

~GIHON 2 (221)

(Gi'hon) [Bursting Forth, Gushing]

- A spring today called **Ha Gihon** having its fountainhead in a natural cave in the Kidron Valley a short distance East of the upper end of the section of Jerusalem anciently called the City of David.
- And Hezekiah was the one that stopped up the upper source of the waters of **Gihon** and kept them directed straight along down to the west to the City of David, and Hezekiah continued to prove successful in every work of his. (**2 Chronicles 32:30**)
- It was a principal source of water for the city in ancient times, there being only two springs in the vicinity. The name **Gihon** is particularly appropriate for this spring inasmuch as it gushes forth intermittently, as much as four or five times a day following a rainy winter, less frequently in the dry season.
- The spring of **Gihon** is generally believed to have been involved in the method employed by General Joab in penetrating the nearly impregnable Jebusite stronghold at Jerusalem, making possible its capture by David.
- So David said; Anyone striking the Jebusites first, he will become head and prince. And Joab the son of Zeruiah got to go up first, and he came to be head. (**1 Chronicles 11:6**)
- Although the translation of the Hebrew text at;
- So David said on that day; Anyone striking the Jebusites, let him, by means of the water tunnel, make contact with both the lame and the blind, hateful to the soul of David! That is why they say; The blind one and the lame one will not come into the house. (**2 Samuel 5:8**)
- Presents certain problems, the usual rendering indicates the presence of a water tunnel, referred to by David when promoting the attack on the city.
- In **1867 C.E.**, Charles Warren discovered a water channel running back from the cave in which the spring of **Gihon** rises and, after a distance of some 20 meters (66 feet), ending in a pool or reservoir.

- A vertical shaft cut in the rock above this pool extended upward 11 meters (36 feet), and at the top of the shaft there was a place where persons could stand and let down containers by rope to draw water from the pool below.
- A sloping passageway led back nearly 39 meters (128 feet) from the shaft up into the interior of the city. By this means it is believed that the Jebusites maintained access to their water source even when unable to venture outside the city walls because of enemy attack.
- Although the spring of **Gihon** is not directly mentioned in the account, it is suggested that Joab and his men daringly gained entrance to the city through this water tunnel.
- **Gihon** was thereafter the site at which Solomon was anointed king at David's command. The ensuing noisy procession as the people joyously followed Solomon back to the city, while not visible from the spring called En-rogel about 700 meters (2,300 feet) away from Gihon, could easily be heard by presumptuous Adonijah and his guests as they banqueted at En-rogel.
- Eventually Adonijah held a sacrifice of sheep and cattle and fatlings close by the stone of Zohemoth, which is beside En-rogel, and he proceeded to invite all his brothers the king's sons and all the men of Judah the king's servants. (**1 Kings 1:9**)
- And Nathan the prophet and Benaiah and the mighty men and Solomon his brother he did not invite. (**1 Kings 1:10**)
- And the king went on to say to them; Take with you the servants of your lord, and you must make Solomon my son ride upon the she-mule that belongs to me and lead him down to Gihon. (**1 Kings 1:33**)
- And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet must anoint him there as king over Israel, and you must blow the horn and say; Let King Solomon live! (**1 Kings 1:34**)
- And you must come up following him, and he must come in and sit upon my throne, and he himself will be king in place of me, and him I shall have to commission to become leader over Israel and over Judah. (**1 Kings 1:35**)

- At once Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said; Amen! Thus may Yehowah the God of my lord the king say. (**1 Kings 1:36**)
- Just as Yehowah proved to be with my lord the king, so let him prove to be with Solomon, and may he make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David. (**1 Kings 1:37**)
- And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and the Cherethites and the Pelethites proceeded to go down and make Solomon ride upon the she-mule of King David, and then brought him to Gihon. (**1 Kings 1:38**)
- Zadok the priest now took the horn of oil out of the tent and anointed Solomon, and they began to blow the horn, and all the people broke out saying; Let King Solomon live! (**1 Kings 1:39**)
- After that all the people came on up following him, and the people were playing on flutes and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by the noise of them. (**1 Kings 1:40**)
- And Adonijah and all the ones invited that were with him got to hear it, when they themselves had finished eating. When Joab got to hear the sound of the horn, he at once said; What does the noise of the town in an uproar mean? (**1 Kings 1:41**)
- Archaeological excavations also revealed an old surface canal leading from the spring of **Gihon** southward along the slope of the City of David.
- This canal terminated in a pool at the base of the spur on which the ancient city was first located at the spur's southern end, toward the junction of the Tyropoeon Valley with the Kidron Valley.
- The canal was constructed with a minimal decline or rate of fall, resulting in a very gentle flow of water.
- This canal is probably the one referred to by Isaiah's prophecy in the time of King Ahaz, **761-746 B.C.E**, its gently-going waters being contrasted with the violent flood of invading Assyrians that Isaiah foretold would eventually attack Judah.
- And Yehowah proceeded to speak yet further to me, saying;

(Isaiah 8:5)

- For the reason that this people has rejected the waters of the Shiloah that are going gently, and there is exultation over Rezin and the son of Remaliah. (**Isaiah 8:6**)
- Even therefore, look! Yehowah is bringing up against them the mighty and the many waters of the River, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And he will certainly come up over all his streambeds and go over all his banks (**Isaiah 8:7**)
- And move on through Judah. He will actually flood and pass over. Up to the neck he will reach. And the outspreading of his wings must occur to fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel! (**Isaiah 8:8**)
- When Assyrian attack became imminent in Hezekiah's reign, **732 B.C.E.**, King Hezekiah took measures to ensure that Jerusalem's supply of water would not fall into the hands of the enemy.
- When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come with his face set for war against Jerusalem. (**2 Chronicles 32:2**)
- Then he decided with his princes and his mighty men to stop up the waters of the springs that were outside the city, and so they helped him. (**2 Chronicles 32:3**)
- Accordingly many people were collected together, and they went stopping up all the fountains and the torrent that floods through the middle of the land, saying; Why should the kings of Assyria come and actually find a great deal of water? (**2 Chronicles 32:4**)
- However, possibly with reference to another time, the record at;
- And Hezekiah was the one that stopped up the upper source of the waters of **Gihon** and kept them directed straight along down to the west to the City of David, and Hezekiah continued to prove successful in every work of his. (**2 Chronicles 32:30**)
- Shows that he shut off the flow of the **Gihon** through its previous channel and diverted the waters to the western side of the City of David, well within Jerusalem's fortifications.

- Evidence of the manner in which this was accomplished came to light in **1880 C.E.** when an inscription was found carved in the wall of a water tunnel terminating in what is presently known as the Pool of Siloam on the West side of the old City of David.
- The inscription, in early Hebrew script regarded as dating from the **Eighth Century B.C.E.**, described the excavation of the tunnel through solid rock by the two teams of men working toward each other from opposite ends.
- When the tunnel was completely cleared in 1910, it was found to measure some 533 meters (1,749 feet), with an average height of 1.8 meters (6 feet) and at times narrowing to a width of only 0.5 meters (20 inches).
- It seems evident that this remarkable engineering feat is the result of Hezekiah's measures to protect and maintain Jerusalem's water supply originating in the Gihon.
- King Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, extended Jerusalem's fortifications during his reign, **716-662 B.C.E.**, building an outer wall for the City of David to the west of **Gihon**, hence not enclosing the spring of **Gihon** within its limits.
- Finally Hezekiah lay down with his forefathers, and they buried him in the ascent to the burial places of the sons of David, and honor was what all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem rendered to him at his death. And Manasseh his son began to reign in place of him. (**2 Chronicles 32:33**)
- And after this he built an outer wall for the City of David to the west of **Gihon** in the torrent valley and as far as the Fish Gate, and he ran it around to Ophel and proceeded to make it very high. Further, he put chiefs of the military force in all the fortified cities in Judah. (**2 Chronicles 33:14**)