The sons of Saul who died with him are named: Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua.
2Sam. 2:8–10	Saul has a son, Ishbosheth, who becomes king after him over the northern kingdom, for a very short time.
1Chron. 8:33b 9:39b	<a href="#">...and Saul became the father of Jonathan, Malchi-shua, Abinadab and Eshbaal.</a>

Explanation: two sons of Saul are undisputed: Jonathan and Malchishua. Also, there is no reason to doubt his daughters, mentioned only in 1Sam. 14:49, as the entire line was not always given. What seems to be the case is that Ishbosheth = Eshbaal (= Ishvi?). In 1Chron. 8:33b, we examined how there were several Israelite names which were sometimes given with a *-bosheth* ending and sometimes given with the *baal* ending. *Baal* had two connotations: one as a heathen god and one as a landowner or landlord. I suspect that this was both a Hebrew word and perhaps a Canaanite word which just turned out to sound exactly the same. The two words may have had similar origins, so that it was not a complete coincidence. Because Israel did not want to be associated with

the heathen god *Baal*, they would replace this ending in some names with the word *bosheth*. The other example is Merib-baal, a son of Jonathan (1Chron. 8:34–9:40), who is called Mephib-bosheth in 2Sam. 4:4–9:6, 10–13–16:1, 4–19:24–25, 30–21:7. *Bosheth* means *shame*. Of course, there is the other possibility that Saul named a son, giving some respect to the local heathen god, but I doubt that.

This would mean that Abinadab is simply mentioned in 1Chron. 8:33, but not in 1Sam. 14:49, either because he had not been born yet, the author chose to leave him out, or his name simply dropped out of the text. The other alternative is that Abinadab was also known as Ishvi, and the placement of the two names in 1Sam. 14:49 and 31:2, indicates that these are two names for the same person.

I should mention that the NASB<sup>52</sup> and Barnes<sup>53</sup> both see Ishvi and Abinadab as equivalent and Ishbosheth and Eshbaal equivalent. The names *Ishvi*, *Ishbosheth* and *Eshbaal* are more similar in the Hebrew than *Ishvi* and *Abinadab*. However, *Ishvi* = *Abinadab* makes more sense from a logical standpoint.

There are three possible reasons why Ishbosheth is not mentioned here: (1) Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua, along with Saul's daughters, will all be mentioned in subsequent chapters of 1Samuel. However, Abinadab will not. Therefore, he was named here. (2) The writer of this portion of God's Word was sympathetic to David, and since Ishbosheth will be Saul's son who succeeds Saul in the northern kingdom, his name is left out. (3) It could be that this was written before Ishbosheth was born. This seems like the simplest explanation. The problem is this: Ishbosheth will be 40 when he takes over the northern kingdom for a short time (2Sam. 10). Saul could not have been king more than 40–42 years. So Ishbosheth would have been born, had this genealogy been written any time after Saul took office. Anyone who inserted this five verses after the fact would have known about Ishbosheth. The other approach would be that vv. 49–51 originally followed 1Sam. 12, and that chapters 13–14:48 were later inserted as eyewitness accounts of the early wars against the Philistines. This would allow for reason #3. I do see this scenario in my head of Saul being named king, his celebrating this with his wife, and then spending several months at war with the Philistines while his wife is pregnant. That would all make sense, as long as either 1Sam. 13:1–14:48 was inserted by a later editor (or, at the very least, vv. 47–48, which clearly summarize Saul's reign as king/military leader).

Given the various possibilities, let me splain it to you, Lucy: although it is suggested that all or a portion of these five verses were added at a later date, perhaps by an editor, that is not necessarily the case. We have gone about 20 years into Saul's reign. Prior to his reign, he defeated the Ammonites; at this time, his army defeated the Philistines. In between times, his army defeated the list of enemies from vv. 47–48. His son, Ishbosheth (also known as Eshbaal) has not been born yet, and is therefore not found in this list. Finally, Ishvi is equivalent to Abinadab.

None of this has any real affect on any doctrine. The doctrine of God's sovereignty, for instance, is unaffected about just which names are equivalent. There are no contradictions to be found here—simply that two of Saul's sons are known by 2 names (which is not unusual).

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Ishbosheth will become, for a short time, the king over the northern kingdom (2Sam. 2:8–10).

### 1Samuel 14:49b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>a</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (i) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>52</sup> *New American Standard Bible, Study Edition*; A. J. Holman Company, ©1975 by The Lockman Foundation, p. 409.

<sup>53</sup> *Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 37.

## 1Samuel 14:49b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
shênayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced shêNAH-yim]	<i>two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	numeral feminine construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughters or villages</i>	feminine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
b <sup>ê</sup> kîyrâh (בְּכִירָה) [pronounced b <sup>ê</sup> -kee-RAW]	<i>firstborn</i> [always of women]	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1067 BDB #114
mêra <sup>b</sup> (מֶרַב) [pronounced may-RAH <sup>b</sup> V]	transliterated <i>Merab</i>	proper noun	Strong's #4764 BDB #597
w <sup>ê</sup> (or v <sup>ê</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
qâtân (קָטָן) [pronounced kaw-TAWN]	<i>small, young, unimportant</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #6996 BDB #881
Mîykal (מִיכָל) [pronounced mee-KAHL]	possibly means <i>brook</i> or <i>stream</i> and is transliterated <i>Michal</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #4324 BDB #568

**Translation:** And the names of his two daughters: the name of firstborn [was] Merab and the name of the younger [daughter was] Michal.

We find Merab mentioned in 1Sam. 18:17–19, where she is first promised to David as a wife, and then given to Adriel. Saul will give Michal to David to wife (1Sam. 18:20, 27 19:12), a marriage which will begin well and end badly, as she is ashamed of his overly enthusiastic display when bringing the Ark into Jerusalem (2Sam. 6:16, 20–23).

And a name of a woman of Saul, Ahinoam, a daughter of Ahimaaz; and a name of a commander of his army, Abner [lit., *Abîyner*], son of Ner an uncle of Saul. 1Samuel 14:50

The name of Saul's wife [is] Ahinoam ([she is] the daughter of Ahimaaz). The name of the commander of his army [is] Abner, the son of Ner, an uncle of Saul's.

Saul's wife was named Ahinoam, who is the daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of Saul's five-star general is Abner, who is the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.



Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And a name of a woman of Saul, Ahinoam, a daughter of Ahimaaz; and a name of a commander of his army, Abner [lit., <i>Abîyner</i> ], son of Ner an uncle of Saul.
Septuagint	And the name of his wife was Achinoom, the daughter of Achimaa; and the name of his captain of the host was Abenner, the son of Ner, son of a kinsman of Saul.

Significant differences: None.

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

NLT	Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The commander of Saul's army was his cousin Abner, his uncle Ner's son.
TEV	His wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; his army commander was his cousin Abner, the son of his uncle Ner.

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

God's Word™	The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of his army was Abner, the son of Saul's uncle Ner.
JPS (Tanakh)	The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of his army commander was Abiner [usually Abner] son of Saul's uncle Ner.

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

NASB	And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.
Young's Updated LT	...and the name of the wife of Saul is Ahinoam, daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of the head of his host is Abner son of Ner, uncle of Saul;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** This verse continues with Saul's significant others. His wife's name is Ahinoam, who is the daughter of Ahimaaz. Their names are right next to one another in the Lexicon, meaning that she was named after her father. Abner was the commander-in-chief of Saul's army, and the son of Ner (*Abner* means *my father is Ner*). The last few words, *an uncle of Saul* could refer back to Abner or to Ner.

1Samuel 14:50			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i> ]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
ʾîshshâh (אִשְׁשָׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAWH</i> ]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

## 1Samuel 14:50

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăchîynôʿam (אֲחִינֹעַם) [pronounced uh-khee-NOH-ġam]	<i>my brother is delight, and is transliterated Ahinoam</i>	proper noun	Strong's #293 BDB #27
bath (בַּת) [pronounced bahth]	<i>daughters or villages</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #1323 BDB #123
ʾăchîymaʿats (אֲחִימָאֵץ) [pronounced uh-khee-MAH-ġahtz]	<i>my brother is wrath, and is transliterated Ahimaaz</i>	proper noun	Strong's #290 BDB #27
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
sar (סַר) [pronounced sar]	<i>chieftain, chief, ruler, official, captain, prince, leader, commander</i>	masculine singular construct	(סַר) [pronounced sar], which
tsâbâʾ (צָבָא) [pronounced tsaw <sup>b</sup> -VAW]	<i>army, war, or warfare</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6635 BDB #838
ʾăbîynêr (אֲבִינֵר) [pronounced u <sup>b</sup> -vee-NAYR]	<i>my father is Ner or my father is a lamp, and is transliterated Abner</i>	masculine proper noun (alternate spelling)	Strong's #74 BDB #4
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
nêr (נֵר) [pronounced nair]	<i>lamp and is transliterated Ner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5369 BDB #633
dôwd (דָּוִד) [pronounced dohd]	<i>beloved, love, uncle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1730 BDB #187
Shâʾûwl (שָׂאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	<i>which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

**Translation:** The name of Saul's wife [is] Ahinoam ([she is] the daughter of Ahimaaz). The name of the commander of his army [is] Abner, the son of Ner, an uncle of Saul's. There are two ways to interpret that last phrase—either Ner is Saul's uncle, or Abner is. The closest proper noun is Ner, which is the reason we would choose that. However, the actual subject is Abner; that final phrase is about Abner, not about Ner, so the uncle could mean that Abner is Saul's uncle. This gives us two possible lines to Saul, which we have discussed back in 1Chron. 8, but will repeat here (after the next verse).

This is the only mention of Ahimaaz (there is another, a son of Zadok the priest). There are a number of Levites with the prefix *Ahi* in their names (*Ahijah*, *Ahimelech*) and it would not be out of the question for this to be someone

from a priestly family.<sup>54</sup> However, given that Jonathan is old enough to have served as a military commander early in Saul's career would suggest that Saul married this woman prior to becoming king. However, we can infer little about religion here, as you will recall that Saul's servant knew who Samuel was and where he lived, and Saul did not. The other option is that Saul married after becoming king (he does not seem to act like a married man when he goes looking for those escaped donkeys). If Saul did not marry until after becoming king, then this particular battle against the Philistines would have occurred at least 20 years into his rulership (because Jonathan had to be old enough to lead an army). It is this particular battle which seems to mark the end of God's approval for Saul's reign (1Sam. 13:13–14). Such an interpretation, which I originally dismissed as unlikely, means that we are halfway through Saul's reign as king, and that vv. 47–48 are a summary of what has *already* occurred. This means that my theory about his last son being born soon after the beginning of his reign would not work; however, that last son would have been born after the recording of this information, which is not out of the question. What this also seems to explain is that we do not have 10 years of Saul being an okay to a good king, and then 30 years of a downhill slide where God says, "Your kingdom will not endure." The implication is that we have say 20–30 years where Saul is a reasonable king (vv. 47–48), and this is the point where he screws up enough for Samuel to tell him that his dynasty is over. Such an interpretation actually explains a lot, and puts a lot of this in perspective. Our only problem is that the summary of vv. 47–48 is typically placed at the beginning of expanded coverage of the same—however, there is no hard and fast rule which means that it could not be a summary. Such a summary would have been particularly apt, as now Saul begins to go downhill as a king and as a person. Now, please, don't misunderstand—there is no contradiction here, I am simply exploring some possible options.

This suggestion of Barnes is intriguing enough to list these implications as points:

### **What if this battle with the Philistines did not occur early in Saul's kingship...?**

1. Saul possibly married Ahinoam, a Levite (and possibly an Aaronite) after he became king.
2. The reasons why this would be logical:
  - a. Saul does not act like a married man when he hunts down the two donkeys. He seems to wander off with no thought to a wife or family; nothing is said about a wife or family; and none of his sons accompany him.
  - b. If his wife is of the priestly family, it would seem unlikely that Saul would not know who Samuel was. He may have had little by way of spiritual interest, but he did marry a woman of the Levite family. People do marry outside their religious comfort zone now and again.
  - c. Such a marriage would make sense to occur soon after Saul became king. He would marry into a higher family than he would have prior to becoming king.
  - d. David is a man after God's own heart. We would not expect him to be standing in the wings for 30 some years. It is more likely that we have a period of, say, 5–10 years where David demonstrates incredible patience. Also, God trains David during this period of time. David will not be off in the shadows of the end of Saul's reign simply tapping his food and waiting for Saul to die.
3. The implication here is that we are some distance into Saul's career as king. Jonathan, who would have been born after Saul became king, is old enough to lead troops into battle. He is impetuous enough to do what he has done.
4. There is no reason to suppose that Saul went from being a great leader (as when he fought against the Ammonites) to making an incredible number of bad decisions, as we find in his war against the Philistines, overnight. This battle marked the beginning of the end for Saul.
5. This means that at least 20 years have passed in between those two battles, during which Saul could have fought many battles against many groups of people, as is indicated in vv. 47–48. The fact that these battles were successful seems to logically point backwards rather than forwards.
6. Our discussion about the possible misplacement of vv. 47–50 becomes moot. It is just exactly where we would expect it to be.
7. There is one item that requires discussion, if this occurred later in Saul's reign: what about his offering of the sacrifices in Gilgal and why should Saul be responsible for instructions given to him 20+ years previous? The explanation is actually fairly simple: this pre-determined meeting place of Saul and Samuel was in case

<sup>54</sup> Barnes suggests this in *Barnes' Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 37.

## What if this battle with the Philistines did not occur early in Saul's kingship...?

of a national emergency, and this was their typical meeting place in case of an emergency. Saul was to always give Samuel seven days to come to him to give him direction. This particular time, Saul screwed up, and felt that he could not wait even another hour.

Note the result of making a simple observation of the name of one person.

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Saul's wife, by the way, is only named in this verse. Saul's mistress, Rizpah, will be mentioned in 2Sam. 3:7 21:8–11.

**And Kish, a father of Saul, and Ner, a father of Abner, a son of Abiel.** 1Samuel 14:51 **Kish [is] the father of Saul and Ner [is] the father of Abner, son of Abiel.**

**Kish is the father of Saul and Ner is the father of Abner, the son of Abiel.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text Septuagint	And Kish, a father of Saul, and Ner, a father of Abner, a son of Abiel. And Kis [was] the father of Saul, and Ner, the father of Abenner, [was] the son of Jamin, son of Abiel.
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Significant differences: We have an additional name in the Greek; the Latin and Syriac are in agreement with the MT.

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

NLT REB	Abner's father, Ner, and Saul's father, Kish, were brothers; both were sons of Abiel. Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel. [ <i>sons</i> is the probable reading; Hebrew: <i>son</i> ]
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### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ JPS (Tanakh)	Kish (Saul's father) and Ner (Abner's father) were the sons of Abiel. Kish, Saul's father, and Ner, Abner's father, were sons of Abiel.
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### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Young's Updated LT	And Kish <i>was</i> the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner <i>was</i> the son of Abiel. ...and Kish <i>is</i> father of Saul, and Ner father of Abner <i>is</i> son of Abiel.
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**What is the gist of this verse?** We have a parallelism: Kish is the father of Saul and Ner is the father of Abner. It is unclear exactly who the *son* of Abiel is, although it could reasonably apply to all four (as *son* properly means *descendant*). However, since the final *son* is in the singular, we apply a simply father son relationship between Ner and Abiel.

## 1Samuel 14:51

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qîysh (קִישׁ) [pronounced <i>keesh</i> ]	transliterated <i>Kish</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7027 BDB #885
ʾâv (אָב) [pronounced <i>awv</i> ]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household or clan	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1 BDB #3
Shâ'ûwl (שׂאול) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nêr (נֵר) [pronounced <i>nair</i> ]	<i>lamp</i> and is transliterated <i>Ner</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5369 BDB #633
ʾâv (אָב) [pronounced <i>awv</i> ]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household or clan	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1 BDB #3
ʾăbîynêr (אַבִּינֵר) [pronounced <i>u<sup>b</sup>-vee-NAYR</i> ]	<i>my father is Ner</i> or <i>my father is a lamp</i> , and is transliterated <i>Abner</i>	masculine proper noun (alternate spelling)	Strong's #74 BDB #4
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
ʾĂbîyʾel (אַבִּי־אֵל) [pronounced <i>u<sup>b</sup>-vee-EL</i> ]	<i>El (God) is [my] father</i> ; transliterated <i>Abiel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #22 BDB #3

**Translation:** *Kish [is] the father of Saul and Ner [is] the father of Abner, son of Abiel.* Just as we have the problem in the previous verse, who goes with whom, we find the same problem here. Are Kish and Ner sons of Abiel? Is Abner the son of Abiel? The latter, even though we have the closeness of the nouns, seems unseemly, as Abner is already stated to be the son of Ner (and *Abner* means *my father is Ner*). We also have a parallelism, which we have not had yet in this line:

*Kish, the father of Saul;  
Ner, the father of Abner;  
son of Abiel.*

That parallelism seems to imply that both Kish and Ner are brothers and both sons of Abiel, despite the singular noun construct *son*. In 1Chron. 8:33, Ner is said to be the father of Kish, which indicates that we must have either two *Ner*'s or two *Kish*'s. These questions have yielded several possible lines for Saul.

Possible Lines to Saul	
First Scenario	Second Scenario
<div><div>Abiel</div><div><div>Abdon</div><div>Zur</div><div>Kish1</div><div>Baal</div><div>Ner</div><div>Mikloth (and others)</div></div><div><div><div>Kish2</div><div>Saul</div></div><div>Abner</div></div></div>	<div><div>Ner1</div><div>Abiel</div><div><div><div>Kish</div><div>Saul</div></div><div><div>Ner2</div><div>Abner<sup>55</sup></div></div></div></div>
Possible Lines to Saul	
<p>What arguments favor the <i>First Scenario</i>?</p> <div><div>1. In 1Chron. 9:35–39, which is probably the chief passage which supports the first scenario, we clearly have two different <i>Kish</i>'s. In v. 36, we have a listing of the sons of Abiel (actually, Jeiel, in the passage). In this list, we have 10 sons listed. Two of those sons are Kish and Ner. In v. 39, Ner is said to be the father of Kish, who is the father of Saul.</div><div>2. Notice the tenor of 1Chron. 8:29 and 9:35; it appears as though we are beginning a significant line. For this reason, it would be less likely to have a primary ancestor, a father of Abiel (Ner2), named elsewhere.</div><div>3. The final <i>son</i> in this verse is a singular construct, meaning that we can reasonably set up one relationship between one father (Abiel) and one son (Ner), rather than making Kish and Ner both sons of Abiel, despite the parallelism.</div><div>4. This is extremely important: in order for the second scenario to be accurate, we <i>should</i> have found a second <i>Ner</i> mentioned in 1Chron. 8:30.</div><div>5. In 1Chron. 9:39, we seem to have a clear lineage Ner → Kish → Saul → Jonathan. Ner is also said, in the previous verse, to be one of the sons of Jeiel (Abiel). This fits perfectly into the line which I have set up, and less so into the accepted line of Saul.</div></div>	
<p>What arguments favor the <i>Second Scenario</i>?</p> <div><div>1. This is the line of Saul that most Bible exegetes follow. As you no doubt noticed in several of the English translations, Kish and Ner are both said to be sons of Abiel.</div><div>2. This allows for Kish and Ner to be brothers.</div><div>3. The most important reason for adhering to the second scenario is this: Abner will back the wrong horse after Saul's death in 2Sam. 2:8. For him to have political aspirations and involvement, we would expect him to be about the same age as Saul or younger (which is more like a cousin, rather than an uncle). If Saul died between the ages of 62–70, we would not expect an older uncle to be politically involved after the fact. They only way around this is for Saul's uncle to be roughly his age, which is certainly possible in either scenario. In case you did not know this, it is possible to be older than your uncle.</div><div>4. If you don't look too closely, this seems to solve the apparently discrepancies between 1Sam. 14:49–51 1Chron. 8:29–33 9:35–39.</div></div>	
In both cases, I should point out that <i>Abner</i> means <i>my father is Ner</i> .	

<sup>55</sup> *When Critics Ask*; Geisler and Howe, ©1992, Victor Books, p. 203.

It must be the mathematician in me which causes me to get so worked up over minor matters such as the line of Saul. However, I believe that in all things of Scripture, it is best to present the most accurate interpretation possible, whether the topic is minor or major.

I also need to include the translation of the previous few verses from the CEV. I have stated, on several occasions, problems which I have with the CEV. One area wherein it is generally superior is its genealogical lines, which are clear and in plain English.

### 1Samuel 14:49–51 in the Contemporary English Version

Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. They had three sons: Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. They also had two daughters: The older one was Merab, and the younger one was Michal.

Abner, Saul's cousin, was the commander of the army. Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.

The problem is, of course, not in the execution, but in the interpretation. Saul does not have three sons, but four (1Chron. 8:33–9:39). And Abner is probably Saul's uncle and not his cousin (see discussion on [Saul's line](#)).

And so is the war strong upon Philistines all days of Saul. And saw Saul all of a man of strength and all of a son of valor, and so he would gather him unto himself.

1Samuel  
14:52

And the war against the Philistines was intense all the days of [the reign of] Saul. And [when] Saul saw any man [who was a potential] soldier and a son of valor, he would take [this] man to himself.

And the war between Israel and the Philistines was intense throughout the entire reign of Saul. And whenever Saul found a man who had the potential for being a valiant warrior, Saul would draft him into his army.

Here is how others have handled this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text      And so is the war strong upon Philistines all days of Saul. And saw Saul all of a man of strength and all of a son of valor, and so he would gather him unto himself.

Septuagint      And the war was vehement against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man, and any valiant man, then he took them to himself.

Significant differences:      None.

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

CEV      Saul was at war with the Philistines for as long as he lived. Whenever he found a good warrior or a brave man, Saul made him join his army.

NLT      The Israelites fought constantly with the Philistines throughout Saul's lifetime. So whenever Saul saw a young man who was brave and strong, he drafted him into his army.

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

God's Word™      There was intense warfare with the Philistines as long as Saul lived. Whenever any warrior or any skilled fighting man came to Saul's attention, Saul would enlist him in the army.

JPS (Tanakh)      There was bitter war against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and whenever Saul noticed any stalwart man or warrior, he would take him into his service.



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

Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached [lit., *gathered*] him to his staff [lit., *himself*].

**Young's Updated LT**

And the war is severe against the Philistines all the days of Saul; when Saul has seen any mighty man, and any son of valor, then he gathers him unto himself.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The war and fighting between Israel and the Philistines was intense during the reign of Saul. Because of this continual conflict, Saul kept his eyes open for any man who was a potential soldier. When Saul saw such a man of valor, he would draft him into the Israeli army.

**1Samuel 14:52a**

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
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
mil <sup>o</sup> châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced <i>mil-khâw-MAW</i> ]	<i>battle, war</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
châzâq (חָזַק) [pronounced <i>khaw-ZAWK</i> ]	<i>strong, mighty</i> , (most often found with the substantive <i>hand</i> ) also <i>fierce, intense</i>	feminine singular adjective	Strong's #2389 BDB #305
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>ǵahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
P <sup>o</sup> lish <sup>tiy</sup> (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>o</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
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
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i> ]	<i>days</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
Shâ'ûl (שָׁאֻל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

**Translation:** And the war against the Philistines was intense all the days of [the reign of] Saul. We had a summation of the relationship between Israel and the Philistines during the time of Samuel (who is still alive, by the way)—and that was that Israel took back her territory and that there was peace between the two national forces. However, during the time of Saul, what characterized the relationship between the Philistines and Israel were fierce battles and intense warfare. A proper attack and the correct approach from the beginning by Saul could have made the victory of this chapter decisive and end the war between Israel and the Philistines for another 20–40 years. All of this depends upon the correct leadership.

The application should be easy. Saul was not God's choice for a king. That is, it was God's choice not to have a king over Israel (at least, not until the time of David). What we should have seen here would be two deliverers: Saul (in 1Sam. 11 and his son Jonathan in 1Sam. 13–14). Such an approach would have resulted in decisive and long-lasting victories.

### 1Samuel 14:52b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Shâ`ûl (שָׂאֹול) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
kol (כָּל) [pronounced <i>ko</i> ]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
`îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>man, each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Together, these mean <i>anyone, any man, every man</i> .			
gibbôwr (גִּבּוֹר) [pronounced <i>gib-BOAR</i> ]	<i>strong man, mighty man, soldier, warrior, combatant, soldier, veteran</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1368 BDB #150
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kol (כָּל) [pronounced <i>ko</i> ]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
chayil (חַיִל) [pronounced <i>CHAH-yil</i> ]	<i>efficiency, army, strength, valour, power, might; and that which is gotten through strength—wealth, substance</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2428 BDB #298
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
`âçaph (אַחַפּ) [pronounced <i>aw-SAHF</i> ]	<i>collect, assemble, gather; take away, draw back, take out of the way; kill, destroy</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #622 BDB #62

## 1Samuel 14:52b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿel (לָא) [pronounced e/]	<i>in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) (with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular suffix)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

**Translation:** And [when] Saul saw any man [who was a potential] soldier and a son of valor, he would take [this] man to himself. Saul, because of this intense war against the Philistines, was always on the lookout for men to place in his army. It was his duty to protect Israel from without, and Saul, although he was bumbling at times, took this responsibility seriously. This meant that he had an open draft which could be applied at any time. Note how this agrees with what Samuel had warned decades before: “This will be the procedure of the king who will rule over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands, and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.” (1Sam. 8:11–12). Samuel's emphasis was upon personal service to Saul; however, he does indicate that these men were attached for military purposes as well. This, by the way, should not be seen as a shortcoming of Saul. A king needs to access the human resources of his country. A king without personal attendants of one form or another (e.g., a cabinet) cannot function. David's personal cadre of soldiers will be mentioned often in chapters to come (1Sam. 22:2 23:13 25:13 27:2–3 29:2 30:1, 9 2Sam. 2:3 5:6 8:19 15:18 23:8–39).<sup>56</sup>

You may wonder how is Saul able to take up these men from where they are and place them into service. Certainly, there would be payment of some sort, which was probably land which Saul seized under the authority of eminent domain (although they did not call it that). 1Sam. 8:14: “And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves, and give them to his servants.” How does Saul pay his soldiers? With land that he seizes from the populace. Most of the male population of Israel was in reserve status; however, generally, there were around 3000 who were always in active duty. Saul could reimburse them with land that he took from his people.

It is important to note that because of Saul's incomplete victory, there will be at least two more significant wars against the Philistines before his reign is over, the first one giving David preeminence over Saul, and the second resulting in the death of Saul and his sons (1Sam. 17 & 31). It is very likely that there were many more skirmishes than those. All of this is the result of one very lame oath.

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<sup>56</sup> All these references are taken from *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 392.