

HERODIUM

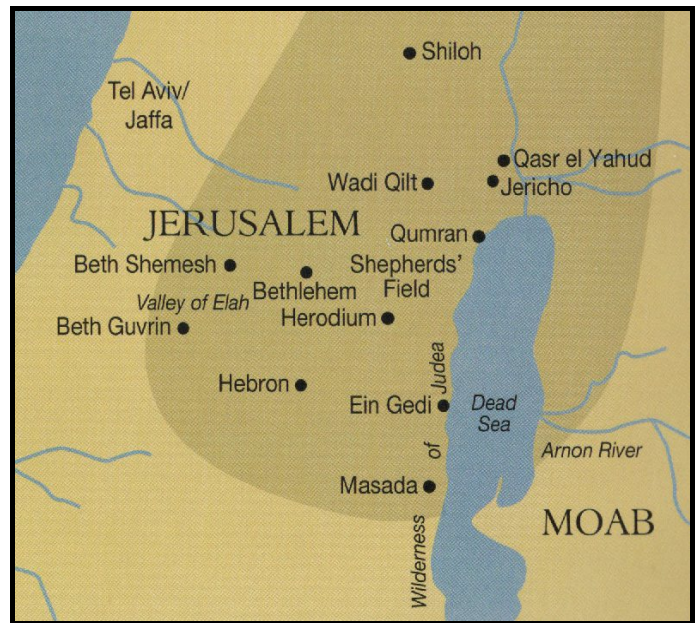
Introduction

- King Herod the Great built a large complex between 24-15 BC, approximately 8 miles south of Jerusalem and 4 miles southeast of Bethlehem, called Herodium.
- Herod's building projects included not only Herodium but also the city port of Caesarea by the Sea, Masada a fort in Jericho and renovation of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Biblical events concerning Herod concerned the birth of Jesus and Herod's attempt to kill Him.

The visit of the wise men, Matthew 2:1-6, *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"*

Herod's meeting with the wise men, Matthew 2:7-8, *Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him."*

The murder of Bethlehem children, Matthew 2:16, *Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.*



Approaching Herodium

Herodium

- Herod designed Herodium as a memorial to himself in honor of his defeat of the Parthians who were fighting against Rome. He barely survived the battle and was strengthened by the victory. He determined to build a monumental tomb at Herodium for his place of burial.
- The site was an enormous complex consisting of three parts: lower Herodium, mountain palace-fortress and the northern slope.

Lower Herodium

- ▶ It included a large palace, massive pool complex, bathhouse and structures built for guests and officials.
- ▶ There was a funeral complex with a grand hall which was known as the *monumental structure* and a large ritual bath.
- ▶ Remains of a long approach was built for Herod's elaborate funeral.
- ▶ There was an administrative center and housing for soldiers.

The mountain palace and fortress

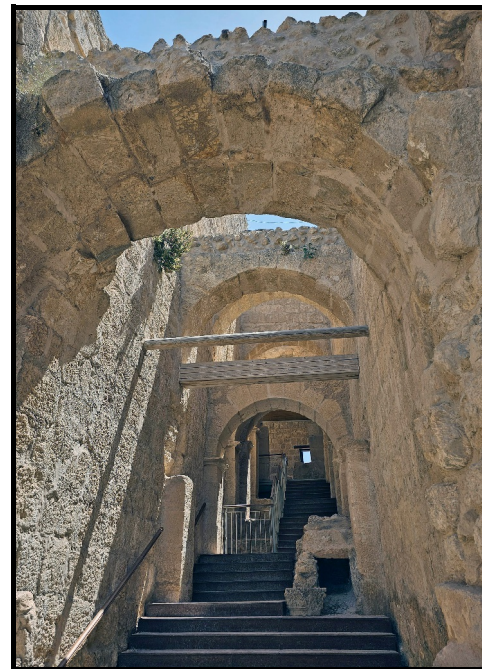
- ▶ Excavations revealed stairs and an entrance corridor supported by arches before Herod's death.
- ▶ During the construction of the artificial cone, shortly before Herod's death, the theater was dismantled and covered to create a gigantic cone which emphasized his tomb.
- ▶ The palace was divided into several wings. On the eastern side was a large colonnaded courtyard used as an ornamental garden. The western half contained the bathhouse, dwellings, a cross-shaped courtyard and an opulent reception hall.
- ▶ All of the palace walls were plastered and decorated with frescoes and stucco of various designs. The capitals and bases of the columns were carved with intricate designs.
- ▶ The large tower was 130 feet high. It housed royal apartments at the top which provided sweeping views and cool breezes.
- ▶ The bathhouse included a tepid room topped by a cupola. The floor of the hot room rested on small pillars. The heating system channeled hot air into the pillared space and from there into the room through conduits carved into the walls and vaulted ceiling.
- ▶ There was a tunnel system that connect the area to three cisterns, providing water for the complex.



Pool and guest quarters



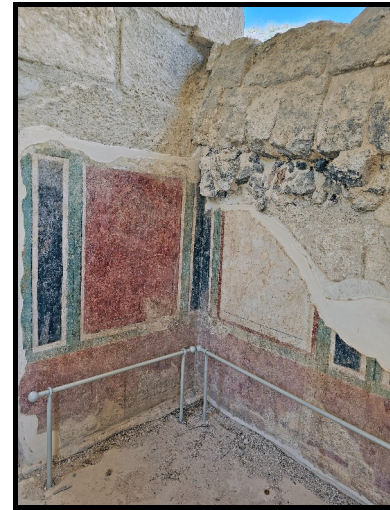
Two hundred steps to the palace



Entrance to palace grounds



Palace courtyard



Royal bathhouse walls

The northern slope

- ▶ A royal staircase on the northern slope next to the theater was no longer used when construction of an artificial cone replaced it and the theater.
- ▶ The theater seated 400 with a view of Jerusalem, a private chamber for the king and his guests. It was beautifully decorated with paintings.
- ▶ Herod's tomb was discovered on the northeastern slope of the mountain, also facing Jerusalem. It was built on a square foundation and rose to a height of 80 feet. It had three stories of rooms and a conical roof. The first story was square and the second was round and surrounded by 18 columns.
- ▶ Israel Nature and Parks Authority, *The king constructed his tomb in the upper part of a terraced garden, outside the sloping wall that encompassed the fortified palace at the summit. In this way he ensured that the mausoleum - a radiant white tower - would be clearly visible from the mountain tops surrounding Jerusalem.*



Unearthed amphitheater



A column from Herod's tomb

- ▶ The remains of three stone coffins were found near the mausoleum. One was believed to be that of Herod and the other two were those of relatives. Rebels razed the mausoleum to the ground during the Jewish revolt in 70 AD. The coffin attributed to Herod was found smashed to bits and the other two coffins were tossed out of the mausoleum and were found broken at its foot. Pieces of Herod's tombe are on display in the Israel Museum.



Rolled stones for defense

West Bank

- Herodium is eight miles from Bethlehem which is in the West Bank.
- The West Bank is bordered by Jordan and the Dead Sea to the east and by Israel to the south, west, and north. It has been under Israeli military occupation since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.
- It is divided into three sectors: A - under full Palestinian control (20% of West Bank); B - under joint control by Israel and Palestine (60%); C- Israeli control (20%).
- To get to Herodium, one must pass through Palestinian controlled territory. Israelis are not permitted to leave the highway and enter Palestinian territory.
- Charles Dyer, *Today, Bethlehem is a city that looks more like Berlin during the Cold War. In 2000, the Second Intifada, or uprising, began against Israel. Suicide bombers from the West Bank made their way into Jerusalem on an almost weekly basis to blow themselves up in Jewish restaurants, stores, and markets. Israel responded by building a separation barrier to protect its citizens. In most areas the barrier is a fence, but in some areas - including around Bethlehem - something stronger and more permanent was needed. And that's why a wall of concrete slabs greets visitors to the birthplace of the Prince of Peace.*



A strong warning!



Bethlehem