

1 Samuel 6:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.

Analysis

And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.

The golden mice extended beyond the five capital cities to represent all Philistine settlements - both fortified cities ('ir mivtsar') and unwalled villages ('perazot'). This comprehensive offering acknowledged that the plague had spread throughout Philistine territory. The reference to 'the great stone of Abel' (possibly 'stone of mourning' or simply 'great stone') served as a permanent memorial. The narrator's note 'which stone remaineth unto this day' indicates this account was written while the memorial still stood, verifying the historical reality for original readers. The stone that received the Ark became a lasting witness to God's sovereignty over pagan nations and His faithfulness in returning to His people. Such memorials throughout Scripture (Jacob's pillar, Joshua's stones) serve to anchor faith in historical events.

Historical Context

The term 'Abel' may mean 'meadow' or relate to 'ebel' (mourning), given subsequent events. Archaeological evidence confirms the existence of both fortified Philistine cities and smaller dependent villages throughout the coastal plain. The stone memorial would have been a recognizable landmark for the original audience.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why does Scripture emphasize physical memorials of God's mighty acts?
2. What 'stones of remembrance' mark significant encounters with God in your life?

Interlinear Text

יַעֲכֹבְרֵי יֵ	הַזָּהָב	מִסְפָּר	כָּל	יְמֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ
mice	And the golden	according to the number	H3605	cities
H5909	H2091	H4557		H5892
וְעַד	לְחֵמֵ שֵׁשֶׁת	הַסִּבִּינִים	יְמֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ	מִבְּצָר
H5704	of the Philistines	belonging to the five	cities	both of fenced
	H6430	H2568	H5892	H4013
אֲשֶׁר	הַגְּדֹלָה	אֶבֶן ל	וְעַד דָּן	הַפְּרָזִי
H834	even unto the great	stone of Abel	H5704	and of country
	H1419	H59		H6521
עַד	יְהוָה	אֲרֹן	אֶת	עַל יְהוָה
H5704	of the LORD	the ark	H853	H5921
	H3068	H727		H3240
בֵּית	יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	בְּשָׂדָה	הַזֶּה	הֵי יוֹם
H0	of Joshua	in the field	H2088	which stone remaineth unto this day
	H3091	H7704		H3117
הַבֶּתְשֶׁמִּיתִי:				
the Bethshemite				
H1030				