

50a Pool of Siloam

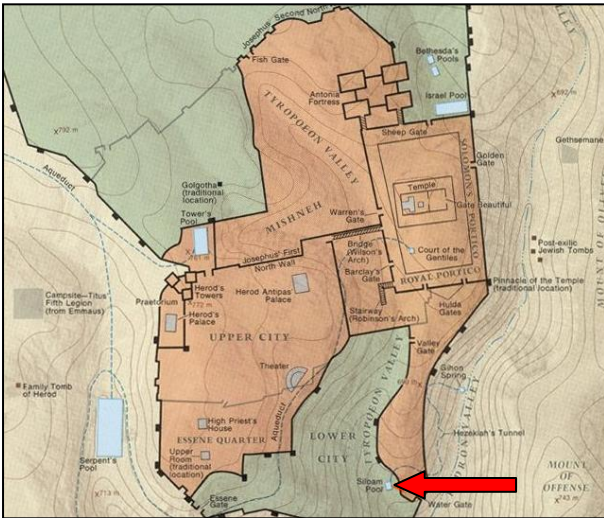
Names (also known as)

Shiloah, Siloah; Hebrew: השילוח בריכת, Breikhat Hashiloah.

Etymology

Strong’s Hebrew - H7975 – “sent”.
Strong’s Greek - G4611 – “sent”.

Location/Description



The Pool of Siloam in the days of Hezekiah

Scriptural references

Old Testament

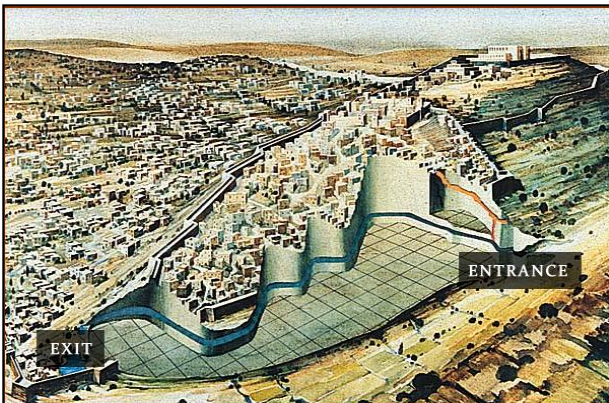
Neh. 3:15; Isa. 8:6

New Testament

John 9:7,11

Famous characters

Hezekiah, Christ, the man born blind



Hezekiah’s tunnel (Entrance) brought water from Gihon to the Pool of Siloam (Exit)

Brief history

Under the imminent threat of siege by Sennacherib the king of Assyria, Hezekiah built a tunnel, or conduit, to divert the waters of the Spring of Gihon to the Pool of Siloam which he constructed at the same time - “He made the pool and the conduit, and brought water into the city” (2 Kings 20:20).



The pool he constructed was a large pool for its time, called Siloam (Shiloah). The pool measured about 20 x 30 feet. In Christ’s day the man born blind was healed washing clay from his eyes in this pool (John 9:7-11).

Hezekiah’s tunnel still brings water to what was once believed to be the pool of Siloam (above and below). This is the pool reached when people walk through the tunnel today.



A substantial remodelling of the above pool, thought to be the Pool of Siloam, was undertaken in the 5th century AD under Byzantine direction and is said to have been built at the behest of Empress Aelia Eudocia. This pool, having been somewhat abandoned and left to ruin, partly survives to the present day, surrounded by a high wall of stones on all sides (except for an arched entrance to

Hezekiah's tunnel, which was only rediscovered in the 19th century).

During a sewer excavation near the present-day pool in the autumn of 2004, Archaeologist Eli Shukron (working in the Israel Antiquities Authority) in association with the "Israel Nature and Parks Authority" uncovered stone steps. It became obvious to prominent archaeologists that these steps were likely to have been part of the Second Temple period pool. Excavations commenced and confirmed the initial supposition and the find was formally announced on 9 August 2005, receiving substantial international media attention.

The pool is less than 65 metres from the edge of the Byzantine reconstruction of a pool previously thought to be the Pool of Siloam. This small pool collected some of the water as it emptied there at the southern end of Hezekiah's tunnel. The water continued on through a channel into the recently discovered Pool of Siloam.



The pool of Siloam featured in the Jerusalem Model today

The lower pool is not perfectly rectangular, but a soft trapezoid. There are three sets of five steps, two leading to a platform, before the bottom is reached, and it has been suggested that the steps were designed to accommodate various water levels. The pool is stone-lined, but underneath, there is evidence of an earlier version that was merely plastered (to help it retain water). Coins found within this plaster date from the time of Alexander Jannaeus (104–76 BC), while a separate collection of

coins, dating from the time of the First Jewish–Roman War (AD 66–70), were also found.

How much of the pool and its surrounding structures were a result of monumental construction by Herod the Great is not yet understood; nor is the relationship of this pool to the earlier one (i.e., why it was built when the earlier pool already existed). A portion of this pool remains unexcavated, as the land above it is owned by a nearby Greek Orthodox church and is occupied by an orchard known as the King's Garden (Neh. 3:15).

As a freshwater reservoir, it would have been a major gathering place for ancient Jews making religious pilgrimages to the city. The Gospel of John suggests that it was probably used as a *mikvah* (ritual bath), although *mikvahs* are usually much smaller in size.

Healing the man born blind

The healing of the man born blind in the record of John 9:1-7 represents the 6th sign of John's Gospel. This miracle was one of seven Christ performed on a Sabbath day (John 9:14). These facts speak volumes in the spiritual realm.

Six is the number of man (Adam and Eve being created on the 6th day – Gen. 1:27,31). The miracle involved Christ spitting on the ground and making clay to anoint the eyes of the blind man. This approach seems to be deliberately modelled on the creation of Adam by the angels who formed him out of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). It was as though Christ was forming a new creature, but his focus was on the blinded eyes. He described his actions as “the works of God” (John 9:3).

The entrance of sin at the fall blinded the human race. Ignorance (blindness) is mankind's greatest problem for he is born with it. Enlightenment (opening of the eyes) is his greatest need. For the whole human race (of which this blind man is a microcosm), universal enlightenment will come at the dawning of the Millennium (the ‘Sabbath’ day – Heb. 4:9).

Christ's declaration “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5) reveals the aim of this sign. His mission was to bring enlightenment to a darkened people who in him would see a great light (Isa. 9:1-2; Matt. 4:14-16). But he had limited time to work – “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John

9:4). By ‘night’ he meant death. He had been ‘sent’ by God, and now he is about to send the blind man to wash in Siloam, signifying “one sent”.



The waters of Shiloah ran softly beneath his feet (Isa. 8:6), but just as in the days of faithless Ahaz his own people received not his words – “Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah’s son.” These waters represented the word of God - Isa. 8:20 – “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” But sadly, for those who refused to be disciples (i.e. learners) the outcome would be the same as Isaiah’s generation – Isa. 8:22 – “And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.”

Their darkness resulted from the rejection of Messiah who was ‘sent’ unto them – “And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Isa. 8:14). They desperately needed “the light of the world” to open their eyes.

But there was another class in Isaiah’s day for whom there was hope. These were the ‘children’ of the prophet – “Behold, I and the

children whom Yahweh hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Yahweh of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.” - Isa. 8:18. This passage is cited by Paul in Heb. 2:13 to describe the redeemed in Christ. The man born blind became one of these ‘children’ by obedience to the word of Christ.

So, why did Christ spit on the ground to make clay? Spittle was water proceeding from his mouth. This is the one who said in John 6:63, “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” When men speak loudly in order to reach the ears of an audience, tiny drops of water invariably proceed from the mouth with the words. When he spoke the “gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth” (Luke 4:22), the word of God went forth to accomplish that whereunto it was sent (Isa. 55:11).

Isa. 55:11 – “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I **sent** it.”

The sign performed at the pool of Siloam had far reaching implications for all disciples of Christ – Jew and Gentile – in all ages.

Sources:

bibleplaces.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pool_of_Siloam

(Compiler – Jim Cowie)