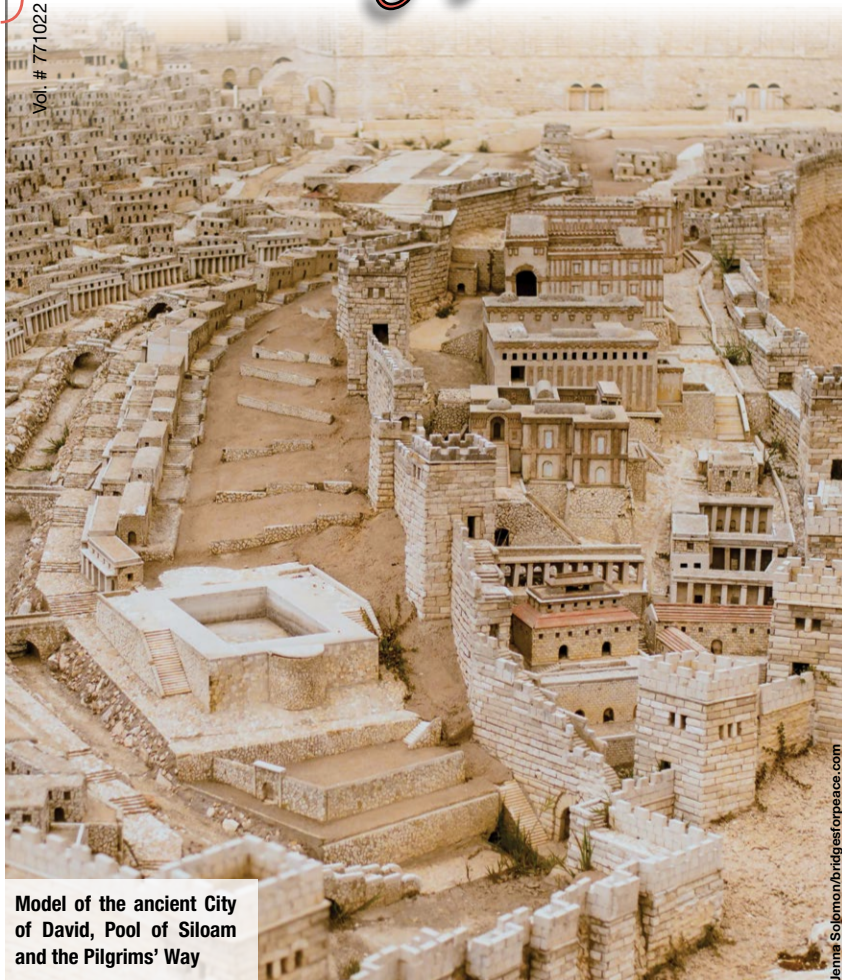


THE HEARTBEAT OF JERUSALEM

The City of David



Model of the ancient City
of David, Pool of Siloam
and the Pilgrims' Way

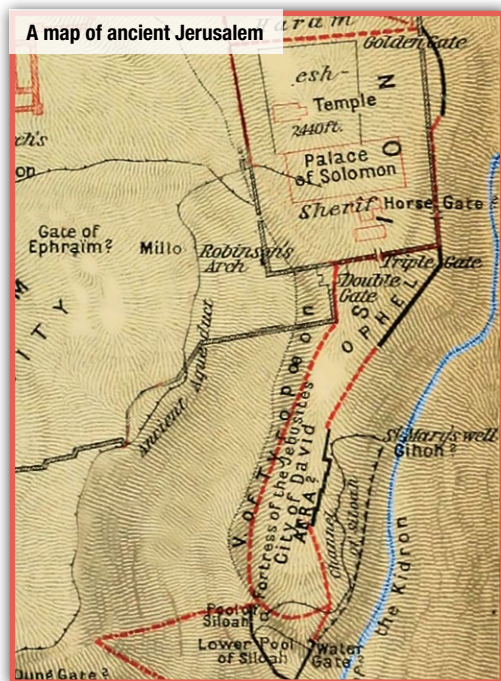
Jenna Solomon/bridgesforpeace.com

By Rev. Peter J. Fast, *National Director, Bridges for Peace Canada*
Bridges for Peace...Your Israel Connection®

LOCATED SOUTH OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT, below the Old City in Jerusalem, is the most archaeologically excavated site on earth, the City of David. Most tourists to Israel add a short visit to the City of David to explore Hezekiah's Tunnel and the Pool of Siloam. However, most do not realize that the City of David is the beating heart of Jerusalem. It is where Jerusalem began. An individual may trek through the Old City, taking in ruins of Jerusalem from the time of the southern kingdom of Judah, the Hasmoneans or King Herod, but if they exclude the City of David, they will miss the biblical epicenter, King David's Jerusalem.

Jerusalem—an Ancient City

The name, City of David, appears 47 times in the Bible and has its foundations in the original city, a Jebusite–Canaanite stronghold called Jebus (Jerusalem), which David captured. We read the harrowing account in 1 Chronicles 11:4–9, where Joab entered the city through a shaft in its waterworks, thereby opening the city gates to King David's army.



When David arrived before the stronghold of Jebusite Jerusalem, it was already an ancient city. Israeli archaeologist, Eilat Mazar, states: “At the beginning of the 10th century BC, the Canaanite–Jebusite city of Jerusalem underwent drastic change when it was captured by David and selected as the capital of his new kingdom. When he took the city, it had been settled for over two millennia and, as a royal city, fortified with imposing city walls for a millennium.”

The location of Jebusite Jerusalem certainly played into David's decision to capture this city, as it was strategically placed, and more

importantly, a foreign enclave unattached to any specific Israelite tribe. However, beyond the strategic position of Jerusalem, with towering heights and steep valleys, Mount Moriah (Gen. 22:1–19)—the location of the future Temple Mount (2 Chron. 3:1)—would have been a leading factor in David’s decision to transfer his influence from Hebron and make Jerusalem his royal seat of power. Afterward, David purchased a threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam. 24) and set up an altar to the Lord where the Temple of Solomon (2 Chron. 3:1) would one day dominate the heights of Mount Moriah.

Covenant-keeping Faithfulness of God

Following the conquest of Jerusalem, King David radically transformed it from an ancient Canaanite–Jebusite capital city to an Israelite city to which all the tribes would one day regularly converge to worship the Lord God of Israel during the Feasts (i.e. Deut. 16:16, Luke 2:41–47).

The City of David was to be the administrative center of royal rule for the united monarchy, but would also serve as the spiritual epicenter where the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would place His name forever and His *shekinah* glory would fill the Temple (1 Kings 8:10).

Jerusalem would represent the faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God of Israel (Gen. 15, Ps. 105) who dwelled among His people and empowered His chosen dynasty of vice-regents who ruled over His nation, Israel (2 Sam. 7).

Jerusalem is also described by another name, Zion (2 Sam. 5:7), which appears 176 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and seven times in the Writings of the Apostles (NT). The name became used to describe the central mountain of worship in Jerusalem, Mount Zion

David's Harp decorates the entrance of the City of David.



(2 Kings 19:31; Ps. 2:6). In the 19th century, the word Zion was used to describe the Jewish movement—Zionism, which maintained the collective goal of regathering the Jewish people back to their ancestral homeland as the prophets foretold (i.e. Isa. 11:12, Ezek. 36)—and self-determination.

The Jebusite city of Jerusalem, which David encountered in the 10th century BC, was not a large city. Scholars have mapped out its boundaries as occupying a space of 50 dunams (12.35 acres). During David's lifetime, the city largely covered the same area as the Jebusite city. However, Jerusalem's municipal size and population would explode in the time of Solomon and further expand during the divided kingdom. Under Herod the Great, Jerusalem would reach its zenith in size, wealth and stature.

David's Palace

After his conquest of Jerusalem, King David's strength was noticed by Phoenician King Hiram who honored David with the construction of a palace. *"Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house"* (1 Chron. 14:1). David's response was to give praise to the Lord for establishing him as king over Israel and that the kingdom had been exalted *"for the sake of His people Israel"* (1 Chron. 14:2b).


The location of David's palace is hinted at in 2 Samuel 5:17: *"Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and **went down** to the stronghold"* (emphasis added). It appears David was in his new palace at the time of the Philistine attack, and thus was forced to go down to the protection of the fortress. Mazar concludes: "It follows that the city fortress stood on a spot at a lower elevation than the palace. Since it can be reasonably assumed that this fortress had been built at the northern edge of the Canaanite city—the highest point of the walled city, commanding over its surroundings—the new palace, consequently, must have been built just to the outside of the city wall."

Ruins believed to be part of King David's palace



Hezekiah's Tunnel





The discovery of King David's palace at the excavations of the City of David has been confirmed by many of the top archaeologists in Israel, the evidence documented carefully with the location and size of the building, including the apparent wealth and structural similarity to other palaces during David's era. Tourists can visit the City of David and feast their eyes upon the palace built by artisans and workers of Phoenician King Hiram as the Bible relates.

Archaeological Activities

The City of David has been a hive of archaeological activity for over a century. Such notables vary from the 1838 explorations of American Bible scholar Edward Robinson to Great Britain's General Sir Charles Warren's 1867 discovery of "Warren's Shaft." In 1880, the Siloam inscription was discovered, documenting how two groups of tunnellers, during King Hezekiah's reign, hacked through stone with chisels to bring water from the Gihon Spring into the city, unbeknownst to the Assyrians.

Other explorations have included the 1899 Gihon Spring channel discovery, the 1923–1925 Macalister and Duncan expedition,

Kathleen Kenyon's 1974 digs, Eilat Mazar's discoveries in the mid-2000s and more. Two of the most incredible discoveries that help us understand the location's history have been Hezekiah's Tunnel (2 Kings 20:20), which flows into the Pool of Siloam (rediscovered in 2004), and the Pilgrims' Way, which winds upward from Siloam to the Temple Mount.

Waterworks of David's City

The waterworks of the City of David are fascinating and reveal to us how the Jebusite–Israelite city functioned by obtaining and preserving water, even during threat of siege and war. Ancient Jerusalem scholar, Hillel Geva, gives an excellent description of the lifesaving source of water: "Ancient Jerusalem's only perennial source of water is in a cave located in the Kidron Valley, beyond the bounds of the fortified city. The Gihon does not maintain constant flow, but is a syphon-type



karst spring, fed by groundwater that gushes intermittently through cracks in the cave floor. Water from the Gihon could be drawn from either the spring cave or a small pool cut in the bedrock close to it.”

In order to contain, store and protect the Gihon’s waters, three subterranean supply systems were constructed at different times. The first was a tunnel, known as “Warrens Shaft,” which allowed for the residents of ancient Jerusalem to access water from the Gihon Spring. The second was the Siloam Channel, “which directed water along the base of the eastern slope of the City of David, part of the way as a rock-cut tunnel, and part of the way as an exposed channel outside the wall, watering nearby agricultural plots in the Kidron Valley through special outlets.”

**The Pool of Siloam at the end
of Hezekiah’s Tunnel**



The third and most sophisticated supply system was Hezekiah’s Tunnel, 533 meters (1,749 ft.) in length. Built with the looming threat of Assyria, Hezekiah had the tunnel receive “the water gushing from the spring and diverted it to the only place...where large reservoirs could be built. Collection of the water in these pools made it possible to regulate the water supply independently of the intermittent flow of the spring.” This way Hezekiah provided his city with access to water without the Assyrian army understanding what was being done.

The most famous of the pools to which Hezekiah’s Tunnel diverted water was the Pool of Siloam, the location where Jesus (Yeshua) healed the blind man (John 9:7–11). This pool also functioned as a place for Jewish ritual immersion of pilgrims who planned to ascend to the Temple via the Pilgrims’ Way. This ritual immersion, from which Christianity adopted baptism, was a purification rite that required total immersion of the body and was

performed in preparation for prayer and the offering of sacrifices (Gen. 35:2, Exod. 19:10). Even the priests would immerse through repeated ritual bathing in baths called *mikva'ot* (Lev. 16:4–24).

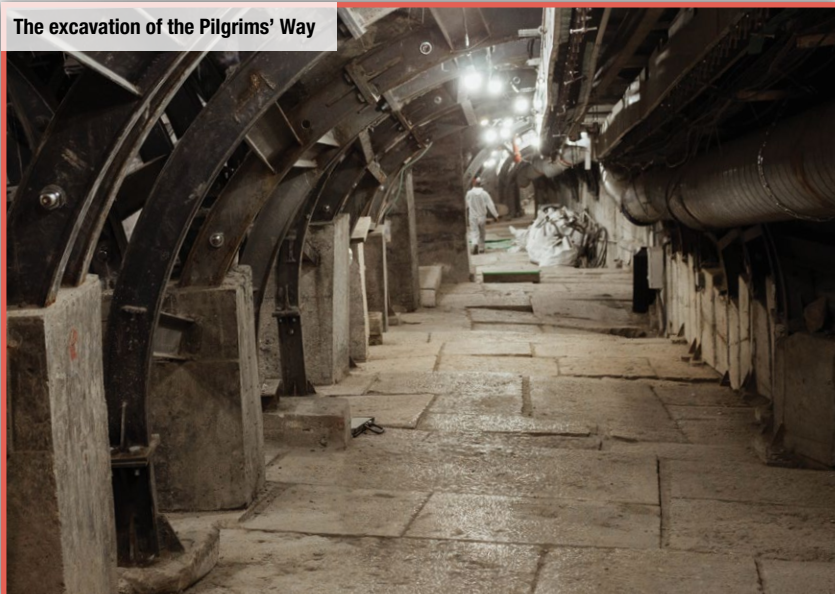
The Pool of Siloam and the Gihon Spring also grew in prominence for their role in the dedication of King Solomon (1 Kings 1:33, 38, 45) and later represented themes such as the Messianic age and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In Herod's time, the Pilgrims' Way was a highway leading up from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple Mount above for hundreds of thousands of pilgrims.

Today, archaeologists have uncovered over one-third of the length of the Pilgrims' Way. Two millennia ago, the Pilgrims' Way was an open aired highway, but is now a tunnel with a stone ceiling supported by reinforced steel pillars to preserve the homes and modern street 18.3 meters (60 ft.) above.

A Glimpse into the Future

Recently, Bridges for Peace leaders visited the City of David and were taken through the Pilgrims' Way. We marveled as we walked upon the 2,000-year-old flagstones, the same ones Jesus (Yeshua), His disciples and countless other Jews would have traveled on as they made their way up from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple.

The excavation of the Pilgrims' Way



However, what gripped our attention most was when our City of David guide pointed out one startling reality: The Pilgrims' Way is not just some archaeological excavation to gaze at for historical posterity's sake, but it serves a practical and spiritual function for the future. Our guide powerfully stated that when the Messiah King comes to rule in Jerusalem, as foretold by the prophet Zechariah in chapter 14, the nations will be expected to gather in Jerusalem and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. For this to happen, it will be imperative that the Pilgrims' Way and the Pool of Siloam are operational to welcome the nations. "This is for all of us!" he declared as he let that settle into our minds. Wow!

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- Scripture is taken from the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.

TERMINOLOGY:

Many of our readers are seasoned supporters of Israel while others are just beginning to understand the importance of standing with God's chosen nation; some prefer the use of Hebrew names and terms, while others are comfortable with more traditional Christian terminology. Because we want to show respect to all of our readers while providing an enjoyable educational experience, we are making every effort to use both terms whenever possible. The following are some of the most common examples:

- Jesus (Yeshua)
- *Tanakh* (Old Testament or OT) – *Tanakh* is an acronym used in Judaism which stands for *Torah*, *Neviim* or Prophets and *Ketuvim* or Writings.
- Writings of the Apostles (New Testament or NT)
- *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.)

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