

50 Hezekiah’s tunnel

Names (also known as)

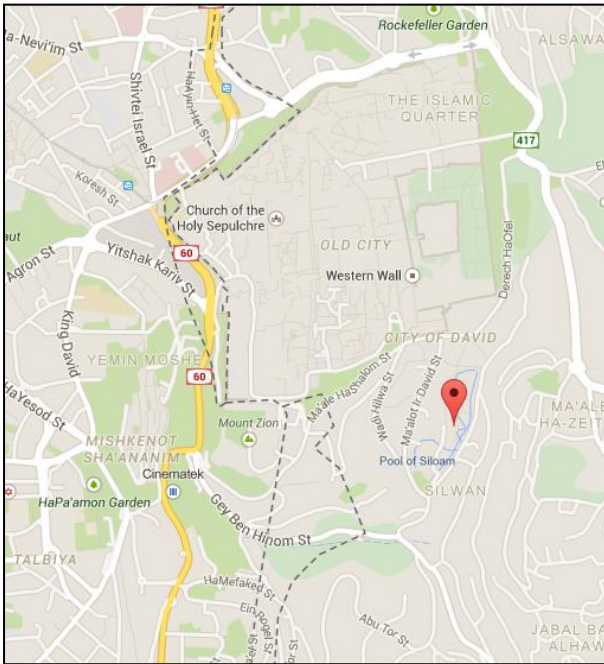
Siloam tunnel



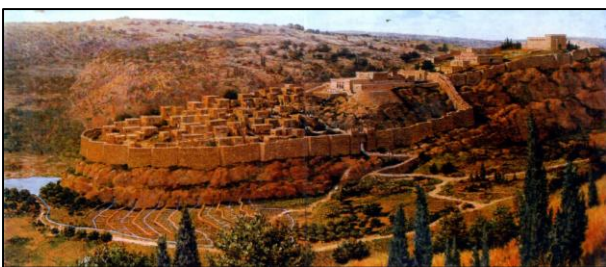
Etymology

Hezekiah’s name means “strengthened of Yah”.

Location/Description



Hezekiah’s tunnel is located in the lower section of the old City of David (see picture below) which is being excavated at present.



Scriptural references

Old Testament

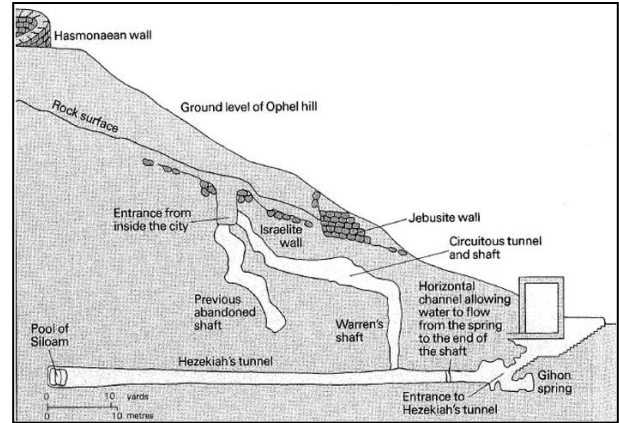
2 Chron. 32:30; 2 Kings 20:20; Isa. 22:11; John 9:7-11.

Famous characters

Hezekiah, Sennacherib
Isaiah
Christ

Brief history

One of king Hezekiah’s major accomplishments was the construction of this tunnel, or conduit that still bears his name. “He made the pool and the conduit, and brought water into the city” (2 Kings 20:20).



He was able to ensure a steady supply of fresh water within the city walls of Jerusalem through this tunnel when the city was under siege by the Assyrian ruler Sennacherib in approximately 701 BC thus saving the city from almost certain destruction. In Chronicles we are told that “it was Hezekiah who stopped the upper waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David” (2 Chron. 32:20).



The intermittent spring of Gihon, Jerusalem’s most ancient water supply, was located below the steep eastern hill (Ophel) in the deep Kidron Valley. It was thus exposed to enemy use or misuse. Hezekiah completely covered over this ancient spring and diverted it through a conduit 1,777 feet (542 metres) long and hewn out of solid rock into a reservoir within the city walls. Tunnels at Megiddo and Gezer are similar to this amazing engineering feat of Hezekiah’s workmen. Hezekiah’s tunnel still brings water to the pool of Siloam (below).

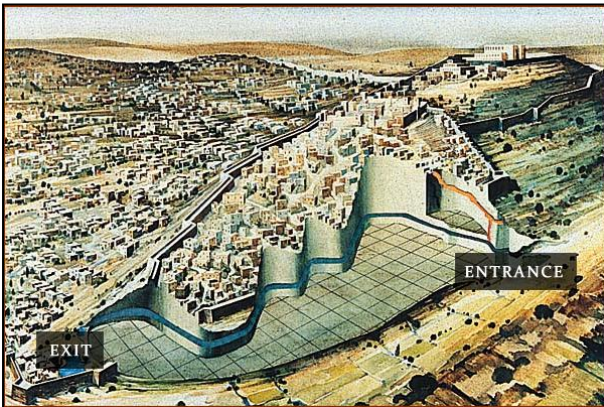
In addition to the tunnel, Hezekiah built a larger reservoir, called the pool of Siloam. The

pool measures about 20 x 30 feet. In Jesus’ day the blind man who was healed was directed to go and wash in this pool (John 9:7-11 – see Pool of Siloam notes).



The Construction

Hezekiah's tunnel together with the 6th century BC tunnel of Eupalios in Greece are considered the greatest works of water engineering technology in the era before Christ. Had it followed a straight line, the length would have been 1070 ft (335m) or 40% shorter.



The inscription on the tunnel wall

Hezekiah's tunnel was made famous by its remarkable inscription, discovered accidentally in 1880 by a boy wading in the pool. The six line memorial, beautifully cut on the wall of the conduit in classical Hebrew characters is about 6 metres (9 ft) from the Siloam end of the aquaduct.

The inscription is translated: “The boring through is completed. Now this is the story of the boring through. While the workmen were still lifting pick to pick each toward his neighbour and while 3 cubits remained to be cut through, each heard the voice of the other who called his neighbour, since there was a crevice in the rock on the right side. And on the day of the boring through the stone cutters struck, each to meet his fellow pick to pick;

and there flowed the waters to the pool for 1200 cubits and 100 cubits was the height of the rock above the heads of the stone cutters.”

The plaque is today housed in the Istanbul Museum.



Sources:

bibleplaces.com
New Unger's Bible Dictionary
NIV Archaeological Study Bible

(Compiler – Darren Peeler)