



## The Half Shekel Journals of 2022 by Pastor Ed Rice #11 Thur 3 Nov The Arch, Southern Steps, City of David

We left the Israel Museum took a short bus ride and came to the Archaeological Park. Our guide Joe pointed down to a rubble of rocks beside a small clearing of pavement (the Bible word pavement has no asphalt attached to it, it is an arrangement of stone in a road walkway or courtyard, or even an arrangement of floor tiles in a mosaic). This pavement was obviously very old and the rubble of stones were the remains of “Robinson’s Arch“, named after American researcher Edward Robinson, who discovered it in 1838. A series of archaeological digs removed 20 feet of rubble that buried the pavement, and we saw the rubble of the fallen stones that accompanied the fallen arch.



Recall the archaeological rule, 10% find and 90% imagination, well this one might reverse those numbers. Even the upper corner stone of the temple wall was pulled from the rubble, and it had markings of where the shofar would rest as it announced the sunset opening of the Sabbath Day. Excavations of 1968–1977 showed that the arch originally reached over the paved street below, and connected to a very large vaulted stairway which led people into the

temple area from the street below. There was pressure a foot to make this south west corner of the temple wall another prayer plaza, but that would require the removal of the aged pavement, and the rock rubble that gave evidence to the fallen arch and stairways. Instead it was made an Archaeological Park, where these findings can be viewed. Praise the Lord, and imagine the huge stairway and arching bridge into the southwest corner of the temple area.

We left the archaeological archway and sat on the southern steps of the temple. In 1967 archaeologists excavated an enormous flight of steps that led up to the southern entry of the temple. They lead to the Huldah gates, named after the prophetess who clarified prophecy for a young King Josiah as detailed in 2Kings 22:14. Prophetess Huldah was “keeper of the wardrobe,” dwelt in Jerusalem in the college, and was entombed right near here.



The southern steps are called the “Rabbis Stairs,” because rabbis taught their disciples on the steps. The expansive width of the steps made plenty of space for congregating. This was the main temple entry from the city of David, as well as the western city area,

where most of the people lived. On the steps Gamaliel taught a disciple named Saul; “*I (Paul) am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day*” (Acts.22:3).

Certainly the Rabbi, of all rabbis, readily taught here on these very steps. This is where The Holy Bible touches archaeologist's shovels to put Jesus on this very spot. It is reported that the famous astronaut Neil Armstrong said, “Standing here on the very place that my Lord stood, is more important to me than standing on the moon.”<sup>1</sup>

Multitudes would come up the pilgrims road from the massive mikvah at the Pool of



Salome in the lower part of the city of David. They would sing the ascension psalms, Psalms 120–134, as they came up. There would be one way entryways to the temple for the pilgrims who just came from their ritual bath in the many purification mikvahs. As they entered the temple, they were not to touch, or be touched by, anyone after leaving the ritual bath.

These steps were a very special place to

sit and listen to a teacher. Pastor Charlie spoke again about how special it was to walk where Jesus walked, and worshiped here on the Southern Steps where he taught. We sat on the steps, listening to Pastor Charlie show again, in our minds eye, our Lord Jesus Christ teaching here on the Southern Steps of the Temple. We enjoyed a half hour of picture taking and wonder on



these 1,990 year old steps before we made our way down toward the old City of David, where we would explore Hezekiah's water tunnel.

As we made our way through the crowd it was hard to miss a couple of Bar Mitzvahs going on, in the entryway into the City of David area. A Jewish boy, reaching age 13, is celebrated into manhood, and is now ready to observe religious precepts and take part in public worship. The celebrations

1 Rice, Edward, “Journaling a Preachers Pilgrimage to Israel”, Volume XXIV, Day 8, 3 Feb 2009, The Southern Steps, Page 47-49.

were invigorating, full of Jewish singing and dancing, food and speeches and food, lots of Jewish food. We slowly made our way through the celebrating masses and came to the City of David's 3-D theater.

The city of David is one of the most excavated archaeological sites in the country. Our Guide Joe got pretty excited about our visit here, and why wouldn't he; Palestinian demagogues decry all such excavations because they deny, incredibly, that the Jews have any historical connection to the land of Israel. These infidels even deny the very existence of King David! Ergo, they hinder and prohibit as much Israeli excavation as possible, even using threats of violence from Hamas and the Palestinian authority.



Joe was animated as he described archaeological discoveries by Kathleen Kenyon (1906–1978), called one of the most influential archaeologists of the 20th century, and Eliat Mazar (1956–2021) one of Israel's top historians and archaeologists. With her Bible open Eliat surmised “Is this the palace of King David?”, and her surmisings are proving valid.

Joe went on for a time about beautifully crafted seals called “bullae” found in the city of David. These small round pieces of

clay, used to seal a scrolled document, were formed off of the signet ring of an author.

When the Babylonians came and burned the city of David, and all Jerusalem, these small clay seals were “fired”, like ceramics, and left completely intact in the ashes.

The bullae found in and around what Eliat called David's palace indicated that this was a royal governmental area of the kingdom of Judah. A seal was found with the name Gedaliah, son of Pashur, and another Jucal, son of Shelemiah<sup>2</sup>, which corresponds to Jeremiah 38.



2 See <https://www.michaelrydelnik.org/what-a-2600-year-old-clay-seal-has-to-do-with-us/> , accessed 2/9/2023.

*Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, 2 Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.(Jer.38:1-2)*

Another seal with words “belonging to Nathan – Melech, servant of the king” corresponds to 2Kings 23:11. “*And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of*



*Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.”* This was under the rein and reforms of Judah's King Josiah, who reigned from 640-610 BC. Excavations continue in the city of David, and archaeological shovels prove skeptics wrong and the Holy Bible right.

Guide Joe displayed a well-deserved enthusiasm for the 3-D movie about the city of David.<sup>3</sup> The 15 minute 3-D display animated an impressive panoramic view of

the topography of “the strong hold of Zion.” Zion was conquered early on in King David’s rule. The film explicitly depicted 2Sam.5:6–12, and 1Chron.11:4–9, and brought the history of the hill up to the present day.

*And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David. <sup>8</sup> And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David’s soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.*



3 See <https://cityofdauid.org.il/en/product/the-city-of-david-comes-to-life-vr-tour/>, Accessed 2/9/2023

