



The Half Shekel Journal by Ed Rice
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The model before us depicted the traditional location and our awe at being here could not be diminished no matter which location proves correct. The girders and beams holding up the city above and spanning the area of the large vault area captivated me as we followed Ronnie down the stairs to view a section of Herod's retaining wall. One stone at eye



Vault in the Great Bridge

One of the vaults supporting the bridge. The foundations of the bridge were laid on the ruins of structures from the second temple period. These remains dictated the irregular plan of the windows foundations.

level above the foundation was 35 feet long, 6 feet high and 8 foot deep. Its weight was estimated at 400 tons and imagining how Herod had it

moved from the stone quarry to this location continues to capture imaginations. With Ryan King standing at one end and Joshua Jones at the other the photo's of this rock could not capture its immensity. Although we viewed the video portraying a possible solution of Herod's rock positioning adventures, this one still boggled all imaginations of modern man.

Standing at the entrance gate to the temple mount was even more moving. Hearing the explanations of those who explored the caves and passages under the temple mount area, and imagining the finds and furnishings that they reported created a new regard for the Muslims who were pouring these finds full of concrete from their perch above. As much as being this close to the original temple location induced awe,



Entrance Gate To The Temple Mount
Warren's Gate is one of the four western wall entrance gates to the temple mount from the second temple period. During the early Muslim period 4495-4859 (735-1099) the internal space of the gate passage served as the main Synagogue of the Jews in Jerusalem. The Synagogue was located here because of its proximity to the holy of holies. It was named "the cave" because of its location under the temple mount. Today the whole passage functions as a large cistern serving the visitors to the temple mount. The gate is named after Charles Warren who discovered it in 5627/1867.

the diabolical hatred from those opposed to Jehovah God produced a wonder. As Christians we know the last chapter of this great conflict. The Lord Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, which man had rejected, pierced and crucified will return in power and great glory to be King of kings and Lord of lords. (1Thes5:1-5)

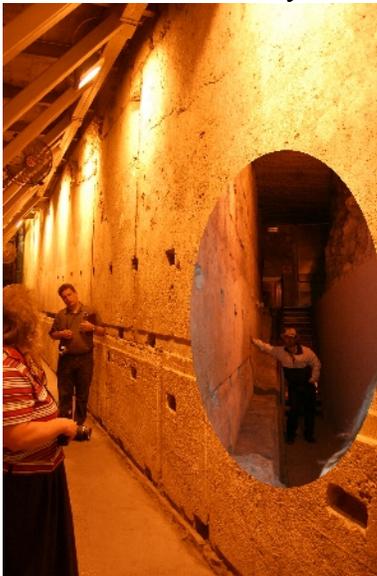
We passed the area just outside the Holy of Holies with reverence. A multitude of worshipers were seated near the wall here, silently praying or reading. Some had headsets on and were listening to sermons or Torah readings, some were in small rooms off of the main corridor, all were reverent, expecting that they were here as close as they might ever be to the Holy of Holies, or Kodesh Hakodeshim, and the very 'shekina' cloud presence of Jehovah God. Christians know that one day the veil

Western Wall Tunnel

A tunnel exposing the entire length of the Western Wall this excavation passes through the medieval structures built adjoining the wall. These structures were built in order to support the row of Moslem buildings which form the western facade of the temple mount enclosure above us.

outside of that Holy of Holies was rent in twain from the top to the bottom and access was given to 'whosoever will' to enter into that holiest of all places, the very presence and throne room of Jehovah God.

We passed the very narrow passages that exposed the whole northern section of the western wall. We walked over glass coverings that exposed great depths of openings below and we peered upward at the stacks of Herod's rocks above. All 24 of us stood in one huge cistern. There were gasps and grunts as we squeezed through tight passages and then made our way up the stairs past a Herodian street to the exposed streets above. The sun was bright. The late afternoon day was beautiful.



The soldiers we passed in the streets were smiling, the children laughing, and we headed for what I think was the Damascus gate where we found Danny waiting with the bus. This day, which began with our first stand on the Mount of Olives, a tour of the city of David and all parts of the temple mount that could be accessed, and ended in the tunnels of the western wall, was overpowering.

We were exhausted while partaking of the stupendous supper back at the Moriah Classic. We mixed our Kosher meal with timid conversations with our longtime friends, the Picketts and the Carpenters. The things we had seen and experienced this day were beyond absorption. Attempts to describe thoughts to friends was swallowed by silent contemplation. In our room Bev and I read some Scriptures and surrounded our day in prayer before we fell into exhausted slumber. Our last day in Israel was looming before us and we both awoke at dawn to greet it.

