

# The Civil Trial

**Pilate** was Roman, and **Caiaphas** was Jewish. **They** worshiped different deities, ate different foods, had different hopes for **their** future, and spoke different languages. **Pilate** served at the will of a supposedly divine emperor, while **Caiaphas** supposedly served at the will of **ADONAI**. **They** both shared a command of the Greek language and a belief that **they** were entitled to do anything to stay in power.

That being said, in the final analysis, nothing happened without the approval of **Pontius Pilate**, the Roman procurator (Perseus: Tacitus, a Roman senator, *The Annals* Book XV, 62-65 AD, 15.44). As if a symbolic reminder, **Pilate** held the clothing of the high priest (see my commentary on **Exodus Fw - The Clothing of the Levitical Priesthood**) in an ornate chest at **Fortress Antonia**. Under Roman control, **Pilate** unlocked them on the morning before high holy days and gave them to **Caiaphas** with the understanding that **he** would return them to **Pilate** after the Festival of Unleavened Bread and the Passover were over.

**The civil trial took place in the former palace of Herod the Great, then called the praetorium, the headquarters of Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:27; John 18:28 and 33).** In time of peace one of the best buildings of any city were selected for the residence of the procurator. Thus, in Jerusalem **he** took up residence in **the praetorium**. It was big and lavish and the courts were trimmed with alabaster. This was the most exclusive section of Jerusalem and **Pilate** was accustomed to the size and comfort of such a royal palace, not the stark military conditions of Fort Antonia. **He** commanded the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem, but **he** did not live with them. Plus, **his** wife had accompanied **him**. Would **he** have her tolerate her visit among rough and tumble Roman soldiers? Never!

The statements of Josephus make it almost certain that the headquarters of **the procurator** were at Herod's palace. This was a building whose magnificence Josephus can hardly sufficiently appraise (*Wars*, I, xxi, 1; V, iv, 4). It was in this **palace** that "Florus, **the procurator** took up his quarters, and having placed his tribunal in front of it, held his sessions and the chief priests, influential persons and notables of the city appeared before the tribunal" (*Wars* II, xiv, 8). Later on, "Florus . . . brought such as were with him out of the king's **palace**, and would have compelled them to get as far as the citadel (Antonia); but his attempt failed" (II, xv, 5). **The soldiers led Jesus away within the palace (that is, the praetorium).**

The actual site of **the praetorium** cannot have been far removed from three Hasmonean towers: the Tower of Hippicus, the Tower of Phasael and the Tower of Mariamne. Byzantine Christians in the fifth century eventually replaced them with a much larger, more massive tower, today called the **Tower of David**. They borrowed the name from **the Song of Songs**, attributed to King Solomon, King **David's** father, who wrote: **Your neck is like the tower of David, built with courses of stone; on it hand a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors (Song of Songs 4:4).**

It is interesting to note that for many years two stations of Turkish garrison occupied the same spot as did the Roman garrison of **Christ's** time. In 2011 the old Turkish prison built by the Ottoman Turks in the mid 1800s opened briefly. It sits next to the **Tower of David**. It is needless to point out how much this more recent information about **the praetorium** must modify the traditional claims of the "Via Dolorosa," the whole course of which depends on the false theory that the "Way of Sorrow" began at Fort Antonia.