

## City of David

The symbol for David's city is the harp which David played. This is the city of kings. Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness, met Abraham here in Genesis 14. Later, the city's Jebusite king attacked the Israelites in the land (Joshua 10:1-4). David conquered this Jebusite stronghold and made it Israel's capital. The city of Melchizedek ultimately became the City of David and the kings of Judah.



Beneath the City of David lies King Hezekiah's 2700 year-old water tunnel. Hezekiah dug the tunnel before an Assyrian siege.

And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, he planned with his officers and mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city. "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?"

2 Chronicles 32:2, 4

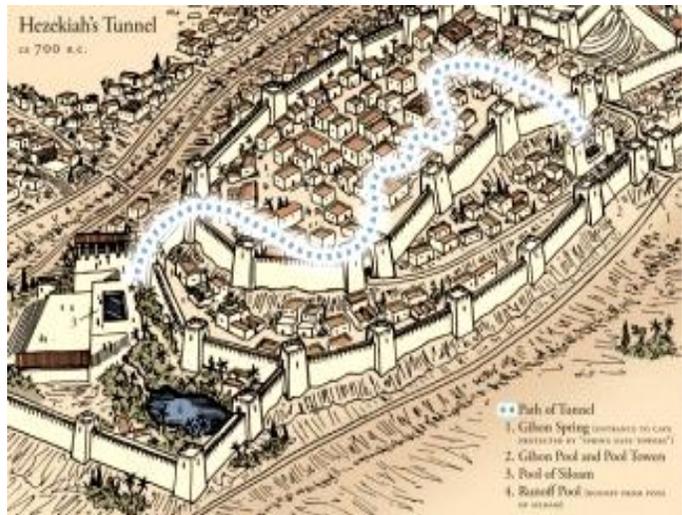
King Hezekiah knew that the mountainous city of Jerusalem was naturally defensible from all sides. But, it suffered from a lack of fresh water. During the upcoming siege led by the Assyrian King Sennacherib, Jerusalem would need water from the Gihon Spring outside the city walls. Hezekiah blocked the spring and diverted the water through a tunnel into the Pool of Siloam inside the walls (2 Kings 20:20). An earlier Canaanite tunnel led from the Gihon Spring into the city, but it was only a 20 foot-deep ditch.

### **Water brings life inside a city.**

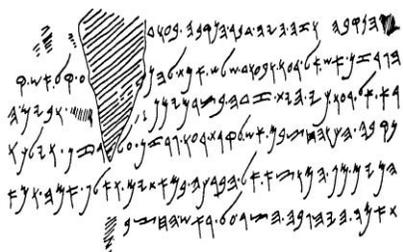
Hezekiah's Tunnel is a 1750 foot-long tunnel under the City of David bringing life-giving water inside the walls. Engineers created a downhill gradient to convey water from the springs to the Pool of Siloam. It is one of the world's few intact, 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE structures that visitors can use.

The tunnel has been carbon dated both by the Siloam Inscription written on its wall, and by the original plaster inside the tunnel.

The tunnel was dug by two teams which began at opposite ends. It takes a serpentine course because the teams were trying to meet deep underground. They made course corrections based on the sounds being transmitted through the overhead rock. Hammerers tapped on the solid limestone above them, directing them where to chisel.



Route of Hezekiah's Tunnel



They inscribed the place where they met with the Siloam Inscription, named for the Pool of Siloam. At the left is the Siloam Inscription that was cut into the rock of Hezekiah's Tunnel. It was discovered by a youth wading in the water, and is the oldest lengthy Hebrew inscription ever found in Jerusalem. It is written in Paleo-Hebrew, the alphabet in use at the time of Hezekiah. The inscription was broken in 1891 when it was chiseled from the wall in an attempt to steal it. Translated into English, it reads:

And this is the history of the digging. When the pickaxes one against the other... And when there were only three cubits more to cut through, the men were heard calling from one side to the other; [for] there was a zedah [a through passage] in the rock, on the right and on the left. And on the day of the piercing the workmen struck each to meet the other, pickax against pickax. And there flowed the waters from the spring to the pool for a space of 200 cubits. And 100 cubits was the height over the head of the workmen.

The Siloam Inscription is housed in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum in Turkey. Copies are in museums in Paris, London, Berlin, and Jerusalem. Turkey has refused to return the artifact to Israel, stating that the Siloam Inscription was the Imperial Ottoman Property of the Turkish Republic.

## Pool of Siloam

**T**he Pool of Siloam is the Pool of Shiloach in Isaiah 8:6. Shiloach means Sent. This is the pool of Those Who Are Sent. A tower collapsed near the Pool of Siloam, killing people who came to purify themselves in a *mikveh* or ritual bath before going to the Temple. Yeshua asked, “Those eighteen on whom the Tower of Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?” (Luke 13:4)

Queen Helene of Constantinople declared the small Byzantine pool at the exit of Hezekiah’s Tunnel to be the Pool of Siloam. In her holy quest to enshrine biblical sites in the third century, she entombed the most important historical places with churches and monuments. But she walked right past Siloam.



Queen Helene’s Pool of Siloam

In 2004, city workers accidentally discovered the real Pool of Siloam less than 70 yards away while digging a drainage channel. Under the newly-found pool is an earlier plastered pool. Coins found there date from 104 to 76 BCE, and 66 to 70 CE. In 2007, archaeologists discovered the ascent stairs that led up to the Temple from the Pool of Siloam.

## There was a bright patch of green.

For centuries, in late Jerusalem summers when everything was dry, one green patch was mysteriously moist and lush while everything around it was brown. Here figs, pomegranates, olives, and other fruits happily flourished after other plants had withered. Beneath the soil, hidden from sight, was the Pool of Siloam sustaining the plants with its life-giving water. The Pool of Siloam was still there, holding the rains and water from the Gihon Spring deep underground.