

What's New in the Ancient City of David?

Read Time: 4 minutes

The book of 2 Samuel, chapter 11 recounts the beginning of the relationship between King David and Bathsheba, who was still the wife of Uriah at the time.

Wouldn't it be fascinating if David had sent a letter to Uriah after he left for battle, so as to provide plausible deniability for Uriah's death, thus permitting David to marry Bathsheba?

And what if that letter—complete with King David's seal—was not only never delivered but, if found today, would be marked in ancient Hebrew with the phrase “Undeliverable: Return to sender”? To which address would it have been returned?

If such a letter were to be discovered, it would be just one of numerous archaeological finds in recent decades which point to the veracity of the biblical account of King David and his connection—along with the Jewish people—to Jerusalem.

Until the City of David was discovered some 150 years ago—with excavations beginning just a few decades ago—people could legitimately claim a lack of proof of King David's existence, thus making the biblical narrative speculative. But the indisputable evidence makes it impossible to refute David's existence with any integrity, casting a cloud of dishonesty on those who would continue to deny his kingship in Jerusalem, the city that became the center of Jewish life for 3,000 years.

The City of David is exactly where King David's palace existed. That's where his letter to Uriah would have been written. And that's where it would have been returned to.

Standing there, while reading the account of his first glance at Bathsheba, you can imagine exactly where that event took place.

In recent decades, archaeological evidence has been extraordinary. Something as mundane as an ancient toilet has allowed scientists to determine what Jerusalem's residents may have eaten while under siege.

City of David discoveries also include the excavation of the Pilgrim's Road, upon which millions of Jewish pilgrims walked as they ascended to the Temple. Some were coming to fulfill their biblical obligation. Others, such as Jesus, came to worship God from all over the land of Israel. There have been remarkable finds all along the Pilgrim's Road, such as first century coins and a bell from the garment of the High Priest. But there's much more.

Recently, I asked the Director of International Affairs for the City of David Ze'ev Orenstein the following question: "What's new in the ancient City of David?"

Apart from the continued excavations of the Pilgrims Road, which is not yet open to the public, Orenstein shared some fascinating ancient discoveries being unveiled in our modern times.

Just prior to our conversation, I had a private tour with an outstanding guide named Shira, who brought to life what was the original Jerusalem. The tour included walking along much of the Pilgrim's Road and seeing the continued excavations taking place.

Orenstein said, in addition to those excavations, there were plans announced during the last weeks of 2022 to excavate the remaining two-thirds of the Pool of Siloam, a significant biblical site to Christians and Jews. The Pool of Siloam sits at the lower foot of the Pilgrim's Road and marks the location where millions would participate in a ritual purification

before ascending about half a mile to the Temple itself.

Christians point to the Pool of Siloam as the site at which—according to John 9—Jesus healed a blind man. Indeed, there's little if anything about the City of David that's not just as significant to Christians as it is to Jews.

Jesus was a first century Jew and literally walked and worshipped in the City of David. Understanding His life and the centrality of the Temple as part of Jewish biblical history is a significant part of understanding the Jewish roots of Christianity.

Miracles are not uncommon in Jerusalem, but some seem to be unbelievable.

Orenstein shared the miraculous way in which the Pilgrim's Road was first discovered, explaining how a modern sewage pipe burst, which required excavations in order to make the necessary repairs.

Affirming the veracity of Jerusalem's biblical history is not just a matter of affirming one's faith, although that is very important. Today, when people don't know the history (or know it and deliberately alter it to fit their own narrative) thousands of years-old evidence from the City of David reveals the historical accuracy.

Denial of biblical history in Jerusalem is particularly egregious because it undermines the faith of billions of Jews and Christians. Unfortunately, it is also a tactic used by anti-Semites, who deny Israel's right to exist and devise and propagate nonsensical rhetoric, mainly that Jews have no history in or connection to Israel in general, particularly Jerusalem. This narrative is often promulgated by Palestinian Arabs, or during United Nations assemblies, or among others who seek to erase the existence of Jewish people from the land that God deeded them.

Regarding the City of David, it is practically possible to play a biblical version of 'Connect the Dots.' There are landmarks and artifacts that point to numerous biblical verses and historical records provided by Josephus and others.

In just a few years, 21st century pilgrims will be able to walk the full length of the Pilgrim's Road, starting at the Pool of Siloam up to the southern steps of the Temple Mount. It puts undeniable proof of the biblical account of King David, and the connection of the Jewish people to Jerusalem, literally at the feet of everyone.

When this happens, it will be the first time in two millennia, since the Romans conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, that this path will be open.

I want to be there and so should you. {eoa}

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