

Mikvah

The word “mikvah” (also, mikveh, mikva, miqve) means “collection” and refers to a collection of water that was used by the Jews for ceremonial washing. They are ritual baths. The Jews would purify themselves before several activities or after certain events that made them unclean. Conversion to Judaism requires submersion into a mikvah. The area around the Temple Mount, especially to the south, is filled with mikvah. Many of them were likely used on the



A first century mikvah used during the days of Jesus and the book of Acts, located south of the Temple Mount at the base of the Double Gate stairs. This could easily have been one of the many mikvah used to baptize the 3,000 new Jewish believers on the Day of Pentecost described in Acts 2.

Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) to baptize the converted Jews in Jesus' name. It signified a major change in their understanding of who Jesus was and was a sign of their new faith and allegiance. A mikvah had to have a source of running water, such as a spring, or fresh water, such as rain. A mikvah had to be large enough to allow an average sized person to immerse his whole body. Stairs would be used to descend into and ascend from the mikvah. Often there was a wall separating the clean side from the unclean side.



In 2009 the large 2,000-year-old mikvah seen above was uncovered along the Western Wall Tunnel only 65 feet from the Western Wall. It has 11 steps and is decorated with the best artistic style, craftsmanship and dressed ashlar stones of the Herodian period. Used by Jews entering the Temple Mount near Wilson's Arch and Warren's Gate. Josephus describes an administrative building here, so this mikvah could in Sanhedrin's building.



Galyn and Toni in the entrance of a mikvah on the outside of the southern wall of the Old City.