

# Mid-East e-News

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## Welcome

This week I went to see the Dead Sea Scrolls in Houston, having seen (almost handled) the copper scroll in Amman, but not having made it to either Qumran or the Scroll Museum in Jerusalem. It was interesting to read the background to their discovery and content.

Also, in College Station (hub city), we recently enjoyed a presentation on the Star of Bethlehem. Perhaps you'll find something related to it in the next issue. If you can't wait that long, see for yourself by visiting the Bethlehem Star web site at: [www.bethlehemstar.net](http://www.bethlehemstar.net)

Email your responses to [pkclark@pmbx.net](mailto:pkclark@pmbx.net), & check the web for back issues.

## *Islamic Interface – What Kind of War?*

In *e-News 27* we began our discussion by asking a series of questions. Having addressed the two sides of question C (who says we had to cover them in sequence?) – *What is the Evidence For/Against it being a Religious War?* I want to turn to question B – *What Other Kind of War Could It Be?* Listed in issue 27 were the following alternatives: *political, cultural, territorial* and *economic*, (and I am sure readers of *e-News* could suggest more).

**Examples of political war** may include civil wars: the Bolshevik Revolution, China in the 1950s; or the Cold War of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century; or more heated conflicts such as Korea or Vietnam. Whereas most wars seem directed towards control of territory (as did some of these) the major component is political differences between the opposing parties.

**A cultural war, on the other hand,** would not have as its focus a dispute over political systems or ideologies, such as capitalism versus communism or Nazism. Cultural wars could be the result of one ethnic/racial group resenting its domination by another. Again, this could arise as a civil war, as in Rwanda in 1994, or in Sudan over the last two decades. In a cultural war one would also be able to distinguish the groups by cultural characteristics, such as religious practices, festivals, traditions, 'holy sites', and possibly ethnic characteristics such as language. Sudan's conflict today in Darfur is pitting Arab Muslim against African Muslim, whereas in the south the population was primarily Christian. Cultural conflict is more often a low-level discord, possibly sparked by practices that cause offense, but also by perceptions of discrimination against a minority group, or by accusations that immigrants are jeopardizing jobs for those native to the region. This last reason is particularly common during times of economic weakness.

**Territorial conflicts often mask other issues,** but have as their *central* focus the acquisition of land. Perhaps the Nazi expansion into Czechoslovakia and Poland came also into this category, as would the British-Argentine conflict over the Falklands in the 1980s. Such a war may arise from resistance to occupation (Poland by Germany, Britain by Argentina) or may be initiated in order to accomplish the occupation. The latter would include the 1956 Suez War in which Britain, France and Israel together attacked Egypt in order to control the recently nationalized Suez Canal. (Obviously, this was in some sense also an economic issue).

**Wars fought over economic issues seem less common,** but cannot be discounted (pun involuntary). In Osama Bin Laden's video and audio messages he has frequently asserted that his intention is to drive the West (the US) to its knees economically. In a videotape released at the end of October, Bin Laden "credited the religiously inspired Arab volunteers that he fought with against the Soviets in Afghanistan for having 'bled Russia for 10 years, until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat.' He suggested the same strategy would work against the United States." The report (Houston Chronicle, 11/2/04) goes on to say that "Al Qaeda has long made a point of hitting economic targets.

Perhaps these examples can help us to focus on the question of whether this is a religious war. We will look over evidence addressing this question in a later issue (probably mid-January) and I would also like to comment on some of your contributions.

Additional reading on this topic: <http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/islam/>, a Focus on the Family web site, with FAQs covering this topic. Check out the links below the brief article, especially the **archive**.

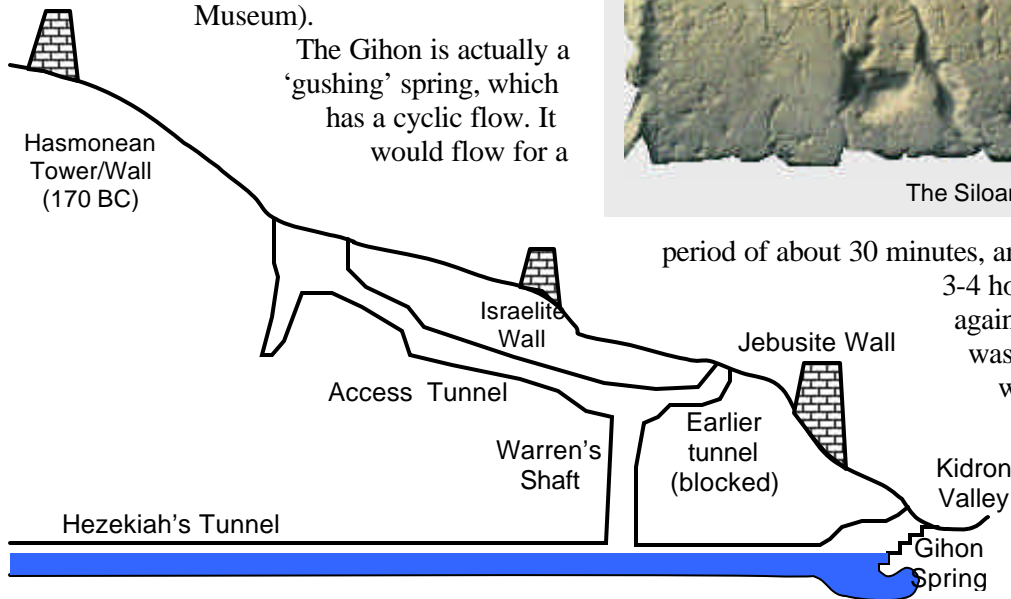
## Jerusalem – The Water System

In e-News 30 we looked at the ‘Broad Wall’ that Hezekiah had built to enclose the growing city in the valley east of the Temple. We also commented on the conduit that Hezekiah had constructed to prevent the Assyrian attackers from using the water from the Gihon spring (see inscription, now located in Istanbul Museum).

The Gihon is actually a ‘gushing’ spring, which has a cyclic flow. It would flow for a



The Siloam Inscription



period of about 30 minutes, and then merely trickle for a period of 3-4 hours before beginning the cycle again. Hezekiah's Gihon-Siloam channel was not the first designed to collect the waters from the Spring. There are two earlier channels, dating from **1100 BC** the time of the Jebusites conquered by David) and from a later period, probably **1000 BC** the time of Solomon.

To ensure access to the water even during a siege, the Jebusites seem to have dug a sloping tunnel down towards the well, at the same time as extending the spring by digging a horizontal tunnel into the hillside. The sloping tunnel ends with a shaft dropping down about 15m and meeting the horizontal tunnel. Hezekiah's Tunnel probably took as its starting point the bottom of the shaft (now named after the soldier archaeologist, Capt. Charles Warren in 1867).

When David attacked the Jebusites they scorned his attempts to enter the city **2 Sam. 5:6-8** but he was successful by using a “water shaft.” Perhaps ‘Warren’s Shaft’ is actually *David’s Shaft*, though it was Joab who actually led the men through it **1 Chron. 11:4-7**.

Notice that the area enclosed by the successive walls is reduced over the period. The City of David was enclosed within the Israelite Wall, but was left outside of the wall built by Judas Maccabeus as the Hasmoneans defended themselves from the Seleucids and Romans. Tombs have been found between these two walls that could well be the “Tombs of the Kings” mentioned in the Old Testament passages (next issue). The Israelite wall is the one strengthened by Manasseh after he repented **2 Chron. 33:14**.

Another water channel ran from the Gihon spring to feed a pool at the bottom of the Valley, around the end of the ridge. It began in a tunnel from the Gihon Spring, and ran in an open conduit for some distance. It was also used, as occurs frequently in the Middle East today, as a source of irrigation water for the crops in the valley below. The condition of the channel indicates that it was probably deliberately destroyed, and probably at Hezekiah's instructions, **2 Chronicles 32:3-4**.

### News Cutting:

As Iraq's national election looms, I can say without hubris that I am literally in the right place for the right job. I've been mortared, ambushed, car bombed and rocketed. I don't take it personally. All it takes is one Iraqi adult to thank me and my men and it makes our day. Luckily this happens a lot. (Lt Brian Suits, Iraq, 11/29/04)

## Second Crusade

In 1145, after hearing of the loss of Edessa, Pope Eugenius III directed Bernard of Clairvaux, the founder of the Cistercian Order, to preach a new crusade, as Pope Urban had done in 1095. This response to the fall of Edessa was divided before it began. German princes took it as authority to initiate **Northern Crusades** against the Slavic peoples of the Baltic states. Others formed a Crusade against the Moors of Spain, capturing Lisbon and Tortuga in 1148.

**Forces from France and the German states** eventually made their way by different routes to Constantinople, the Germans under Conrad arriving in Syria in 1147. Conrad had split his army into two divisions, but in October 1147 the first was destroyed by the Seljuks, the remainder suffering the same fate early the next year. French forces led by King Louis VII met up with the remnants of Conrad's army in Nicaea early in 1148, but were themselves defeated by the Seljuks, and it was only the survivors of these engagements that finally arrived in Syria, in disarray, in 1148.

**Mosul and Aleppo were Nur Ad-Din's power base**, and Damascus, further to the south, was still not captured by him. For its protection the city of Damascus had made an alliance with the Christians of the Latin Kingdom. Upon arrival in the Jerusalem Conrad, thrice defeated by the Seljuks, pressed Baldwin III to attack Damascus. Aleppo would have been a weaker target, and its capture might have damaged Nur Ad-Din's growing power, but against the wishes of many of the Crusaders Conrad prevailed and in the July heat, still in 1148, a siege was mounted against the city. This met with no more success than any of their previous ventures, the heat and lack of water defeating the Crusaders, and within a week they retreated. Conrad and Louis returned to their homes in Europe, but the greatest impact of this campaign was that Damascus, having lost its trust in the Christians, voluntarily submitted to the Seljuks in 1154. It may not have been so voluntary, however; some historians report that this occurred during a siege by Nur Ad-Din.



Najm Citadel, close to Aleppo, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Nur Ad-Din** took advantage of the Damascus debacle to attack Antioch in 1149. At the Battle of Inab Raymond of Poitiers was killed but the city remained. Nur Ad-Din is said to have celebrated his victory by bathing in the Mediterranean. The Orontes river became the border between Seljuk Aleppo and Crusader Antioch.

**Nur Ad-Din's general in the field was Shirkuh**. He was of Kurdish origin, from Tikrit in Iraq. He was sent to Egypt to control some rebellion there, and strengthen the military in the face of Crusader attacks. He took his son with him, and in time was succeeded by him, though still under the authority of Nur Ad-Din. Upon the death of the Fatimid Caliph in 1171 Shirkuh's son was able to depose the Fatimid dynasty, using the mosques of the city to declare the name of the Abbasid Caliph at morning prayers. Though he made no outward challenge to his chief's authority Salah Ad-Din was soon seen as a threat to Nur Ad-Din. The question of whether this would ever come to conflict was put to rest when Nur Ad-Din died in 1174. Salah Ad-Din (known to the West as Saladin) claimed the title of Sultan in Egypt and marched on Damascus, where he was welcomed.

**For the next decade Saladin was strengthening his hold** on Syria, losing to the Crusaders at Montgisard in 1177, but defeating them at the Ford of Jacob's Daughters in 1179. At Montgisard, on June 24 1177, the Crusaders were led by Baldwin IV and Raynald of Chatillon. Saladin had attacked them from Egypt, near Gaza, and thought them hemmed in by his troops, but the Crusaders had avoided the danger. They surprised him and with 500 knights and a few thousand infantry were able to decimate his 30,000 strong force, leaving Saladin barely able to escape to Egypt with his life.



Bernard of Clairvaux  
(1090-1153)

