

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

Psalm 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

מַעַיְרָכָל	מִסְפָּר	בְּזַבְּעַנְבָּר	וְעַכְבָּר	מִעַיְרָכָל	מִסְפָּר	בְּזַבְּעַנְבָּר	וְעַכְבָּר
mice	And the golden	according to the number		H3605			cities
H5909	H2091	H4557					H5892
וְעַד מִבְּצָר	לְקָטָם שָׁתְּ פָלְשָׁתִים	בְּסִבְנֵי מִלְּכָה	מִעַיְרָכָל	וְעַד מִבְּצָר	לְקָטָם שָׁתְּ פָלְשָׁתִים	בְּסִבְנֵי מִלְּכָה	וְעַד מִבְּצָר
of the Philistines	belonging to the five	lords	cities	both of fenced			H5704
H6430	H2568	H5633	H5892	H4013			
אֲשֶׁר בְּגִדּוֹל הַפְּרָזִים	אֶבֶל עַד בְּפְרָזִים	אֶבֶל עַד בְּפְרָזִים	אֲשֶׁר בְּגִדּוֹל הַפְּרָזִים				H834
villages	and of country	stone of Abel	even unto the great				
H3724	H6521	H59	H1419				
עַד יְהִי הַאֲרָן עַל יְהִי הַאֲרָן עַל יְהִי	עַד יְהִי הַאֲרָן עַל יְהִי	עַד יְהִי הַאֲרָן עַל יְהִי	עַד יְהִי הַאֲרָן עַל יְהִי				H5704
whereon they set down		H853	the ark	of the LORD			
H3240	H5921	H727	H3068				
בְּבֵית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּבֵית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּבֵית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	בְּבֵית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּבֵית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	בְּבֵית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ	בְּבֵית יְהוֹשֻׁעַ				H0
which stone remaineth unto this day		H2088	in the field	of Joshua			
H3117		H7704	H3091				
בְּשַׁמְּנֵי:							
the Bethshemite							
H1030							

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