

1 Samuel 5 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[1 Samuel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1Chr 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		
Legend: B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that after the division of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as " Judah " and the Northern Kingdom as " Israel ." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.									

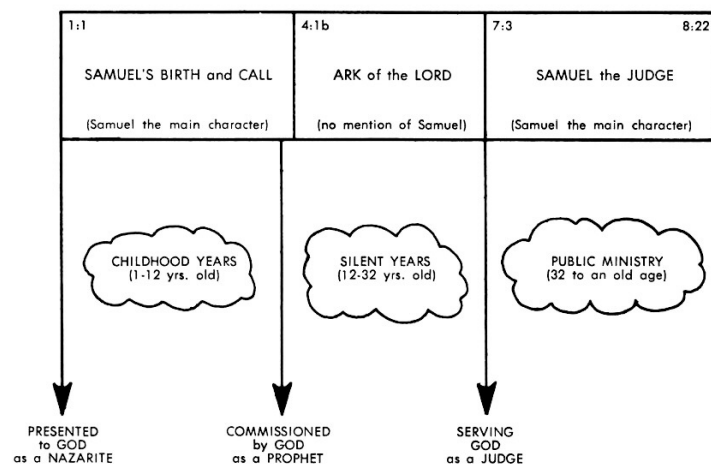
The Ryrie Study Bible

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Map on Left [ESV Global Study Bible](#), on right [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#)
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The Man Samuel in 1 Samuel 1-8



1 Samuel 5:1 Now the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:1 καὶ ἅλφυλοι λαβόν τινεῖς τὸ θεο καὶ σνεγκαν αὐτὸν ἐξ Ἀβεννεζερ εἰς ζωτον

KJV 1 Samuel 5:1 And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod.

NET 1 Samuel 5:1 Now the Philistines had captured the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:1 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod,

ESV 1 Samuel 5:1 When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:1 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:1 After the Philistines captured the Ark of God, they took it from the battleground at Ebenezer to the town of Ashdod.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:1 When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod;

RSV 1 Samuel 5:1 When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they carried it from Ebenezer to Ashdod;

YLT 1 Samuel 5:1 And the Philistines have taken the ark of God, and bring it in from Eben-Ezer to Ashdod,

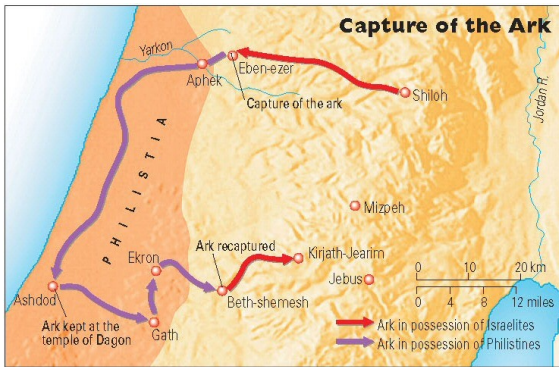
NKJ 1 Samuel 5:1 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:1 When the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:1 The Philistines, having captured the ark of God, transferred it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:1 And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Abenezar to Azotus.

- **Philistines took the ark of God:** 1Sa 4:11,17,18,22 Ps 78:61
- **Ebenezer:** 1Sa 4:1 7:12
- **Ashdod** called Azotus by the Greeks Jos 11:22 Ac 8:40



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I love Tommy Nelson's title for his 1 Samuel 6 Sermon - [Gentiles in the Hands of an Angry God \(play Mp3\)](#).

Now the Philistines ([pelishti](#)) took the Ark ([aron](#)) of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod - See the map above for depiction of this journey from Ebenezer to Ashdod which was about 20+/- miles. Notice to Whom the **Ark** ultimately belonged -- **God (ark of God)** See **Ashdod** on map above along the southwest coast of Philistia. As discussed in notes on 1Sa 4, this mention of Ebenezer is probably not the same location as the memorial set up at Ebenezer between Mizpah (see Mizpah on the map above located south and east of the first mention of Ebenezer) and Shen (1Sa 7:12+)

Philistines (06430)([pelishti/pelistiy](#) from Petesheth - territory on the southeast coast of Israel. Name of one who belonged to the ethnic group the Philistines who had settled in Philistia ([see map](#)). See [Wikipedia article](#). See [archaeology related to Philistines](#).

Pelishti in 1-2 Samuel- 1Sa 4:1-3, 6-7, 9-10, 17; 5:1-2, 8, 11; 6:1-2, 4, 12, 16-18, 21; 7:3, 7-8, 10-11,13-14; 9:16; 10:5; 12:9; 13:3-5, 11-12, 16-17, 19-20,23; 14:1, 4, 11, 19, 21-22, 30-31, 36-37, 46-47, 52; 17:1-4, 8, 10-11, 16, 19, 21, 23, 26, 32-33, 36-37, 40ff, 48ff,57; 18:6, 17, 21, 25, 27, 30; 19:5, 8; 21:9; 22:10; 23:1ff, 27-28; 24:1; 27:1,7,11; 28:1, 4-5, 15, 19; 29:1-4, 7, 9, 11; 30:16; 31:1-2, 7-9, 11; 2Sa. 1:20; 3:14, 18; 5:17-19, 22, 24-25; 8:1, 12; 19:9; 21:12, 15, 17-19; 23:9ff,16

Ark (0727)([aron](#) means a chest, a box (first use was coffin for Joseph's body - Ge 50:26), a container for funds to repair the Temple in (2 Ki 12:10-11, 2 Chr 24:8, 10-11). It is used most often of the Ark in the Holy of Holies and is first called the Ark of the Covenant in Nu 10:33. **Aron** is often used with another word to denote the ark of the covenant: "the ark of the Lord your God" (Josh. 4:5); "the ark of God" (1 Sam. 3:3); "the ark of the God of Israel" (1 Sam. 5:7); "the holy ark" (2 Chr. 35:3). The Ark contained the tablets of the law (Dt. 10:5); a copy of the Law which Moses had written (Dt. 31:26); a pot of manna (Ex 16:33, 34); Aaron's rod (Nu 17:10).

Aron in 1-2 Samuel - 1 Sam. 3:3; 1 Sam. 4:3; 1 Sam. 4:4; 1 Sam. 4:5; 1 Sam. 4:6; 1 Sam. 4:11; 1 Sam. 4:13; 1 Sam. 4:17; 1 Sam. 4:18; 1 Sam. 4:19; 1 Sam. 4:21; 1 Sam. 4:22; 1 Sam. 5:1; 1 Sam. 5:2; 1 Sam. 5:3; 1 Sam. 5:4; 1 Sam. 5:7; 1 Sam. 5:8; 1 Sam. 5:10; 1 Sam. 5:11; 1 Sam. 6:1; 1 Sam. 6:2; 1 Sam. 6:3; 1 Sam. 6:8; 1 Sam. 6:11; 1 Sam. 6:13; 1 Sam. 6:15; 1 Sam. 6:18; 1 Sam. 6:19; 1 Sam. 6:21; 1 Sam. 7:1; 1 Sam. 7:2; 1 Sam. 14:18; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Sam. 6:3; 2 Sam. 6:4; 2 Sam. 6:6; 2 Sam. 6:7; 2 Sam. 6:9; 2 Sam. 6:10; 2 Sam. 6:11; 2 Sam. 6:12; 2 Sam. 6:13; 2 Sam. 6:15; 2 Sam. 6:16; 2 Sam. 6:17; 2 Sam. 7:2; 2 Sam. 11:11; 2 Sam. 15:24; 2 Sam. 15:25; 2 Sam. 15:29

Ashdod (0795)(Ashdod; Lxx = Azotus)

Ashdod - 15v - Jos. 11:22; Jos. 15:46; Jos. 15:47; 1 Sam. 5:1; 1 Sam. 5:5; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:7; 1 Sam. 6:17; 2 Chr. 26:6; Isa. 20:1; Jer. 25:20; Amos 1:8; Amos 3:9; Zeph. 2:4; Zech. 9:6

QUESTION - . [What does the term "Ebenezer" mean in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Most of us are familiar with the name "Ebenezer" because of the character Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens's novella *A Christmas Carol*. Because of that story, the name "Ebenezer" has taken on the connotation of miserliness and a lack of charity—although, to be fair, Ebenezer Scrooge did become a changed man at the end of the story.

The name "Ebenezer" actually comes from the Bible. In 1 Samuel 7, during the end of the time of the judges, Israel experiences revival under the leadership of [Samuel](#). The nation repents of their sin, destroys their idols, and begins to seek the Lord (1 Samuel

7:2–4). Samuel gathered the people at [Mizpah](#) where they confessed their sin, and Samuel offered a sacrifice on their behalf (verses 5–9).

It was during this time of repentance and renewal that the enemy attacked: “While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle” (1 Samuel 7:10). The Israelites went out to do battle against the invaders, and God sent them supernatural help: “That day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites” (verse 10).

Israel’s victory over the Philistines was decisive. Several cities the Philistines had captured were restored to Israel, and it was a long time before the Philistines tried to invade Israel again (1 Samuel 7:13–14). To commemorate the divine victory, “Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the LORD has helped us’” (verse 12).

Ebenezer means “stone of help.” From then on, every time an Israelite saw the stone erected by Samuel, he would have a tangible reminder of the Lord’s power and protection. The “stone of help” marked the spot where the enemy had been routed and God’s promise to bless His repentant people had been honored. The Lord had helped them, all the way to Ebenezer. GotQuestions.org

QUESTION - [What is the significance of Ashdod in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Ashdod was one of the five primary [Philistine](#) cities: Gaza, Gath, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Ashdod. These were major metropolitan areas because later Ashdod, as well as the other cities, are mentioned as having “town and villages” (Joshua 15:46–47), perhaps similar to modern suburbs.

Ashdod is mentioned several times in the book of Joshua in conjunction with the conquest of the Promised Land. Joshua 11:22 mentions that most of the [Anakim](#) (giant warriors) had been destroyed in the conquest, but a few remained in some of the Philistine cities including Ashdod. Gath, the future home of Goliath, is also mentioned here.

Joshua led the people in the [conquest](#) and captured a number of major cities. The land was then divided among the tribes of Israel who were then supposed to finish taking control of their territory. However, by the time Joshua is old and ready to pass from the scene, there were some areas that had not yet been subdued including Ashdod and the other four primary Philistine cities (Joshua 13:3). Ashdod was in the territory allotted to Judah (Joshua 15:46–47). The Philistines continued to present problems for Israel for many years to come. Although the Philistines figure prominently in the book of Judges, Ashdod is not mentioned in that book.

In 1 Samuel, the Israelites decide to carry the ark of the covenant into battle against the Philistines. They do this, treating the ark almost as if it were a “good luck charm,” and God, in response, allows the ark to be captured by the Philistines and taken to Ashdod:

When the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon. And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the Lord, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day. The hand of the Lord was heavy against the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, “The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god” (1 Samuel 5:1–7, ESV).

The leaders of Ashdod sent the ark to Gath, where similar things happened, and the Gathites sent it on to Ekron. Ultimately, the Philistines decided they had to send the ark back to Israel. The whole story is found in 1 Samuel 5–6.

During the time of Saul and David, the Philistines are a frequent enemy, but Ashdod is not specifically mentioned in conjunction with either king. After the time of David, the Philistines are not mentioned as prominent enemies, although [King Uzziah](#) is commended for his campaign against the Philistines. One of his specific accomplishments was breaking through the wall of Ashdod (2 Chronicles 26:6).

Amos prophesied judgment against Ashdod (Amos 1:8; 3:9), and later the Assyrian armies defeated Ashdod (Isaiah 20:1). Years after that, Jeremiah also prophesied judgment against “the remnant of Ashdod” to be carried out at the hands of the king of Babylon (Jeremiah 25:20).

After the Jews’ return from exile, some of the people of Ashdod were among those who opposed the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4:7). Nehemiah was also dismayed to find that some of the Israelites had intermarried with

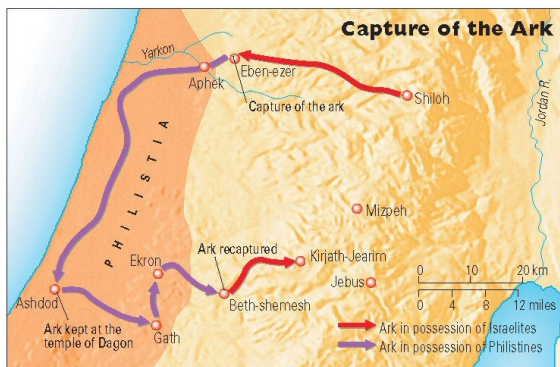
the women of Ashdod and many of the children could not even speak “the language of Judah” (Nehemiah 13:23–24).

Zephaniah also gives a word on the Philistines: “For Gaza shall be deserted, and Ashkelon shall become a desolation, Ashdod’s people shall be driven out at noon, and Ekron shall be uprooted” (Zephaniah 2:4, ESV). And, finally, Zechariah weighs in: “Ashkelon shall see [the judgment of God on the surrounding nations] and be afraid; Gaza too, and shall writhe in anguish; Ekron also, because its hopes are confounded. The king shall perish from Gaza; Ashkelon shall be uninhabited; a mixed people shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of Philistia” (Zechariah 9:5–6, ESV).

However, even in judgment there is mercy. Immediately following the pronouncement of doom, Zechariah includes a note of hope: “I will take away its blood from its mouth, and its abominations from between its teeth; it too shall be a remnant for our God; it shall be like a clan in Judah” (Zechariah 9:7, ESV). In the future, the Philistines would cease to eat unclean food and join in true worship of God. The historian Josephus reports that many Philistines became proselytes to Judaism. Yet there still awaits an even greater fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy. Philistines or their descendants will one day be part of the great congregation made of every tribe and tongue and people and nation who worship God (Revelation 7:9–10). GotQuestions.org

The Journey of the Ark of the Covenant 1–2 Samuel

Adapted from ESV Study Bible



Journey of First 8 Stop of the Ark

1. 1 Sam. 3:3 The Lord calls to Samuel who is sleeping in the tent of meeting, “where the ark of God was”
2. 1 Samuel 4 Philistines capture the ark (for seven months: 1 Sam. 6:1)
3. 1 Sam. 5:1–7 Philistines bring the ark to Ashdod, setting it up next to the idol Dagon
4. 1 Sam. 5:8–9 Philistines bring the ark to Gath
5. 1 Sam. 5:10–12 Philistines send the ark to Ekron
6. 1 Sam. 6:10–15 Philistines return the ark with guilt offering to Beth-shemesh
7. 1 Sam. 6:19–21 The Lord strikes 70 men for looking upon the ark
8. 1 Sam. 7:1–2 Men of Kiriath-jearim take the ark to the house of Abinadab (where it stays for 20 years)
9. 1 Sam. 14:18 Saul commands Ahijah to bring the ark to the war camp
10. 2 Sam. 6:2–5 David begins to move the ark to Jerusalem on a cart
11. 2 Sam. 6:6–7 The Lord strikes Uzzah dead for holding on to the ark
12. 2 Sam. 6:10–11 David takes the ark to the house of Obed-edom, where it stays for three months
13. 2 Sam. 6:12–17 David brings the ark to Jerusalem, and places it inside the tent he pitched for it
14. 2 Sam. 15:24–25 Zadok brings the ark to David, who commands him to carry it back to Jerusalem
15. 2 Sam. 15:29 Zadok and Abiathar carry the ark back to Jerusalem

1 Samuel 5:2 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it to the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon.

KJV 1 Samuel 5:2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

NET 1 Samuel 5:2 The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the temple of Dagon, where they

positioned it beside Dagon.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:2 brought it into the temple of Dagon and placed it next to his statue.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:2 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:2 Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:2 They carried the Ark of God into the temple of Dagon and placed it beside an idol of Dagon.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:2 then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and placed it beside Dagon.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:2 then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:2 and the Philistines take the ark of God and bring it into the house of Dagon, and set it near Dagon.

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the temple of Dagon and set it by Dagon.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:2 Taking the ark of God, the Philistines put it in the temple of Dagon, setting it down beside Dagon.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:2 They then took the ark of God and brought it into the temple of Dagon, placing it beside Dagon.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:2 And the Philistines took the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:2 And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

- **of Dagon:** Judges 16:23 1Chr 10:10 Da 5:2,23 Hab 1:11,16

MY GOD IS STRONGER THAN YOUR GOD!

Then - The time significant word then marks progression in the narrative. From Ebenezer, to Ashdod and **then** into the temple of Dagon. There is a saying kids often toss around that "My dad is stronger than your dad." The Philistines by taking the Ark of God to the temple of their god was as if they were saying to Israel "Our god is stronger than your God!" They would soon learn that sayings like this are dangerous when it comes to Yahweh!

The depiction of Dagon is most often with the head of a man and body of a fish (recall the Philistines were sea peoples originally). In light of this depiction of Dagon it is interesting to compare the depiction on the [modern flag of Ashdod!](#)

The Philistines ([pelishti](#)) took the Ark ([aron](#)) of God and brought it to the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon - Ashdod had a temple ("house") for Dagon. Bringing the Hebrew's God into the Temple of their God was tantamount to their belief that the victory had shown their "god" to be superior, but that false impression would soon change! Stated another way to bring the captured Ark of the Covenant into the pagan temple was meant to be a sign of submission of Yahweh to Dagon, the pagan god of that temple. It is notable that this is the second time the Philistines wrongly assumed that Yahweh (and His representatives in this case Samson) had been shown to be submissive to their god Dagon

Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to **Dagon their god**, and to rejoice, for they said, "**Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands** ("HANDS" - STRENGTH, AUTHORITY)."

24 When the people saw him, **they praised their god**, for they said, "**Our god has given our enemy into our hands**, Even the destroyer of our country, Who has slain many of us." (Jdg 16:23,24+)

As would soon prove to be the case with the second supposed "victory" over Yahweh, Yahweh's man Samson had the last word on this first occasion, clearly showing Yahweh's supremacy over all so-called gods of men...

Now the house was full of men and women, and all the lords of the Philistines were there. And about

3,000 men and women were on the roof looking on while Samson was amusing them. 28 Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "O Lord GOD, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes." 29 Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left. 30 And Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life. (Jdg 16:27-30+)

The Philistines later killed King Saul and again in a vain attempt to show their god Dagon was greater than Israel's God "They put his (KING SAUL, GOD'S REPRESENTATIVE'S) armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head in the **house of Dagon**." (1Chr 10:10) Is this not a tragic irony that the severed head of Saul would be placed before the same so-called god whose head had been severed by Jehovah!

Dagon (01712)(**Dagon** from **dag** = a fish) is a masculine noun representing the pagan god of the Philistines.

Gilbrant - Dagon, the Philistine god of grain, was first mentioned in Judg. 16:23, where we are told the Philistine rulers were assembled in Gaza to offer a great sacrifice. His name again occurs in 1 Sam. 5:2-7 and in 1 Chr. 10:10. His worship seems to have been associated with the two great urban centers of the Philistines, Gaza and Ashdod. In the latter case, the Ark of the Covenant when captured by the Philistines, had been placed in the Temple of Dagon at Ashdod (1 Samuel 5). We have a vivid picture of God's judgment on any form of idolatry in 1 Sam. 5:3f. The idol of Dagon was in effect destroyed after the Ark had been set beside it. Prior to that event of judgment, the Temple of Dagon at Gaza was destroyed by Samson, a judge of Israel. Dagon was also worshiped at Beth-Shan (1 Sam. 31:10; 1 Chr. 10:10). The history of the worship of Dagon dates to before 2000 B.C., when a Temple to his honor at Ugarit was built. Dagon was a major deity of the Amorite population in the Old Babylonian Period, as well as the peoples who lived in the area of the fertile crescent (he is mentioned among the gods at Ebla, Palestine, Phoenicia and elsewhere, always as a major object of worship). H.G. Stigers (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, 3:3) points out that archeological evidence in the form of a tablet from Ugarit dated ca. 1580-1350 B.C., established commercial relations with the Palestinian cities of Ashdod, Askalon and Akko. This presents strong support for the view that traders doing business in those Palestinian cities likely carried the worship of their principal god, Dagon, with them and that such worship was absorbed into the religious practices and perspectives of the peoples of Palestine. Temples existed at Mari and Terqa in the Amorite realm of the Upper Euphrates, in modern Syria. The Mari Archive attests to worshippers engaging in ecstatic prophecy in these temples, speaking the words of Dagon to be delivered to the king. Sumerian names from the mid-third millennium B.C., also exist. Because Philistia was located in the narrow coastal plain of southwestern Palestine (extending from Joppa to the north to just south of Gaza), a major grain-producing area, the worship of Dagon by the Philistines and in coastal Palestine was a natural sociological by-product of geographic conditions. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Dagon - 7v - Jdg. 16:23; 1Sam. 5:2; 1Sam. 5:3; 1Sam. 5:4; 1Sam. 5:5; 1Sam. 5:7; 1Chr. 10:10

QUESTION - [Who was Dagon in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Dagon was the chief deity of the [Philistines](#), and the worship of this pagan god dates back the third millennium BC. According to ancient mythology, Dagon was the father of **Ba'al**. He was the fish god (*dag* in Hebrew means "fish"), and he was represented as a half-man, half-fish creature. This image furthered an evolutionary belief that both men and fish had evolved together from the primal waters. Dagon may also have been the provider of grain. So Dagon was similar to many other idols in that he personified natural forces that had supposedly produced all things (cf Ro 1:23).

There are three places where Dagon is mentioned in the Bible. The first mention is Judges 16:23+, where we are told that Dagon was the god of the Philistines. The Philistines offered "a great sacrifice" to Dagon, believing that their idol had delivered Samson into their hands. First Chronicles 10:10 mentions a temple of Dagon in which the head of King Saul was fastened. Then, in 1 Samuel 5, Dagon is brought to humiliation by the True God of the Israelites.

What an interesting story is found in 1 Samuel 5! The Philistines had captured the [Ark of the Covenant](#), and they "carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. When the people of [the city of] [Ashdod](#) rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the Lord! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold. The Lord's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumors. When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, 'The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy on us and on Dagon our god'" (verses 2-7). Who says

God does not have a sense of humor? This has to be one of the more funny passages in the entire Bible. For further reading, see 1 Samuel 6 for the account of the Philistines' attempt to solve their dilemma—with golden rats and golden tumors (or, as some translations put it, "golden hemorrhoids")!

Dagon figures into the story of [Jonah](#), as well, although the deity is not mentioned by name in Jonah's book. The Assyrians in Nineveh, to whom Jonah was sent as a missionary, worshiped Dagon and his female counterpart, the fish goddess Nanshe. Jonah, of course, did not go straight to Nineveh but had to be brought there via miraculous means. The transportation God provided for Jonah—a great fish—would have been full of meaning for the Ninevites. When Jonah arrived in their city, he made quite a splash, so to speak. He was a man who had been inside a *fish* for three days and directly deposited by a *fish* on dry land. The Ninevites, who worshiped a fish god, were duly impressed; they gave Jonah their attention and repented of their sin. [GotQuestions.org](#)

J. F. HEALEY - DAGON דגון (Borrow [Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible - discussion on page 244](#))

I. Dagon is the Hebrew form of the name of the god Dagan, who was an important Mesopotamian and West Semitic deity.

Dagon occurs as a Philistine deity in the Hebrew Bible, specifically as the god of Ashdod (1 Sam 5:1–7 and 1 Macc 10:83–84; Judg 16:23 [Gaza]; 1 Chr 10:10 [Beth-Shan?]). The LXX also reads the name Δαγών instead of Nebo (→Nabû) in Isa 46:1.

The etymology of the name Dagan is uncertain. Etymologies based on *dāg*, 'fish', *dāgān*, 'grain', and on a root meaning 'be cloudy' (Arabic *dajj* or *dajana*) are all equally dubious and there is no contextual evidence from the Hebrew Bible or from Mesopotamian/West Semitic sources to give much support to these speculations. It is wiser to restrict oneself to what can be known from the evidence, principally that Dagan was a deity of major significance in the Mari region in the Old Babylonian period and that his worship appears to have spread widely in later times. He was thus adopted, no doubt in some syncretistic form, perhaps as a corn-god, by the Philistines.

II. Dagan is one of the most persistent deities of the world of Semitic religion.

His worship is well attested from the third millennium BCE in the Ebla texts and he appears in Sargonic personal names, but neither source gives any hint of the precise nature of this deity. In Ebla, though important in cult, he is rarely named, but called by various titles including *dBE* (*bēlu*, 'Lord') and *dLUGAL-du-du-luki* ('Lord of Tuttul'). Temples, festivals and even a section of the city were dedicated to Dagan.

Sargon attributed his conquest of Upper/Western Mesopotamia to Dagan and worshipped him in Tuttul. This confirms Dagan's regional authority, leaving southern Mesopotamia to other deities, including Enlil. He is well attested in the Mari texts as one of the principal deities of the Amorites of Old Babylonian Upper Mesopotamia and he is specifically linked with Mari, his great cult-centres being at Terqa and especially Tuttul. It may be noted that Dagan is often connected in the Mari texts with the activities of ecstasies/prophets who received messages from the god in his temple, which were then transmitted to the king.

In southern Mesopotamia Dagan was sometimes identified with the god Enlil. This may suggest some 'storm-god' aspect (supporting the etymology linking the name with the possible Arabic cognate noted above), though the significance of the equation may not be this aspect and the Arabic cognate is extremely remote.

The westward 'migration' of Dagan is already evident in the Ugaritic texts. He has a rather minor role in Ugaritic mythology, playing a very small and obscure part in the Nikkal poem. The context here is fragmentary, but it is possible that Dagan is mentioned as the father of the lunar deity Yarikh (→Moon) (KTU 1.24:14). **He has no active role in the main myths and legends and is merely mentioned as the father of Ba'al** (called *bn dgn*, *ḥtk dgn*). His paternity of Ba'al might be interpreted as implying characteristics similar to Ba'al's. Be this as it may, Dagan's importance in Ugaritic religion is confirmed by his relative popularity in offering-lists and similar texts. From the fact that he is the recipient of offerings recorded on two stelae found in the precinct of a major temple (KTU 6.13 and 6.14) it appears that one of the two principal temples at Ugarit was dedicated to Dagan, though the evidence is not completely conclusive. The other temple was that of Ba'al. Ugaritic 'theology' (as opposed to the different world of Ugaritic mythology) may be reflected in the local pantheon lists and the main one of these, extant in several versions, puts Dagan in third place, after →El and →Ilil but before Ba'al (see KTU 1.47; 1.118 and Akkadian RS 20.24 = Ugaritica V i, 18).

It is noteworthy that in the Ugaritic texts Dagan is twice called *dgn ttl*, 'Dagan of Tuttul' (KTU 1.100:15; 1.24:14 [tt(l)]), a title which shows the continuity of the Ugaritic Dagan tradition with that of Mari.

The fact of Dagan's having no active part in the main Ba'al myths may reflect the relative lateness of his arrival on the Syrian coast. References to Ba'al as 'son of Dagan' also present considerable problems, since he is clearly also the son of El. Some have sought to resolve this by assuming that Dagan is to be identified with El, but this idea is hard to maintain in view of the fact that the two were separately worshipped. Others suggest the title 'son of Dagan' reflects an awareness of Ba'al's foreignness and secondariness within the history of the Ugaritic pantheon. It may well be that the confusion arises from a lack of fixity in the

genealogy of the Ugaritic gods.

Biblical evidence of Philistine worship of Dagan (below)—the form of the name recorded for this is Dagon, reflecting a shift of *ā* to *ō*—is uninformative in detail, but clearly implies that the deity was taken over by the Philistines as a national god. We must assume his worship had been widespread throughout the coastal (corn-producing?) area which the Philistines came to call their own. The adoption of pre-existing cults, no doubt still popular among the Semitic population, can be regarded as normal. It may be noted, however, that there is only one possible direct Phoenician allusion to Dagan/Dagon, in the phrase *ʾršt dgn hʾdrt*, ‘the rich lands of Dagon’, in the fifth century BCE Eshmunazar inscription (KAI 14:19). Dagon does, however, have a prominent role in Philo of Byblos’ speculative account of Phoenician religion (below).

ROBERTS (1972:18–19) argued for Dagan having had an underworld role. His argument is largely based on the underworld aspect of Enlil, with whom Dagan was identified, though he also cites a Mari text in which Dagan is called *bēl pagrē*, which Roberts takes to mean ‘lord of the sacrifices for the dead’. This translation is dubious: ‘lord of sacrificial victims’ may be more likely. There is, however, some slight evidence pointing in the direction of the funerary cult in that an inscription of Shamshi-Adad I seems to connect the *bīt kispi* (‘temple of the funerary ritual’) in Terqa with the temple of Dagan there.

We cannot resolve the question of the etymology of the name Dagan/Dagon. It could be pre-Semitic. The connection with ‘fish’ (cf. Biblical evidence as interpreted by Wellhausen [below], Jerome and later Jewish tradition [Rashi, Kimchi]) is entirely secondary, being based on a folk etymology. The name Dagan appears to have been a ‘given’ which needed explanation and the explanation arrived at would, conveniently, help to make sense of certain difficulties in one of the Biblical texts (see below). This made the ‘fish’ connection the more attractive, but it has little intrinsic merit. As an interpretation it is only loosely supported by the Philistine association with the sea and analogies with the goddess Derketo at a later date.

As for ‘grain’, this suggestion has a venerable ancestry in that this is the significance of Dagan in Philo of Byblos, where Dagon is identical with Siton and is regarded as having discovered grain and the plough. This cannot, however, be regarded as settling the issue and it is now a widely held view that the word for ‘grain’ comes from the name of the god and not vice versa. Perhaps more simply we might suppose that the connection with ‘grain’ is secondary and based on the coincidence of the West Semitic word for grain (e.g. Hebrew and Ugaritic [one doubtful occurrence: KTU 1.16 iii:13]) and the Mesopotamian name of the god being homonyms. The grain-related meaning of the root *dgn* is distinctively West Semitic. It would not have been known to a Mesopotamian worshipper of the deity and cannot have been at all prominent in the understanding of his name.

Finally the Arabic *dajana*, ‘to be gloomy, cloudy’, not found elsewhere in Semitic, has been adopted by many recent scholars. As we have seen, connection with storms (since Dagan was Enlil-like and also the father of Baʿal) is possible though never explicit. The appeal to such a remote Semitic cognate for etymology smacks of desperation.

III. 1 Sam 5:1–7 contains the most important of the Biblical references to Dagan/Dagon

The passage concerns the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines into the temple of their god Dagon in Ashdod. The introduction of the captured Ark into a temple is meant to be a sign of submission to the god of the particular temple. According to the story in 1 Sam, however, the statue of Dagon fell down (in submission) before the Ark and was smashed. There is a difficulty in the text of the end of v. 4: *raq dāgōn nišʾar ʾālā(y)w*, apparently “only Dagon was left upon him”. BHK and BHS recognise the need for a construct noun before ‘Dagon’ and this is reflected in the ancient versions (LXX: ὄχις, backbone; Vg: truncus, body without limbs; Tg: gwpyh, his body, Syr: gwšmh, his body). Wellhausen would correct *dāgōn* to *dāgō*, ‘his fish(-part)’, and this is still favoured by BHK. This would give ‘only his fish-part remained upon him’, which would, if accepted, support the connecting of Dagan’s name with *dāg*, ‘fish’, a tradition represented in Jerome (<*dag* ʾōn, ‘fish of tribulation’!) and in the Talmud. It is notable, however, that while the ancient versions are aware of a problem with the text, this is not an interpretation they put upon it. The Wellhausen suggestion is now rightly abandoned by BHS.

Of the remaining Biblical references to Dagan/Dagon, note may be made of other passages which confirm the association of the god with the Philistines. In Judg 16:23 the Philistine chiefs assemble, presumably in the temple of Dagon, to offer sacrifice of thanksgiving to Dagon for their capture of Samson. Dagon is called ‘their/our god’ and he receives a *zebaḥ gādōl*, ‘a great sacrifice’. Although it is not explicitly stated here that there was a Dagon temple at Gaza, no change of locale is implied and it seems likely that there was such a temple, since there appear to have been many temples of the god. Josh 15:41 and 19:27, where the placename Beth-Dagon occurs, imply there were such temples in Judah and in Asher. According to 1 Chr 10:10 the head of Saul was initially displayed by the Philistines as a trophy of war in a temple of Dagon. This appears to have been at Beth-Shan (1 Sam 31:10).

That the cult of Dagon persisted into the intertestamental period is clear from 1 Macc 10:83–84, according to which the High Priest Jonathan burned down the temple of Dagon in Azotus, i.e. Ashdod, which had become the place of refuge of the cavalry of Apollonius, governor of Coele-Syria.

In addition to these explicit biblical references to the god Dagon, note should be made of a number of biblical verses in which it has

been argued that the occurrence of the word *dāgān*, ‘grain’, intends an allusion to the deity. Thus in Gen 27:28 and Hos 7:14 and 9:1 (e.g. ALBRIGHT 1946: 1046). The claimed allusion in Gen 27:28 is without foundation, since nothing in the context suggests anything to do with foreign gods and *dāgān* is satisfactorily translated as ‘grain’, one of the divine gifts in Isaac’s blessing upon his son. Here and elsewhere ‘grain’ is associated with →‘dew’ (*ṭal*), ‘fatness of the earth’ and ‘new wine’ (*tîrôš*, →Tirash). The fact that *ṭal* and *tîrôš* may elsewhere have mythological overtones does not prove that *dāgān* has such overtones in Gen 27:28.

The case of the Hosea passages is different, since it is clear that it is one of Hosea’s themes that it was Yahweh, not the foreign gods, who gave Israel “the grain, the wine and the oil” (2:10–11:12). In these cases there may be a faint echo of the divine name Dagan (though the fact that the definite article is used means that it is indeed faint). In Hos 7:14 the specific context is that of turning to other gods and “for *dāgān* and *tîrôš* (without definite articles) they gash themselves” may plausibly be interpreted as an allusion to illicit cult, though the allusion could be simply to a cult of lamentation for the failure of vegetation. Hos 9:1, “you have loved a prostitute’s payment upon all the threshing-floors of *dāgān*”, could again contain an allusion to the deity.

IV. Bibliography

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1 Samuel 5:3 When the Ashdodites arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set him in his place again.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:3 καὶ ῥῆρισαν οἱ ζῆποὶ καὶ ἐσλθον ἐς τὸν Δαγῶν καὶ ἐδον καὶ ὁ Δαγῶν πεπτῶκες πρὸς τὸ πρῶτον αὐτοῦ πρὶν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ γείραντες τὸν Δαγῶν καὶ κατήστανον αὐτὸν καὶ βάρυνθη ἡ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἔδαφος καὶ βάσινεν αὐτὸς καὶ πάλιν αὐτὸς ἐστὶς τὸν ἔδαφος καὶ τὸν ἔδαφος αὐτοῦ

KJV 1 Samuel 5:3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

NET 1 Samuel 5:3 When the residents of Ashdod got up early the next day, Dagon was lying on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set him back in his place.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:3 When the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and returned him to his place.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:3 And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:3 When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:3 But when the citizens of Ashdod went to see it the next morning, Dagon had fallen with his face to the ground in front of the Ark of the LORD! So they took Dagon and put him in his place again.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:3 When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:3 And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:3 And the Ashdodites rise early on the morrow, and lo, Dagon is fallen on its face to the earth, before the ark of Jehovah; and they take Dagon, and put it back to its place.

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:3 And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:3 When the people of Ashdod got up the following morning and went to the temple of Dagon, there lay Dagon face down on the ground before the ark of Yahweh. They picked Dagon up and put him back in his place.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:3 When the people of Ashdod rose early the next morning, Dagon was lying prone on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they picked Dagon up and replaced him.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:3 And the people of Azotus rose early, and entered into the house of Dagon; and looked, and behold, Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark of the Lord: and they lifted up Dagon, and set him in his place. And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon the Azotians, and he plagued them, and he smote them in their secret parts, Azotus and her coasts.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:3 And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of Jehovah. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

- **Dagon** : Ex 12:12 Ps 97:7 Isa 19:1 46:1,2 Zep 2:11 Mk 3:11 Lu 10:18-20 2Co 6:14-16
- **set him**: Isa 19:1 40:20 41:7 44:17-20 46:1,2,7 Jer 10:8

A BAD WAY TO BEGIN YOUR MORNING IN ASHDOD

When the Ashdodites arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD - The Philistines thought that Dagon had given them their victory over the Hebrews, but they were wrong. Yahweh had given them the victory! The omnipotent God was now demonstrating His power over Dagon, even making him fall on his face before Him. It was almost as if Yahweh said "Your "little g" God will bow before Me on his face and worship Me!" Yahweh's message was clear, but the Ashdodites were slow learners as we shall see!

Robert Bergen - Early the next morning, at the time of day prescribed in the Torah for the first daily act of worship toward the Lord (cf. Exod 24:14; 29:39, 41; 30:7; Lev 6:12, 20; 9:17; Num 28:4, 23), Dagon was found in a posture of reverence and submission before "the ark of the Lord" (v. 3); "his face" was "on the ground" (cf. Gen 19:1; 24:52; Neh 8:6). The writer, subtly suggesting the futility of the Philistine's idolatrous practices (cf. Isa 44:9-20; Jer 10:5; Hab 2:18; Acts 19:26; 1 Cor 8:4), noted that the people of Ashdod had to "put" Dagon "back in his place." Their god, thought to be so virile on the battlefield, in the confines of his own dwelling did not even have the strength to lift his face out of the dust! (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

Warren Wiersbe - God will not reveal His power on behalf of His sinning people, but He will not allow His glory to be mocked or His Name to be defiled by a smirking enemy. The lords of the Philistines added the ark to their other religious relics in their heathen temple and put Jehovah on the same level as their fish-god Dagon. Of course, God stands high above all other gods! (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

So they took Dagon and set him in his place again - Is this not almost comical? Finite puny men forced to reposition their puny "non-god!" At its core idolatry is utter foolishness. It is amazing that intelligent men can be duped to this degree. Paul actually gives us the pathogenesis of this "devolution" of religion in Romans 1 writing

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools (HOW FOOLISH MUST THEY HAVE FELT TO HAVE TO PICK DAGON OFF THE FLOOR!), 23 and **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.** (AND EVEN PERVERSIONS OF NORMAL NATURAL WITH THEIR RIDICULOUS DAGON - MAN'S HEAD, FISH'S BODY!) 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 **For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.** 26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (THE PAGAN NATIONS AROUND ISRAEL WERE SO PERVERTED IN THEIR SEXUAL PRACTICES THAT ONE CANNOT

EVEN WRITE ABOUT THEM WITHOUT CRINGING!) 28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:18-32)

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - 1 Samuel 5:3 Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord.

The idols of the heathen represent demons who are their accepted gods, just as the Ark was the symbol of the presence of Jehovah. In the one case there was a material representation of the demon; but in the case of the Ark there was only a throne, the Mercy Seat; and no attempt was made to represent the appearance of the God of Israel. When placed in the Holy of Holies, the Shekinah shone between the cherubim; this alone spoke of the Divine Spirit who filled the apparently vacant throne. When the effigy of the fish-god was confronted by the Sacred Ark, it was as though the demon spirit and the Divine Spirit had come into contact, with the inevitable result that the inferiority of the one ensured the crash of its effigy to the ground.

What a lesson this must have been to the Philistines—similar to that given Pharaoh in the plagues of Egypt, and with the same object of leading them to see the superior greatness of Jehovah! How great the encouragement to Israel—to know that God could defend His superiority! And how striking the prognostication for the future, when all the Dagon of the world shall be broken before the symbol of Divine power and love!

Bring the Ark of God into your life. Set it down in your heart, and forthwith the Dagon which have held sway for so long will one after another succumb. “The idols He will utterly abolish.” Let Christ in—that is the one need of the soul; and let Him take full possession of you. Then He will do His own work. Darkness cannot abide light; nor the defilement of the Augean stable the turning in of the water of the river.

1 Samuel 5:4 But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:4 καὶ γένοιτο τὸ ῥθισαν τὸ πρῶ καὶ ὁ Δαγὼν πεπτῶκς πρὸ σωπὸν αὐτοῦ πρὶν κίβωτο διαθήκης κυρίου καὶ κεφαλὴ Δαγὼν καὶ μὲν τεράτῃ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ φρημνὰ πρὸς μὲν σθία ἀμαφεθῇ καστόν καὶ μὲν τεροὶ οὗ καρποῦ τῇ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ πεπτῶκτες πρὸς τὸ πρὸ θυρὸν πλὴν χεὶς Δαγὼν πελεφθῇ

KJV 1 Samuel 5:4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.

NET 1 Samuel 5:4 But when they got up early the following day, Dagon was again lying on the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and his two hands were sheared off and were lying at the threshold. Only Dagon's body was left intact.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:4 But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. This time, both Dagon's head and the palms of his hands were broken off and lying on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso remained.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:4 But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:4 But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:4 But the next morning the same thing happened-- Dagon had fallen face down before the Ark of the LORD again. This time his head and hands had broken off and were lying in the doorway. Only the trunk of his body was left intact.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:4 But when they rose early on the next morning, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground

before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:4 But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:4 And they rise early in the morning on the morrow, and lo, Dagon is fallen on its face to the earth, before the ark of Jehovah, and the head of Dagon, and the two palms of its hands are cut off at the threshold, only the fishy part hath been left to him;

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:4 And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:4 But when they got up on the following morning, there lay Dagon face down on the ground before the ark of Yahweh, and Dagon's head and two hands lay severed on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left in its place.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:4 But the next morning early, when they arose, Dagon lay prone on the ground before the ark of the LORD, his head and hands broken off and lying on the threshold, his trunk alone intact.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:4 And it came to pass when they rose early in the morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off each before the threshold, and both the wrists of his hands had fallen on the floor of the porch; only the stump of Dagon was left.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of Jehovah; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands lay cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.

- the head: Isa 2:18,19 27:9 Jer 10:11 50:2 Eze 6:4-6 Da 11:8 Mic 1:7

Related Passages:

Psalms 115:3-8 - But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. 4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands. 5 **They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; 6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat.** 8 Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them.

ANOTHER BAD WAY TO START THE DAY - A HEADLESS DAGON!

But when they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen on his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) were cut off on the threshold; only the trunk of Dagon was left to him - In case the Philistines thought Dagon's first fall was an accident, there is a second, more devastating fall. Dagon is on his face again (as if bowing down to Yahweh) but now even his hands were cut off. There may be some symbolic meaning regarding the severed hands because the hand figuratively spoke of power and authority in the ancient cultures. Victors would carry out military executions on their defeated enemy (even David in 1Sa 17:51; cf 1Sa 31:9; 2Sa 4:12), and it could be that Yahweh's execution had a similar import. This time they don't even try to put "[Humpty, dumptly together again](#)!" One has to wonder what these intelligent men were thinking now. God was "speaking" through the crashing of their idol, being forced to bow down to Him and yet they would not listen, because their hearts were hard (see 1Sa 6:6). Yahweh in demonstrating His power was mercifully showing them their way is wrong and there is a true way. I doubt if any Ashdodites received the Yahweh's evangelistic message! [Guzik](#) adds "When we close our ears to God, He often finds another way to speak to us, and we may not like the second way."

THOUGHT - This headless, lifeless Dagon is a preview of coming attractions, for one day (soon) Messiah will return as King of kings and Lord of lords and will put an end to every so-called god of this world. Are you prepared to meet your Maker? Are you a genuine believer (disciple) of the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are not,

then you need to heed to sobering words from Jesus (notice the repetition) declaring to the Jews (and by application to all mankind) "Therefore I said to you that **you will die in your sins**; for unless you believe that I am He, **you will die in your sins**." (Jn 8:24). In Acts 16:31+ Paul says "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." In Acts 4:12+ Peter says "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name (OTHER THAN JESUS - Acts 4:10,11+) under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." Where would you be tomorrow if you died tonight? If you do not believe in Jesus Christ the Savior and Redeemer, you will be in Hell, suffering eternal punishment as "payment" for your sins just as Jesus said "you will die in your sins." And you can never pay off the debt you owe God. 2Cor 6:2+ says "'AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.'" Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" Don't put off the most important decision you will ever make, because you cannot be sure you will have tomorrow to make it!

See imagery of hand in Bible

[NIV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) on possible significance of the **hands** cut off - In the ancient Near East, the heads and/or right hands of slain enemy soldiers were often brought back to the victors' camp as trophies of war (1Ch 10:10) and to establish a body count (cf. 1Sa 18:27 and note).

Hand (03027) *yad* is a feminine noun meaning hand and figuratively meaning strength. **Hand is "the terminal part of the arm used to perform functions of man's will."** *Yad* is employed literally of man's hand which does normal work functions (Genesis 5:29), good or bad (Genesis 4:11). The law of *lex talionis* ("hand for a hand") is a penalty involving destruction of bodily parts for bodily parts harmed by another

The metaphorical use of *yad*, יָד, covers a wide range of the concept of "power." In this respect there is no essential difference whether the word is related to God or humankind. יָד is used about 200× in connection with God, in most cases combined with the name Yahweh, and rarely combined (about 13×) with a form of El or Elohim (1 Sam 4:8; 5:11; 2 Chron 30:12; Ezra 7:9; 8:18, 22, 31; Neh 2:8, 18; Job 19:21; 27:11; Ps 10:12; Eccl 2:24; 9:1). The theological metaphor of God's hand (comp. arm) seems to have its roots in Israel's experience of God's redeeming them from slavery in Egypt. In the Exodus reports the outstretched arm of God and of Moses play a decisive role (Exod 3:20; 4:17; 6:1 [2×]; 7:19; 13:3). יָד can be used metonymically to describe God's mighty acts, either for the salvation or for the judgment of his people: "the great power (הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה) [of] the LORD" (Exod 14:31; cf. Deut 34:12 with Moses as subj.; Ps 78:42). "God's good hand" protected the Israelites returning from the Exile (cf. Ezra 7:9; 8:22; Neh 2:18). But God also swings his hand of judgment over his people or over other peoples (יָד הַיָּגוֹר hi., e.g., Isa 19:16; Zech 2:9 [13]), lifts up his hand (יָד הַיָּגוֹר hi., e.g., Isa 49:22; to swear, Deut 32:40; Ezek 20:5) or stretches out his hand (יָד הַיָּגוֹר hi., Exod 7:5; Isa 14:26–27; Jer 6:12; יָד הַיָּגוֹר only being used in a negative connotation). His punishing hand is heavy on Israel's enemies (1 Sam 5:6, 11). "The work of his hands" testifies to God's creating power (Ps 19:1; Isa 48:13; 64:8).

- See 4-5 page discussion of imagery of HAND in [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) (online)
- See article The Hand of the LORD

Ralph Alexander has a helpful discussion of hand as used idiomatically -

Significant theologically is the manifold way in which the word "hand" is employed idiomatically These idioms arise from the versatility of the hand. The phrase "into (or "under") someone's hand" conveys authority involving responsibility, care, and dominion over someone or something. One may be under the custody of this authority. In the Amarna letters, the Canaanite gloss ba-di-ú means "in his hand." Mankind is to have the rest of creation "under his dominion" (Genesis 9:2). Sarah's authority over Hagar (Genesis 16:6, 9), Joseph's over Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:3-8), that of Moses and Aaron over Israel (Numbers 33:1), and David over Aram (1 Chron. 18:3) are all expressed by this phrase. Yahweh is to have authority over our lives. We place our hearts and spirits into his care, sovereignty, and judgment (Psalm 31:5, 15; [H 6, 16]; 2 Samuel 24:14). Moreover, this idiom portrays "victory over someone" when one is "delivered into one's hands." Deliverance, on the contrary, is described as being "delivered out of one's hands." Often Yahweh promised Israel that he would "deliver her enemies into her hands" (Genesis 49:8; Joshua 6:2) and that he would deliver Israel "out of her enemies' hands" (Exodus 3:8). Refuge cities provided "deliverance" for the innocent slayer "from the hand" of the revenger of blood (Numbers 35:15).

The hand symbolized "power" or "strength" (Deut. 8:17). Deut. 32:36 described Israel's loss of power by saying "their hands were gone." Moses' hand was poignantly used to portray power in the plagues against Egypt (Exodus 10:12-25). The most notable use of this metaphor is its conveyance of God's power. 1 Chron. 29:12 declares that in Yahweh's hand is power and might (cf. Psalm 89:13 [H 14]). His hand is not "short" (or "weak") (Isaiah 59:1), but mighty. A predominant demonstration of his power was his deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 13:3-16; Numbers 33:3). All the world witnessed Yahweh's power through this event (Joshua 4:24). His hand created the world (Psalm 8:6; Psalm 95:5) and works truth and justice (Psalm 111:7). He upholds

and guides the righteous with his hand (Psalm 37:24; Psalm 139:10). He continually lifts up his hand on our behalf (Psalm 10:12). A corollary idea is that of "ability" to accomplish a task. The phrases "hand reaches" or "hand finds" denote the ability to do or obtain something (Leviticus 14:21-32).

"Possession" is a common function of the hand. Therefore, "in one's hands" often bears that connotation. The Ishmaelites had Joseph in their possession ("hands," Genesis 39:1). Yahweh declared that he would take David's kingdom from his son (1 Kings 11:12, 31-35).

"Submission" is indicated by the phrase "to give one's hands under" someone else. Solomon's officials "submitted" to him (1 Chron. 29:24). Yahweh exhorted Israel to "submit" to him and not rebel.

"To stretch out the hand" conveys two ideas. It expresses the "attacking" of an object (Joshua 8:19, 26); second, it describes the psalmist's yearning for the Lord (Psalm 143:6).

"Putting one's hand to" something expresses "work" and the activity in which that person is involved (Deut. 2:7; Deut. 30:9). "Strengthening the hands" is helping someone (cf. Jonathan helping David, 1 Samuel 23:16).

Obstinate rebellion is described by the phrase "high hand" (Numbers 15:30). Contrarily, the same expression conveyed God's mighty deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 14:8). "Shaking the hand" symbolized God's warning and destruction of judgment (Isaiah 10:32; Isaiah 19:16). Contempt is likewise visualized by this symbol (Zeph. 2:15).

"Laying hands on" has four basic connotations. First, this phrase was employed to depict killing (Genesis 37:22, 27). Second, it was used in the ritual ceremony of blessing (cf. Genesis 48:17). Third, commissioning for a specific office or task was normally accompanied by the laying on of hands (cf. Moses' inauguration of Joshua and Acts 13:1-3). Fourth, the important theological concept of substitution was continually portrayed through the laying of hands upon a sacrificial animal. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest transferred the nation's sins to the goat ("substitution"), by laying his hands upon the goat. Individuals depicted their sins as transferred to and borne by the sacrificial animal through this expression (Exodus 29:10-19; Leviticus 1:4). Ultimately this figure was fulfilled in Christ's bearing of our sins upon the cross (Col. 2:14).

The "uplifted hand" expressed several nuances. First, it symbolized prayer as one lifted up his hands toward the sanctuary (Psalm 28:2). Second, the uplifted hand periodically accompanied a public blessing (Leviticus 9:22). Third, it was common for one to lift up his hand in an oath. When Abram vowed not to take spoils of war, he lifted up his hand to the king of Sodom. Another means of expressing a vow was to place the hand under the thigh of the other person as Abram's servant did when swearing that he would be faithful to Abram's charge (Genesis 24:2, 9). The most significant vows of scripture are those anthropomorphically made by God. The oath most remembered in the scripture by this accompanying sign is God's unconditional and eternal covenant promise to make a nation from Abram and bless the world through that nation, Israel (Genesis 12:1-3; cf. Exodus 6:8; Numbers 14:30). God also swore to avenge the blood of his servants (Deut. 32:40).

Consecration was depicted by the idiom "fill the hands." Some suggest that the sense of filling means the hands were full and had no time for other business, though others think that "filling" was with a sacrificial portion since this phrase was predominately used in the commissioning of priests (Exodus 29:9-35; Exodus 16:32). Ritual cleansing was portrayed by "washing the hands" (Leviticus 5:11), making the person ritually righteous (2 Samuel 22:21). This symbolic action also denoted "absolution from guilt" (Deut. 21:6-7; cf. Matthew 27:24).

To give to one was to "open the hand" (Deut. 15:8, 11), whereas to "shut the hand" was to withhold (Deut. 15:7). God opens his hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing (Psalm 145:16).

One who "slacks his hand" (or withdraws his hand) "gives up" (Joshua 10:6); the slothful "buries his hand in a dish" (Proverbs 19:24). The silent places the "hand to the mouth" (Proverbs 30:32).

"Hand" is interestingly employed to mean an "ordinance" (Ezra 3:10) or a "monument" (cf. ritual stelae at Hazor) used perhaps to establish a covenant or as religious commemorations (1 Samuel 15:12; Isaiah 56:5). The Law was symbolically placed on the hand of the Israelite to remind him of its centrality in life (Deut. 6:8). The instrumentality of giving ordinances and God's word was expressed with "by the hand of."

Perhaps the joining of hands led to the use of *yād* to denote "axles" which held the wheels of the molten sea together (1 Kings 7:32-33) and the "stays" (tenons) to fasten the boards of the tabernacle or temple (Exodus 26:17-19; 1 Kings 7:35-36). The hand hanging at the side most likely precipitated the use of *yād* for "side, coast, or border" (Exodus 2:5; Numbers 2:17; Numbers 34:3). The spreading of the hands denoted "space" (Genesis 34:21), while "hand" also meant "part" or "time" (Genesis 43:34; Genesis 47:24). A different root, *ydd*, "to love," may be the basis for translating *yād* "penis" in the context of Isaiah 57:8, 10 (cf. UG 19: no. 1072). (From [TWOT](#) online)

Over 1400 uses in OT - here are the uses in First Samuel - Note that "hand" is a keyword in 1 Samuel 4-7 - 1 Sam. 2:13; 1 Sam. 4:8; 1 Sam. 4:18; 1 Sam. 5:4; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:7; 1 Sam. 5:9; 1 Sam. 5:11; 1 Sam. 6:3; 1 Sam. 6:5; 1 Sam. 6:9; 1 Sam. 7:3; 1 Sam. 7:8; 1 Sam. 7:13; 1 Sam. 7:14; 1 Sam. 9:8; 1 Sam. 9:16; 1 Sam. 10:4; 1 Sam. 10:7; 1 Sam. 10:18; 1 Sam. 11:7; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Sam. 12:4; 1 Sam. 12:5; 1 Sam. 12:9; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Sam. 12:11; 1 Sam. 12:15; 1 Sam. 13:22; 1 Sam. 14:10; 1 Sam. 14:12; 1 Sam. 14:13; 1 Sam. 14:19; 1 Sam. 14:26; 1 Sam. 14:27; 1 Sam. 14:37; 1 Sam. 14:43; 1 Sam. 14:48; 1 Sam. 15:12; 1 Sam. 16:16; 1 Sam. 16:23; 1 Sam. 17:22; 1 Sam. 17:37; 1 Sam. 17:40; 1 Sam. 17:46; 1 Sam. 17:47; 1 Sam. 17:49; 1 Sam. 17:50; 1 Sam. 17:57; 1 Sam. 18:10; 1 Sam. 18:17; 1 Sam. 18:21; 1 Sam. 18:25; 1 Sam. 19:3; 1 Sam. 19:9; 1 Sam. 20:16; 1 Sam. 21:3; 1 Sam. 21:4; 1 Sam. 21:8; 1 Sam. 21:13; 1 Sam. 22:6; 1 Sam. 22:17; 1 Sam. 23:4; 1 Sam. 23:6; 1 Sam. 23:7; 1 Sam. 23:11; 1 Sam. 23:12; 1 Sam. 23:14; 1 Sam. 23:16; 1 Sam. 23:17; 1 Sam. 23:20; 1 Sam. 24:4; 1 Sam. 24:6; 1 Sam. 24:10; 1 Sam. 24:11; 1 Sam. 24:12; 1 Sam. 24:13; 1 Sam. 24:15; 1 Sam. 24:18; 1 Sam. 24:20; 1 Sam. 25:8; 1 Sam. 25:26; 1 Sam. 25:33; 1 Sam. 25:35; 1 Sam. 25:39; 1 Sam. 26:8; 1 Sam. 26:9; 1 Sam. 26:11; 1 Sam. 26:18; 1 Sam. 26:23; 1 Sam. 27:1; 1 Sam. 28:15; 1 Sam. 28:17; 1 Sam. 28:19; 1 Sam. 30:15; 1 Sam. 30:23;

1 Samuel 5:5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor all who enter Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:5 δι το το ο κ πιβα νουσιν ο ερε ς Δαγων κα π ς ε σπορευ μενος ε ς ο κον Δαγων π βαθμ ν ο κου Δαγων ν ζ τ ως τ ς μ ρας τα της τι περβα νοντες περβα νουσιν

KJV 1 Samuel 5:5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

NET 1 Samuel 5:5 (For this reason, to this very day, neither Dagon's priests nor anyone else who enters Dagon's temple step on Dagon's threshold in Ashdod.)

CSB 1 Samuel 5:5 That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on Dagon's threshold.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:5 This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:5 That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:5 That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor anyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod will step on its threshold.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:5 This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:5 This is why the priests of Dagon and all who enter the house of Dagon do not tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:5 therefore the priests of Dagon, and all those coming into the house of Dagon, tread not on the threshold of Dagon, in Ashdod, till this day.

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:5 This is why the priests of Dagon and the people frequenting Dagon's temple never step on Dagon's threshold in Ashdod, even today.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:5 For this reason, neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter the temple of Dagon tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this very day; they always step over it.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:5 Therefore the priests of Dagon, and every one that enters into the house of Dagon, do not tread upon the threshold of the house of Dagon in Azotus until this day, for they step over.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod, unto this day.

- **neither:** Ps 115:4-7 135:15-18
- **tread:** Jos 5:15 Zep 1:9

INSTITUTION OF A NEW POLICY DON'T STEP ON THE THRESHOLD

Therefore - What has just been stated that would lead to this conclusion? **The head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold.**

Neither the priests of Dagon nor all who enter Dagon's house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day (to the time of writing of 1 Samuel) - Since Dagon's parts had touched the threshold, in the foolishness of their religion, they assigned special character to the threshold. Thus worshipers entering Dagon's lair refused to step on the threshold. One can just picture them skipping or hopping over it like foolish children playing a game of "spiritual hopscotch!" Idolatry will make you look very stupid!

Bergen on threshold policy - Though the practice of recognizing the special character of an entrance into sacred space by means of some ritual was common in ancient Palestine (cf. Exod 3:5; Zeph 1:9), this particular expression apparently was adopted in Ashdod only after the Lord desecrated Dagon. Perhaps the Ashdodites believed their failure to treat his temple with proper respect had been the cause for their deity's problems. Better to blame themselves than admit their god's inferiority! (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

Guzik on the threshold tradition - After seeing the superiority of the God of Israel, these Philistine priests had a choice. They could turn from their weak, inferior god Dagon and begin serving the mighty, superior Lord of Israel. Or they could make a religious tradition instead. They chose the religious tradition. These Philistine priests, like men confronted with the truth today, rejected God despite the evidence, not because of the evidence. They wanted to believe it was an accident. How could they believe something so ridiculous? Because worshipping the Lord instead of Dagon meant a huge change in thinking and living. The Philistine priests were unwilling to make those changes. Setting Dagon up and gluing him together is easier than changing your life and your thinking. (Guzik's comment reminds me of Jesus' words in John 3:19-21 - "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light (**THIS IS THE WORLD'S #1 PROBLEM WITH JESUS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!**), for (TERM OF EXPLANATION) their deeds were evil. 20 "For (TERM OF EXPLANATION) everyone who does ([prasso](#)- means practice - present tense = HABITUALLY - PRACTICE DOES NOT MAKE PERFECT!!!) evil hates (present tense) the Light, and does not come (present tense) to the Light SO THAT ([hina](#) TERM OF PURPOSE) his deeds may not be exposed. 21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God." THERE YOU HAVE IT - A GOOD SUMMARY FROM JESUS CHRIST OF WHY THE WORLD IS IN THE STATE IT IS IN!!!)

1 Samuel 5:6 Now the hand of the LORD was heavy on the Ashdodites, and He ravaged them and smote them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territories.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:6 καὶ βαρὺν θῆκε ἡ κυρὸς οὐ πλάζων καὶ πύλας αὐτοῦ καὶ ξέσεσιν αὐτοῦ ἐς τὰς νῆσους καὶ μὲν τὰς χερὰς αὐτοῦ νεφθήσαν ἐκ καὶ γένητο σάγχυσις θανάτου μεγάλῃ ἐν τῇ πλει

KJV 1 Samuel 5:6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

NET 1 Samuel 5:6 The LORD attacked the residents of Ashdod severely, bringing devastation on them. He struck the people of both Ashdod and the surrounding area with sores.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:6 The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod, terrorizing and afflicting the people of Ashdod and its territory with tumors.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:6 The hand of the LORD was heavy against the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:6 The LORD's hand was heavy upon the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumors.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:6 Then the LORD's heavy hand struck the people of Ashdod and the nearby villages with a plague of tumors.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:6 The hand of the LORD was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and struck them with tumors, both in Ashdod and in its territory.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:6 The hand of the LORD was heavy upon the people of Ashdod, and he terrified and afflicted them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:6 And the hand of Jehovah is heavy on the Ashdodites, and He maketh them desolate, and smiteth them with emerods, Ashdod and its borders.

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:6 Yahweh oppressed the people of Ashdod; he ravaged them and afflicted them with tumours -- Ashdod and its territory. When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening they said,

NAB 1 Samuel 5:6 Now the LORD dealt severely with the people of Ashdod. He ravaged and afflicted the city and its vicinity with hemorrhoids; he brought upon the city a great and deadly plague of mice that swarmed in their ships and overran their fields.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:6 And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon Azotus, and he brought evil upon them, and **it burst out upon them into the ships, and mice sprang up in the midst of their country**, and there was a great and indiscriminate mortality in the city.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:6 But the hand of Jehovah was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with tumors, even Ashdod and the borders thereof.

- **the hand:** 1Sa 5:7,11 Ex 9:3 Ps 32:4 Ac 13:11
- **emerods:** 1Sa 5:9,11 6:5 De 28:27 Job 31:3 Ps 78:66
- 1Sa 6:4,5

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 28:58-60+ "If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God, 59 then the LORD will bring **extraordinary plagues** on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses. 60 "He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid, and they will cling to you.

Two Leading Candidates for Smiting with Tumors = Hemorrhoids (L) & Bubonic Plague (R)

JEHOVAH IS "HEAVY HANDED" ON THE ASHDODITES

Heavy handed is an idiom, so when you say that someone's behaviour is heavy-handed, you mean that they are too forceful or too rough. That is the definition with men's treatment of one another. But while Yahweh is forceful and even rough, it is always in keeping with His holiness and His perfect justice!

Now - Introduces a new topic, Yahweh's wrath on Ashdod for taking His Ark.

The hand ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) **of the LORD was heavy** ([kabad](#); Lxx - baruno = cause pressure thru something, weigh down, oppress, weary) **on the Ashdodites** - **Hand** is an anthropomorphism that figuratively describes Yahweh's power, strength and authority. God's **hand** can go forth for harm (as in the case of the Philistines) but can also go forth for good as in the case of Ezra in Ezra 7:9-10+. See more discussion of the topic the Hand of the LORD and the imagery of hand in Bible. A "**heavy hand**" is a picture of negative divinely wrought consequences poured forth on the pagans. This picture of God's hand heavy on the Philistines was just the beginning for these pagans as the summary statement in 1Sa 7:13 states "And the **hand of the LORD** was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel (who lived probably to about 90 years of age)."

Dagon lost his hands, but God did not lose His!

THOUGHT - If you would prefer the **good hand of the LORD** to be upon you (AND WHO WOULD NOT?!), you would be well-advised to read the "secret" of Ezra below, which makes it very clear why Ezra had experienced the good hand of the LORD upon his life and ministry. The great news is that Ezra presents a pattern that every believer can imitate and thereby assure the **good hand of the LORD** is upon their life and ministry (EVERY BELIEVER HAS A MINISTRY - cf 1Pe 4:10, 11+)! See also multiple resources related to the Hand of the LORD.

Ezra 7:9-10+ For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because **the good hand of his God was upon him**. 10 **For** (VITAL TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINING WHY THE GOOD HAND OF YAHWEH WAS ON EZRA) Ezra had (1) set his heart (IT BEGINS WITH A HEART DESIRE - cf Da 1:8KJV+) (2) to study the law of the LORD and (3) to practice it (OBEY), and (4) to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel (TO MAKE DISCIPLES!).

Hand of the LORD - 38x in 38v including 3 in the NT- Exod. 9:3; Deut. 2:15; Jos. 4:24; Jos. 22:31; Jdg. 2:15; Ruth 1:13; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:9; 1 Sam. 7:13; 1 Sam. 12:15; 2 Sam. 24:14; 1 Ki. 18:46; 2 Ki. 3:15; 1 Chr. 21:13; Ezr. 7:6; Ezr. 7:28; Job 12:9; Ps. 75:8; Ps. 118:15; Ps. 118:16; Prov. 21:1; Isa. 19:16; Isa. 25:10; Isa. 41:20; Isa. 62:3; Isa. 66:14; Jer. 51:7; Ezek. 1:3; Ezek. 3:14; Ezek. 3:22; Ezek. 8:1; Ezek. 33:22; Ezek. 37:1; Ezek. 40:1; Lk. 1:66; Acts 11:21; Acts 13:11

Note repetition of the **hand of God** in some form 8 times in Chapters 4-7 - 1Sa 4:8, 1Sa 5:7, 9, 11; 6:3, 5, 9; 7:13).

And He ravaged ([shamen](#)) them and smote ([nakah](#)) them with tumors ([ophel](#)), both Ashdod ([ancient Ashdod](#)) and its territories - Here are the first two effects of Yahweh's heavy handed treatment of the Ashdodites. **Ravaged** has a dual meaning describing the effect of making desolate and the reaction of horror, fear or dismay to the desolation. It presents a strong picture of the dire straits that Yahweh brought to bear on Ashdod (and later to the other Philistine cities). **Ravaged** does not say with what they were **ravaged**, but from the context this is most likely means **ravaged** with Yahweh's "trained" mice infesting their land (see 1Sa 6:5+). The meaning of **tumors** ([ophel](#)) (KJV - [emerods](#)) is debated but many think these were hemorrhoids (and as a physician I have seen such large hemorrhoids that the sufferer could barely even sit down and would be constantly in pain, making everything the victim did a very miserable task) or other swellings. The Septuagint uses the verb *ekzeo* which literally means to boil over, to burst out, to break out according to Liddell-Scott's lexicon describes "a cutaneous eruption, eczema....boiling out or over, breaking out."

Smote is used in 1Sa 4:2 "the Philistines....**killed** ([nakah](#)) about 4000" Hebrews. **Smote** is also used by the Philistines themselves in 1Sa 4:8 describing the "gods who **smote** ([nakah](#)) the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues" which is exactly what was happening to the Philistines now! In a sense this smiting of Ashdod is retribution for their killing the 4000 Hebrews! God clearly had used the Philistines as His instrument to chasten or discipline his disobedient, idol worshiping children, but in keeping with His righteousness and His justice, He would punish His "instrument" (even though they acted by their own free will), in this case the Philistines. We see this same pattern with Babylon being used as His "instrument" against Israel (Jer 25:9) and then God's just recompense for their treatment of Israel (Jer 50:18, 27, 31 51:6 = "He is going to render recompense to her!")

The **Septuagint translation** gives us a picture of Yahweh's heavy hand rendering it "And the hand of the Lord was heavy upon Azotus, and **He brought evil upon them, and it burst out upon them into the ships**(ED: THIS IS THE LITERAL GREEK, THE MEANING OF WHICH IS UNCERTAIN), **and mice sprang up in the midst of their country**, and there was a great and indiscriminate mortality in the city."

Tumors - In medicine (I am a physician with infectious disease subspecialization) there are 4 classic signs of inflammation - **Rubor** (redness), **Calor** (heat), **Dolor** (pain) and **Tumor** (swelling). While hemorrhoids can produce all 4, so too can [bubonic plague](#) (Bacterium = *Yersinia Pestis* - See [WHO Fact Sheet](#)) which can be transmitted by mice and have a case-fatality ratio of 30% to 60%. Either would be reasonable "candidates" for the divinely given "tumors" but only [bubonic plague](#) would be fatal.

Guzik on tumors - Older commentators often describe them as hemorrhoids, and newer commentators often describe them as signs of the bubonic plague. "According to the Rabbins, swellings on the anus." (Keil and Delitzsch) "Beating Dagon upon his own dunghill, and smiting his worshippers on their hinder parts, paying their posteriors, as men used to deal with puny boys." (Trapp) "The word *apholim*, from *aphal*, to be elevated, probably means the disease called the bleeding piles, which appears to have been accompanied with dysentery, bloody flux, and ulcerated anus." (Clarke) "Of the numerous suggested identifications of the specific malady that struck the Philistines, bubonic plague remains the most likely: 'It is a disease characterized by an epidemic occurrence, by the appearance of tumours, by the production of panic amongst the affected population, by a high mortality rate, and by an association with mice or rats.' " (Wilkinson cited in Youngblood) The Septuagint adds this to verse six: "And the cities and the fields of all that region burst up, and mice were produced, and there was the confusion of a great death in the city."

In the fascinating book (online) [Legends of the Jews](#), Ginzberg paints a graphic (even if not totally Biblical) picture writing "This new plague consisted in mice crawling forth out of the earth, and jerking the entrails out of the bodies of the Philistines while they eased nature. If the Philistines sought to protect themselves by using brass vessels, the vessels burst at the touch of the mice, and, as before, the Philistines were at their mercy."

Bergen on tumors - The tumors, often understood to be buboes—not anal tumors or hemorrhoids (= KJV's "emerods")—caused by

a rodent-borne disease (cf. 1Sa 6:4), were one of the maladies the Lord promised to send against those who violated his covenant expectations (cf. Deut 28:27). (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

Technical note on Tumors - The MT's kethiv reading is טחורים, a term that apparently meant "tumors" (so McCarter, I Samuel, 123) or "boils, abscesses (at the anus), or buboes (so W. L. Holladay, CHAL, 123). The qere עפלים may be a euphemism (so Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel, 51). **Among those favoring the affliction as a disorder related to the bubonic plague** are R. F. Youngblood (1, 2 Samuel, EBC, ed F. E. Gaebelien [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 3.388), R. P. Gordon (I and II Samuel: A Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 99), D. F. Payne, I and II Samuel, DSB (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 32, and J. Wilkinson ("The Philistine Epidemic of I Samuel 5 and 6," ExpTim 88 [1977]: 137–41). A. F. Kirkpatrick prefers the translation "boils" (The First Book of Samuel, CBSC [Cambridge: University Press, 1891], 77). Josephus (Ant., vi.1.1) suggested dysentery was the plague. **Those favoring the interpretation of either a hemorrhoidal problem or anal tumors** include W. L. Holladay, CHAL, 123; and E. Merrill ("1 Samuel," in Bible Knowledge Commentary of the Old Testament, ed. J. Walvoord and R. Zuck [Wheaton: Victor, 1985], 436). L. I. Conrad takes the untenable position that no actual disease can be discerned from the text since the text was not intended to portray accurate history ("The Biblical Tradition for the Plague of the Philistines," JAOS 104 [1984]: 281–87). (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

Heavy (03513) **kabad** is a verb which is translated in several ways (as shown below in the list of words in NAS) and primarily means to weigh heavily, to be heavy (weighty, burdensome). In some contexts kabad can also to be honored, to be wealthy, to get honor, to make dull, to make hard, to multiply or make numerous. There are 2 literal uses of **kabad** describing Eli as **heavy** (1Sa 4:18) and Absalom's hair as **heavy** (2Sa 14:26). Most of the uses of **kabad** are figurative and most of these figurative uses in turn convey the sense of **honor** or **glory** (e.g., a "weighty" person in society is one who is honored or worthy of respect ["respected" = Ge 24:19].)

Kabad - 106v - **abounding(1), achieve honor(1), became fierce(1), became heavy(1), boasting(1), burdensome(1), dim(1), distinguished(3), dull(2), enjoy your glory(1), glorified(4), glorify(7), glorious(2), glorious things(1), grave(1), grew strong(1), harden(1), hardened(6), heavier(2), heavy(6), held in honor(1), honor(17), honor you greatly(1), honorable(4), honored(19), honoring(2), honors(5), indeed honor(1), laid burdens(1), made my heavy(1), made our heavy(2), made your heavy(3), make(1), make it glorious(1), makes himself rich(1), multiply(2), nobles(1), respected(1), stopped(1), weigh(1), weigh heavily(1), went heavily(1).** Gen. 18:20; Gen. 34:19; Gen. 48:10; Exod. 5:9; Exod. 8:15; Exod. 8:32; Exod. 9:7; Exod. 9:34; Exod. 10:1; Exod. 14:4; Exod. 14:17; Exod. 14:18; Exod. 20:12; Lev. 10:3; Num. 22:15; Num. 22:17; Num. 22:37; Num. 24:11; Deut. 5:16; Deut. 28:58; Jdg. 1:35; Jdg. 9:9; Jdg. 13:17; Jdg. 20:34; 1 Sam. 2:29; 1 Sam. 2:30; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:11; 1 Sam. 6:6; 1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Sam. 15:30; 1 Sam. 22:14; 1 Sam. 31:3; 2 Sam. 6:20; 2 Sam. 6:22; 2 Sam. 10:3; 2 Sam. 13:25; 2 Sam. 23:19; 2 Sam. 23:23; 1 Ki. 12:10; 1 Ki. 12:14; 2 Ki. 14:10; 1 Chr. 4:9; 1 Chr. 10:3; 1 Chr. 11:21; 1 Chr. 11:25; 1 Chr. 19:3; 2 Chr. 10:10; 2 Chr. 10:14; 2 Chr. 25:19; Neh. 5:15; Neh. 5:18; Job 6:3; Job 14:21; Job 23:2; Job 33:7; Ps. 15:4; Ps. 22:23; Ps. 32:4; Ps. 38:4; Ps. 50:15; Ps. 50:23; Ps. 86:9; Ps. 86:12; Ps. 87:3; Ps. 91:15; Ps. 149:8; Prov. 3:9; Prov. 4:8; Prov. 8:24; Prov. 12:9; Prov. 13:18; Prov. 14:31; Prov. 27:18; Isa. 3:5; Isa. 6:10; Isa. 9:1; Isa. 23:8; Isa. 23:9; Isa. 24:15; Isa. 24:20; Isa. 25:3; Isa. 26:15; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 43:4; Isa. 43:20; Isa. 43:23; Isa. 47:6; Isa. 49:5; Isa. 58:13; Isa. 59:1; Isa. 60:13; Isa. 66:5; Jer. 30:19; Lam. 1:8; Lam. 3:7; Ezek. 27:25; Ezek. 28:22; Ezek. 39:13; Dan. 11:38; Nah. 3:10; Nah. 3:15; Hab. 2:6; Hag. 1:8; Zech. 7:11; Mal. 1:6

Ravaged (be made desolate, cause consternation) (08074) **shamen/samen** means ruin or waste and is a primary root which refers to a desolation caused by some great disaster, usually a result of divine judgment and is used of people (2 Sam. 13:20; Lam. 1:13, 16) and places (Lev. 26:31, 32; Isa. 61:4; Ezek. 35:12). Shamen is the verb used repeatedly in the description of the curses on Israel if they were disobedient to the covenant (Lev. 26:22; Lev. 26:31; Lev. 26:32; Lev. 26:34; Lev. 26:35; Lev. 26:43). Shamen means to be desolate, be devastated, destitute, laid waste, ravaged, ruined, deserted, i.e., be in a destroyed and ruined state, **Shamem** also refers to the reaction to such a ruin (1Ki 9:8), including consternation, astonishment, or being appalled (Job 18:20; Isa. 52:14; Jer. 18:16). Shamen often describes a person's reaction on seeing desolation and destruction (1Ki 9:8) Lev 26:32 uses **shamen/samen** twice and conveys both of the ideas of this word the desolation and the reaction to the desolation = 'I will **make** the land **desolate** (shamen) so that your enemies who settle in it will be **appalled** (shamen) over it. **Webster's** English definition of **desolate** - Laid waste; in a ruinous condition; neglected; devoid of inhabitants and visitors; joyless, disconsolate, and sorrowful through or as if through separation from a loved one, showing the effects of abandonment and neglect; barren, lifeless (desolate landscape). Verb = to lay waste, to make wretched. **Webster's** English definition of **appalled** - to overcome with consternation, shock, or dismay; causing extreme dismay, horror, or revulsion

Smote (struck)(05221) **nākāh** is found almost 500x in the OT (a lot of smiting was going on because there was a lot of SIN!) and

means to beat, to strike, to wound. The meaning of the verb ranges from hitting to killing. Nihal - be hit, be struck down; Pual - be battered, ruined, destroyed; Hiphil - strike, hit, beat, strike dead, wound, batter, destroy; ho. be struck down (dead), be taken, be hit (#5782); nom. מַכָּה (makkâ), blow, stroke, wound, plague, defeat. There are many instances of striking physically (Ex. 21:15, 19; Job 16:10; Ps. 3:7; Song 5:7). Of Yahweh smiting the firstborn (Nu 3:13, 8:17), His own people (Nu 11:33). Of Moses striking the rock twice resulting in his not being allowed to enter the Promised Land (Nu 20:11). Frequently, nākhāh is related to the Israelite conquest of Canaan. God used disease to smite the inhabitants of Canaan (Num. 14:12). This word is also used in a different sense, as when the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were stricken blind by the two angels (Gen. 19:11); when a priest stuck a fork into the kettle (1 Sam. 2:14); when people clapped their hands (2 Kgs. 11:12); or when people verbally abused Jeremiah (Jer. 18:18). God struck the Egyptians with plagues (Ex. 3:20); and struck people down in judgment (Isa. 5:25).

Nakah is used frequently in First Samuel (as well as thru 2Chr) 1 Sam. 2:14; 1Sa. 4:2; 1 Sam. 4:8; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:9; 1 Sam. 5:12; 1 Sam. 6:19; 1 Sam. 7:11; 1 Sam. 11:11; 1 Sam. 13:3; 1 Sam. 13:4; 1 Sam. 14:14; 1 Sam. 14:31; 1 Sam. 14:48; 1 Sam. 15:3; 1 Sam. 15:7; 1 Sam. 17:9; 1 Sam. 17:25; 1 Sam. 17:26; 1 Sam. 17:27; 1 Sam. 17:35; 1 Sam. 17:36; 1 Sam. 17:46; 1 Sam. 17:49; 1 Sam. 17:50; 1 Sam. 17:57; 1 Sam. 18:6; 1 Sam. 18:7; 1 Sam. 18:11; 1 Sam. 18:27; 1 Sam. 19:5; 1 Sam. 19:8; 1 Sam. 19:10; 1 Sam. 20:33; 1 Sam. 21:9; 1 Sam. 21:11; 1 Sam. 22:19; 1 Sam. 23:2; 1 Sam. 23:5; 1 Sam. 24:5; 1 Sam. 26:8; 1 Sam. 27:9; 1 Sam. 29:5; 1 Sam. 30:1; 1 Sam. 30:17; 1 Sam. 31:2; 2 Sam. 1:1;

Tumors (06076) (ophel from aphal = to swell) boils or tumors.

Gilbrant - Nine times the OT uses 'ōphel, commonly translated "ulcers," "tumors" or "hemorrhoids." In each of these occurrences the noun techōrīm is replaced by the Qere (HED #3025), "hemorrhoids," which apparently was considered a more delicate euphemism by the Masoretes. The noun is related to an Arabic word that means "a tumor," "a boil of the anus or vulva." The noun is found in the list of various skin diseases with which Yahweh threatened Israel in the cursings' formula (Deut. 28:27). It also figures prominently in the story of the Philistine control of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Sam. 5:6, 9, 12; 6:4f), where God afflicted them with "tumors" and overran their land with mice. Since Dagon was the god of grain or the harvest, the mice represented Yahweh's defeat of this popular deity. Furthermore, because the mice are mentioned in connection with the malady of the Philistines, some scholars translate 'ōphel as "plague," believing it to be the bubonic plague. Mice are known carriers of this disease, which is characterized by swelling in the lymph glands of the groin, armpits, etc. Still, to demonstrate that the meaning of 'ōphel is not entirely certain, at least one source thinks the word may refer to "head lice" or "scabs" (cf. KB). In three contexts, 'ōphel means "hill" or "citadel," and refers to locations in Samaria and Jerusalem. The noun also denotes a hill in Samaria, where Gehazi hid the gifts he took from the servants of Naaman the Syrian (2 Ki. 5:24). Additionally, it is used seven times in connection with Jerusalem, where it refers to the land joining the old Jebusite city conquered by David (Mic. 4:8; cf.) with the palace of Solomon and the temple area (Isa. 32:14). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Ronald Allen - 'ōpel II. **Emerods.** (ASV, "emerods, tumors;" RSV, tumors; NASB, hemorrhoids; NIV "tumors.") A noun occurring six times, five in 1 Samuel 5-6, 'ōpel refers to boils or tumors (cf. Arabic 'aflun "tumor, boil of the anus or vulva"). In all instances in the OT it is replaced by the Qere tehōr (q.v.), apparently regarded as a more delicate euphemism by the Sopherim (see C. D. Ginsberg, Introduction to the Massoretic-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible [Reprint, KTAV, 1966], p. 346). In Deut. 28:27 (in the "cursings" formula) Israel is threatened with loathsome diseases of the skin including 'ōpel. The noun figures prominently in the story of the Philistine control of the ark (1 Samuel 5:6, 9, 12; 1 Samuel 6:4-5). Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron (the latter, in threat at least) were scenes of the Lord's affliction of the people by tumors and of the land by mice (1 Samuel 6:5). Five golden images of the tumors were made, along with five golden mice or rats, at the direction of the Philistine priests as a trespass offering to compensate Yahweh on the return of the ark. The number five represented the pentapolis of Philistia. Hindson writes, "These representations of their plagues were thought by pagan peoples to bring healing from the thing represented. Thus by the pagan notion of sympathetic magic they hoped to rid themselves of the creator's plagues. The mice may indicate that they suffered from the bubonic plague" (The Philistines, p. 143). If so, this would be the first time in history when the bubonic plague (characterized by swellings, especially in the lymph glands of groin and armpits) was observed to be associated with rodents. (See online [TWOT](#))

Ophel - 6v - Deut. 28:27; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:9; 1 Sam. 5:12; 1 Sam. 6:4; 1 Sam. 6:5

QUESTION - [What were the emerods God afflicted the Philistines with in 1 Samuel 5?](#)

ANSWER - In 1 Samuel 5—6 (KJV), God afflicts the [Philistines](#) with emerods in His anger over their taking the [Ark of the](#)

[Covenant](#) from the Israelites. The word translated “emerods” in the [King James Version](#) comes from a root word literally meaning “to swell,” and the Hebrew word translated “emerods” literally means “mound.” This is basically all we know about emerods, but the context has led historians and Bible commentators to conclude that the plague of emerods was actually an occurrence of tumors, boils, or possibly hemorrhoids or “piles.” Most translations of 1 Samuel 5:6 say the affliction was “tumors”; the ISV says “tumors of the groin”; and the Darby translation says “hemorrhoids.”

The emerods were a divine punishment on the Philistines when they defeated the Israelites and captured the Ark of the Covenant on the day that Eli and his sons died. The Philistines brought the Ark to [Ashdod](#), one of the Philistine-controlled cities of Judah. They placed the Ark in their temple next to the statue of [Dagon](#), their pagan god. When the Philistines rose the next day, they found Dagon’s image on its face before the Ark. They placed the statue upright, only to find it on the floor before the Ark again the next day—this time with its head and both hands broken off. In addition to humiliating the Philistine god, God afflicted the worshipers of Dagon with “emerods,” which could be boils, tumors, or severe, bleeding hemorrhoids (1 Samuel 5:1–6).

The Philistines realized that their affliction was from the God of Israel, and they rightly associated their suffering with the stolen Ark of the Covenant. But they wrongly assumed a change of location would help. They sent the Ark to [Gath](#), another Philistine city. At Gath, God “smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts” (1 Samuel 5:9KJV). The Philistines tried again, sending the Ark on to Ekron, where the same thing happened: “And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven” (1 Samuel 5:12KJV).

We have a couple of other clues as to what the emerods were. The condition was “devastating” to the Philistines and caused “a great panic” in Gath (1 Samuel 5:6, 9). 1Sa 5:12 indicates that Philistines were dying from the emerods. This doesn’t sound much like hemorrhoids, however severe. Then, in 1 Samuel 6:4, we have the additional detail that rats were somehow involved in the plague. It could very well be that God sent bubonic plague to the Philistines, spread by rats and causing boils and death. It is also possible that the rats were not spreading the emerods but simply destroying crops.

After seven months of suffering with emerods (1 Samuel 6:5), the Philistines called for their priests and diviners and asked what was to be done about the Ark. Their advice was to send the Ark back to Israel with a guilt offering of “five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers” (1 Samuel 6:4). The smarting Philistines made the golden tumors and golden rats, placed the Ark on “a new cart,” and sent the Ark away “with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked” (1 Samuel 6:7). The cows “went straight up . . . keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left” (verse 12), and thus the Ark was returned to Israel. The Bible doesn’t say when the tumors and rats disappeared from the cities of Philistia.

Interestingly, the pagan priests and prophets of Philistia cited the [plagues of Egypt](#) as a reason to send the Ark back to Israel. They asked their fellow Philistines, “Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When Israel’s god dealt harshly with them, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?” (1 Samuel 6:6). Such was the fame of Israel’s God and the demonstration of His power that pagan nations generations later still feared His wrath. The plague of emerods was bad enough—what if it was only the first of ten?

The word *emerods* first appears in the KJV in Deuteronomy 28. The Lord promised blessings upon the Israelites if they listened to His voice and obeyed His commandments. If they did not, He promised curses upon them, one of which was “the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed” (Deuteronomy 28:27, KJV). The “botch of Egypt” is a reference to the boils with which God plagued the Egyptians during the sixth plague (Exodus 9:9).

Whether the emerods were hemorrhoids or tumors of the private parts or a symptom of bubonic plague, the lesson is that God does not take lightly the disobedience of men. He is holy, and He did not allow the Philistines to profane the Ark of the Covenant. The Lord alone is God, and Dagon, the impotent god of the Philistines, was no match for His power and glory. [GotQuestions.org](#)

James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose- THE ARK OF GOD IN THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES 1 Samuel 5:6

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.”
—COWPER.

While the jubilant Philistines were bearing away the Ark as a trophy, little did they think that they were bringing the judgment of God down among themselves. The Ark, like the Bible, may be a dead letter to some, but in the hands of the Holy Spirit it is a two-edged sword. It is always a solemn and critical thing to be brought into contact with that presence and power of which the Ark was the visible symbol, that power which killeth and maketh alive, that bringeth low and lifteth up (chap. 2:6–8). The experiences of the Philistines, with the Ark of the Covenant, are very much the same as those of the ungodly now under the power of the Gospel of

Christ.

I. Their Religion was Completely Upset.

"Dagon fell upon his face before the Ark of the Lord, and his head and his hands were cut off" (vv. 3, 4). They put the Ark in the temple of their god, thinking to keep both. But God and Dagon cannot both rule in the same house. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." When Christ comes in the false theories and opinions of men must fall. The Dagon of self may stand erect, and claim all the homage and worship till the Ark of the Truth of God comes into the temple of the heart, then he must fall on his face before the Lord, and part with both his head and his hands. Until self is completely broken he will be set up again and again. Men still think that they have to do many and great things to merit the salvation of God; but when they come into the presence of Christ the Ark, their lofty thoughts and imaginations must fall down before Him.

II. They were Severely Smitten.

"The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them, and destroyed and smote them" (vv. 6, 12). Not only was their god destroyed, but they themselves afflicted with painful tumours. The Ark of His presence brings no comfort or encouragement to those who are His enemies, nothing but the wounding and bruising of conviction and humiliation. "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not in Me" (John 16:8, 9). The Gospel will be the savour of death where it is not the savour of life. The Ark of the Lord is a dreadful possession to the unsaved.

III. They were Utterly Perplexed.

"What shall we do to the Ark of the Lord?" (chap. 6:2). They had sent it from city to city, seeking to get it peacefully disposed of, but this only increased their suffering and alarm. We are solemnly reminded here of how others, in after years, sought to get quit of Jesus Christ, the true Ark of God, until Pilate, almost in the exact words of the Philistines, said, "What shall I then do with Jesus?" Paul was playing the part of these troubled enemies of God when he kicked against the goadings of the Word of Truth (Acts 9:5). There is a tremendously important question that still presses with perplexing urgency upon ungodly men to whom the Gospel has come. How are you going to dispose of the claims of God and of His Christ? Submission or rejection?

IV. They Sent it Away.

They made a new cart, put the Ark on it, and with a trespass offering they sent it away (vv. 7, 8). Suppose we read it thus: "They made a new cross, put Him on it, and as a trespass offering they sent Him away!" The Philistines would not have this Ark to rule over them. Away with it. Christ, like the Ark, was delivered up at the instigation of the chief priests (chap. 6:2). The presence of the holy Ark of God's covenant testified against them, but there was no repentance of sin, no pleading for mercy, but a growing desire to get back to their former Arkless condition. They felt that they could not keep it and continue as they were. They must either send IT away, or be reconciled to God. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

V. They had Clear Evidence of Its Divine Character.

"See if it goeth up by the way of His own coast, then the Lord hath done this: if not, then it was a chance that happened to us. And the kine took the straight way to Beth-shemesh" (vv. 9-12). Thus they had another proof, in the manner of its home-coming, that the Lord God of Israel was with it, and had been dealing with them through it. Well might they have said, as the centurion did, when he saw the manner of the home-going of the rejected Saviour of men, "Truly this was the Son (Ark) of God" (Mark 15:39), The Gospel of God is still as the "Ark of the Covenant" among men. Mighty deeds are still being wrought through it, false systems of religion fall down before it, and the enemies of the Lord are smitten with terror in its presence. By its works it asserts its own divinity. Yet many, though fully convinced that it is of God, treat it as the Philistines did the Ark, they refuse to yield to its claims, and politely send it away with an offering, and remain the enemies of God.

1 Samuel 5:7 When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is severe on us and on Dagon our god."

BGT 1 Samuel 5:7 κα ε δον ο νδρες ζ του τι ο τω ς κα λ γουσιν τι ο καθ σετ αι κιβωτ ς το θεο Ισραηλ μεθ μ ν τι σκληρ χερ α το φ μ ς κα π Δαγων θε ν μ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

NET 1 Samuel 5:7 When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel should not remain with us, for he has attacked both us and our god Dagon!"

CSB 1 Samuel 5:7 When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of Israel's God must not stay here with us, because His hand is strongly against us and our god Dagon."

ESV 1 Samuel 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for his hand is hard against us and against Dagon our god."

NIV 1 Samuel 5:7 When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god."

NLT 1 Samuel 5:7 When the people realized what was happening, they cried out, "We can't keep the Ark of the God of Israel here any longer! He is against us! We will all be destroyed along with Dagon, our god."

NRS 1 Samuel 5:7 And when the inhabitants of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us; for his hand is heavy on us and on our god Dagon."

RSV 1 Samuel 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw how things were, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us; for his hand is heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god."

YLT 1 Samuel 5:7 And the men of Ashdod see that it is so, and have said, 'The ark of the God of Israel doth not abide with us, for hard hath been His hand upon us, and upon Dagon our god.'

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god."

NJB 1 Samuel 5:7 'The ark of the God of Israel must not stay here with us, for he is oppressing us and our god Dagon.'

NAB 1 Samuel 5:7 On seeing how matters stood, the men of Ashdod decided, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for he is handling us and our god Dagon severely."

LXE 1 Samuel 5:7 And the men of Azotus saw that it was so, and they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us, for his hand is heavy upon us and upon Dagon our god.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us; for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

- saw: 1Sa 4:8 Ex 8:8,28 9:28 10:7 12:33
- The ark: 1Sa 6:20 2Sa 6:9 1Ch 13:11-13 15:13
- upon Dagon our god: 1Sa 5:3,4 Jer 46:25 48:7

PAGANS RECOGNIZED THE HEAVY HAND OF GOD

Keep in mind that the Philistines were aware of plagues associated with Yahweh ""Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? **These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues** in the wilderness." (1Sa 4:8)

When the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) **is severe on us and on Dagon our god."** - Clearly they recall God's power in Egypt. But now they sense a variation of that wrath has come on them leading to only one conclusion - GET IT OUT!. They are also in effect acknowledging Yahweh's power is superior to Dagon's "power!" They said in effect "Let us not submit to the God of Israel, but get Him out of our sight!" Sounds like the mantra of many modern day "Philistines!" They assumed God was in the box and if they got rid of the Ark, they could get rid of God! Of course, the omnipresent God does not work that way as they all realized the day they died and encountered Yahweh, finally understanding that He is not "God in a Box" but God in Control!

THOUGHT - Revelation 20 is very clear that you can try to push God away now, but you will one day stand before His Holy and Righteous bar of justice and judgment! John paints this dramatic picture of everyone who tries to send God away now...

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, **standing before the throne**, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into

the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15+)

Bergen adds "Like the plagues of Egypt, the Lord's plagues in Philistia brought judgment to the foreign gods (cf. 6:5; Exod 12:12) and disease and death to oppressors of the Hebrews." (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#))

Notice that for the first time the pagans recognize the Ark as the Ark of the the God of Israel, the nation they had soundly defeated. The phrase **God of Israel** is repeated 6 times in this chapter as if the pagans were coming to understand that the God symbolized by the Ark was only Israel's God and could not be added to their polytheistic pantheon of false gods headed by Dagon.

1 Samuel 5:8 So they sent and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel around.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:8 καὶ ποστ ἄλουσιν καὶ συν γουσιν τοὺς σατρ πάς τιν ἄλοφ λων πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἄγουσιν τ ποι σωμεν κιβωτ θεο Ἰσραηλ καὶ ἄγουσιν οὗ Γεθθα οἱ μετελθ τω κιβωτ τὸ θεο πρὸς μὲς καὶ μετ ἔθεν κιβωτ τὸ θεο εἰς Γεθθα

KJV 1 Samuel 5:8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.

NET 1 Samuel 5:8 So they assembled all the leaders of the Philistines and asked, "What should we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They replied, "The ark of the God of Israel should be moved to Gath." So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:8 So they called all the Philistine rulers together and asked, "What should we do with the ark of Israel's God?" "The ark of Israel's God should be moved to Gath," they replied. So the men of Ashdod moved the ark.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:8 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." So they brought the ark of the God of Israel there.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:8 So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, "What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?" They answered, "Have the ark of the god of Israel moved to Gath." So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:8 So they called together the rulers of the Philistine towns and asked, "What should we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?" The rulers discussed it and replied, "Move it to the town of Gath." So they moved the Ark of the God of Israel to Gath.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:8 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" The inhabitants of Gath replied, "Let the ark of God be moved on to us." So they moved the ark of the God of Israel to Gath.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:8 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." So they brought the ark of the God of Israel there.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:8 And they send and gather all the princes of the Philistines unto them, and say, 'What do we do to the ark of the God of Israel?' and they say, 'To Gath let the ark of the God of Israel be brought round;' and they bring round the ark of the God of Israel;

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:8 Therefore they sent and gathered to themselves all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried away to Gath." So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:8 So they summoned all the Philistine chiefs to them, and said, 'What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?' They decided, 'The ark of the God of Israel shall be taken away to Gath.' So they took the ark of the God of Israel to Gath.

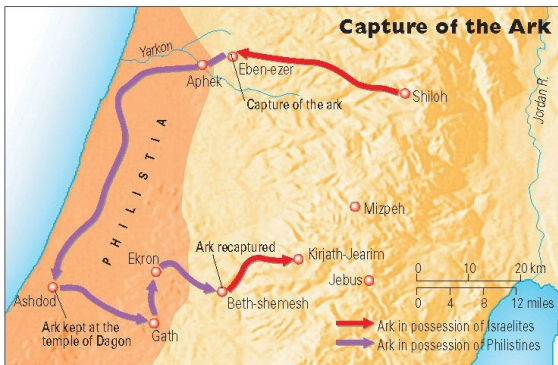
NAB 1 Samuel 5:8 So they summoned all the Philistine lords and inquired of them, "What shall we do with the

ark of the God of Israel?" The men of Gath replied, "Let them move the ark of the God of Israel on to us."

LXE 1 Samuel 5:8 And they send and gather the lords of the Philistines to them, and say, What shall we do to the ark of the God of Israel? and the Gittites say, Let the ark of God come over to us; and the ark of the God of Israel came to Geth.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel thither.

- **What shall:** Zec 12:3
- **Gath:** 1Sa 17:4 Am 6:2



Ark Shuttled to Gath

So (term of conclusion) - Based on their recognition of Yahweh's superior strength, the pagans come to a conclusion.

They sent and gathered all the lords (also translated "tyrants") **of the Philistines** ([pelishti](#)) **to them and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" And they said, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath." And they brought the ark of the God of Israel around** - The phrase **the lords of the Philistines** indicates the five lords of the major cities (1Sa 6:16) had a high summit. Assuming all 5 were present and in agreement, it is amazing that they agreed to send the Ark to one of the other lord's cities, Gath! Why Gath? The text is silent. But their decision is defective (to put it mildly)! One possible reason for sending the Ark to another town is to rule out coincidence, for if nothing happened at Gath, it would be chance coincidence that occurred in Ashdod.

Lords (05633)(seren) tyrant is a Philistine loan word and is always found in plural describing the five lords of the Philistine cities (Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza). Although the Philistine city-states were independent, they did cooperate when common cause necessitated as here in 1Sa 5-6 and when they conspired with Delilah to subdue Samson, an action which God eventually turned to their death (Jdg 16:5ff.).

Baker - This term is a Philistine loan word and was applied only to Philistine rulers. Five rulers reigned in the five main cities of the Philistines: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (1 Sam. 6:16, 18). In one passage, the word is translated axle of brass, based on the Septuagint rendering (1 Ki. 7:30), but the etymology is unknown. David and his men were sent away by the seren and not allowed to fight for the Philistines (1 Chr. 12:19[20]).

Complete Word Study Dictionary, The - The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament.

1 Samuel 5:9 After they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion; and He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:9 καὶ γένθη μετὰ μετελθεῖν αὐτὴν καὶ γινέται χεῖρ κυρίου ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν τῶν φιλισταίων ὡς ὅτι καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἄνδράσι τῆς πόλεως πικρὸς ὡς μέλου καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἄνδράσι τῆς πόλεως αὐτοῖς οἱ ὄφθαλμοὶ ὄραν

KJV 1 Samuel 5:9 And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

NET 1 Samuel 5:9 But after it had been moved the LORD attacked that city as well, causing a great deal of

panic. He struck all the people of that city with sores.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:9 After they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against the city of Gath, causing a great panic. He afflicted the men of the city, from the youngest to the oldest, with an outbreak of tumors.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:9 But after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:9 But after they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:9 But when the Ark arrived at Gath, the LORD's heavy hand fell on its men, young and old; he struck them with a plague of tumors, and there was a great panic.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:9 But after they had brought it to Gath, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic; he struck the inhabitants of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:9 But after they had brought it around, the hand of the LORD was against the city, causing a very great panic, and he afflicted the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out upon them.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:9 and it cometh to pass after they have brought it round, that the hand of Jehovah is against the city -- a very great destruction; and He smiteth the men of the city, from small even unto great; and break forth on them do emerods.

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:9 So it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction; and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors broke out on them.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:9 But after they had taken it there, Yahweh oppressed that town and a great panic broke out; afflicting the people of the town from highest to lowest, he brought them out in tumours too.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:9 So they moved the ark of the God of Israel to Gath! But after it had been brought there, the LORD threw the city into utter turmoil: he afflicted its inhabitants, young and old, and hemorrhoids broke out on them.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:9 And it came to pass after it went about to Geth, that the hand of the Lord comes upon the city, a very great confusion; and he smote the men of the city small and great, and smote them in their secret parts: and the Gittites made to themselves images of emerods.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:9 And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of Jehovah was against the city with a very great discomfiture: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great; and tumors brake out upon them.

- **the hand of the LORD:** 1Sa 5:6 7:13 12:15 De 2:15 Am 5:19 9:1-4
- **very great confusion:** 1Sa 5:11
- and they had emerods: 1Sa 5:6 6:4,5,11 Ps 78:66

SURPRISE! SURPRISE! **HAND OF GOD NOW AGAINST GATH**

After they had brought it around, the hand ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) **of the LORD was against the city with very great confusion** - Once again we see the key word/phrase, **the hand of the LORD** was heavy on the city of Gath. **Very great confusion** speaks of the emotional turmoil brought on by the plague.

And He smote the men of the city, both young and old, so that tumors broke out on them - **KJV** calls the tumors "**emerods**." No age group was immune. The smiting here is described only as **tumors**. From other texts the assumption is that Gath was also overrun by God's mighty mice!

1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And as the ark of God came to Ekron the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people."

BGT 1 Samuel 5:10 καὶ ἔαποστ' αὐλοῦσιν τὸν κιβωτὸν τὸ θεοῦ ἐς σκαλὸν καὶ γενήσεται ἡ ἐσθλὴν κιβωτὸς θεοῦ

ες σκαλ να κα βησαν ο σκαλωνται λγοντες τ πεστρ ψατε πρς μς τ ν κιβωτ ν το θεο Ισραηλ θανατσαι
μς κα τ ν λα ν μ ν

KJV 1 Samuel 5:10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

NET 1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when the ark of God arrived at Ekron, the residents of Ekron cried out saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel here to kill our people!"

CSB 1 Samuel 5:10 The Gittites then sent the ark of God to Ekron, but when it got there, the Ekronites cried out, "They've moved the ark of Israel's God to us to kill us and our people!"

ESV 1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But as soon as the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people."

NIV 1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people."

NLT 1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the Ark of God to the town of Ekron, but when the people of Ekron saw it coming they cried out, "They are bringing the Ark of the God of Israel here to kill us, too!"

NRS 1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the ark of the God of Israel to Ekron. But when the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "Why have they brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to kill us and our people?"

RSV 1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when the ark of God came to Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought around to us the ark of the God of Israel to slay us and our people."

YLT 1 Samuel 5:10 And they send the ark of God to Ekron, and it cometh to pass, at the coming in of the ark of God to Ekron, that the Ekronites cry out, saying, 'They have brought round unto us the ark of the God of Israel, to put us to death -- and our people.'

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people!"

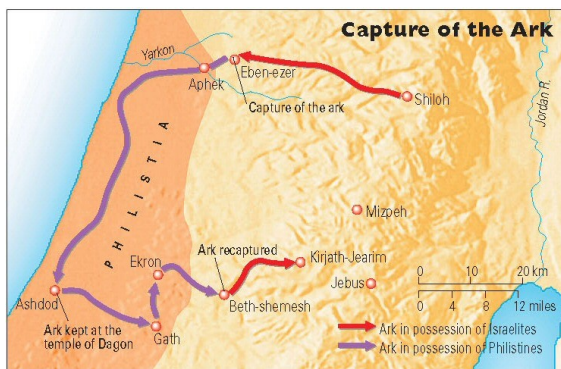
NJB 1 Samuel 5:10 They then sent the ark of God to Ekron, but when it came to Ekron the Ekronites shouted, 'They have brought me the ark of the God of Israel to kill me and my people!'

NAB 1 Samuel 5:10 The ark of God was next sent to Ekron; but as it entered that city, the people there cried out, "Why have they brought the ark of the God of Israel here to kill us and our kindred?"

LXE 1 Samuel 5:10 And they send away the ark of God to Ascalon; and it came to pass when the ark of God went into Ascalon, that the men of Ascalon cried out, saying, Why have ye brought back the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people?

ASV 1 Samuel 5:10 So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

- God to Ekron: Jos 15:45 Jud 1:18 2Ki 1:2 Am 1:8
- us, to slay us and our people: Heb. me, to slay me and my people



Ark Sent to Ekron

GATH PASSES THE "HOT POTATO"

A [hot potato](#) is an idiom meaning something is so controversial or sensitive that it is risky to deal with! The Ark was a "hot potato" in Philistia!

So (term of conclusion) - Based on their recognition of Yahweh's hand had fallen heavily on Gath, they arrived at a logical (and probably quick) conclusion!

They sent the ark of God to Ekron [hot potato](#) - See Ekron on map above, about 4-5 miles north of Gath. If the same problem occurred in Ekron, there would be no doubt that the events were from the God of the Ark!

And as the ark of God came to Ekron the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the Ark([aron](#)) of the God of Israel around to us, to kill us and our people - Bad news travels fast especially if the city in which the bad news occurred is only 4-5 miles north! So by this time the word had spread that the **Ark of God** was a real [hot potato](#) and the Ekronites predicted it would bring death to their city.

1 Samuel 5:11 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines and said, '**Send away** the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people.'" For there was a deadly confusion throughout the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:11 καὶ ἔξαποστ' ἄλλουσιν καὶ συν' ἑαυτοῖς τοὺς σατράπας τῶν ἑλλοφ' ὧν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἔξαποστε λατρεῖ τὴν κιβωτὴν τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ καθίστω ἐς τὴν τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ μὴ θάνατος μὲν καὶ τὴν λαὸν μὴ τι γενέθῃ σ' ὅσους θάνατος ἔλτ' ἐπὶ πλεῖστα βαρεῖα σφ' ὅρα ὅς ἐσθ' ἔλθεν κιβωτὴς θεοῦ Ἰσραὴλ κε

KJV 1 Samuel 5:11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

NET 1 Samuel 5:11 So they assembled all the leaders of the Philistines and said, "Get the ark of the God of Israel out of here! Let it go back to its own place so that it won't kill us and our people!" The terror of death was throughout the entire city; God was attacking them very severely there.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:11 The Ekronites called all the Philistine rulers together. They said, "Send the ark of Israel's God away. It must return to its place so it won't kill us and our people!" For the fear of death pervaded the city; God's hand was oppressing them.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:11 They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people." For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:11 So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, "Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people." For death had filled the city with panic; God's hand was very heavy upon it.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:11 The people summoned the Philistine rulers again and begged them, "Please send the Ark of the God of Israel back to its own country, or it will kill us all." For the deadly plague from God had already begun, and great fear was sweeping across the town.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:11 They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people." For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there;

RSV 1 Samuel 5:11 They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not slay us and our people." For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there;

YLT 1 Samuel 5:11 And they send and gather all the princes of the Philistines, and say, 'Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and it turneth back to its place, and it doth not put us to death -- and our people;' for there hath been a deadly destruction throughout all the city, very heavy hath the hand of God been there,

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:11 They summoned all the Philistine chiefs and said, 'Send the ark of the God of Israel away; let it go back to where it belongs and not kill me and my people' -- for there was mortal panic throughout the town; God was oppressing them.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:11 Then they, too, sent a summons to all the Philistine lords and pleaded: "Send away the ark of the God of Israel. Let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our kindred." A deadly panic had seized the whole city, since the hand of God had been very heavy upon it.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:11 And they send and gather the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it lodge in its place; and let it not slay us and our people.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:11 They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, that it slay us not, and our people. For there was a deadly discomfiture throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

- a deadly: Isa 13:7-9 Jer 48:42-44
- the hand: 1Sa 5:6,9

CITIES CALL A CRISIS CONFERENCE

They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines ([pelishti](#)) and said, "Send away** the Ark ([aron](#)) of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people."** - Three cities. Three catastrophes. While the old saying "the third time is the charm" was hardly apropos for in fact it was the third curse, the "light bulbs" finally went off that the heavy hand of God is not going to depart until the Ark of God departs.

For (term of explanation) **there was a deadly confusion** (lit. "panic of death") **throughout the city** - **NLT** = "For the deadly plague from God had already begun, and great fear was sweeping across the town." Presumably this is the city of Ekron, which had indeed been struck with evil just as the Ekronites had feared.

The hand ([yad](#) - hand is keyword in 1Sa 4-7 = 13x/13v) **of God was very heavy there** - A heavy hand from God is not good! God's omnipotence was visibly and dramatically displayed. While the glory had departed Israel, the God of glory was bringing glory (especially with the meaning of showing or giving a proper opinion to Himself) among these pagan idolaters!

Related Resource:

- See imagery of hand in Bible
- See article The Hand of the LORD

G Campbell Morgan - Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to its own place.—1 Sam. 5.11

This short chapter is full of interest, in that it shows how God is able to become His own witness when His people fail in their testimony to Him among the nations. All that is essential in this story is of abiding application. To Israel the ark was the centre and symbol of their national life. In itself it was devoid of power. In the hour of peril from Philistine attack, and hoping to save themselves, the people had brought this Ark into the midst of the fight. That was an entirely superstitious use thereof, and had proved utterly

unavailing. The Ark was not a charm equal to delivering disobedient Israel. But God would not permit the enemies of His people to trifle with it. If men hold their peace, stones will cry out; and if chosen witnesses are unfaithful to God, then He will make the Ark, which is the symbol of His presence, the occasion of His judgment upon His enemies. Thus Philistia was made to feel that if she had been able for the moment to conquer and break the power of Israel, she had still to deal with the God of Israel, and that was a different matter. This cry of the people to the Philistine lords to send the Ark away was the result of- this conviction. Thus God constantly breaks through on human consciousness directly, not always in ways which we describe as supernatural, but always with certainty and conviction. This fact may give us encouragement, but it must not be used as an excuse for the infidelity of those who should be His witnesses. Had Israel been obedient Philistia had never taken the Ark of God. ([Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible](#))

1 Samuel 5:12 And the men who did not die were smitten with tumors and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

BGT 1 Samuel 5:12 καὶ οἱ ζῆντες καὶ οἱ κτεθάνοντες πλησάν ἐς τὴν θόρον καὶ ἡ βοή κραυγῆς πλεωρῆς ἐστὶν ὅλην

KJV 1 Samuel 5:12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

NET 1 Samuel 5:12 The people who did not die were struck with sores; the city's cry for help went all the way up to heaven.

CSB 1 Samuel 5:12 The men who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

ESV 1 Samuel 5:12 The men who did not die were struck with tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

NIV 1 Samuel 5:12 Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

NLT 1 Samuel 5:12 Those who didn't die were afflicted with tumors; and the cry from the town rose to heaven.

NRS 1 Samuel 5:12 those who did not die were stricken with tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

RSV 1 Samuel 5:12 the men who did not die were stricken with tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

YLT 1 Samuel 5:12 and the men who have not died have been smitten with emerods, and the cry of the city goeth up into the heavens.

NKJ 1 Samuel 5:12 And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

NJB 1 Samuel 5:12 The people who did not die were afflicted with tumours, and the wailing from the town rose to the sky.

NAB 1 Samuel 5:12 Those who escaped death were afflicted with hemorrhoids, and the outcry from the city went up to the heavens.

LXE 1 Samuel 5:12 For there was a very great confusion in all the city, when the ark of the God of Israel entered there; and those, who lived and died not were smitten with emerods; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

ASV 1 Samuel 5:12 And the men that died not were smitten with the tumors; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

- **died:** 1Ki 19:17 Am 5:19
- **the cry:** 1Sa 9:16 Ex 12:30 Isa 15:3-5 Jer 14:2 25:34 48:3

**CRYING OUT
TO HEAVEN**

And the men who did not die were smitten ([nakah](#)) with tumors ([ophel](#)) and the cry of the city went up to heaven- The deadly plague stimulated a cry **up to heaven**, which is usually what a sudden tragedy does to people. So even today when people are suddenly confronted with devastating news they cry out "O God!" Sadly these Gathites **cry** out to **the heaven**, but not to the God who made the heavens and earth!

[Guzik](#) - The Philistines, if they had repented and turned towards the Lord, could have benefited from the ark. Instead it became a curse and a judgment to them. The same is true of the presence of God among men today, which can be as a fragrance of life to some and the aroma of death to others (2 Corinthians 2:15–16+).