

TRUE TEMPLE STEPS, TEL DAN AND LAISH

A. Songs of Ascent, Psalm 120-134, Psalms recited step by step as worshipers climbed up the southern steps to the Temple in Jerusalem.

1. Psalm 122

- 1 *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"*
- 2 *Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!*
- 3 *Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together,*
- 4 *to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.*
- 5 *There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David.*
- 6 *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! "May they be secure who love you!*
- 7 *Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!"*
- 8 *For my brothers and companions' sake I will say, "Peace be within you!"*
- 9 *For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.*

2. The Western Wall is the closest Jews can get to the former location of the Holy of Holies, God's presence.



South Temple Steps



Western Wall

B. Tel Dan

- The tribe of Dan was looking for an inheritance and moved to an unclaimed land at the northern end of the territories, called Laish, Judges 18:7, *Then the five men departed and came to Laish and saw the people who were there, how they lived in security, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting, lacking nothing that is in the earth and possessing wealth, and how they were far from the Sidonians and had no dealings with anyone.*
- At the death of Solomon, Jeroboam became king of northern Israel when the country was split in two. He had an altar built in Dan that was to be just like the one in the temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12). He reasoned that it was too far for the people to worship in Jerusalem. He had two golden calves made for worship by the people, one for Dan and one for Bethel.
- Jeroboam's folly, 1 Kings 12:26-32, *And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah." 28 So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." 29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. 31 He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. 32 And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made.*

- Prophecy against Jeroboam, 1 Kings 14:14-16, *Moreover, the LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam today. And henceforth, 15 the LORD will strike Israel as a reed is shaken in the water, and root up Israel out of this good land that he gave to their fathers and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their Asherim, provoking the LORD to anger. 16 And he will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin.”*
- Pictures follow of *Tel Dan*, the site of Jeroboam’s golden calves and view of total destruction of this site of false worship.



Tel Dan - site of Jeroboam’s false altar



The site was permanently destroyed.

C. Laish

- This ancient city is down the hill from where Dan was built, Judges 18:29, *And they named the city Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was Laish at the first.*
- A mud brick gate still stands and is from the Bronze Age around 4,000 years ago. The gate survived because it was buried in mud.



Laish Gate



Laish wall near gate entrance

- Abraham pursued the people who took captive Lot, his family, and possessions, Genesis 14:14, *When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.*
- One of the greatest archaeological finds was from Laish. A piece from a stone monument was uncovered that contained an inscription from the king of Damascus following his defeat of Israel, 3,000 years ago. The king claimed to have killed 2 kings from the house of David. Until this discovery, many believed David was nothing more than a myth, 2 Kings 8:28-29.



The stone identifying the historical David found in Laish but now housed in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem

D. A Song of Ascent, Psalm 130

- 1 *Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!*
- 2 *O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!*
- 3 *If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?*
- 4 *But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.*
- 5 *I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;*
- 6 *my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.*
- 7 *O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.*
- 8 *And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*