

## ~ANTONIA, TOWER OF (130)

- A fortified structure in Jerusalem, serving as soldiers quarters. According to Josephus, it had apartments, baths, barracks, and courtyards.
- The Tower of Antonia was situated at the Northwest corner of the temple court and evidently occupied the site where Nehemiah earlier had constructed the Castle, or fortress, mentioned at;
- Also a letter to Asaph the keeper of the park that belongs to the king, that he may give me trees to build with timber the gates of the **Castle that belongs to the house**, and for the wall of the city and for the house into which I am to enter. So the king gave them to me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. (**Nehemiah 2:8**)
- Herod the Great did extensive and costly repair work on it and increased its fortifications. Previously known as the **Baris**, Herod named it **Antonia** in honor of **Mark Antony**. As the Jewish High Priest and ruler John Hyrcanus had done before him, Herod had the priestly garments kept there, apparently as a means of maintaining a certain check or control on the High Priest.
- According to Josephus, the fortress was built on a rocky eminence 50 cubits (c. 22 meters)(73 feet) high. Above the rock, it had stone walls 40 cubits (c. 18 meters)(58 feet) high and four corner towers, three of them 50 cubits (22 meters)(73 feet) high and the other, at the southeast corner overlooking the whole temple area, 70 cubits (c. 31 meters)(102 feet) high. [**The Jewish War, V, 238-247 [v, 8]**]
- Prior to Herod's time the fortress served primarily against incursions from the North, but thereafter it mainly **served as a point of control over the Jews** and a means of **policing the activities in the temple area**, to which there was direct access from the fortress.
- The **square layout of the fortress would indicate that it had a central court**. Some believe that it was in such a central court within this tower that Jesus appeared before Pilate for judgment.
- Therefore Pilate, after hearing these words, brought Jesus outside, and he sat down on a judgment seat in a place called

**The Stone Pavement**, but, in Hebrew, **Gabbatha**. (John 19:13)

- They suggest that a stone pavement found in this area was the one referred to as **Gabbatha**. Others, however, believe that Jesus judgment by Pilate took place before Herod's palace.

**See Also STONE PAVEMENT**

- A more certain reference to the **Tower of Antonia** is that recorded in the account at;
- And the whole city was set in an uproar, and a running together of the people occurred, and they laid hold of Paul and dragged him outside the temple. And immediately the doors were closed. (Acts of Apostles 21:30)
- And while they were seeking to kill him, information came up to the commander of the band that all Jerusalem was in confusion. (Acts of Apostles 21:31)
- And he at once took soldiers and army officers and ran down to them. When they caught sight of the military commander and the soldiers, they quit beating Paul. (Acts of Apostles 21:32)
- Then the military commander came near and took hold of him and gave command for him to be bound with two chains, and he proceeded to inquire who he might be and what he had done. (Acts of Apostles 21:33)
- But some in the crowd began shouting out one thing, and others another. So, being unable himself to learn anything certain because of the tumult, he commanded him to be brought to the **soldiers quarters**. (Acts of Apostles 21:34)
- But when he got upon the stairs, the situation became such that he was being carried along by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd. (Acts of Apostles 21:35)
- For the multitude of the people kept following, crying out; Take him away! (Acts of Apostles 21:36)
- And as he was about to be led into the soldiers quarters, Paul said to the military commander; Am I allowed to say something to you? He said; Can you speak Greek? (Acts of Apostles 21:37)

- Are you not really the Egyptian who before these days stirred up a sedition and led the four thousand dagger men out into the wilderness? (**Acts of Apostles 21:38**)
- Then Paul said; I am, in fact, a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. So I beg you, permit me to speak to the people. (**Acts of Apostles 21:39**)
- After he gave permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned with his hand to the people. When a great silence fell, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying; (**Acts of Apostles 21:40**)
- The **military commander ordered him to be brought into the soldiers quarters** and said he should be examined under scourging, that he might know fully for what cause they were shouting against him this way. (**Acts of Apostles 22:24**)
- Paul appears to have delivered his defense and witness to a religious mob from the **steps of the fortress** and thereafter was taken into the **soldiers quarters for examining**. Probably Paul was returned to this place after his stormy session with the Sanhedrin and was here when his nephew came to warn him of the conspiracy against his life.
- Now when the dissension grew great, the military commander became afraid that Paul would be pulled to pieces by them, and he commanded the force of soldiers to go down and snatch him from their midst and bring him into the soldiers quarters. (**Acts of Apostles 23:10**)
- However, the son of Paul's sister heard of their lying in wait, and he came and **entered into the soldiers quarters** and reported it to Paul. (**Acts of Apostles 23:16**)
- The **Tower of Antonia** came to final ruin when **it was destroyed along with the temple and city** by Roman General Titus in **70 C.E.**