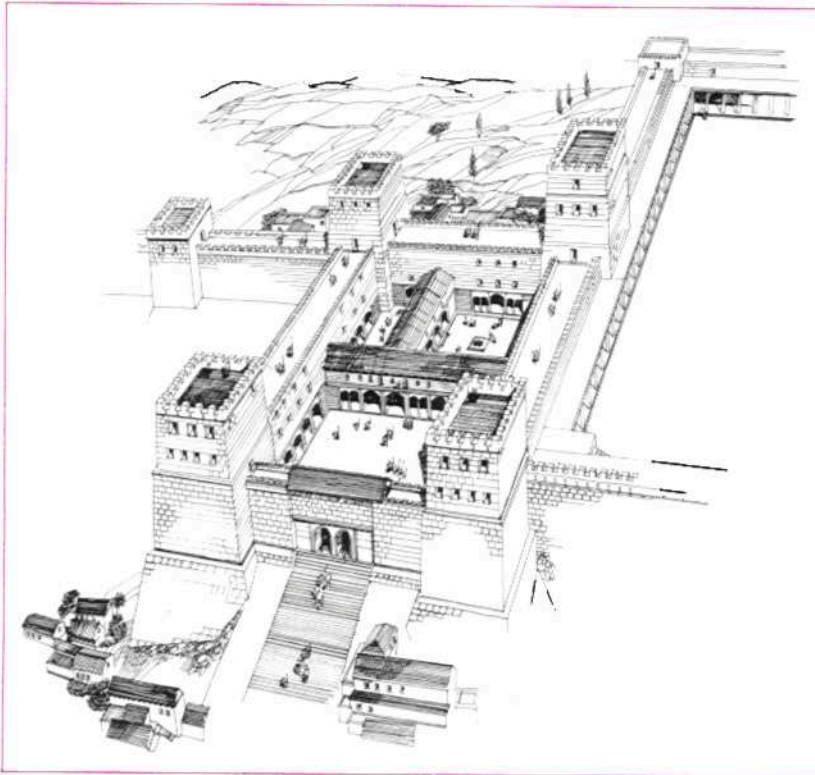


The Fortress Where Jesus Was Scourged

Jesus' trial before Pilate may have taken place in the Antonia, a fortress overlooking the Jerusalem temple. Though the temple had its own police force—a small army of Levites—Roman soldiers of the Antonia stood by as a constant reminder of Rome's presence.



Originally a Maccabean fortress, the Antonia (above) was rebuilt on a grand scale by Herod the Great and named for Mark Antony. It stood on a precipice 75 feet high at the temple's northwest corner. Stairs led to the Court of the Gentiles, and an underground passage to the Court of Israel. Symbols of Roman authority were common in the empire, such as a Herodian statue (upper right) from Caesarea, seat of Roman government in Palestine.

"When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement" (Jn. 19.13). The stones at lower right are thought to have been part of "The Pavement" in the Antonia—a central court where a Roman governor might adjudicate at public trials. Games have been scratched in the stones, perhaps by some of the 500 to 600 Roman soldiers who made up the cohort stationed there. The chief duty of the garrison troops was to be ready for any emergency in the Court of the Gentiles. During major Jewish religious festivals, when this court was thronged, the garrison was increased.

