

City of David

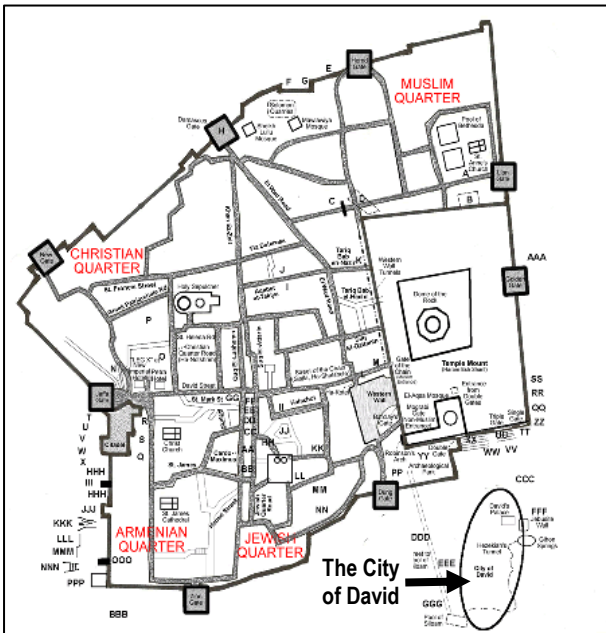
Names (also known as)

There are two places called by the name ‘City of David’ in Scripture; namely, Bethlehem where David was born (see N.T. references below); and a core section in the city of Jerusalem (the focus of this article) originally called Salem (Gen. 14:18) and then, in the days of David, Jebus (1 Chron. 11:5).

Etymology

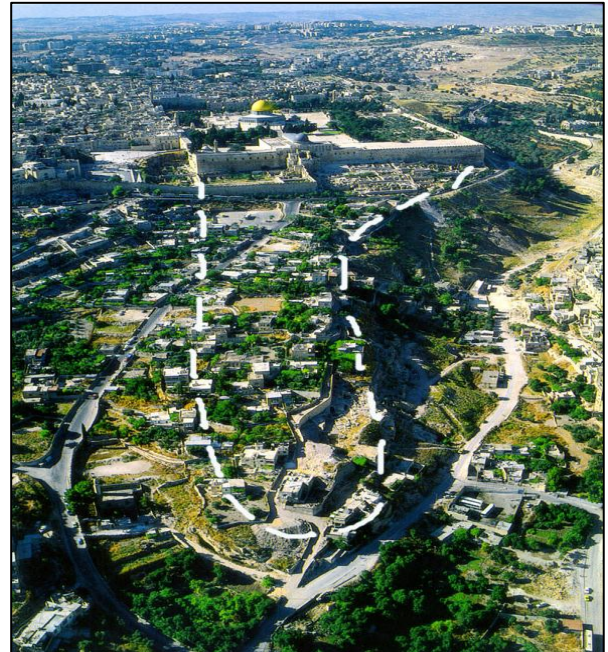
The name David means ‘Beloved’ – From a root meaning ‘loving’.

Location/Description



The 3,000 year old city established by King David is located on a low ridge above the Gihon spring, southeast of the Temple Mount. The location of this ancient core of Jerusalem is separate from the Temple Mount and the northern part of Jerusalem. This earlier part of the city of Jerusalem was forgotten after three millenniums of successive constructions and destructions. Recent excavations revealed sections of David’s palace, fortifications, the city’s water supply and many other interesting remains from its time as a Canaanite city and later an Israelite city. It is now an Israeli settlement and park.

This archaeological park is one of Israel’s most important historical landmarks and is on the itinerary of all visitors to Israel with an interest in Biblical history.



The modern archaeological park of the "City of David" is accessible through the street of Ma'lot Ir David (Hebrew - "City of David Ascent"). The corner of the street is just a few dozen metres east of the Dung Gate, near the southern side of the Temple Mount.



Scriptural references

Old Testament

1 Chron. 11:5 – **And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David.**

2 Sam. 5:9 – **So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.**

1 Chron. 15:1 – **And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.**

2 Chron. 5:2 – **Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.**

2 Chron. 5:7 – **And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.**

Neh. 12:37 – **And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward.**

The previous reference shows that the city of David slopes down from the upper city.

New Testament

Bethlehem where both David and Christ were born is also called the city of David.

Luke 2:4 – **And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David).**

Luke 2:11 – **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.**

Famous characters

David and Solomon and subsequent kings of Judah in David's line until 586 BC. Its most important visitor was the Lord Jesus Christ whose city this place will become in the future – **“...Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King”** (Matt. 5:35; see also Ps. 48:2).

Brief history

When Israel entered the land of Canaan under Joshua around 1570 BC, the city once known as Salem in the days of Melchizedek, was then called Jerusalem (Judges 1:7-8). It was ceded by the tribe of Judah to the tribe of Benjamin because it was in the portion of the land granted to Benjamin, but the Benjamites failed to secure the city and it was recaptured by the remaining Jebusites (Judges 1:21).

King David finally captured the city around 1,000 BC after it had been inhabited by

Jebusites for 500 years. One of David's soldiers, Joab (his nephew) entered into the city of Jebus through the gutter, most likely the shaft of the Gihon spring (2 Samuel 5:6-9) and opened the gates of the city for David's men to enter and capture it.

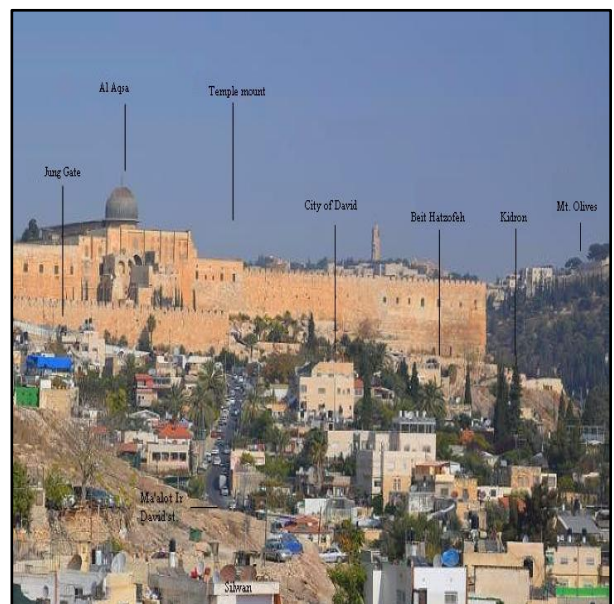


Warren's Shaft, which was discovered in 1867 by Charles Warren, is thought to be the shaft through which King David conquered Mount Zion from the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:6–10).

Hence, David took from the Jebusites the fortress of Mount Zion. He “dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David” (1 Chronicles 11:7).

This is the name afterwards given to the castle and royal palace on Mount Zion, as distinguished from Jerusalem generally (1 Kings 3:1; 8:1).

It is on the southwest side of Jerusalem, opposite the Temple Mount, with which it was connected by a bridge over the Tyropoeon Valley.



The exact location of the City of David was lost for centuries after the total Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when surviving Jews were banned from Jerusalem.

The Gihon spring is mentioned in the event of the anointing of David's son, Solomon, in parallel to the attempt of Adonijah to replace David. The spring is located below the palace, as David commands Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet to "bring him down" to the spring (1 Kings 1:33-34,39) – **"The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon...And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon."**

King Solomon enlarged the city of Jerusalem. He built the first temple on top of Mt. Moriah which is located to the north of the city of David. Solomon built the royal palace in the Ophel, between the temple mount and the city of David, and connected these two sections within the new walls. The city subsequently expanded to the north and west. After Solomon's reign, the Kingdom of Israel split in the early reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam. Jerusalem became the capital city of the southern kingdom of Judah.

After the death of the Assyrian king Sargon II (705 B.C.), king Hezekiah of Judah (716-687 BC), son of Ahaz who made an alliance with Assyria to help him against Israel and Syria, mutinied against the Assyrians and attempted to free Judah from foreign dominion. Hezekiah, being aware of the coming Assyrian invasion, set about fortifying Jerusalem and the major cities of Judah.

Among other works, he constructed a tunnel from the Gihon spring to the pool of Siloam, in order to prevent the waters of Gihon to be used by the enemy (2 Chron. 32:2-4) – **"And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who**

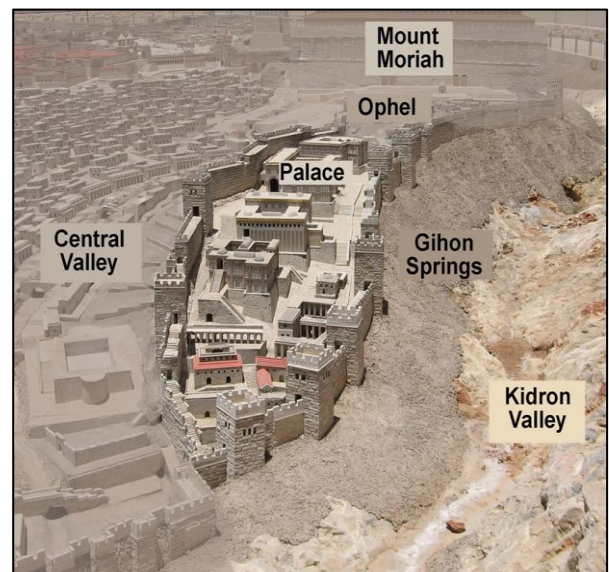
stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?"

The tunnel brought the waters of the spring inside the walls of the city of David rather than flowing out into the brook Kidron (2 Chron. 32:30) – **"This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David."**

The tunnel project is also summarized in Hezekiah's Biblical 'obituary' (2 Kings 20:20) – **"And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"**



The excavations in the City of David have uncovered some huge stones that are thought to be the foundations of David's palace.



An artist's impression of the City of David at the height of David's reign in Jerusalem.

Archaeological Discoveries

One of the amazing Biblical discoveries of recent times were two Bullae (clay seals) dated to the beginning of the 6th century BC, bearing the name "Gedaliah ben Pashur" and "Yehuchal ben Shelemayahu." Both officials are named in Scripture in conjunction with Jeremiah's prophecy (Jer. 38:1) – **"Then... Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah...heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people..."** This is the first time two bullas bearing the names found in a single Bible verse have been discovered in one place.



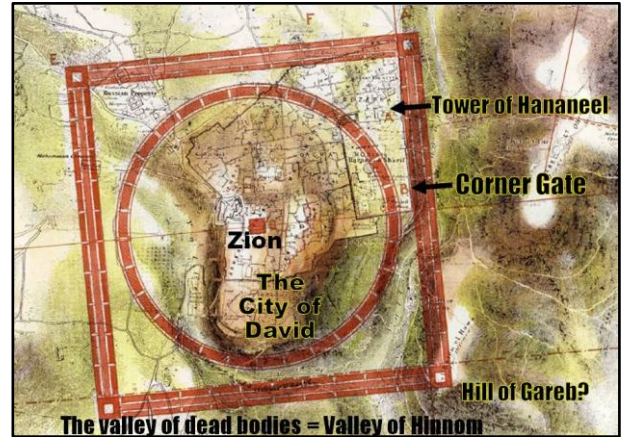
Bulla of Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe

Scriptural importance

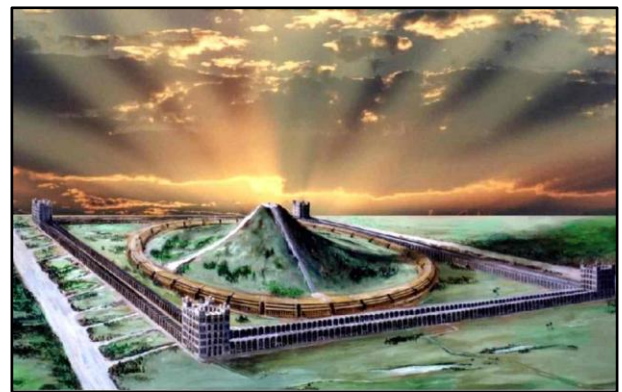
David brought the Ark of the Covenant to the City of David (2 Sam. 6) and it rested there in the Tabernacle (*ohel* - a round tent) of David (1 Chron. 15:1) until placed by Solomon in the Temple he constructed after David's death (2 Chron. 5:5-7).

The temple Solomon constructed was built on the site of the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chron. 3:1). This was north of the city of David.

However, the future temple described in great detail in the Prophecy of Ezekiel will encompass within its walls the City of David. The positioning of the Temple of Ezekiel's prophecy is provided in Jer. 31:38-40 and Zech. 14:10 and is shown below on a map of the local terrain.



This magnificent building will be “a house of prayer for all nations” (Isa. 56:7) and is called “the tabernacle of David” in Isa. 16:5. It will be the centre of the world-wide government of Christ for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:4-6) and people of all nations will come to worship and sacrifice in it (Isa. 2:1-3; Mic. 4:1-2). So, the promise to Mary that her son Jesus would sit on the throne of his father David will come to pass in the same place (Luke 1:31-33).



Other sources of information

BibleWalks.com
Wikipedia

(Compilers – Ron and Judy Leadbetter)