

## Section C: Old Testament

### Chapter 16

#### Salem, Jebus, Jerusalem (2000-1000 BC)

When Abraham entered the land of Canaan around 2000 BC the city of Jerusalem was called Salem (Genesis 14).

*After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the **Valley of Shaveh** (that is, the **King's Valley**). Then **Melchizedek king of Salem** brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, **Creator of heaven and earth**. And blessed be **God Most High**, who delivered your enemies into your hand.' Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*

-Genesis 14:17-20

Melchizedek's city was called Salem, or Shalem, which is also the name of the God whose worship was centered in the city. The full name of this God was "God Most High, Creator of Heaven and Earth" since he was the God of creation. It is interesting to note that Abram recognizes this God in verse 22 when he swears by his name and, at the same time, calls him "Lord" which is the word YHWH, the name of the covenant God of Israel:

*Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have raised my hand to the Lord (YHWH), **God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth**, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you.'* -Genesis 14:22-23

The name of the city Jerusalem was originally "Yerushalem". We already know that "shalem" comes from the name of the God who was worshiped in the city by Melchizedek. (The Jews taught that Melchizedek was Noah's son Shem, who according to biblical records, was still alive at this time.) The word "yeru" means "foundation stone" or "cornerstone". The name Jerusalem, then, means "the foundation stone of Shalem" and refers to the original cornerstone laid by the Creator of the universe when he built the earth.

Melchizedek was the king of this city, which was located on the southern part of the Eastern Hill between the Kidron Valley and the Central Valley. Abraham met Melchizedek in the Valley of Shaveh, that is the King's Valley (Genesis 14:17). This would be at the south end of the ridge of the city where the Kidron and Hinnom valleys meet. Melchizedek was also a priest of God Most High, who was Abraham's God as well.

Abraham was in Jerusalem again a few years later when he offered Isaac on Mount Moriah, as described in Genesis 22. Mount Moriah is on the northern end of the Eastern Hill that Melchizedek's city sat on. So, in Genesis 14 Abraham met Melchizedek on the south end of the Eastern Hill in the valley, but in Genesis 22 he went to the highest point, the north end, of that same ridge.

Around the time of Jacob and Joseph (1800-1700 BC), Jerusalem, or Rushalimum, is mentioned in an Egyptian text as a chief city in the central hill country with two rulers named Y'qar'am and Shas'an. Just a few years later in another Egyptian text the name Jerusalem is mentioned along with the name of one single ruler, which is illegible.

Canaanites continued to live in the city through the days of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons. After the Hebrews spent 400 years in Egypt and 40 years in the wilderness, Joshua led them into the promised land. The Jebusites (also called Amorites) were a group of Canaanites. The king's name at that time was Adoni-zedek (Joshua 10:1-3) who appears to be an heir or descendent of Melchizedek. (Notice the spelling: Melchizedek.) The Zedek family, or the Zedek title, had been ruling Jerusalem from 2000 to 1400 BC. In about the year 1404 BC, Adoni-zedek met Joshua on that fateful day when the sun stood still and was killed by Joshua (Joshua 10:3; 12:7, 10). After Joshua's death the men of Judah attacked and captured Jerusalem. The people in the city were slaughtered and the city was burnt.

*The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem also and took it. They put the city to the sword and set it on fire.*

- Judges 1:8

After that time the city of Jerusalem was resettled by Jebusites and the city was named Jebus by its inhabitants.

*Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah.*

- Joshua 15:63

The Amarna Collection was found in Egypt in 1887. It is a collection of ancient letters written on clay tablets varying in size from 2 x 2.5 inches up to 3.5 x 9 inches. A substantial amount of the content of the letters written to Pharaoh Amenhotep III (1410-1377 BC) are appeals from many of the kings in Canaan for military



help and provisions. At that time the land of Canaan was being overrun by invaders called “Haibru” in the letters. The word “Habiru” simply means “nomadic invaders,” but its pronunciation sounds like the name of a people called “Hebrews” who invaded the same land of Canaan in a similar fashion at the very same time. In my book *Framework for Christian Faith*, the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt is dated as occurring in the year 1444 BC. After 40 years in the wilderness the Hebrews would have entered Canaan in 1405-1404 BC. For the next seventy years, letters written from the land of Canaan focus on the chaos and fighting caused by these Habiru invaders.

A letter sent to Pharaoh Amenhotep IV of Egypt between 1350 and 1334 BC from Jerusalem has survived among the Amarna letters. The letter is from Abdi-Hepa, the ruler of Jerusalem, which indicates that Jerusalem was an important city at that time. In these letters Abdi-Hepa, a Hittite name, discusses a failed attempt to break into his palace in order to assassinate him. The natural location of this palace fortress would be the same place in Jerusalem that the kings before him and after him would choose: the north edge of the city near the Ophel. (David would eventually take this fortress around 1005 BC). In these letters the ruler of Jerusalem is clearly having trouble with invaders and raiding parties a generation after Joshua brought Israel into the land of Canaan. Abdi-Hepa was asking for help from the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Jebus, or Jerusalem, is also mentioned in the account of a traveling Levite in the book of Judges from roughly around 1200 BC:

*Unwilling to stay another night the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine. When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, ‘Come, let’s stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night.’ His master replied, ‘No. We won’t go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah.’*  
- Judges 19:10-12

By David’s day in 1005 BC, these Jebusites had built up the southern half of the Eastern Hill. The Jebusites had built walls around their city and had added considerable defensive structures on the north end in the middle of the Eastern Hill in the area called the Ophel. The northern section of the ridge, Mount Moriah, was being used as a threshing floor (2 Samuel 24:16-24). This city covered about 10 acres.

When David was 37-years-old and had reigned in Hebron for 7 years his men entered the city of Jerusalem through the water system and took it from the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:4-9). David began extensive building in Jerusalem which he renamed “the City of David”. The Bible says that David captured the “stronghold of Jerusalem”, which would be the same palace fortress mentioned by Adbi-Hepa and used for centuries by the kings who preceded David:

*The Jebusites said to David, ‘You will not get in here’. . . . Nevertheless, David captured the **fortress of Zion**, the City of David. . . . David then took up residence in the **fortress** and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the **supporting terraces (Millo)** inward.*  
- 2 Samuel 5:6, 7, 9

Chapter 17

Millo and the Jebusite Wall (2000-1000 BC)

The Millo is part of the City of David. It is the rampart built by the Jebusites before David conquered the city. The Millo consists of the terraces and retaining walls on the eastern slope of the southeastern spur that

supported the buildings above. The Millo is the Stepped Stone Structure uncovered by Kathleen Kenyon. Eilat Mazar uncovered the Large Stone Structure that sat on the Millo.



The Stepped Stone Structure at what is believed to be the location of the Jebusite Wall. This photo includes:  
1) a glacis, a steep sloped wall for protection, which is called the Millo in 2 Samuel 5:9 from 1100-1000 BC  
2) remains of residences from 1200 BC  
3) retaining walls from 1200 BC  
4) rooms used from 700-586 BC  
5) walls built by Nehemiah



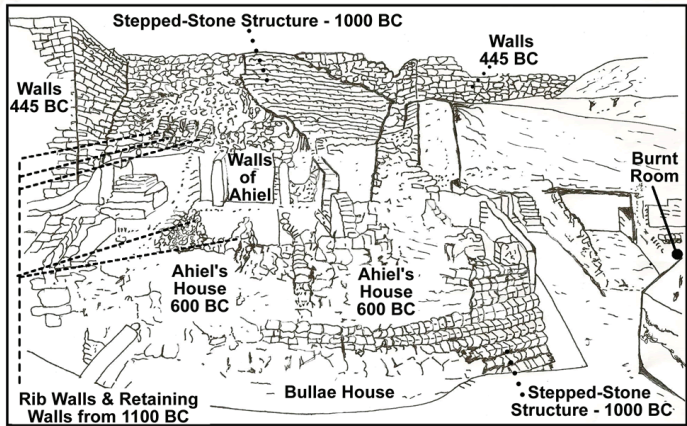


Diagram detailing the Stepped Stone Structure

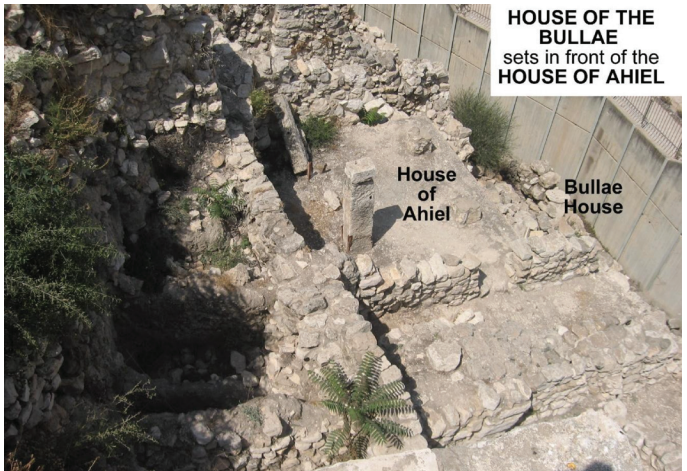
**The House of Ahiel.** This four-room house was built into and over the Millo around 650 BC in the days of young Josiah and Jeremiah. The staircase to the left (seen in photos below) would have provided access to the home's flat roof. A stone with a hole in it was found in a corner of the small room. This stone is the toilet seat that sat over a cesspit about 6.5 feet deep.



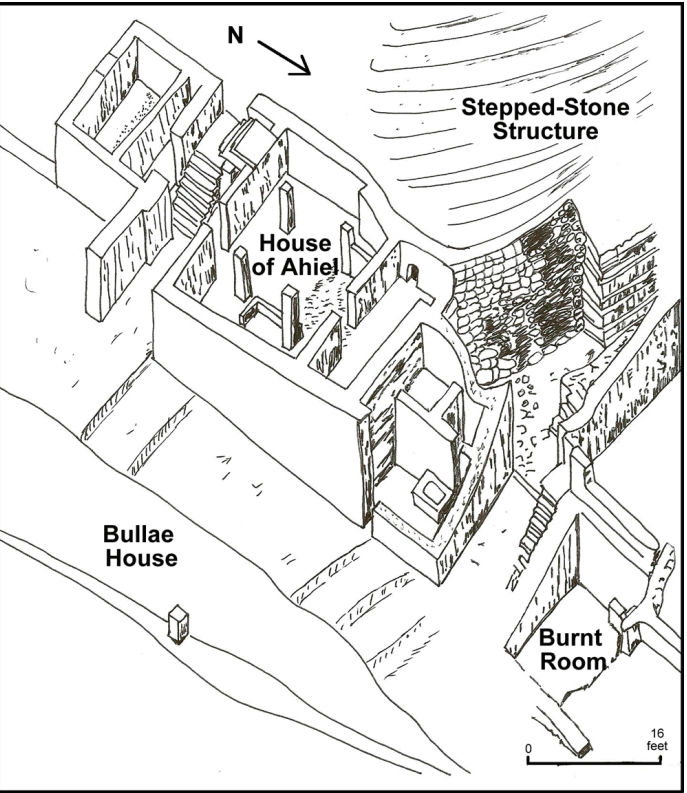
A massive stepped podium for the Canaanite-Jebusite palace/fortress which was also used as David's palace. Eilat Mazar dates the building of this structure from the period of 1200-1000 BC. This Stepped Stone Structure was the work of the Jebusites during the days of the Judges, and the work of David around 1000 BC.



A view looking down at the sloped wall built by the Jebusites and reinforced by David, which served as a protective wall (glacis) but also as a terraced support system called the Millo in scripture. The straight wall with the right-angled corner in the background is from the days of Nehemiah. The remains between the Jebusite wall and Nehemiah's wall are the ruins of the ribs of retaining walls from the 1200's BC designed to hold fill. Just in front of them is the beginning of rooms dating from 700-586 BC.



Setting in front of the House of Ahiel was another building used to store parchment and papyrus documents that were rolled and sealed with a small, flat piece of clay. This piece of clay would have been pressed with a signet ring, a seal worn on a finger or as a necklace to leave an impression that identified the individual who sealed it. The fire during Nebuchadnezzar's burning of Jerusalem in 586 BC consumed all these documents, but glazed the clay seal impression, which made the image and names permanent. These baked clay impressions of the seal are called bullae. A bulla is a single clay seal with a personal stamp impressed on it. The house that was excavated in front of the House of Ahiel became known to archaeologists as the House of the Bullae because 51 bullae were discovered here during the excavation.



Also, seen in the above diagram are the details of the House of Ahiel. The four columns would have supported a flat roof. The staircase would have provided access to the flat roof. Notice the square box in the lower right, small room - this is the bathroom. The toilet seat, or the box, can be seen in photos on the next page.

## Roman Clay Bulla (100 AD)

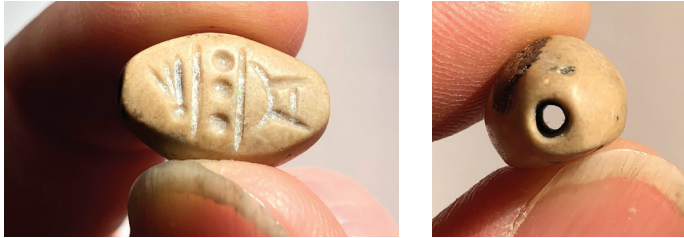


Front: Emperor facing a goddess

Back: Imprint lines from sealed papyrus document

This Roman bulla from around 100-200 AD is an example of a piece of clay pressed with a signet ring onto a rolled up piece of papyrus (see the lines on the back from the papyrus). The papyrus document sealed by this document was in an ancient library in Israel that burned sometime around 200 AD leaving behind only this and other fired clay bulla.





An authentic Phoenician seal from the same time as the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. This stone seal would have been worn on a finger like a stone on a ring by inserting wire or a similar item through the hole bored through the stone. This stone would have been used to make impressions in clay to serve as a signature for the person wearing the ring.

Since the fire that consumed these documents and glazed the bullae in and around the House of the Bullae occurred during the life of Jeremiah there have been several bullae found here that were impressed with the seal of people from the time of Jeremiah. Scribes, public officials and anyone who was actively involved with writing and documents would have a seal or signet ring. Found in the House of the Bullae was a bulla sealed with the name Gemariah son of Shaphan. The text on the bulla reads:

**“Belonging to Gemaryahu son of Shaphan”**

According to the text of Scripture Gemariah (Gemaryahu) was a scribe in the court of King Jehoiakim in 604 BC during the king’s fifth year. This same Gemariah the scribe is mentioned in Jeremiah 36:10 where the biblical text says:

*“From the room of **Gemariah son of Shaphan** the scribe, which was in the upper courtyard at the entrance of the New Gate of the temple, Baruch read to all the people at the Lord’s temple the words of Jeremiah from the scroll.”*

Since this royal scribe’s impression was found in this room of documents, we can infer that this burnt “House of Bullae” was some form of royal archive or public office. It would be invaluable to have access to all the records and historical documents that were lost in the fire. Other bullae located here were impressed with Hebrew names such as:

- “Belonging to Benayahu son of Hoshaiah”
- “Belonging to Azaryahu son of Hilkiahu”
- “Belonging to Azrikam Michyahu”
- “Belonging to Elishama son of Samachiah”.

*The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC is well documented in the biblical sources (2 Kings 25:8-10; 2 Chronicles 36:18-19), which describe the destruction, burning, and collapse of houses and walls. The archaeological evidence for this phase in Jerusalem’s history, which rounds out the historical account, can be counted among the more dramatic at any biblical site. Alongside the Israelite tower cleared by Avigad in the north of the city was a*

*thick conflagration layer, in which arrow heads were found, that may have been fired when the city’s northern defenses were being breached. In addition, many of the buildings excavated by Shiloh, mainly in areas E and G, were also destroyed in a fierce conflagration: the Ashlar House, the House of Ahiel, the Burnt Room, and the House of the Bullae. Their walls collapsed and buried abundant and rich finds, including large quantities of pottery; dozens of metal and stone vessels; bone implements, and considerable epigraphic material. The dozens of flat iron arrowheads of the local type and triangular bronze arrowheads of the so-called Scythian type found in the houses bear mute witness to the battle for the city on the eve of its destruction, as the inhabitants amassed ammunition in their homes. The destruction of these residential quarters, which resembles that on the western hill and in one section of the “house of Millo” cleared by B. Mazar, was total. The rubble was preserved in some of the buildings up to the height of their first-story ceiling. Perhaps the most graphic telling of the story is Nehemiah’s description of the ruins in the City of David as he found them in his tour of the city, some 140 years later (Nehemiah 2:13-14).*

- The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Volume 2, The Israel Exploration Society and Carta, 1993, page 709

Two bullae were discovered by Eliat Mazar in this area less than half an inch in diameter.

- The first was found in 2005 inside the royal palace, or David’s Palace, with writing from the 500’s BC that translates **“Belonging to Jehucal son of Shelemiah son of Shovi.”** This bulla is described as being in mint condition and is a mere 0.4 inches in diameter which is a little smaller than a dime.
- In 2008 another bulla was discovered by Mazar just outside the walls of the royal palace a few yards away from where the Jehucal bulla was discovered three years earlier. According to the writing and formation of the letters this bulla was from the same time period (500’s BC) as the one discovered in 2005. The inscription on this bulla read: **“Gedaliah son of Pashur”**

Jeremiah 38:1-4 says, Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what Jeremiah was telling all the people when he said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians will live. He will escape with his life; he will live.’ And this is what the LORD says: ‘This city will certainly be handed over to the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it.’ ” Then the

**GEMARIAH BULLA**  
(Replica)



**“Belonging to Gemaryahu son of Shaphan”**  
Found in “House of Bullae”

*officials said to the king, “This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin.”*



*This structure is called the House of Ahiel because two pieces of pottery (ostraca) were found with his name on it when this home was excavated. (Photo from 2010 with both back pillars standing.)*



*The stairs to access the roof of the House of Ahiel can be seen on the left in this photo. (Photo from 2007, with the back right pillar leaning in the corner.)*

Between the lowest part of the stepped stone structure and the outer wall of the city ancient citizens built several stepped terraces to support and provide a platform for the buildings above.

One of the terraces excavated was 40 feet wide and 88 feet long. In two upper terraces three separate structures were identified:

**1. In the middle terrace:** A four-room house built in two levels. Two ostraca (pieces of pottery broken from a vase or earthenware) were found with the name “Ahiel” inscribed on them. This structure was named the “House of Ahiel.” Also found in this four-room structure were many other small items and pottery vessels.



*This toilet seat sat in the corner of the small room in the House of Ahiel. This would have provided the four-room home with a bathroom. It dates from the 700’s BC and was destroyed in the Babylonian destruction of 586 BC. The house that this room was connected with was of high-quality construction compared to other residences and buildings. Other artifacts found in this room convincingly demonstrate that it was a lavatory.*

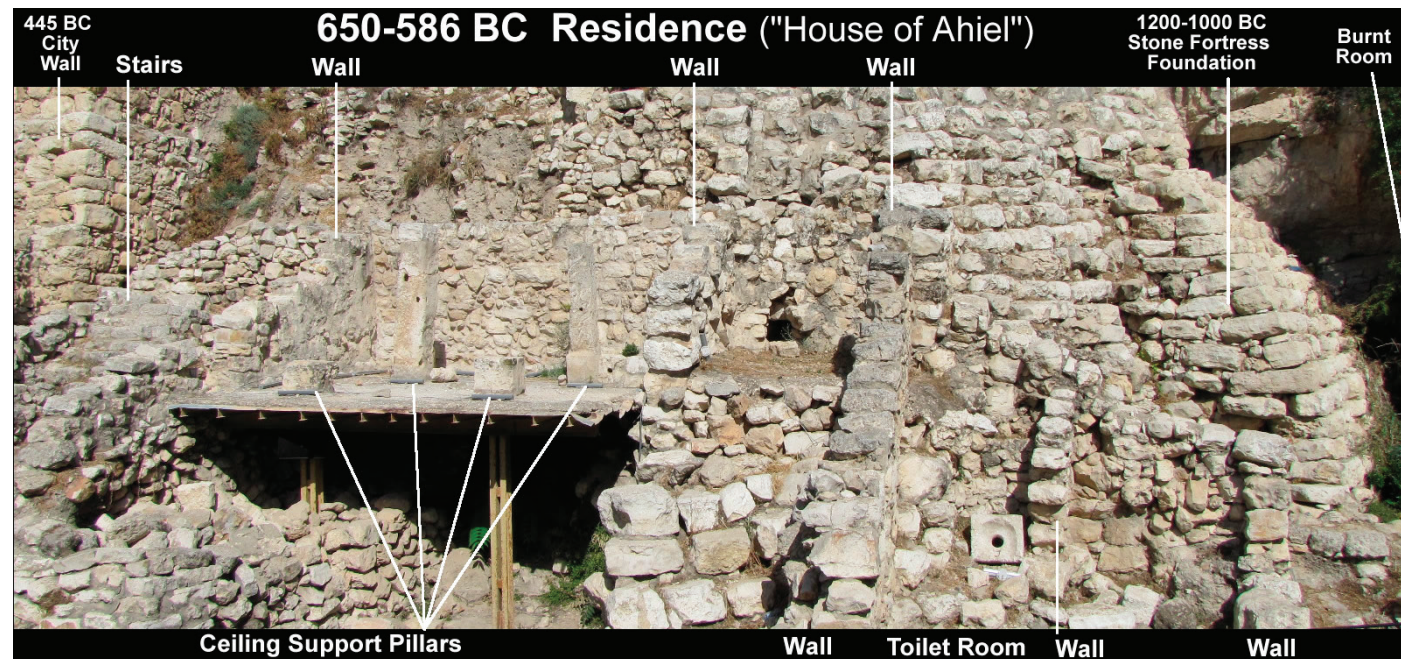


*A toilet seat made of plastered limestone on display at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem was found just south of the Philistine city of Gaza in a city named el-Ajjul. It was in use sometime during the Middle to Late Bronze Age (2000-1200 BC). It was from a small room with a plastered floor inside an official building or a similar room in a Philistine palace in el-Ajjul.*

**2. In the middle terrace:** To the north (right) of the House of Ahiel was the Burnt Room that showed signs of the intense fire suffered during the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, as prophesied by Jeremiah. The remains of burnt wood included imported wood from northern Syria with carved palmette patterns (an artistic design of the fan-shaped leaves of palm trees), furniture and parts of the roof beam. Also found in this room were pottery, stone vessels, bone vessels and a metal spoon.

**3. In the lower terrace:** 16 feet below the House of Ahiel was a narrow building where 51 bullae (round clay seals with an impression affixed to a rolled document) were found. This structure is called the “House of Bullae.”



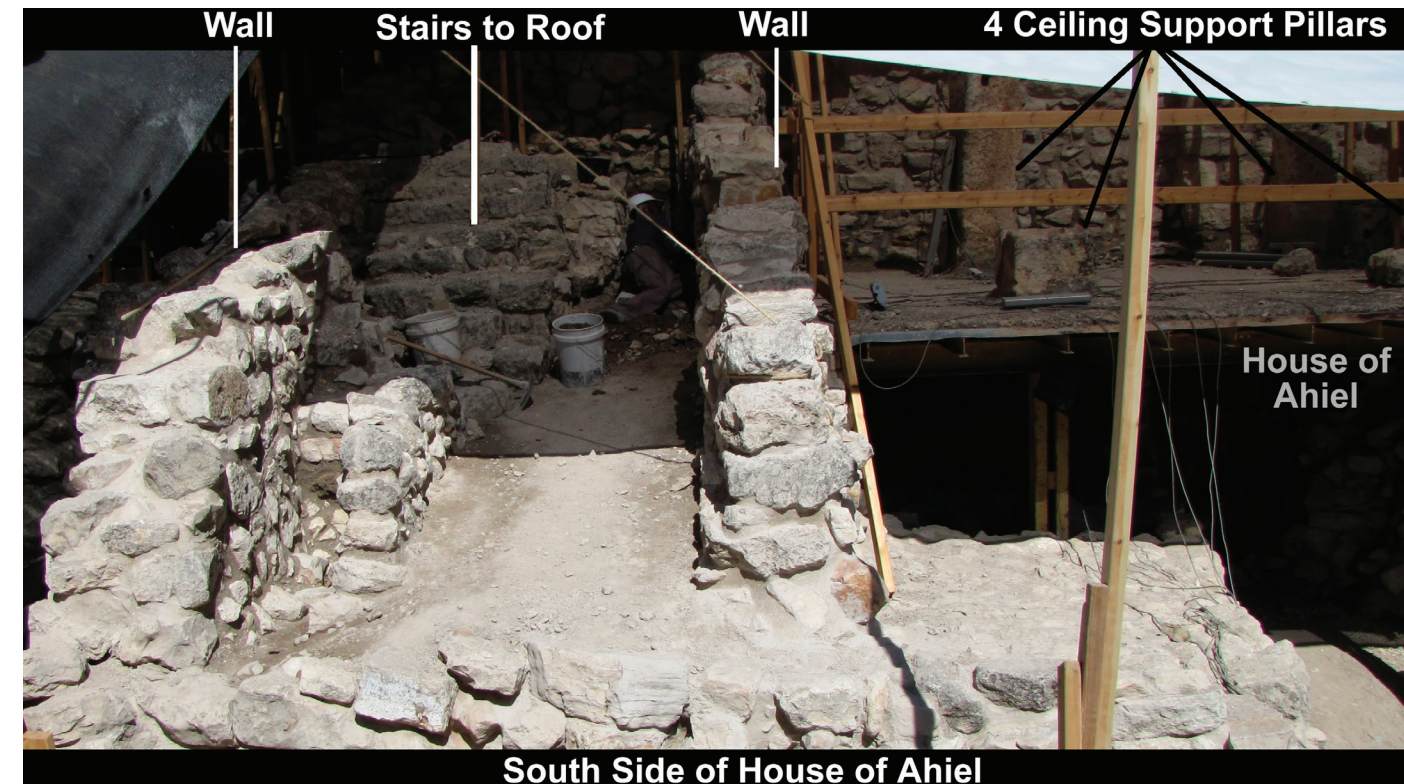


The Stepped-Stone Structure with the House of Ahiel cut into it and the toilet seat. The Burnt Room is to the right of the toilet. Evidence of the Babylonian fire of 586 BC and the charred remains of imported wood, a roof beam, pottery, stone vessels and a metal spoon from that time were found here.

Excavation between the stairs and south wall of the House of Ahiel.



The North side of the House of Ahiel.

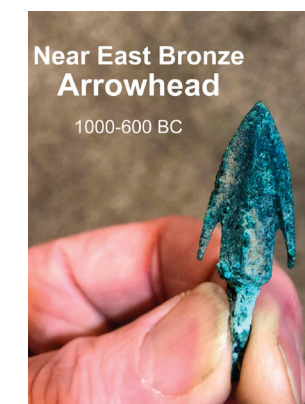


To the north of the House of Ahiel is an alley and a set of stairs that likely lead up to the flat roof that was used as a living space in the cool evenings. The room seen in the right of the photo and is identified as the Burnt Room because of the intense destruction caused by the Babylonians in 586 BC. All these rooms were covered in a thick layer of ash with the remains of imported Syrian wood with ornamental decorations resembling the fan-shaped leaves of a palm tree used in the furniture. Also, among the charred ruins were arrowheads from both the Babylonians and the army of Judah.



The view down into the Kidron Valley from the base of the Stepped Stone Structure. It is a deep drop. Imagine David and Joab looking up at the Jebusites who were above this level on top of the Stepped Stone Structure and understanding what they meant when they said, "You will never get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off" (2 Samuel 5:6). With this sort of natural and constructed defensive system it is no wonder they said what they did. David ordered Joab to use the water system from the Gihon Springs further down this ridge to enter the city.

Bronze arrowhead used during the Iron Age in the Middle East.





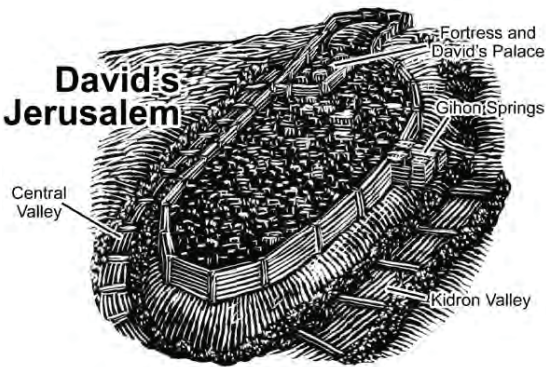
Chapter 18

Gihon Springs

The main water source of the original City of David was the Gihon Springs located at the base of the eastern slope of the city in the Kidron Valley. The Gihon Springs provide water year round by gushing forth water several times a day. This water then naturally flows into the Kidron Valley. Reservoirs were built to collect the water from the Gihon Springs in the earliest days of Jerusalem's occupation. Three systems were eventually designed to use this water:

- 1. Warren's Shaft
- 2. Siloam Channel (Tunnel) - the Canaanite Tunnel
- 3. Hezekiah's Tunnel

These three water systems continued to bring water to the city of Jerusalem until the days of the Hasmoneans and Herod. During the last century BC and the first century AD aqueducts were built to transfer water into Jerusalem from the southern hill country of Judea from around Hebron and Bethlehem.



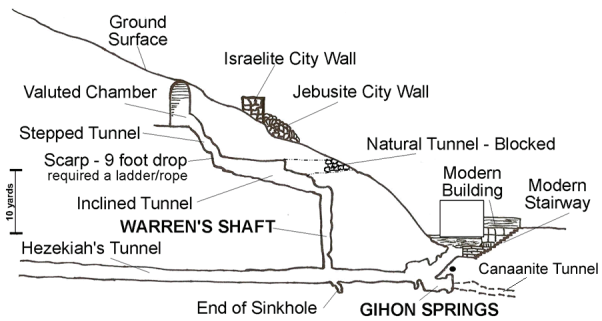
The City of David, formerly called Salem and Jebus, sits on the southern part of the Eastern Hill or the eastern ridge with Mount Moriah further up on this same ridge to the north.

Warren's Shaft - discovered in 1867 by Charles Warren. This shaft is a rock-hewn opening that is first descended on steps into a horizontal tunnel that runs for about 135 feet to a depth of about 42 feet. The tunnel ends at the top of a vertical shaft that goes straight down into the Gihon Springs about 40 feet below. This 40 foot vertical shaft was used to draw or pump water up the shaft where it could be collected by people who had descended down the stairs and through the 135 foot horizontal tunnel. A hydrogeological survey of this water system revealed that both the vertical shaft and the horizontal tunnel were natural openings that were adapted and cut wider by the ancient city planners.



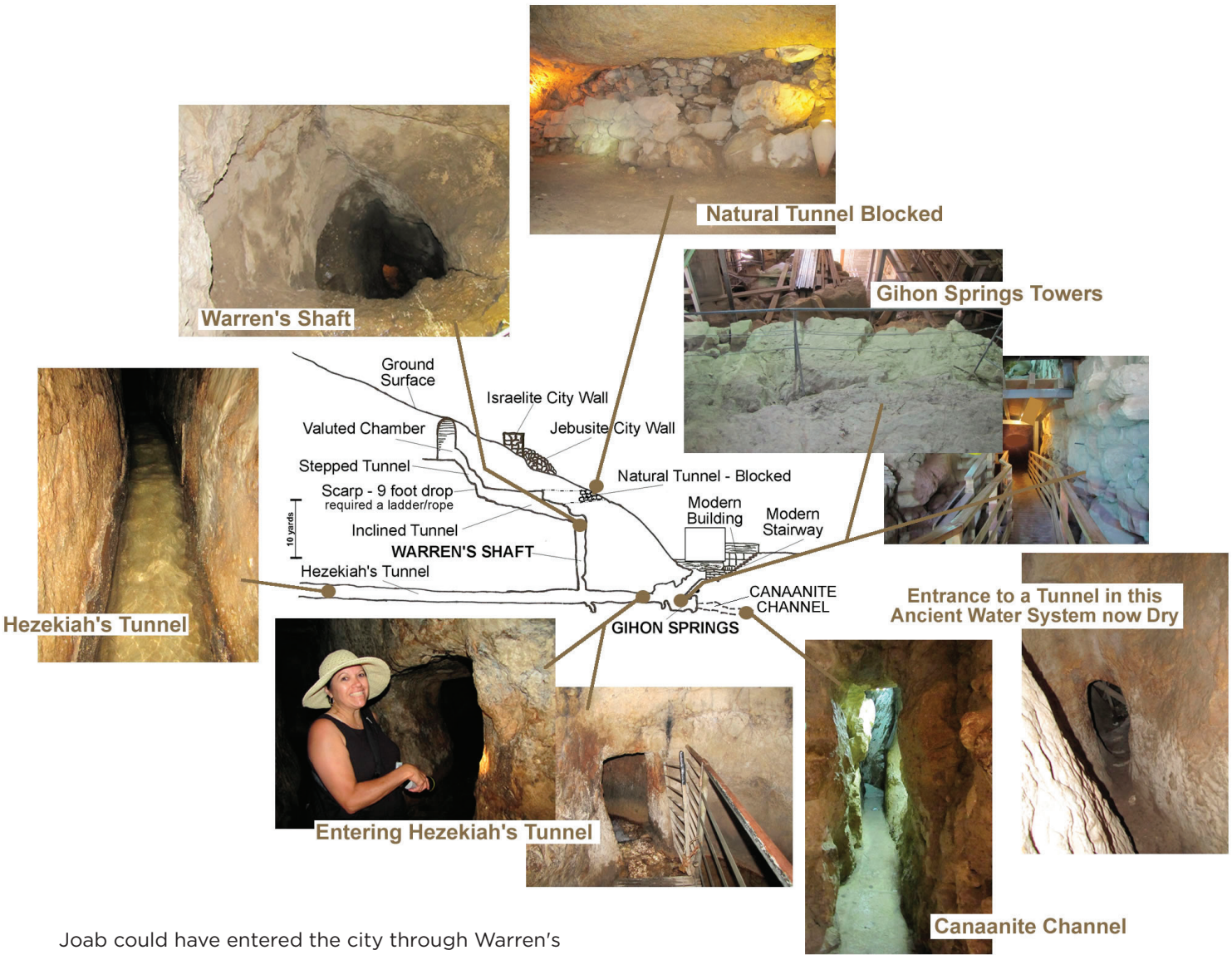
The vertical shaft, known today as Warren's Shaft, which the Jebusites used to dip water from the reservoir located below their city. The water from the Gihon Springs filled the reservoir. Joab followed David's advice and led a division of soldiers up this shaft and into the Jebusite city of Jebus, or Jerusalem, around the year 996 BC.

This is the water shaft used by David and his men to enter and attack Jerusalem when it was occupied by the Jebusites in 2 Samuel 5:8: "And David said on that day, 'Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack.'"



Details of the natural water supply from the Gihon Springs and the water system developed by the Jebusites, David, Hezekiah and others. This Gihon Spring still fills the water system today.

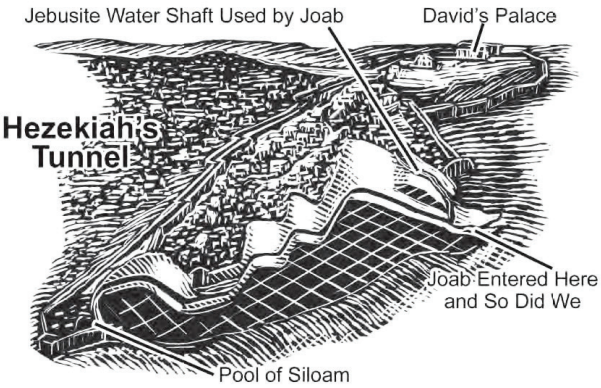
The water from the Gihon Springs followed a natural tunnel to the base of the shaft discovered by Warren. This shaft was developed from a natural sinkhole that extended down to the natural tunnel of water from the Gihon Springs. City planners widened the sinkhole and developed a tunnel to reach it from the upper ground level of the city from within the city's walls. Warren's Shaft functioned like a well. A person at the top of the shaft in the inclined tunnel could lower a bucket on a rope to the bottom of the 40 foot shaft to get fresh water from the reservoir below. A person could reach this inclined tunnel by entering a vaulted chamber at ground level, walking down a steep, stepped tunnel, then using a ladder to descend a nine-foot scarp drop to arrive in the inclined tunnel. Although the Gihon Springs were outside the walls, the entrance to this water system was inside the city walls.



Joab could have entered the city through Warren's Shaft, or he may have used the natural tunnel before it was blocked (see diagram above and photo below), to access the inclined plane and ascend into the city.

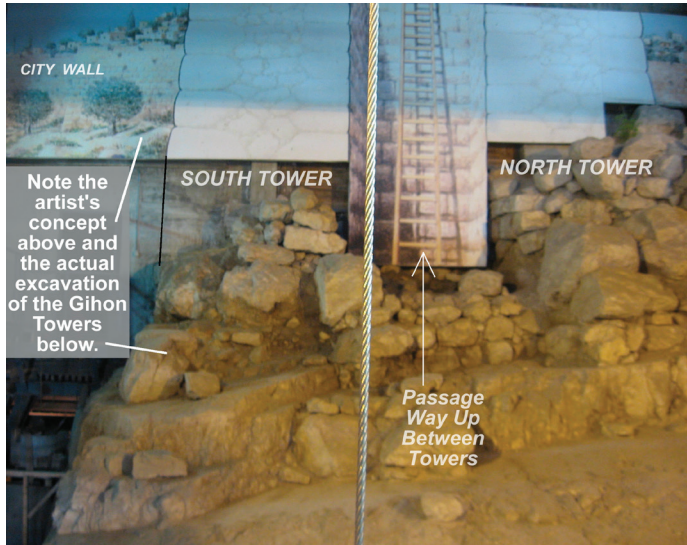


This is the "Natural Cave" shown in the diagram above that was blocked. This photo shows it from the inside.

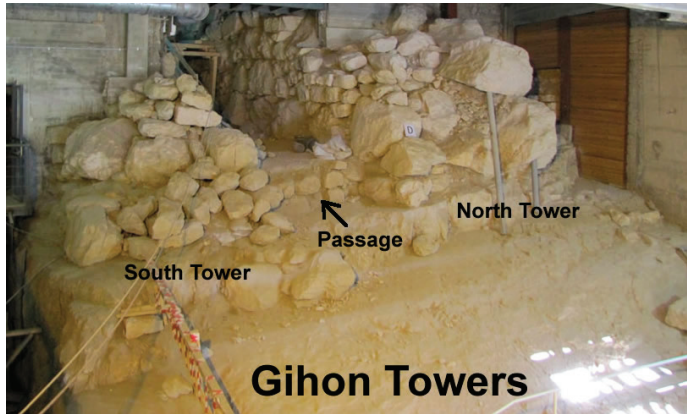


Details of the water system and the City of David.





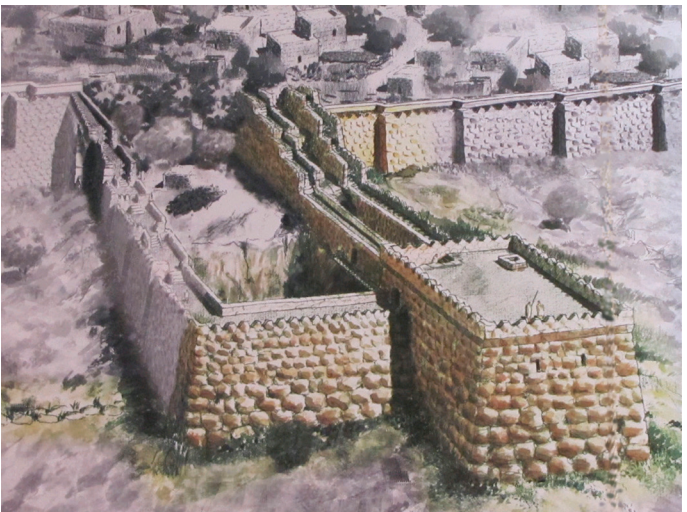
*This is a view of the two towers in the Gihon Tower excavation in 2007, looking from the Kidron Valley toward the city wall.*



This photo was taken from the same location in the Gihon Tower in 2010. Excavation has made some progress by discovering a walkway along the top of a wall in the Gihon Towers. (See images below to compare the progress of the excavation.)



*Artist's conception in 2007 of the Gihon Springs Towers*



*Artist's conception in 2010 of the Gihon Springs Towers*



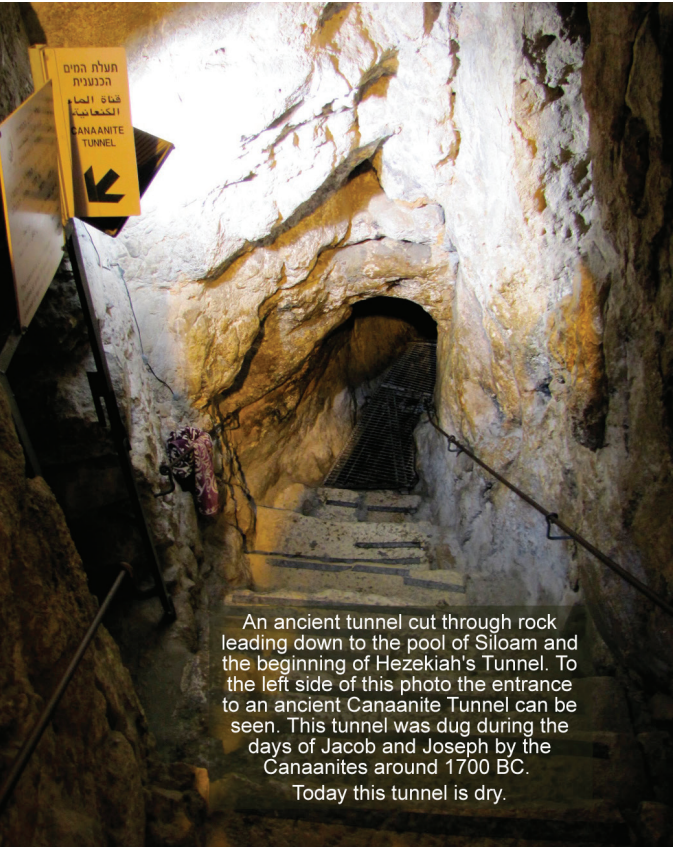
*Looking down on the remains of the Gihon Towers that extend toward the Kidron Valley and enclose the Gihon Springs for protection.*



Excavation of the Gihon Springs and the Gihon Towers



Descending to the Gihon Springs and the tunnels cut into the bedrock under the City of David.



Straight ahead to Hezekiah's Tunnel (701 BC). At the base of these steps just inside the tunnel opening in the photo above are the rushing waters of the Gihon Springs. Before this is the entrance to the Canaanite Tunnel. Turn left at the sign in the photo to enter the Canaanite Tunnel cut before the time of David (1700 BC). This Canaanite Tunnel is 8 feet higher in elevation than the water flow line of Hezekiah's Tunnel below.

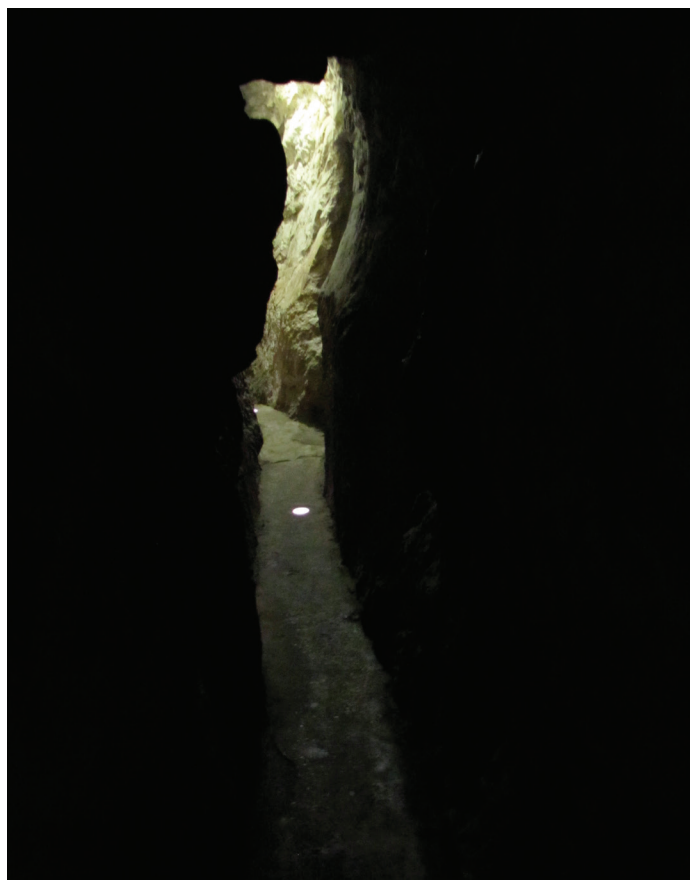


This channel is called the Canaanite Tunnel. It is 394 feet long and takes about 10 minutes to walk through today. The floor of this tunnel is 8 feet higher in elevation than the floor of Hezekiah's Tunnel which was cut about 1,000 years later.

The **Canaanite water tunnel** that was used to bring water from the Gihon Springs before Hezekiah's Tunnel was cut. This was cut from the top down and filled in with large stones that were dropped from the top and wedged into this V-shaped tunnel. These stones can be seen in other photos and while in the tunnel.

**Canaanite Tunnel (or, Siloam Tunnel)** – was built to collect and transfer the intermittent gushing water from the Gihon Springs. This rock tunnel was cut along the base of the eastern hill of the City of David on the western bank of the Kidron Valley. The Siloam tunnel was cut as both an open channel and as a covered tunnel. The tunnel ran south along the west side of the Kidron valley, around the southern end of the city and into the end of the Central Valley where the Siloam Pool sat on the southwest side of the City of David. Openings in the tunnel were also cut as it ran along the west side of the Kidron Valley so that the water could flow out eastward to water the Kidron Valley. The Siloam Tunnel was 1,312 feet long and completely outside the city's defensive system, so it was a security weakness.

**Boulders dropped and wedged into the top the "V-shaped" Canaanite Channel to create a covering to make it the Canaanite Tunnel.**



*Entrance to Hezekiah's Tunnel is made by crouching down and stepping through this opening cut out of the rock around 700 BC into the water that is still flowing from the gushing Gihon Springs. Hezekiah's Tunnel is still filled with water flowing from the Gihon Springs.*

**Hezekiah's Tunnel** – was cut through the Cenomanian bedrock under the City of David, or the eastern hill of Jerusalem for 1,748 feet. This construction project had to be precisely calculated as there is a very moderate gradient height differential of 13.8 inches (1.1 feet) between the source of water at the Gihon Springs and the end of the tunnel at the Pool of Siloam over 1/3 mile away. Hezekiah's tunnel was cut to provide a secure water system for Jerusalem in the days of the advancing Assyrian military. The Bible accurately, and on numerous occasions (2 Kings 20:20, 2 Chronicles 32:3-4; 32:30), mentions this construction project that replaced their dependence on the Siloam tunnel as a source of water supply to the city and to the Pool of Siloam around 701 BC. Part of the Siloam Tunnel was lowered at this time to reverse the flow back to the western banks of the Kidron Valley so that it might continue to serve as an irrigation source for the valley and to fill other pools and water reservoirs.

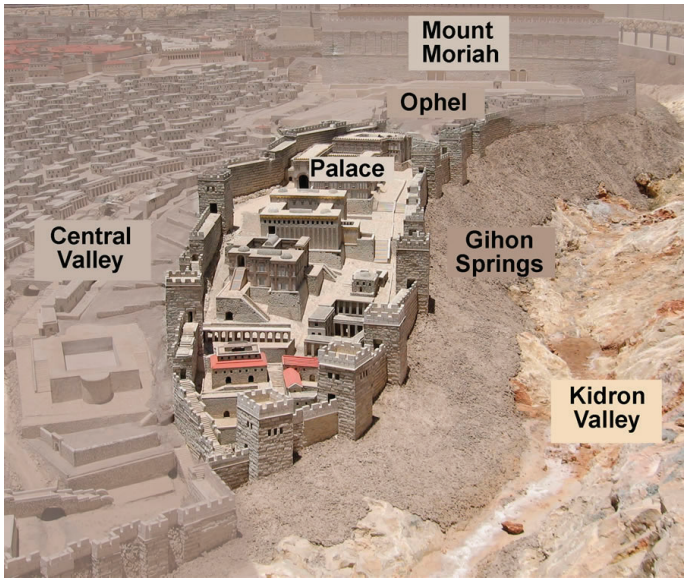


*Water flowing through Hezekiah's Tunnel.*



Chapter 19

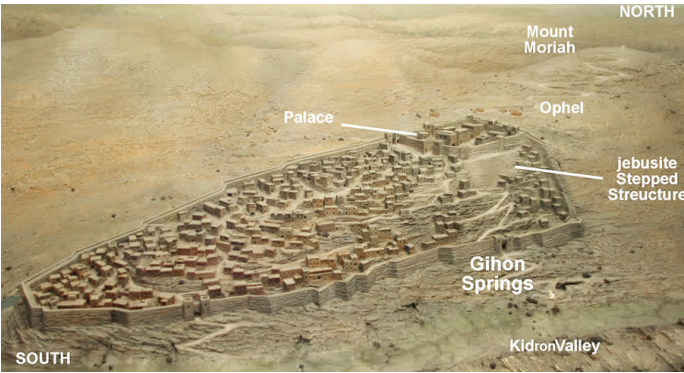
City of David (1000 BC)



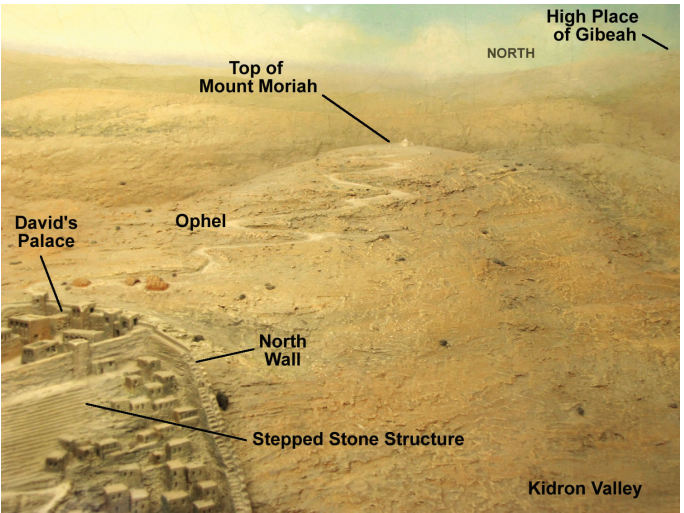
A model showing the location of early Jerusalem, or the City of David. Notice the steep, rugged Kidron Valley to the right (east). By the days of the New Testament the Central Valley was either filled in or spanned with bridges. Mount Moriah is part of this eastern ridge on which the City of David sits, but is further up the ridge toward the top of the photo (north).



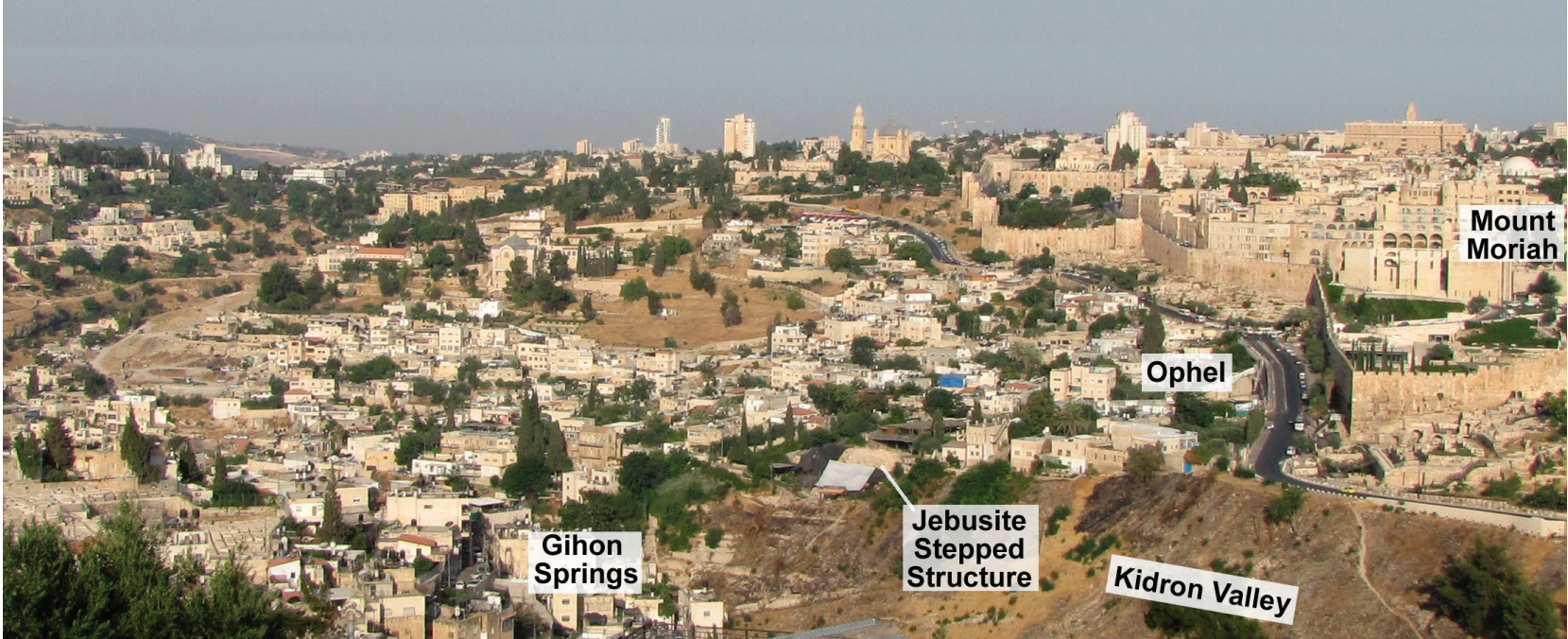
Another image of early Jerusalem from the days of Melchizedek (2000 BC) until David (1000 BC).



Early Jerusalem labeled and viewed from the Mount of Olives to the east. Notice the Stepped Stone Structure (Millo).



Mount Moriah to the north of the walls of the City of David. This northern portion of the eastern ridge would be purchased by David from a Jebusite, and Solomon would build the Temple here. Three miles further to the north of Mount Moriah is the location of the High Place of Gibeah with an elevation of 2,700 feet which is 300 feet higher than Jerusalem.



A view from the Mount of Olives of the City of David and Mount Moriah rising to the north of the Stepped Stone Structure and the Gihon Springs.



A detailed image of the Stepped Stone Structure with the stronghold/fortress and palace of David on the top inside. The Gihon Springs and their protective towers are below in the Kidron Valley.



Chapter 20

David’s Palace (990 BC)

Eilat Mazar began excavating on the site of King David’s palace in 2005. She uncovered a large building that sat above the Jebusite wall (the Stepped Stone retaining wall). The Jebusite wall was built between 1200 and 1000 BC, and the large building, known as the Large Stone Structure, was built just after 1000 BC during the reign of David. Mazar identified this Large Stone Structure as the royal “House of Cedar” which was King David’s palace as described in 2 Samuel 5:11:

*Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David.*  
- 2 Samuel 5:11-12



*Inside the Large Stone Structure that sits on top of the Stepped Stone Structure. This Large Stone Structure has been identified as the palace of David. The pottery uncovered here indicates it was not built until the time of David, around 1000 BC.*



*Standing inside David's palace looking at the excavated walls.*



*Looking along a wall of David's palace toward the east.*

*This is a view from David's palace looking down into the Kidron Valley. The Mount of Olives and its three summits can be seen to the right running along the Kidron Valley. The southeast corner of the Temple Mount can be seen on the left edge of the photo.*



*Inside David's palace, also known as the Large Stone Structure, on the top of the Stepped Stone Structure.*

It is worth noting that David’s palace was new construction in his day. The Jebusites’ former fortress that he had taken was left standing. David moved into that Jebusite fortress after his conquest of Jerusalem and lived there until his palace was built:

*David then took up residence in the fortress.*  
- 2 Samuel 5:9

This Jebusite fortress would have been to the south of the new palace, guarding the northern wall of the old Jebusite city. This means David’s palace would have originally been built outside the walls of the city on the north. David’s palace was beautiful and luxurious, but when the Philistines invaded the land to assassinate him he returned to the protection of the old fortress within the walls of the city:

*When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold.*  
- 2 Samuel 5:17

The “stronghold” could also be interpreted as one of the wilderness hideouts in the land of Judah that David had used during his years fleeing from Saul. If that is the case, it is most likely Masada. But then the questions could be asked, “Why would David flee the strong fortifications of Jerusalem?” and “Why would David abandon his city and his people?” But if “stronghold” refers to the fortress of the Jebusites, we have confirmation as to the location and identification of the fortress, and the palace, which was located higher up on the Eastern Hill in the Ophel.



*The walls of David's palace in the northwestern part of the excavation area looking west. Notice the marks and pits carved into the floor. See details in photos below.*



*Same view as above looking slightly south/southwest. Again notice the markings on the floor.*



*Pits cut in the floor to secure a post or serve some other structural function.*



*A pit cut out in the floor, paved with stones on the bottom and covered with plaster on the sides.*



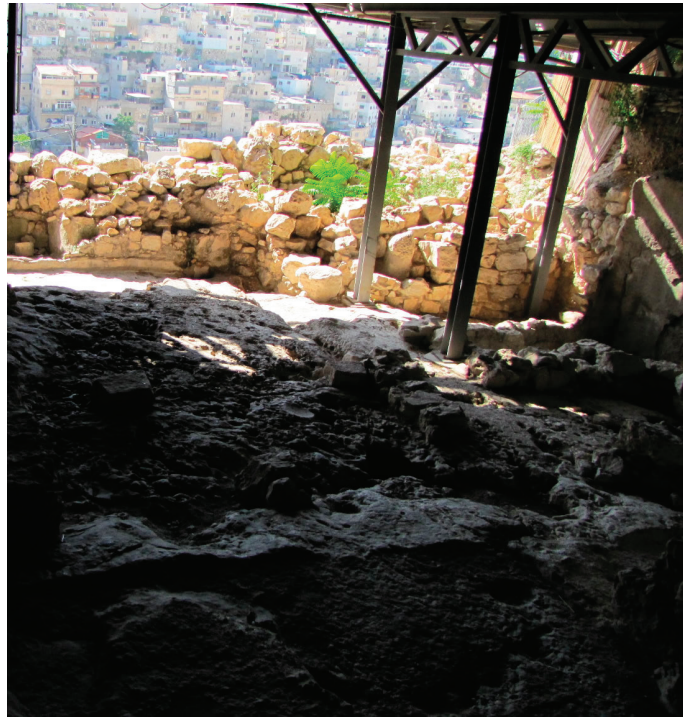


Walls inside David's palace looking south.



Underneath the Large Stone Structure are remains most likely left from the events described in Judges 1:8, which were also the subject of some of the Amarna Letters sent to Egypt asking for help.

The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem also and took it. They put the city to the sword and set it on fire.  
- Judges 1:8



Looking east from David's Palace at the wall at the top of the Stepped Stone Structure.



Looking down from the top of the Stepped Stone Structure from David's palace. Notice how far down the Kidron Valley is. The House of Ahiel can also be seen near the middle of the photo. David would be able to see the roof of this house and many others from his palace. To the far right of this photo we can see a portion of the wall built by Nehemiah.

## Chapter 21

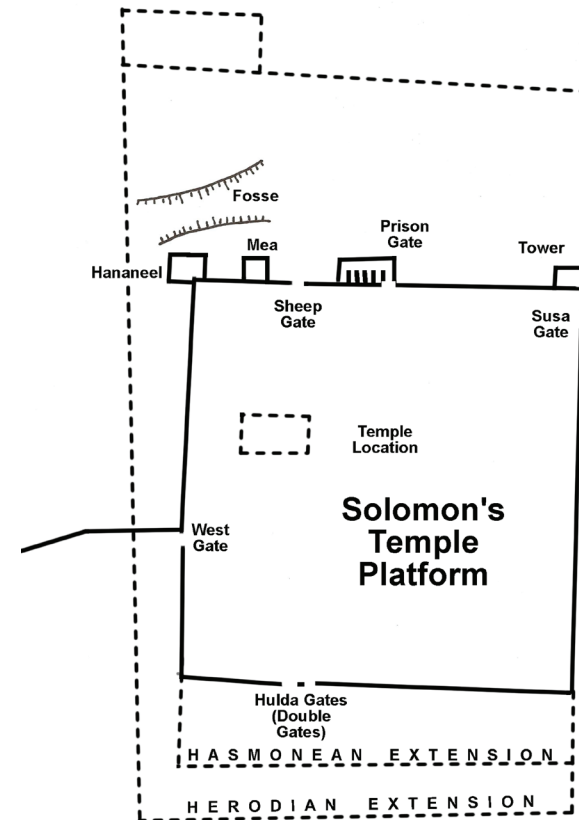
### Solomon's Temple Mount (970 BC)

David purchased the threshing floor north of the City of David from Araunah the Jebusite for 50 shekels of silver (2 Samuel 24:24) and paid 600 shekels of gold for the entire site of Mount Moriah (1 Chronicles 21:25). These became the site of Solomon's Temple.

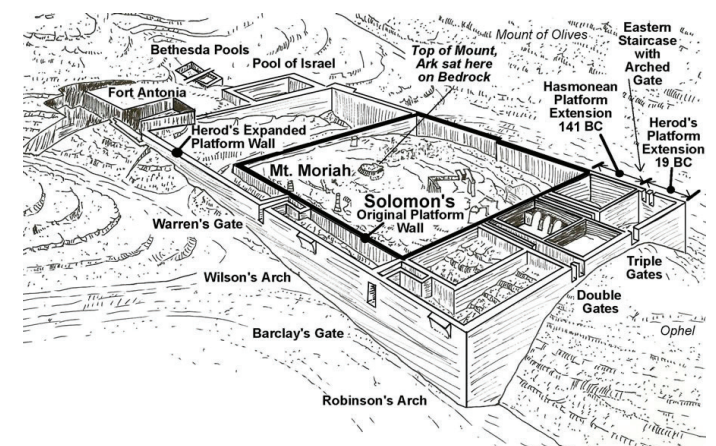
Interestingly, in recent Israeli-Palestinian conflicts most Muslims around the world have begun to claim there was never an Israelite Temple on the Temple Mount. This has been the popular view among Muslims from the second half of the 1900's AD. But, in a 16-page booklet published in 1924 by the Supreme Moslem Council for visitors to the Temple Mount entitled, "A Brief Guide to Al-Haram Al-Sharif Jerusalem" a different view (the original view held for 1,287 years) is clearly stated:

The two principal edifices are the Dome of the Rock, on a raised platform in the middle, and the mosque of al-Aqsa against the south wall. Other buildings which we shall consider later lie dotted about here and there. On the left, along the east wall, the double portals of the Golden Gate appear. On every side, trees break the prospect, which lend a peculiar charm to the scene. The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest (perhaps from pre-historic) times. Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute. This, too, is the spot, according to the universal belief, on which "David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings." (footnoted to 2 Samuel XXIV, 25 in the booklet) But, for the purposes of this Guide, which confines itself to the Moslem period, the starting-point is the year 637 A.D. In that year, the Caliph Omar occupied Jerusalem and one of his first acts was to repair to this site. (Page 4; Note that in Islam the Jewish Temple Mount is called Haram al-Sharif which means "The Noble Sanctuary"; Underline and bold text mine)

Solomon built the Temple that would sit on a square Temple Mount platform on Mount Moriah. The Temple Mount platform was supported by retaining walls on all four sides which brought the surface area to a level 17 acres. Each of the retaining walls of the Temple Mount was 500 cubits long (or, 861 feet long using the conversion of one royal cubit to 20.67 inches).



This is a diagram of the Temple Mount comparing the size of Solomon's 500 cubit square platform with the two later phases of extension. The first phase was in the days of the Hasmoneans who extended the Temple Mount to the south; it is identified by a bend in the eastern wall where they began adding on in 141 BC. The second took place in 19 BC by Herod who extended it even further to the south of the Hasmonean extension but also extended it to the west and the north. In all, Herod doubled the size of Solomon's Temple Mount.



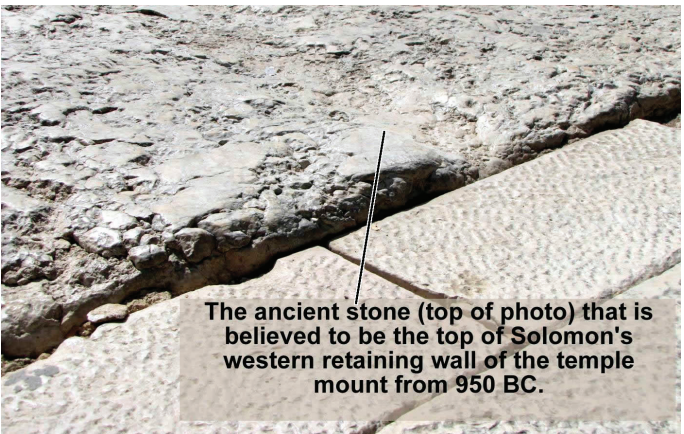
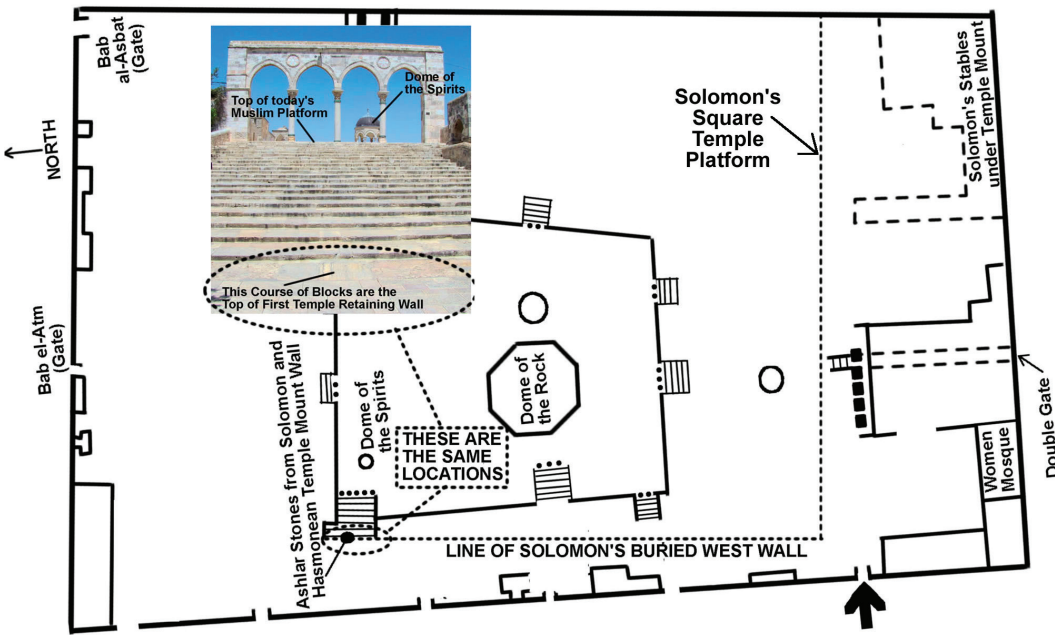
Notice how the top of the rugged Mount Moriah, which is the northern portion of the eastern ridge, was made into a large level surface. Solomon first built a 500-cubit square retaining wall around the high point of Mount Moriah. Then the area inside that square was filled in. The high point of bedrock that was left exposed was where the Ark of the Covenant sat and was the area that supported the Temple itself.



In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord. . . . In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built. . . .The foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv. In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, the eighth month, the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent seven years building it. – 1 Kings 6:1, 7, 36-38

On the Temple Mount today a portion of the top course of cut stone that was in the line of the west retaining wall of Solomon's Temple can be seen, although Solomon's Temple was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians. Then beginning in 19 BC Herod the Great added additional retaining walls and fill to double the size of the Temple Mount surface which buried any of Solomon's outside retaining walls that remained. Today the Muslims have a raised platform that sits on the Temple Mount platform. This platform can be seen in the diagram above with the Dome of the Rock sitting on it. The stairs in the photo and in the bottom left corner (northwest) of the Muslim platform in the diagram are not perpendicular with the platform. Notice all the other staircases are perpendicular to the Muslim platform. Why are the

northwest stairs at a different angle than the platform? There is a course of stones at the base of this northwest (bottom left) staircase whose top can be seen. These stones begin the angled staircase and instead of running parallel with the Muslim platform, they preserve a former line of the west wall of Solomon's 500 cubit square Temple Mount surface. The details of this information was collected and connected by Leen Ritmeyer who has assembled a very insightful and solid presentation on this subject in many of his writings, books and blogs including *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount* and *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem*.



The northwest stairway that is aligned with this bottom row of ashlar stones, instead of the top of the Muslim platform. The stairs are aligned with Solomon's western retaining wall, which was buried by the Herodian addition to the west side of the Temple Mount.



Galyn Wiemers points at the top of the course of ashlar stones that remain from the line of Solomon's western retaining wall. On the stone closest to Galyn, the margin (the trimmed edge) and the boss (the raised center) of the face of the stone could be seen up until the 1970's. At that time the pavement where Galyn is standing was raised and mortar (which is visible in this photo to the left of the dotted line) was added to cover up the visible face, or outside, of Solomon's western wall. Leen Ritmeyer has before and after photos of this alteration that he has published in his books and online.



A view of the Temple Mount on Mount Moriah as seen from the Mount of Olives.

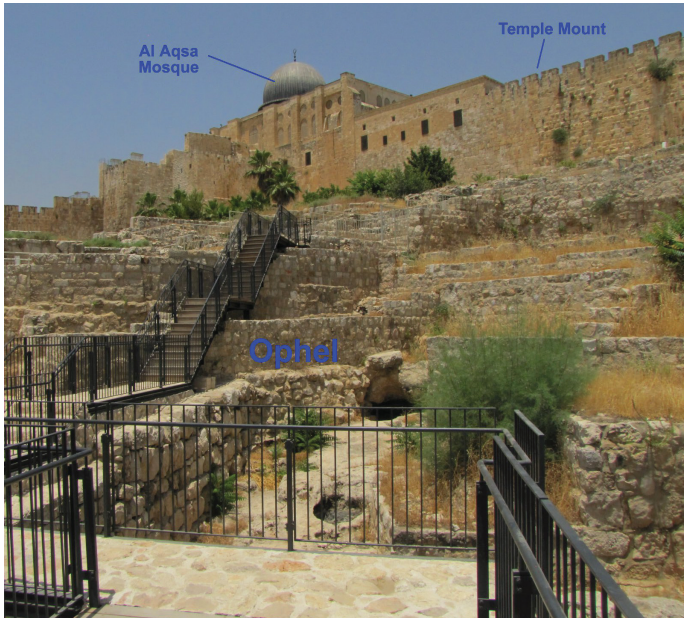


Chapter 22

Solomon's Walls

A section of a wall built in Solomon's day around 950 BC was found south of the Temple Mount on the Ophel. The remains of the excavated wall are 19.6 feet high and 230 feet long. Found along with the portion of Solomon's wall were a gatehouse that led into the royal district of the city. The gate is built in the typical style used by Solomon and his builders at Megiddo, Beersheba and Ashdod, with four symmetrical rooms, two on each side of the passageway through the gate. A 78 by 59 foot tower in the wall overlooking the Kidron Valley is located under the road that runs along the Ophel. Two earthenware jars, almost four feet tall, were also found from the time of Solomon. One jar handle was marked with the inscription: "For the King."

King Solomon would have built his royal palace north of his father David's palace further up the Ophel. This would later be called the "upper house of the king" in Nehemiah 3:25. The exact location of Solomon's palace is unknown at this time. It could be connected to the location of these walls on the Ophel, or it could be under the temple mount extensions of the Hasmoneans and Herod. Another possibility is that it could have been situated on the temple mount on the southern half of the temple mount square just south of the temple. In any case, the city wall would have been expanded north. This is that wall.



Walls built by Solomon north of David's Palace of Cedar (2 Samuel 5:11) and, possibly, part of Solomon's Palace of the Forest of Lebanon (1 Kings 7:2), on the Ophel just south of the Temple Mount on Mount Moriah.

*It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace. He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long (150 feet), fifty wide (75 feet) and thirty high (45 feet), with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns—forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other.*

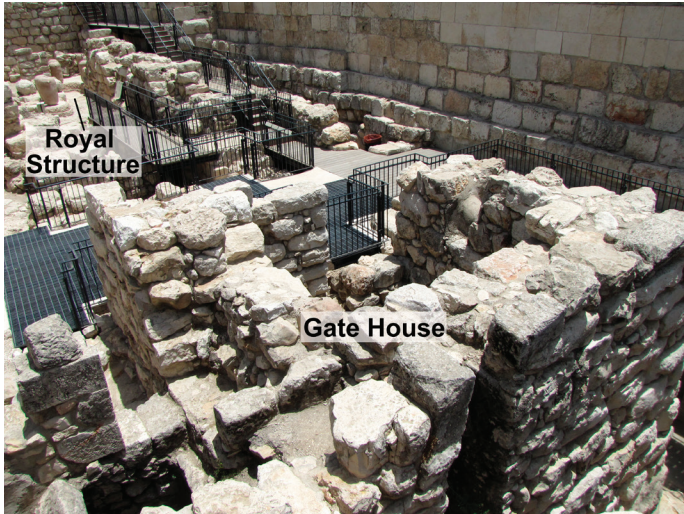
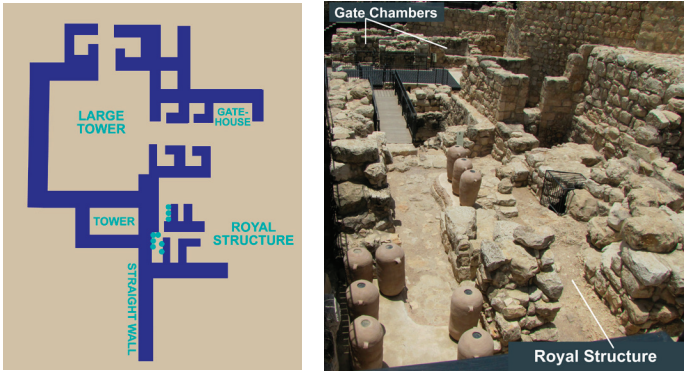
*He made a colonnade fifty cubits long and thirty wide. In front of it was a portico, and in front of that were pillars and an overhanging roof.*

*He built the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling. And the palace in which he was to live, set farther back, was similar in design. Solomon also made a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.*

*All these structures, from the outside to the great courtyard and from foundation to eaves, were made of blocks of high-grade stone cut to size and trimmed with a saw on their inner and outer faces. The foundations were laid with large stones of good quality, some measuring ten cubits and some eight. Above were high-grade stones, cut to size, and cedar beams. The great courtyard was surrounded by a wall of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams, as was the inner courtyard of the temple of the Lord with its portico. - 1 Kings 7:1-12*

These walls expanded the City of David to the north. Solomon's building projects around his palace complex would have required the opening of the northern wall, leaving a breach. As mentioned before, David may have built his own palace just on the outside of the old north wall of the Jebusite city that had enclosed their fortress or stronghold. The book of 1 Kings also records Solomon rebuilding this northern wall which would have included him extending the wall further to the north to include his new palace and thus closing up this breach in the wall made for the many years of construction in this area of the city on the Ophel. This is the wall recently excavated and seen in the photos.

*Solomon had built the supporting terraces (Millo) and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father.*  
- 1 Kings 11:27



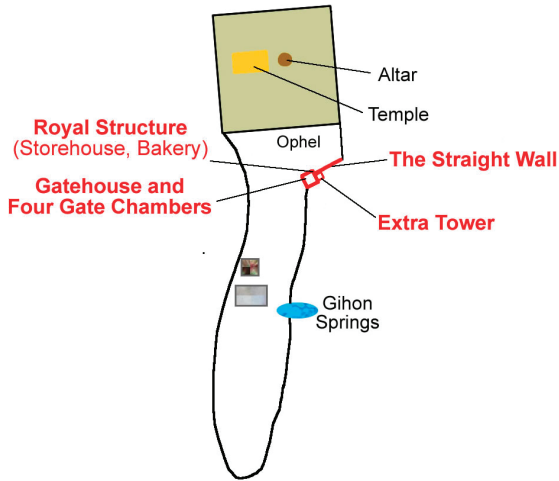
These are Solomon's walls built to extend the city to the north around his Palace of the Forest of Lebanon around the year 950. Solomon began to reign in 970. He spent 7 years building the Temple and 13 years building his palace. At the end of these 20 years of building (950 BC), Solomon would have closed up the gap in the north wall that was created by all of his construction work. These are the walls he built.







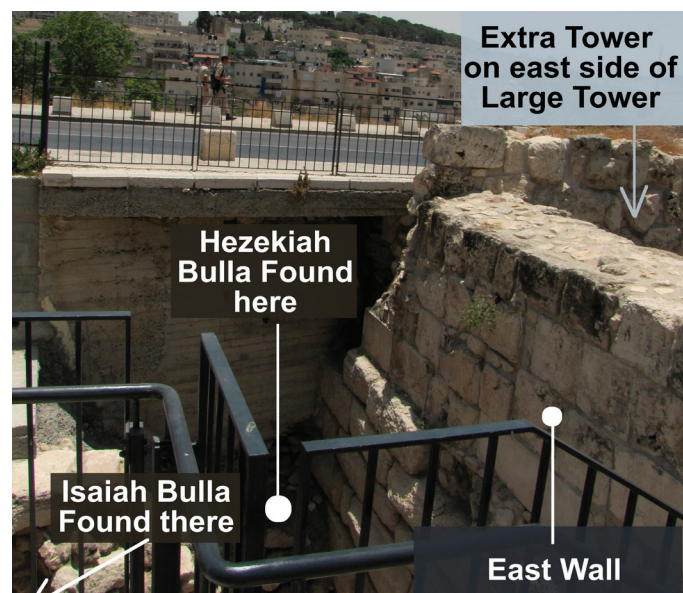
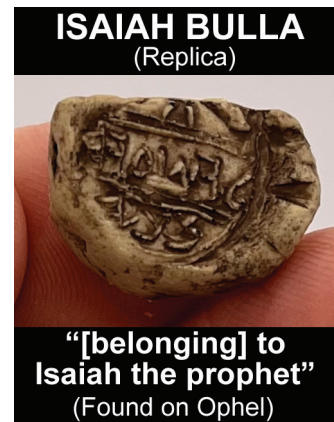
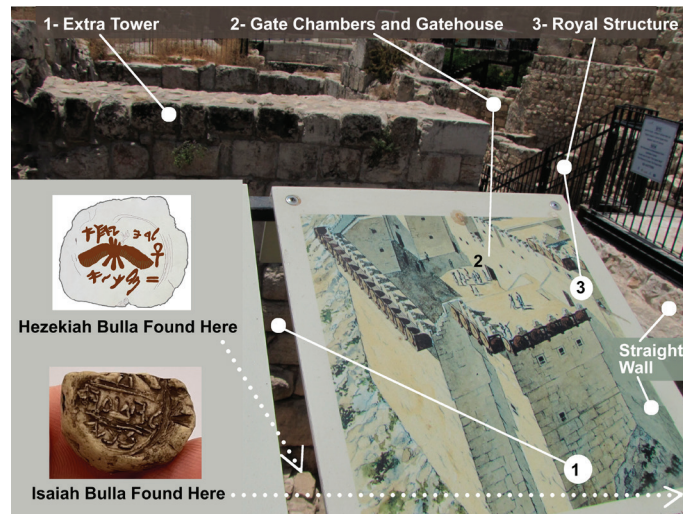
**Solomon's Wall and Four Chamber Gate  
950-586 BC excavated by Mazar on the Ophel  
(1986-87 and 2009)**



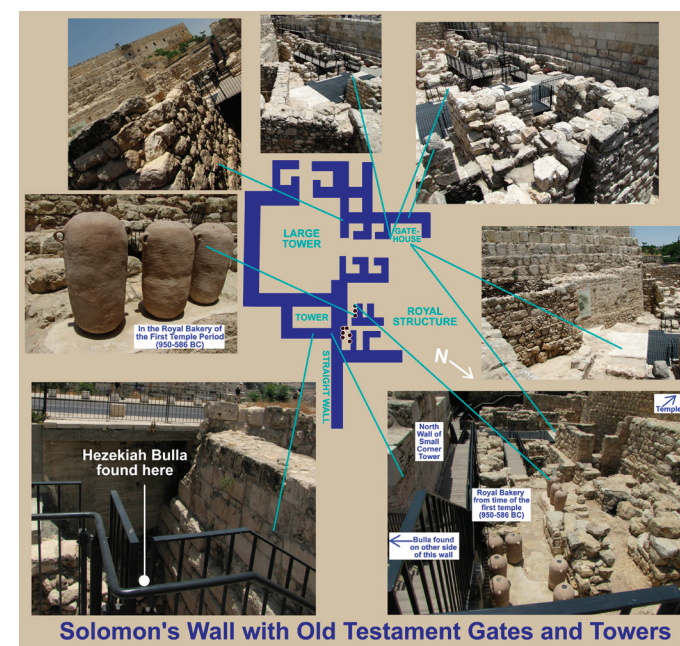
Toni examines one of the pithos found in the basement of the Royal Structure in Solomon's wall and gate system. These gigantic pithoi were used for storage and labeled to belong to the government official incharge of the bakery and distribution of the dates, wine or honey stored in these. These date from the time of Hezekiah and may have been used to store and distribute supplies to the fortified cities during the Assyrian sieges. Pithoi like this were found in the destroyed cities of Judah from 701 BC. Since Jerusalem was delivered from the Assyrians in 701 BC these pithoi would have continued to be used for the next 100 years until the Babylonian invasion that destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC. These pithoi were found crushed in the destruction layer of 586 BC in the basement of the Royal Structure.





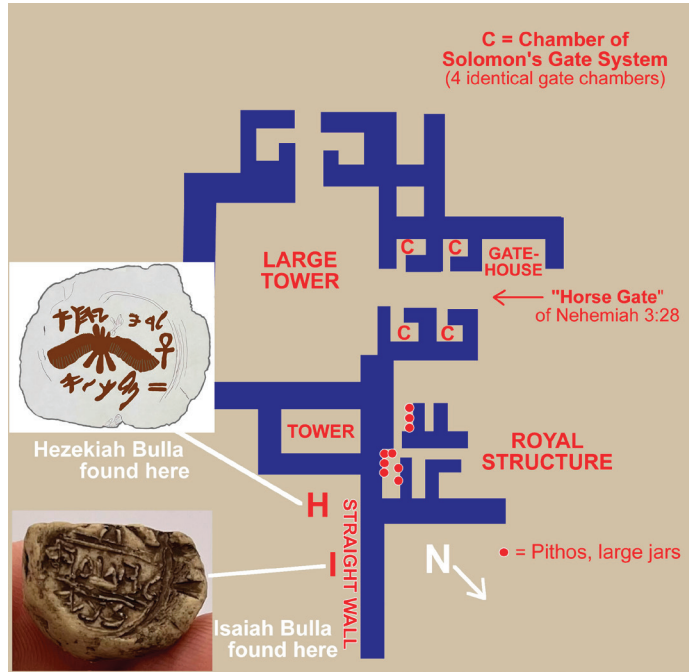


Found along with 33 other bullae by Eilat Mazar on the Ophel while excavating in the Royal Building in 2015



# Nebuchadnezzar Takes Jerusalem

Jehoiakim, King of Judah, surrenders Jerusalem in 597 BC according to this Babylonian cuneiform text.



An official cuneiform document kept in the British Museum chronicles some of the events in the reign of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar between 605-595 BC. This cuneiform tablet describes the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem and the surrender of Jehoakim, King of Judah, at Jerusalem in 597 BC. The Bible records that Jehoakim died and his son Jehoiachin, who ruled for only 3 months, was taken as a captive to Babylon at this time, and Babylonian records corroborate this by documenting Jehoiachin in Babylon and the provisions that were provided for him. Nebuchadnezzar appointed the dead King Jehoakim's brother Zedekiah as a vassal king. When Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (in opposition to the words of Jeremiah the Prophet) Nebuchadnezzar returned in 586 BC to burn Jerusalem and take large numbers of Hebrews captive.



Chapter 23

Solomon’s Quarries



The entrance to Solomon’s Quarries built by Suleiman in 1535 is under the north wall of the Old City, and sits on the rock escarpment of Mount Moriah. Solomon’s Quarries are also known as Zedekiah’s Cave or Zedekiah’s Grotto.

The stones for Solomon’s temple may have been hewn and taken from this quarry around 970 BC (1 Kings 6:1):

Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills, as well as thirty-three hundred foremen who supervised the project and directed the workmen. At the king’s command they removed from the quarry large blocks of quality stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple. The craftsmen of Solomon and Hiram and the men of Gebal (Byblos) cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the temple. -1 Kings 5:15-18

It seems certain that King Herod returned here in 19 BC for some of the stone used to build his temple. Some of the stones in the Western Wall, for example, could have originated in this quarry.



The entrance to Solomon’s Quarries

The quarry entrance is under the north wall of the Old City about 500 feet to the east of the Damascus Gate. It was concealed during the Ottoman Empire by Suleiman in 1540 for security reasons and was not rediscovered until 1854 when James Barclay found it and snuck in one night. Josephus mentions the “Royal Caverns” (War 5:147) in his discussion of the north wall and gate built by Herod Agrippa I in 41 BC on the same location as today’s wall and Damascus Gate. This quarry became known as Zedekiah’s Cave because 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah 52 tell how Zedekiah fled the city of Jerusalem in 586 even though the Babylonian army had encircled the city for 24 months and had even entered the city to pillage and burn. How did Zedekiah escape entrapment in the city of Jerusalem at that time? The Bible indicates that he and his troops used a gate at night, but legend and the system of caves under the city provide additional information. There is reported to be a tunnel from the royal palace of David that was connected to the cave system under the Temple Mount on Mount Moriah, which would have been connected to this quarry. In fact, many ancient accounts and even modern reports claim that this cave system extends all the way to Jericho 13 miles away.

Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled. They left the city at night through the gate between the two walls near the king’s garden, though the Babylonians were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah (Jordan Valley), but the Babylonian army pursued King Zedekiah and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, and he was captured. - Jeremiah 52:7-9 (2 Kings 25:4-6)



The stone ashlars were taken from this quarry. The straight cuts and grooves of the square blocks that were removed can still be seen.

This quarry is located under Mount Moriah. The area open for visitors today is just north of the Temple Mount about 30 feet beneath the Muslim Quarter in the Old City. There is a system of tunnels and caves used by the Jewish priests of the Old and New Testament to move about under the Temple Mount. The quarry is about 330 feet wide and 650 feet deep.



Galyn stands in Solomon’s Quarries where stones for the Temple were taken. This quarry leads to many tunnels that run under the Old City and the Temple Mount, and extend possibly for miles to the east before surfacing 13 miles away on the plains near Jericho.

Some believe that in one of these secret tunnels lies the hidden Ark of the Covenant.

He (Josiah) said to the Levites, who instructed all Israel and who had been consecrated to the Lord: ‘Put the sacred ark in the temple (“beth” meaning “house”) that Solomon son of David king of Israel built. It is not to be carried about on your shoulders. -2 Chronicles 35:3

This verse is saying either:

- 1. The Ark of the Covenant was moved out of the Most Holy Place located in the Temple to an undisclosed location during the evil days of Manasseh, and was being returned to the Temple in Josiah’s day.
- 2. The Ark of the Covenant was moved here by King Josiah after he heard the prophecy from Huldah concerning the coming destruction of the Temple which was to occur after Josiah’s death.

If the Ark was being moved by Josiah to a place of hiding for protection, then it would have been taken to the “temple” or “house” (from the word “bet” or “beth” meaning “house”) that Solomon had made under the Temple. When Solomon built the Temple he would have prepared a hiding place deep inside Mount Moriah to protect the Ark in times of great rebellion or wickedness. God spoke to Solomon concerning a future time when the very Temple that Solomon had built would be destroyed and the people deported because of their sin:

If you turn away and forsake the decrees and commands I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. And though this temple is now so imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and say, ‘Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ - 2 Chronicles 16:19-21

Solomon may have responded to this warning by preparing a place for the Ark to be placed in the days of Israel’s great apostasy. If this is true then the Ark was never seen by the Babylonians in 586 BC and would have remained hidden even after the Jewish return from exile, through the New Testament days, and up until today. This hiding place would have been accessible through Solomon’s Quarry, which provides access to a large number of of tunnels and caves under the Temple Mount.



Chisel marks can be seen in the walls and ceilings, while chipped pieces remain in piles on the ground.



Bedrock in the quarry that has been left in place.

The hard white limestone, called *malaky*, used by Herod is visible throughout this quarry. A variety of other types of limestone can also be seen here.





Toni walks deeper into the maze of caverns in the quarry that extends to a width of 330 feet.



Galyn and Toni under Mount Moriah in Solomon's Quarries. Notice the square cuts and straight grooves left from the removal of ashlar stones used to build in the city of Jerusalem above.



A section where the walls and ceiling show signs of the removed ashlars.

Chisel marks can be seen and piles of chipped rock remain. The location of removed ashlars is marked and even some finished blocks, ready to be removed, remain attached in the quarry.

## Chapter 24

### The Broad Wall (721 BC, Assyrian Destruction of north Israel)



A section of the Broad Wall built by Hezekiah around 721 BC to the west of the Temple Mount and the City of David. This wall was built over the Central Valley and up onto the Western Hill to enclose homes in the part of the city that expanded when the Assyrians invaded Israel to the north. Many people from the northern kingdom of Israel fled their country and moved into Judah and Jerusalem in order to escape the Assyrian invasion. Hezekiah protected them with this wall. The remains of the wall in this photo measure 23 feet wide and 213 feet long.

The Broad Wall was built during Hezekiah's expansion of the city. Jews from the northern tribes of Israel, who had been overrun by the Assyrians in 721 BC, migrated down to Judah and the city of Jerusalem for protection at this time. They settled outside the city walls to the west on the Western Hill. To protect them and their residences Hezekiah fortified the western part of this newly expanded city around 721 BC with a wall. The uncovered remains of this wall are 23 feet wide and 213 feet long. This portion of the wall ran west from the Temple Mount toward the western corner of the southwestern hill (which would be the Citadel today). Evidence uncovered during excavation seems to indicate that Hezekiah had to destroy some homes in order to build it. Isaiah addresses this very issue in his book, in chapter 22:

*And you looked in that day to the weapons in the Palace of the Forest (King Solomon's Palace of the Forest of Lebanon); you saw that the City of David had many breaches in its defenses; you stored up water in the Lower Pool (from Hezekiah's Tunnel). You counted the buildings in Jerusalem (new*

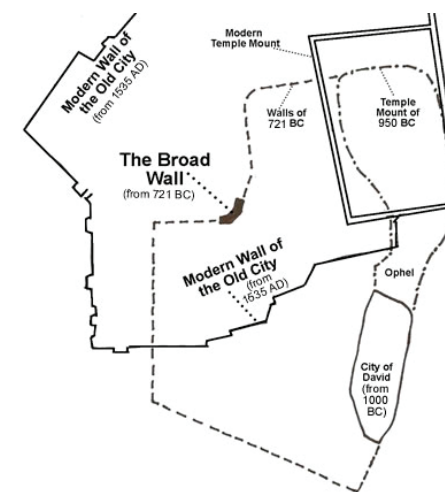
*expansion to the west) and tore down houses to strengthen the wall (this is what we see here, a broad wall built through houses that had to be removed to build it). You built a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the Old Pool, but you did not look to the One who made it, or have regard for the One who planned it long ago.* - Isaiah 22:8-11

The book of Nehemiah places the Broad Wall near the Temple Mount wall when, during the dedication of the new wall, one group of priests walked in procession on the wall, past the remains of this Broad Wall:

*The second choir proceeded in the opposite direction. I followed them on top of the wall, together with half the people - past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall, over the Gate of Ephraim. . . .* -Nehemiah 12:38



This is the remains of a portion of the "Broad Wall" that was built during Hezekiah's expansion of the city after 721 BC and before 701 BC. Jews from the northern tribes of Israel who had been overrun by the Assyrians in 721 BC migrated down to Judah and into the city of Jerusalem for protection from the Assyrians at this time. This wall is mentioned in Isaiah 22:8-11 and Nehemiah 12:38. Today this wall sits below street level in the Jewish Quarter. It was uncovered in 1970 during the excavations that took place in the Old City after the Six-Day War won by Israel in 1967.



*This diagram shows where the 213 foot section of the excavated Broad Wall would have been in the wall that Hezekiah built to protect the western portion of his growing city.*



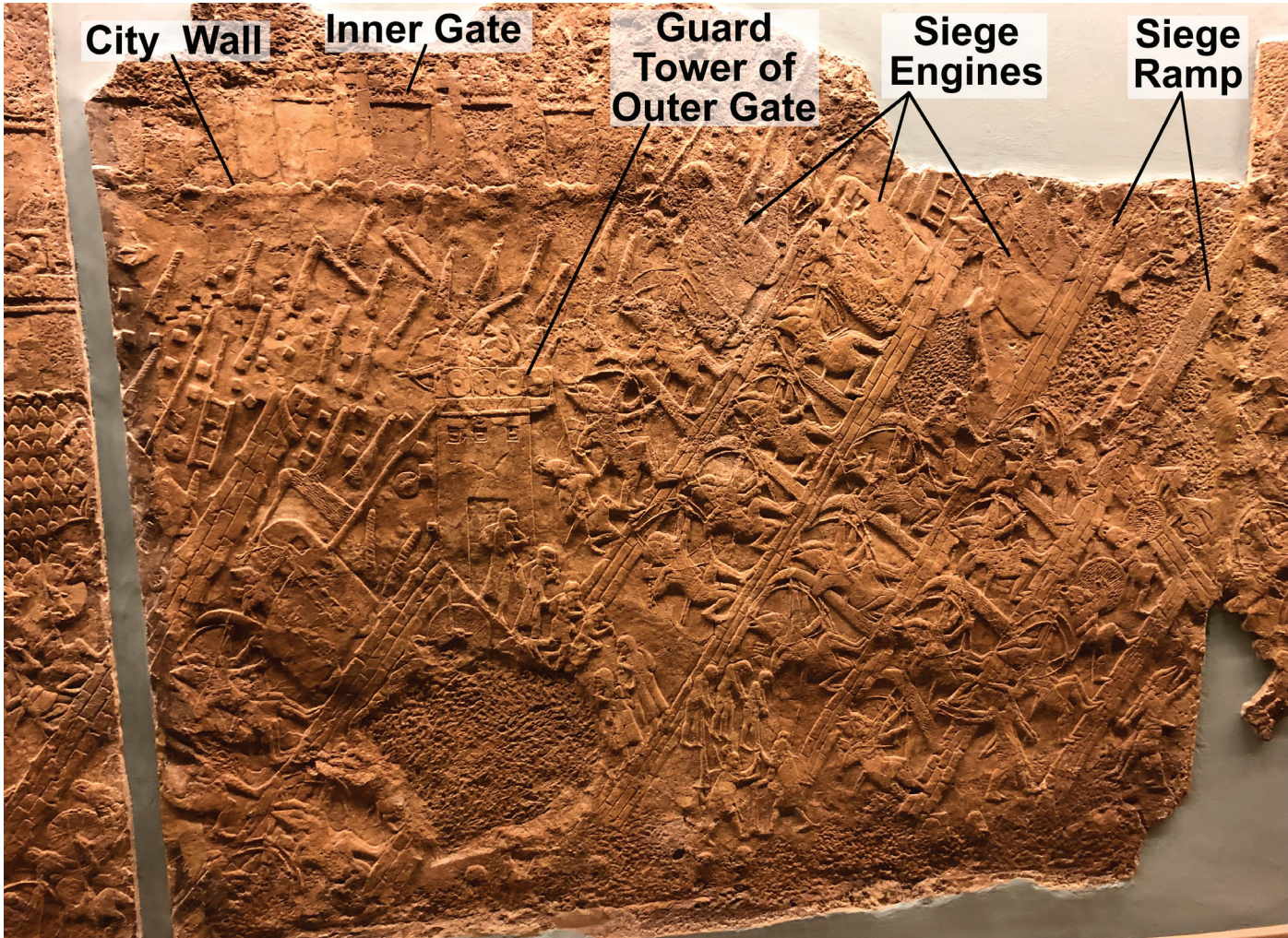
Chapter 25

The Assyrian Siege of Lachish

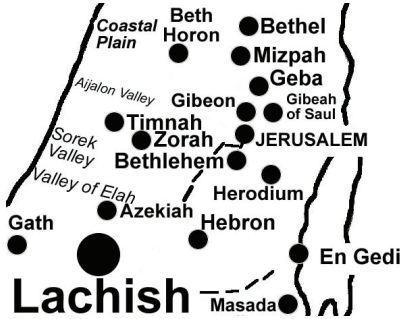
Between 722-701 BC Hezekiah took several precautions to prepare Jerusalem for the fallout of Assyria’s invasion of Northern Israel and the Assyrian King Sargon’s 721 BC destruction of Samaria, the capital city of Northern Israel. The massive migration of Hebrew refugees from the north seeking shelter to the south in Jerusalem was the reason for Hezekiah’s expansion of the city’s wall to the west. This included the construction of the Broad Wall discussed previously. By 701 BC Sargon’s son Sennacherib (reigned 705-681 BC) had become King of Assyria and continued the Assyrian advance into Judah. Sennacherib had destroyed all the fortified cities of Judah by 701 BC. While the Assyrians were laying siege to Hezekiah’s city of Lachish just 37 miles southwest of Jerusalem, King Sennacherib sent letters to be read to Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem warning them that they would be the next to fall to the Assyrians since Jerusalem was the only fortified city left for Hezekiah, king of Judah.

The last city before the Assyrian’s moved to take Jerusalem was Hezekiah’s city of Lachish. Lachish had just fallen to a violent assault from the Assyrian military that was detailed in gypsum stone panels on the remains of the walls of Sennacherib’s palace in Nineveh.

Details can be seen in the following photos.



In this relief cut into gypsum stone are details of the Assyrian siege of Hezekiah’s fortified city of Lachish in the land of Judah in the year 701 BC. These panels lined the walls of Sennacherib’s palace in Nineveh. Today they are displayed in the British Museum.



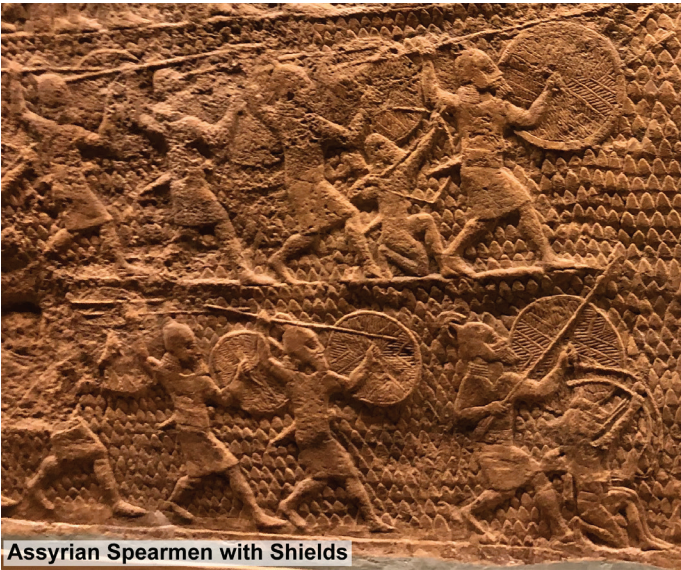
Lachish is 37 miles southwest of Jerusalem. The siege ramp built by the Assyrians in 701 BC can still be seen at Lachish.



Assyrian King Sargon (722-705 BC) with his son crown prince Sennacherib (705-681 BC)



Assyrian slingers and archers during the assault on Lachish with a long range attack as they begin the siege in 701 BC on one of Judah’s last fortified cities.

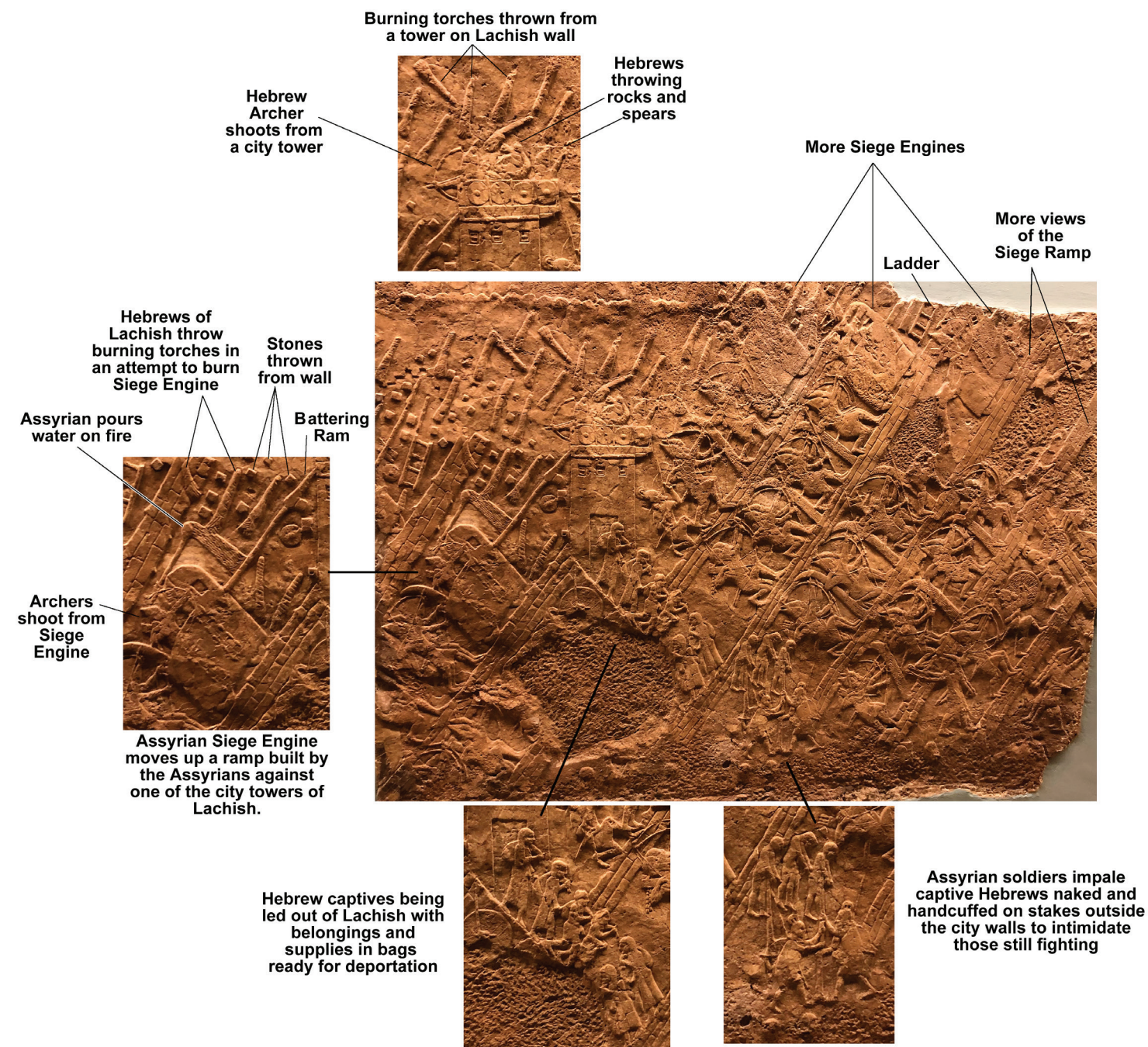


Assyrian spearmen begin the infantry phase of the siege on Lachish.



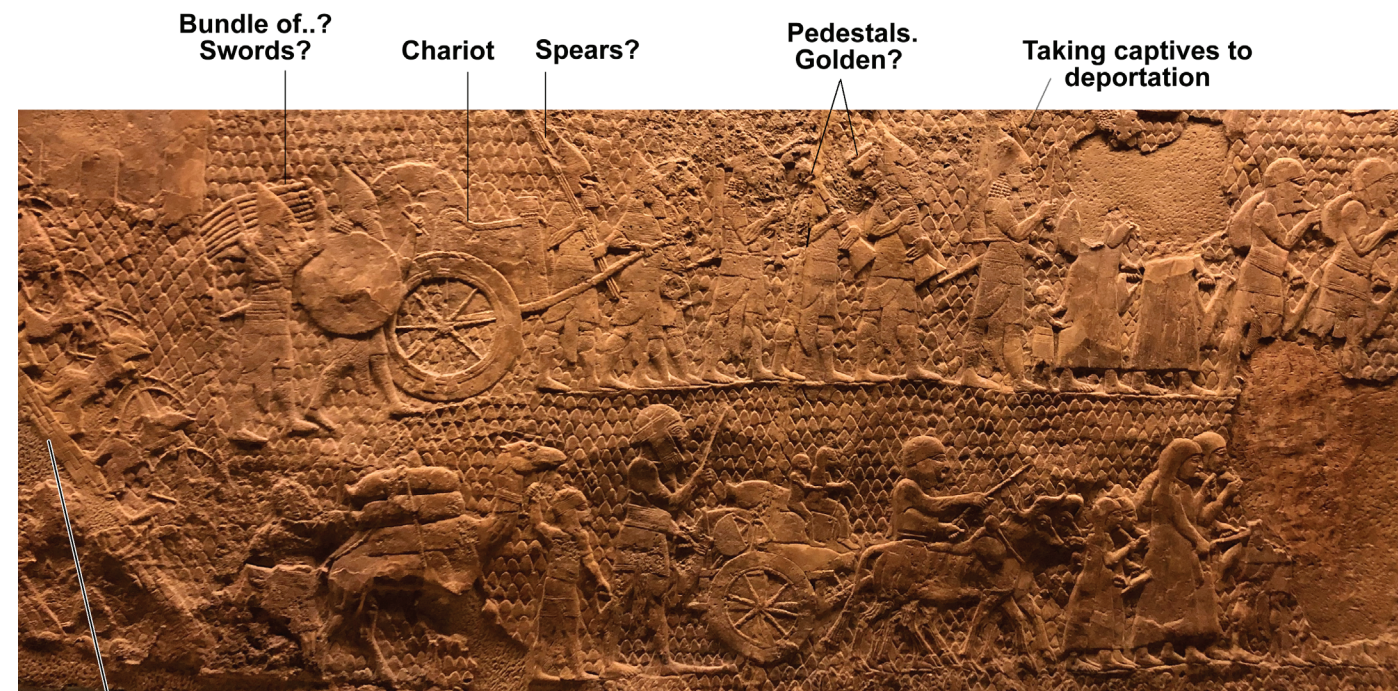
The Hebrews of Lachish throw burning torches down on the Assyrian siege engines from the western city wall that sets above the guard tower of the main city gate being assaulted.





## ASSYRIAN SIEGE OF LACHISH IN 701 BC

### TOP ROW OF PANEL: Assyrian soldiers take the plundered treasure



The Siege of Lachish

Family #1 with loaded camel led by wife with husband walking in front

Family #2 with ox driven cart. Mother driving with child. Father walking with ox.

Family #3 with children walking behind parents

### BOTTOM ROW: Hebrews of Lachish carrying their possessions as they are deported to other countries by the Assyrian forces



Assyrian stone slingers assault Lachish along with archers.

Another depiction of the Assyrian slingers at Lachish in 701 BC that was engraved on Sennacherib's palace walls in Nineveh.





One of five siege engines portrayed in this relief, making contact with its battering ram against the guard tower of the outer city gate on the west side of Lachish. The Hebrews of Lachish hurl burning torches towards the wooden siege engine in an attempt to set it on fire. Notice the Assyrian soldier on the siege engine pouring water (the long handled scoop dumping water) on the siege engine to keep the wood wet and extinguish the fire. Stones are also being thrown from the city walls. Captives have begun to leave the city in the bottom right of the image.



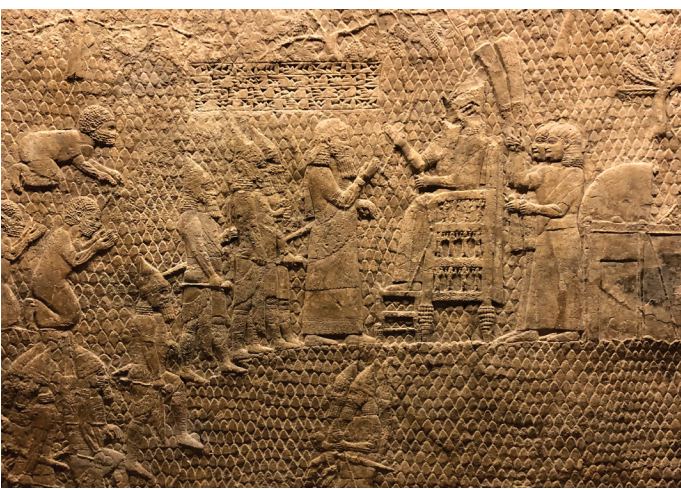
These are some of the actual sling stones the Assyrians stone slingers hurled against Lachish in 701 BC. These sling stones were recovered from the main gate on the west side of Lachish and are displayed in the British museum today.



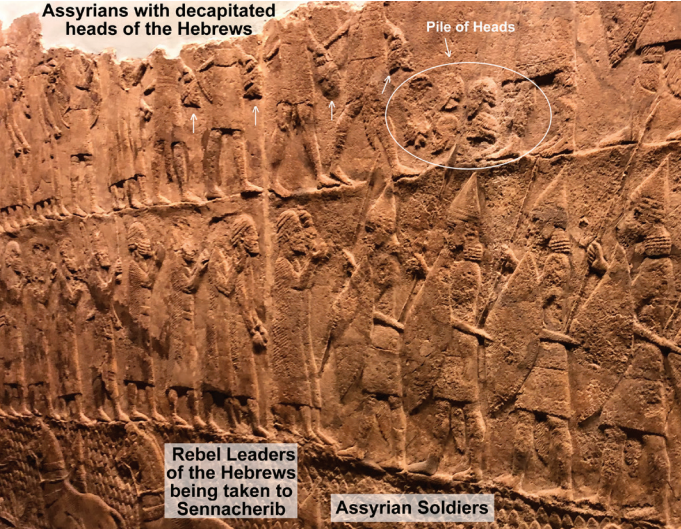
**Assyrian Helmet - 700 BC**  
(British Museum)

Assyrian soldiers decapitate a Hebrew captive at Lachish. The Assyrians can be identified in this 700 BC artwork by their cone shaped helmets.

This is one of the conical iron helmets used by the Assyrians of this time period (800-700 BC). It is inlaid with bronze for decoration with an artistic depiction of a procession of attendants with the king and the crown prince. Some helmets were made entirely of bronze.



Sennacherib sits on his throne outside the city watching his siege of Lachish. In front of Sennacherib is a leader of the Hebrew rebellion at Lachish who has been captured alive and brought to face judgment by Sennacherib. Assyrian soldiers stand behind the captured Hebrew official. Behind the Assyrian soldiers to the far left are three other Hebrew officials on their knees begging for mercy as they wait for their fate to be determined. Behind the king, his attendants can be seen providing him with a covering of shade. Note the cuneiform inscription above the captive and in front of Sennacherib. Below but not seen in this photo are Hebrew leaders who are already being flayed alive as a consequence of having joined Hezekiah in his rebellion against the Assyrians.



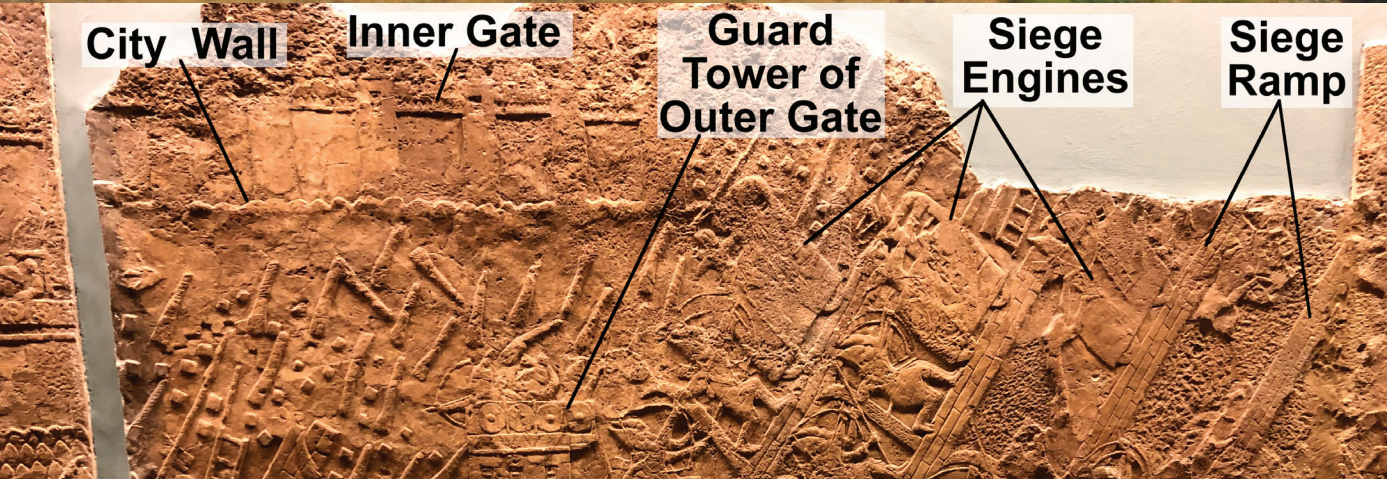
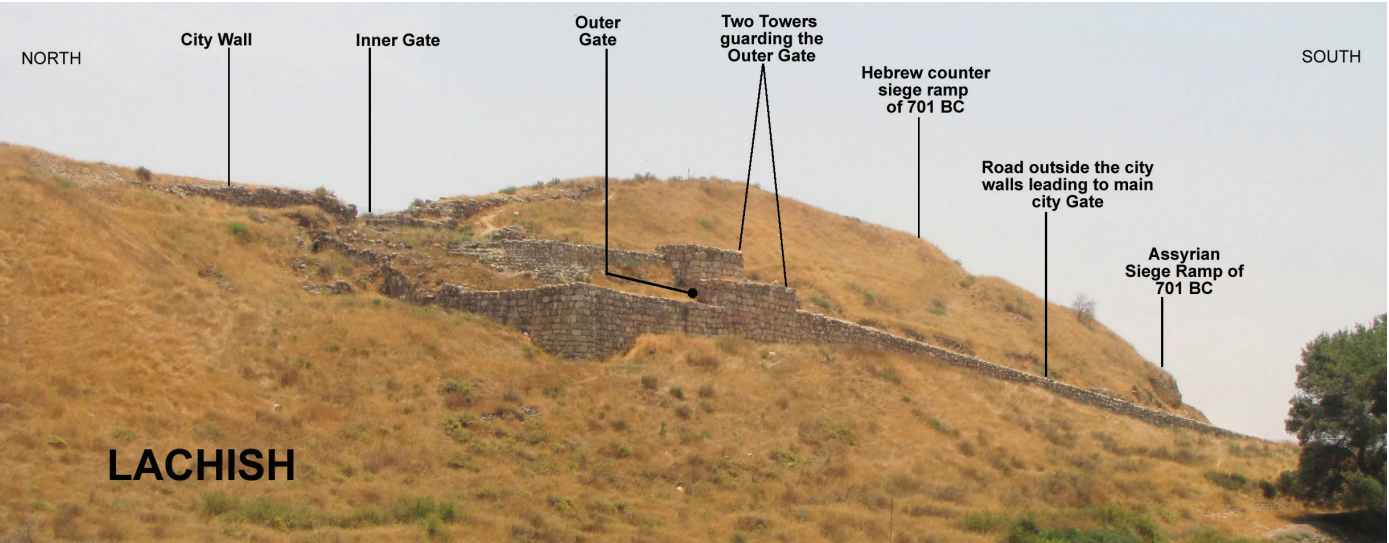
A close up of a Hebrew leader of Lachish at the judgment seat of Sennacherib outside the city of Lachish. The cuneiform inscription says:

**Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, set up a throne and the booty of Lachish passed before him.**



The northwest corner of the remains of the city of Lachish seen from the north looking south. It was along the west side of this city that the Assyrian siege occurred.





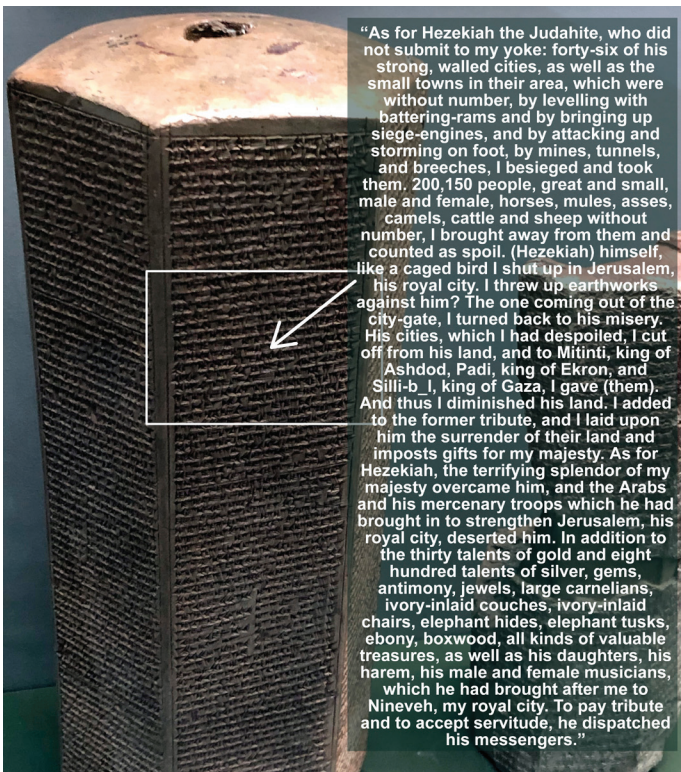
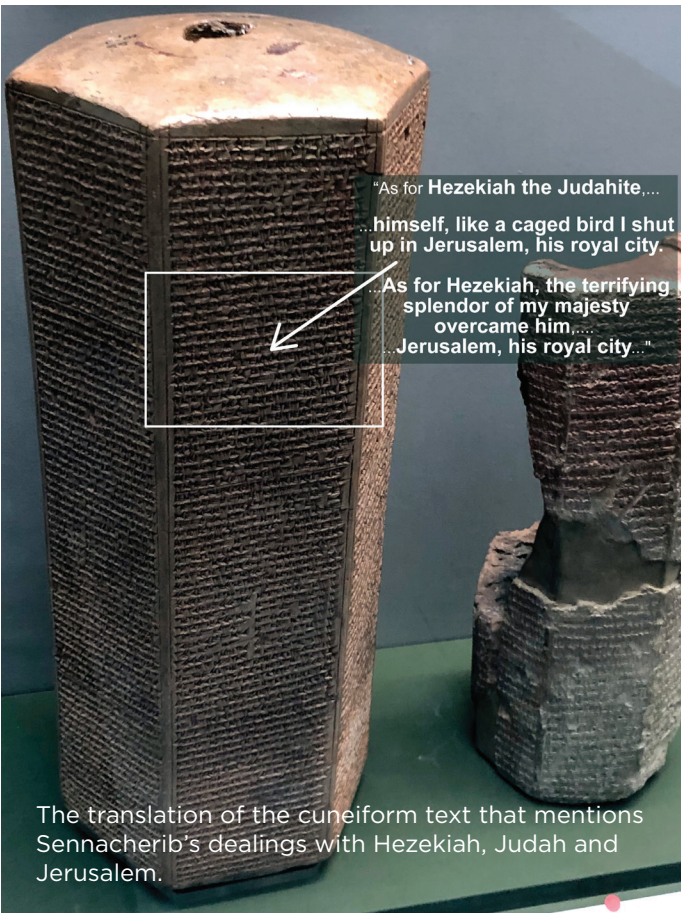
It is interesting to compare the archaeological remains on the west side of Lachish with the 701 engraving of the same area portrayed in gypsum stone from the walls of Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh.



The northwest corner of the city wall at Lachish.



The Sennacherib Prism is a six-sided baked clay prism discovered in Nineveh, the ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire. This is one of three Assyrian accounts of their invasion of Judah. This prism, called the Taylor Prism, is kept in the British Museum. It records the first eight campaigns of Assyrian King Sennacherib (704-681 BC). According to this Assyrian document the city of Jerusalem was approached but never taken. Hezekiah paid tribute after the land of Judah was invaded but was never defeated. Hezekiah remained on the throne of Judah in Jerusalem. This agrees with the biblical account that Judah was invaded and many of its cities fell, but in the end Jerusalem and Hezekiah were not touched by the military. The most Sennacherib can say concerning Hezekiah is, "I made [him] a prisoner in Jerusalem...like a bird in a cage." It is not surprising that Sennacherib does not mention his flight out of Judah or the loss of 185,000 men in one night. Even Herodotus, the Greek historian, explains why the Assyrian soldiers died and why Sennacherib fled the battlefield to return to Nineveh and never returned to Judah.



The full translation of this section of cuneiform text on Sennacherib's Prism known as the Taylor Prism in the British Museum.



## Chapter 26

### Hezekiah's Tunnel (701 BC, Assyrian Invasion of Judah)

Hezekiah's Tunnel was designed and cut to bring water from the Gihon Springs in the Kidron Valley (located on the east side of the Eastern Hill outside the city's walls) through the bedrock of the Eastern Hill to the west side, where Hezekiah's city of Jerusalem was expanding and protected by the new Broad Wall. Hezekiah's Tunnel was cut through bedrock in 701 BC under the City of David, curving and weaving for 1,750 feet. If the tunnel had been cut in a straight line, it would be 40% shorter, at only 1,070 feet. The entire 1,750 foot tunnel from the Gihon Springs to the Pool of Siloam, gradually declines only 12 inches, which is exactly enough to keep the water flowing the whole way. This is a mere 0.6% decline. The ground level is 130 feet above the tunnel floor.

By cutting this tunnel, Hezekiah was preparing Jerusalem for a siege by the Assyrian forces of Sennacherib. Jerusalem was the last fortress city of Judah standing, and Sennacherib had the siege of Jerusalem scheduled as the next event on his calendar. The Bible records all these details:

*After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, thinking to conquer them for himself. When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, he consulted with his officials and military staff **about blocking off the water from the springs** outside the city, and they helped him. A large force of men assembled, and **they blocked all the springs and the stream** that flowed through the land. 'Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?' they said. Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. He built another wall outside that one and reinforced the supporting terraces (Millo) of the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields. . . It was Hezekiah who **blocked the upper outlet of the Gihon spring** and **channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David**. He succeeded in everything he undertook.* - 2 Chronicles 32:1-5, 30

*As for the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements and how he **made the pool** and **the tunnel** by which he brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?* - 2 Kings 20:20

*Tunnel with flowing water from the Gihon Springs that leads to Hezekiah's Tunnel.*



*This is the entrance that leads to a tunnel running with water from the Gihon Springs that connects to Hezekiah's Tunnel. This tunnel was dug before the time of David (maybe 1200 BC) to bring water to the underground water reservoir that could be accessed inside the city through Warren's Shaft. Hezekiah's Tunnel connects with it on the other side of this opening.*



*Toni is ready to enter Hezekiah's Tunnel and the knee deep water with her flashlight.*



*Hezekiah's Tunnel is about 2 feet wide and 5 feet high at the entrance near the Gihon Springs, as seen in this photo. Notice that fresh water is still moving through this tunnel as it has for 2,700 years.*

The tunnel ceiling is only 5 feet high at the entrance, but reaches 16 feet toward the end, near the Pool of Siloam. The water is generally knee deep at the beginning but only to mid-calf throughout the rest of the tunnel. At times the water in the tunnel can be chest deep, depending on the circumstances.



*The pick marks of Hezekiah's workers are still visible on the rock walls and ceiling of this 1,750 foot tunnel.*



*Detail of a portion of the right side of the tunnel wall.*



*Detail of the ceiling that begins at about 5 feet high and ends a third of a mile later at 16 feet. Notice the pick marks of Hezekiah's men that can still be seen in the bedrock under the City of David.*



This tunnel was discovered by Edward Robinson in 1838 and was cleared by Montague Parker's team during the years 1909-1911. The water had continued flowing through this tunnel for 2,000 years. In fact, before its rediscovery, people thought the water in the area of the Pool of Siloam came from its own spring. It was not until later that people realized the water in the Pool of Siloam is actually water from the Gihon Springs over a third of a mile away. Water still flows naturally from the Gihon Springs today through Hezekiah's Tunnel and to the Pool of Siloam.



The water moving along the floor through the 1/3 mile tunnel

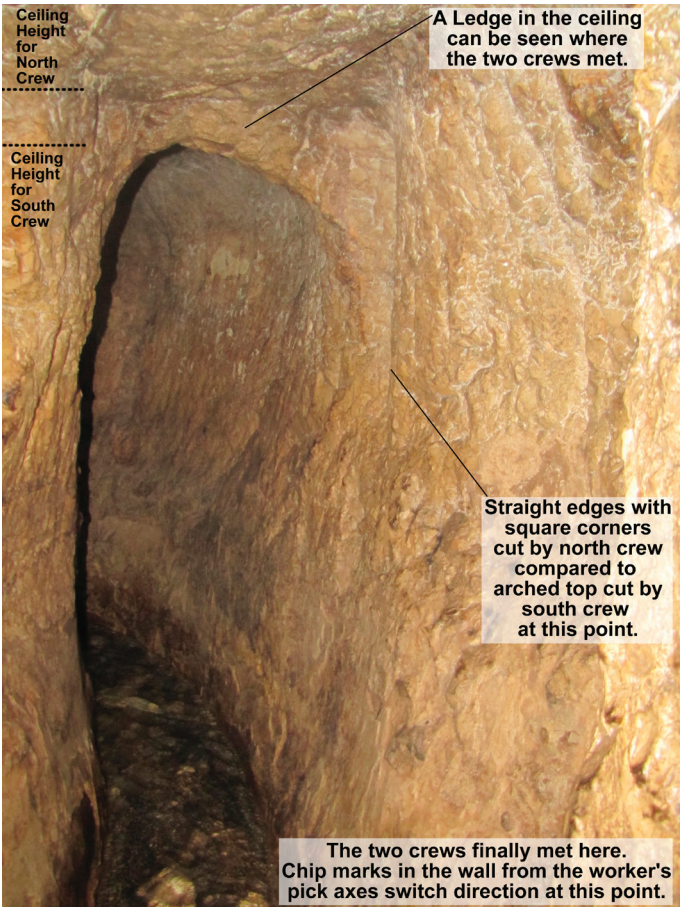


A nice photo of the tunnel clearly showing the pick marks, the sharp corners where the walls and ceiling meet, and the fresh moving, cool water on the floor of the tunnel which comes above the ankles to mid-calf.

The point where the two crews finally met can be identified by at least three signs, following the winding, weaving and false starts that preceded it. One, the ceilings are different heights at this point creating a ledge in the ceiling. Two, the tunnel from the north had square corners forming more of a rectangle shape while the tunnel from the south had an arched top at this point. Three, the angle of the chips in the wall indicated the pick axes were being swung in two different directions at the meeting point.



A bend in the tunnel going left (south toward the Pool of Siloam) was made as the two crews of tunnelers were trying to meet each other. In this photo the impression of the beginning of a straight tunnel can be seen in the tall, rectangular shape indentation. This direction was abandoned and the northern crew digging south from the Gihon Springs turned left. The meeting place where the two crews met occurs just around this corner after a few more false starts.



Here the tunnel weaves to the right after passing the point where the two crews would meet. False starts (i.e. the beginnings of wrong directions in the tunnel), made by the crew digging north from the Pool of Siloam can be seen in this photo by the marks on the walls. At this point the crews were attempting to meet each other so the water could flow from the Gihon Springs through the tunnel to the Pool of Siloam.



A photo of one of the false starts that was abandoned and the direction of the tunnel changed in an attempt to meet the other crew.



Toni coming from the south a few steps after the point in the tunnel where the two crews met. One of the false starts made by the crew coming from the north can be seen in the wall.



Galyn Wiemers in Hezekiah's Tunnel by a rectangular hole in the wall.



Holes in the walls were cut out by the workers to hold torches for light in the dark tunnel.



In April of 2022 Aryeh E. Shimron, Vitaly Gutkin and Vladimir Uvarov released their extensive archaeological and scientific research in “Archaeological Discovery” (10, 69-113; <https://doi.org/10.4236/ad.2022.102004>) revealing evidence that a sluice gate was used in Hezekiah’s tunnel during and after the reign of Hezekiah (715-686 BC). A sluice gate is a movable damn that could be raised up to allow water to move through the tunnel to the Pool of Siloam or lowered to the floor of the tunnel creating a temporary blockage of the water flow moving south and instead fill up the original pools and channels on the north end that serviced the area around the Gihon Springs. These pools to the north included the pool accessed by the public through Warren’s Shaft, but there were other pools and channels in the Kidron Valley outside the eastern city walls. This portion of the water system near the Gihon Springs also provided water for the royal administrative building complex.

The Gihon Springs had abundantly provided water on the east side of the original city of Jerusalem (Salem, Jebus, City of David). But, with the diversion of the water from the Gihon Springs through Hezekiah’s Tunnel to the south into the Pool of Siloam, the water supply to the north on the eastern side of the city would be drastically lowered. To control the water level at its source Hezekiah would need a plan to justify and monitor the diverting of water to the other side of the city.

The resolution to this problem was the planning, installation, and use of a sluice gate along the route of Hezekiah’s Tunnel. This sluice gate would not only be politically acceptable to the citizens of the city by doubling available access to the city’s water, but it was also a strategically proactive military maneuver in preparation for the rising threat of an Assyrian siege. This very logic is recorded in a quote from Hezekiah’s team designing the tunnel:

*“Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities... And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, he planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, **“Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?”** He set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. He also made weapons and shields in abundance... **Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David.** And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.”*  
2 Chronicles 32:1-5, 30, ESV

This device would control the water level in Hezekiah’s Tunnel while also allowing the pools on the north end of the tunnel to fill when the sluice gate was closed. Additionally, when the sluice gate was open it would cut off the supply of water to the pools and channels outside the city walls that would otherwise be available to an attacking army.

The sluice gate was found to have been constructed 233 feet from the south exit of Hezekiah’s Tunnel. Evidence of a formerly functioning sluice gate at this location is plentiful.

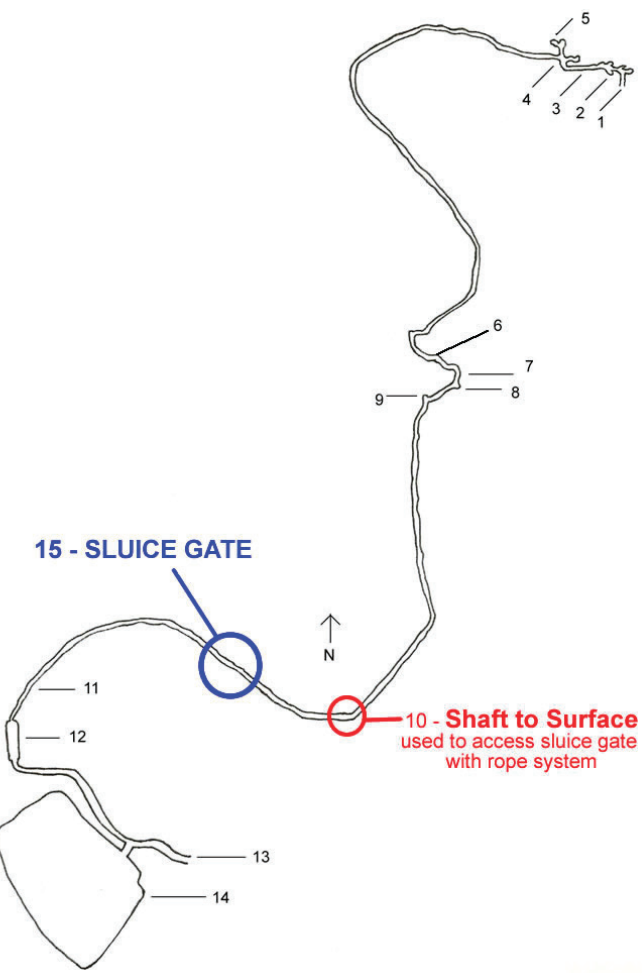
To make room for this tall, vertically-sliding gate to be raised up above the water level, the ceiling would have to be cut higher than the 5-7 foot level that existed south from the Gihon Springs. The point in Hezekiah’s Tunnel where the ceiling height goes from 6 feet to 19 feet is 233 feet from the south exit of the tunnel. (see photo below)



Toward the end of the tunnel the ceiling reaches 19 feet high.

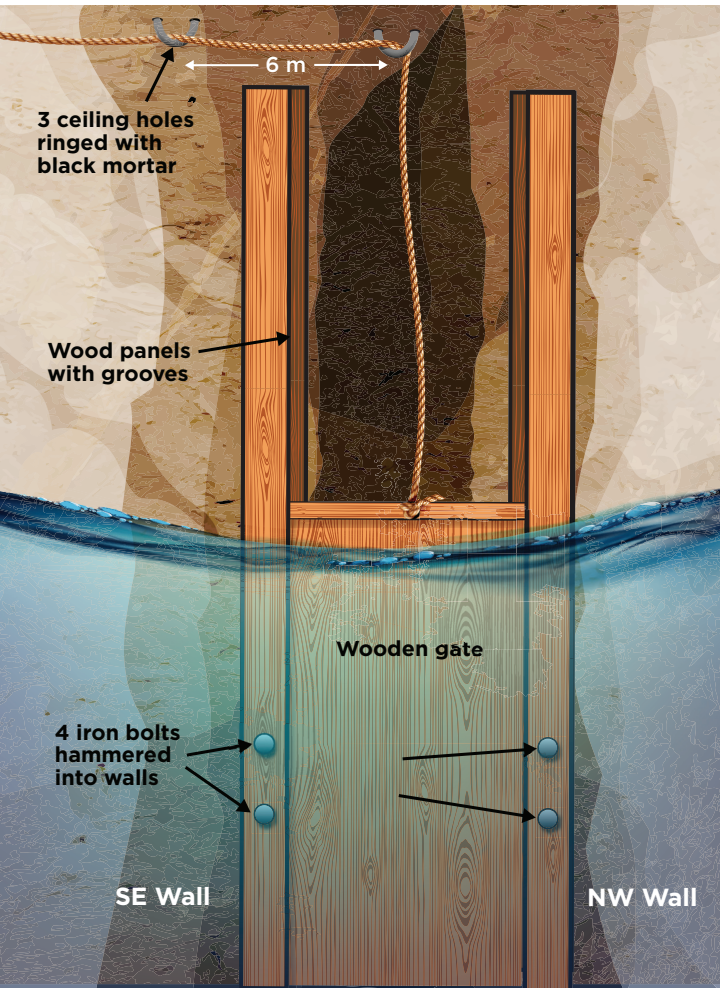
A few feet north of this point is a natural shaft (similar to Warren’s Shaft) that extends from the ceiling of the tunnel through a passage and then up and out to the surface above. This was where a rope system would have been installed to operate the lifting and lowering of the sluice gate. The rope system that worked the gate was on the surface above Hezekiah’s Tunnel, inside the city walls, so could easily be used during a siege to open the gate to draw all the water into the Pool of Siloam. This would leave little or no water outside the city walls for the Assyrians.

There is also an indication of a metal device to guide the rope found in the traces of smelting ore that remain on the ceiling of the tunnel directly above the location of the gate.



The location of the sluice gate and the shaft in the ceiling that continues to ground level are shown in the above diagram of Hezekiah’s Tunnel.

The tall, vertical gate would have been made of wood (scientific examination indicates cedar wood) which would slide up and down in two wooden grooves, one secured to each wall with two iron nails/bolts driven through the wood into the rock wall. The location of these nails/bolts are at this same point on each side of the tunnel symmetrically placed two on each side below the location where the ceiling of the tunnel rises from 6 feet to 19 feet.



Two nails/bolts on the north side of Hezekiah’s Tunnel at the location of the sluice gate could still be seen in the rock wall in 2007. This is a screen shot from a video I made as I walked through the tunnel in June of 2007.



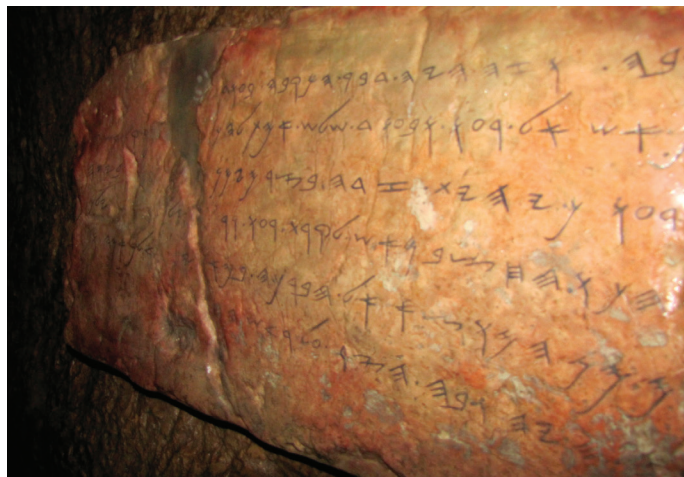


Toni points to the place where an inscription etched in the rock wall by Hezekiah's men was found in 1880. It is called the Siloam Inscription and was engraved in 701 BC. It describes how two teams of workers cut the tunnel, each coming from opposite ends, and when they met the water began to flow.

The Siloam Inscription was written in 701 BC and discovered in 1880. It was engraved in the wall of the tunnel, but later chiseled out of the bedrock and taken to a museum in Istanbul, Turkey. Inscribed by one of Hezekiah's workmen near the western end of the tunnel close to the Pool of Siloam, it reads:

*[...when] (the tunnel) was driven through. And this was the way in which it was cut through: While [ . . . ] (were) still [ . . . ] axes, each man toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, [there was heard] the voice of a man calling to his fellows, for there was an overlap in the rock on the right [and on the left]. And when the tunnel was driven through, the quarrymen hewed (the rock), each man toward his fellow, axe against axe; and the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the heads of the quarrymen was 100 cubits.*

- Siloam Inscription, engraved in 701 BC



An imitation of the actual stone and the inscription that was removed and taken to a museum in Istanbul, Turkey.



Toni at the end of the 1,750 foot tunnel ready to exit and make her way to the Pool of Siloam.



Stairs leading out of Hezekiah's Tunnel to an open channel, through which the water flows into the Pool of Siloam.

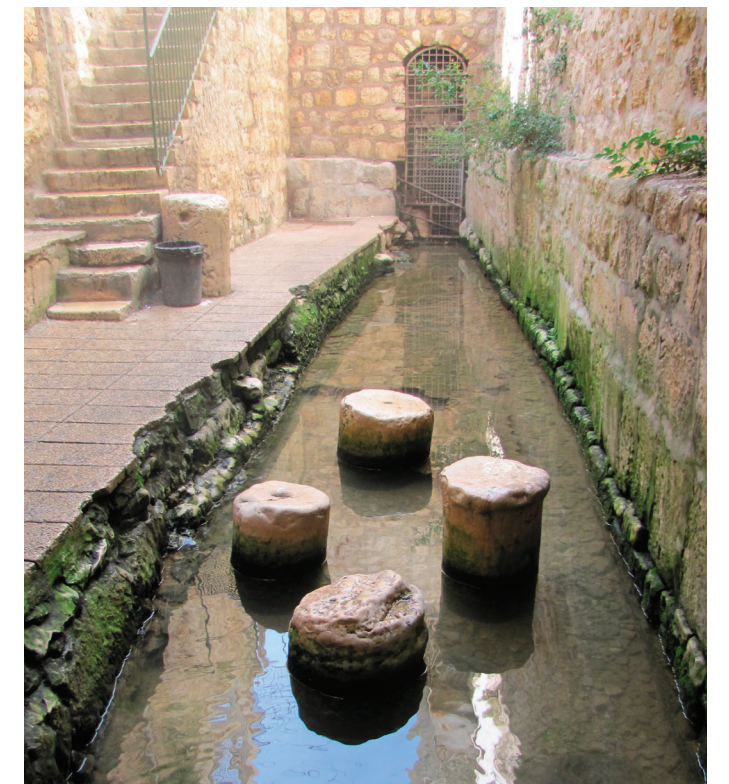


A view of the open channel at the end of Hezekiah's Tunnel. This channel flows into the Pool of Siloam. The circular, or cylinder, remains of pillars are from a Byzantine church built on this site that was called the Siloam Church.

The water in the channel flowing out of Hezekiah's Tunnel has been considered sacred and was believed to have healing powers. A church was built over the site by the empress Eudokia around 450 AD. This church, along

with most other churches of the Byzantine Empire, was destroyed in 614 when the Persians invaded the Holy Land and Jerusalem. The remains of the bases of the pillars can be seen in the water of this open channel. The Bordeaux pilgrim, who saw this location in 333 AD, wrote that this pool had four porches. In the 500's, after the Church of Siloam was built by Eudokia, but before the Persians destroyed it, a pilgrim from Piacenza wrote:

*You descend by many steps to Siloam, and above Siloam is a hanging basilica beneath which the water of Siloam rises. Siloam has two basins constructed of marble, which are separated from each other by a screen. Men were in one and women in the other to gain a blessing. In these waters miracles take place, and lepers are cleansed. In front of the court is a large man-made pool and people are continually washing there; for at regular intervals the spring sends a great deal of water into the basins, which goes on down the valley of Gethsemane (which they also call Jehosaphat) as far as the River Jordan.*

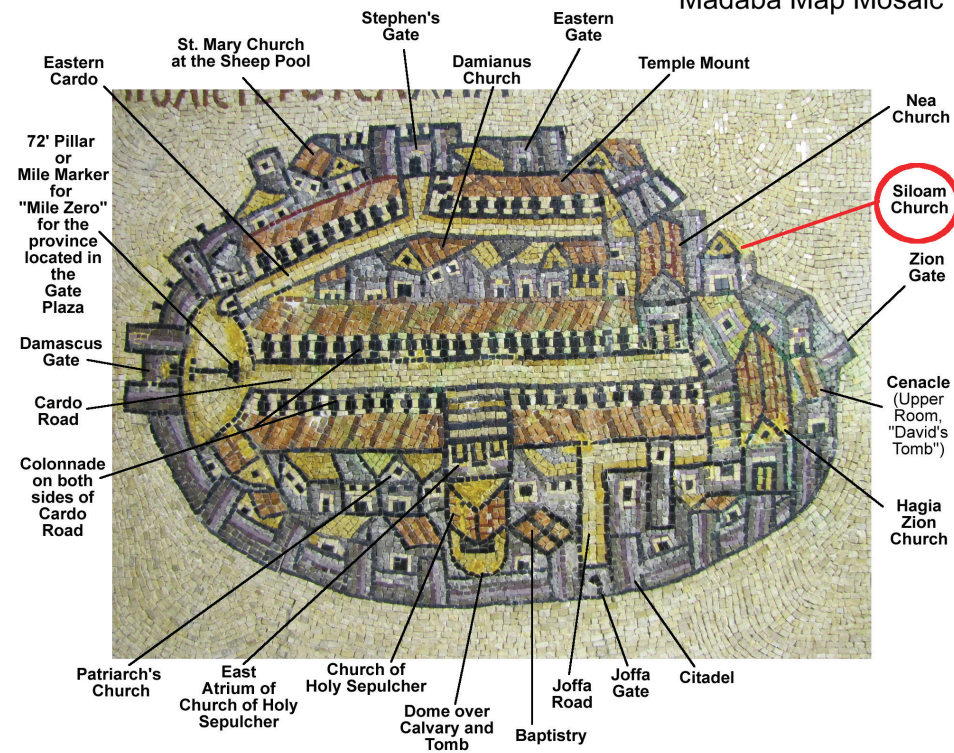


A view of the open channel from the exit of Hezekiah's Tunnel. This site is actually the site of the Byzantine church called the Siloam Church. The pillars in the channel seen in this photo are the remains of supports of the Siloam Church that was built over the waters that flowed out of Hezekiah's Tunnel. The Pool of Siloam is just a few feet on the other side of the gate that is seen at the end of the channel. Until 2005, the channel was identified as the Pool of Siloam, but in 2005 the actual Pool of Siloam was uncovered accidentally by a city crew working on the public sewer system. Today this water flows on toward that pool.



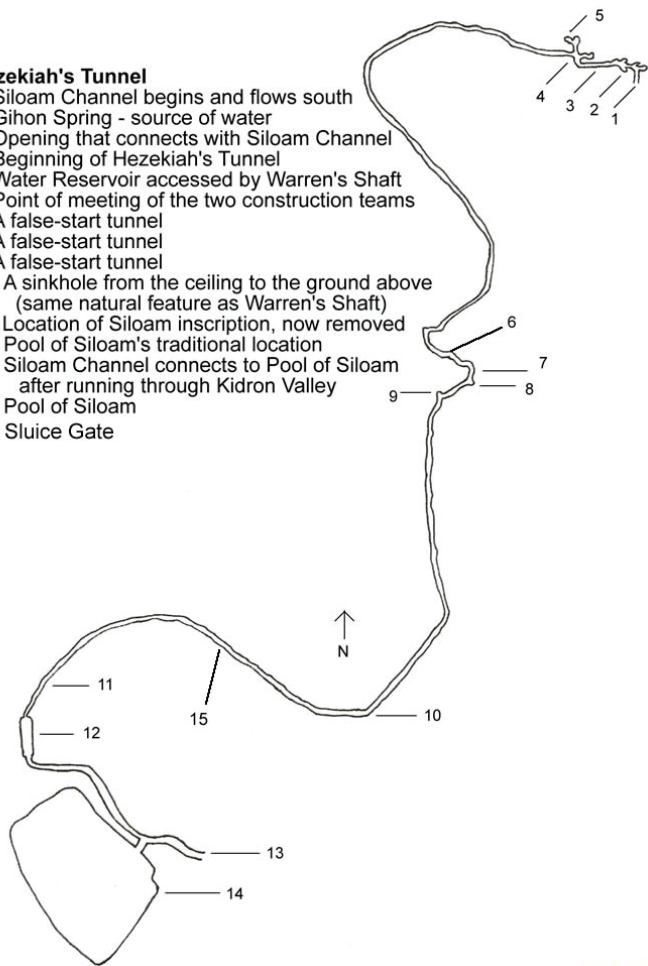
JERUSALEM in 500 AD

500 AD Byzantine  
Madaba Map Mosaic

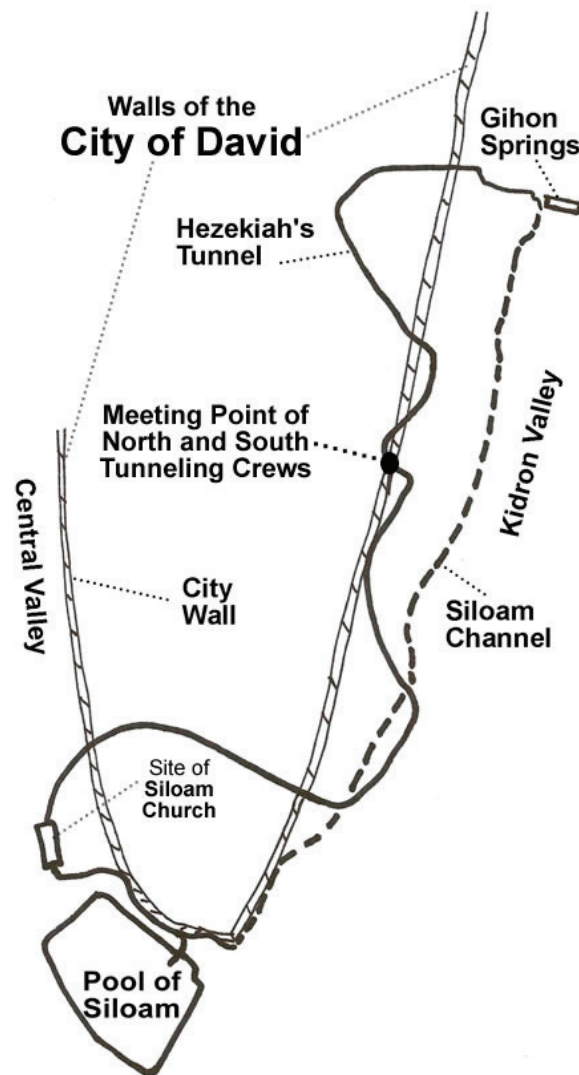


Hezekiah's Tunnel

1. Siloam Channel begins and flows south
2. Gihon Spring - source of water
3. Opening that connects with Siloam Channel
4. Beginning of Hezekiah's Tunnel
5. Water Reservoir accessed by Warren's Shaft
6. Point of meeting of the two construction teams
7. A false-start tunnel
8. A false-start tunnel
9. A false-start tunnel
10. A sinkhole from the ceiling to the ground above (same natural feature as Warren's Shaft)
11. Location of Siloam inscription, now removed
12. Pool of Siloam's traditional location
13. Siloam Channel connects to Pool of Siloam after running through Kidron Valley
14. Pool of Siloam
15. Sluice Gate



Walls of the  
City of David



Chapter 27

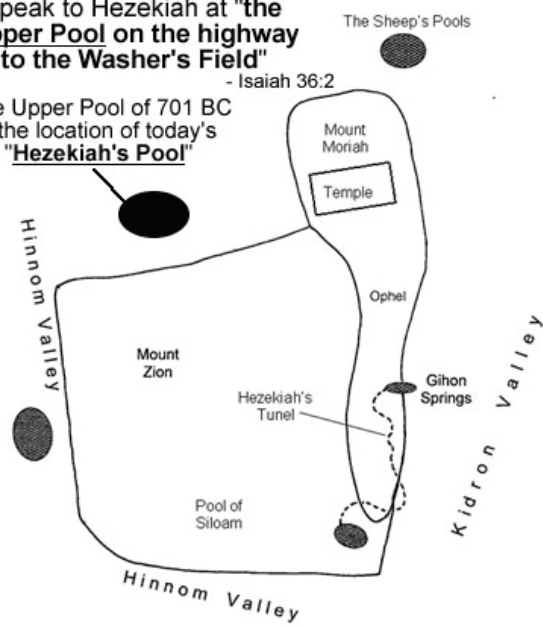
Hezekiah's Pool



This is a view of what is called "Hezekiah's Pool" but is thought to be a reservoir from the time of Herod that received water from aqueducts that are still visible outside the Jaffa Gate. It also may have been a quarry outside the city where stones were cut for an Old Testament wall to the east of here. Some consider this to be the pool mentioned in Isaiah 36:2 and 2 Kings 18:17 where Sennacherib's field commander met Hezekiah's men "at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washer's Field."

Sennacherib sent a messenger from the siege at Lachish to speak to Hezekiah at "the Upper Pool on the highway to the Washer's Field" - Isaiah 36:2

The Upper Pool of 701 BC is the location of today's "Hezekiah's Pool"



JERUSALEM  
in Hezekiah's Day in 701 BC

"And the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field." - Isaiah 36:2



It is located in the Christian Quarter and in this photo is viewed from the Petra Hotel which is just inside the Jaffa Gate across from the Citadel. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is in the middle of the photo behind Hezekiah's Pool. At one time the courtyard around the reservoir was encircled with inns and rest stops for travels and royal couriers. Today these buildings are workshops and up until recently the pool was used as a trash dump. The site has never been excavated but there are plans to do so in the future.



Church of Holy Sepulcher and Dome of the Rock in the background.





Clean up of Hezekiah's Pool had made good progress by June of 2012



The floor of Hezekiah's Pool in June of 2010 (Photo taken from the top of Petra Hotel)



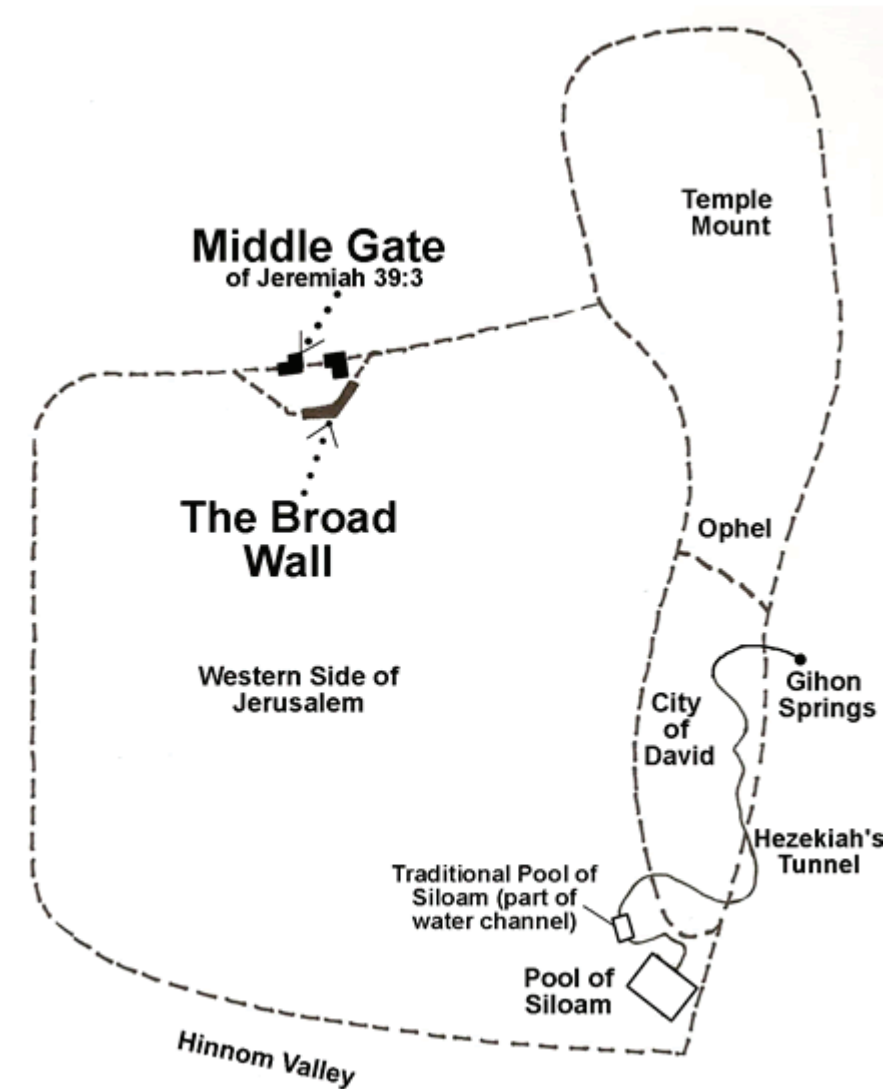
Old stairs leading to the top floors of the Petra Hotel, the oldest hotel in Jerusalem. From the second and third floors Hezekiah's Pool can be seen with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Dome of the Rock in the background. This hotel was built in 1830 and sits just inside the Joppa Gate. Mark Twain stayed here when he was in Jerusalem in 1867. He then published his travel notes in his book "The Innocents Abroad". It is claimed that Herman Melville conceived the idea for his book Moby Dick while staying here at the Petra Hotel. Even General Allenby stayed here and addressed the crowd from one of the balconies after he won the Battle for Jerusalem during WWI in 1917. Likewise, Kaiser Wilhelm II stayed here in 1898.



Stairs coming off David Street in front of the Joppa Gate ascend to the second floor of the old 1830's Petra Hotel. From here and the floor above Hezekiah's Pool can be seen.

## Chapter 28

### Middle Gate (586 BC, Babylonian Destruction)



In the Citadel near the Jaffa Gate fragmentary remains of fortifications were found, which include a corner of a massive tower with remains at 8 meters. This appears to be part of a gate that belonged to the northern defense system of Hezekiah's wall defending the western expansion. The Babylonian generals met at this gate in June of 586 BC. Jeremiah 39:3 calls this the "middle gate":

*Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and sat in the middle gate: Nergal-sar-ezer, Sam-sekim the Rab-saris, Nergalsar-ezer the Rab-mag. . . .*  
- Jeremiah 39:3

The area outside this gate, which suffered a great fire around that time, was littered with Babylonian and Israelite arrowheads.



## Chapter 29

### Nehemiah's Wall (445 BC, Exiles Return to Rebuild Temple and City)



A portion of the wall Nehemiah built in 445 BC. The top seven courses of stone on this wall were rebuilt by the Hasmoneans. This is located on the east side

of the City of David below the palace and next to the Jebusites Stepped Stone Structure.