

Gabbatha

Names (also known as)

The Pavement, called in Hebrew Gabbatha.

Etymology

Gabbatha (Hebrew) Strong’s #1042 means “elevated or a platform”. Used only once in the Scriptures.

Pavement (Greek - *lithostrotos*) Strong’s #3038 meaning paved place frequently used of tessellated or mosaic pavement. It is found nowhere else in the New Testament and its Hebrew equivalent *martsepheth* also meaning pavement is only used once in the Old Testament in 2 Kings 16:17.

Location/Description

Most likely an open air area in front of the Praetorium which was in Herod’s former Palace (Mark 15:16). Pilate was on a judgement seat or “*bema*” meaning raised platform (Matthew 27:19) of mosaic stone. Christ’s accusers did not want to go in the Praetorium lest they be defiled (John 18:28 – 19:16).



Picture courtesy of Brooklyn Museum – “Judgment on the Gabbatha” by James Tissot

Scriptural references

John 19:13 - “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the

Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.”

(Both Greek for “pavement” = *lithostrotos* and Hebrew *gabbatha* are found only in this verse in the New Testament).

Famous characters

Lord Jesus Christ; Pontius Pilate.

Chief priests & elders of Israel along with crowds of the Jewish people who conspired to crucify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brief history

Subsequent to his arrest, the Lord Jesus was delivered first unto Annas, and then bound unto Caiaphas the High Priest. He was then led from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment to be accused before Pontius Pilate. Because the Jews would not enter into the judgment hall, Pilate therefore questioned Jesus within the judgment hall and went back and forth to converse with the Jews. Finally, after the Jews, in John 19: 12 said: “If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend”, Pilate brought Jesus forth unto Gabbatha to pronounce the sentence the Jews desired.

Scriptural importance

The declaration by the Lord Jesus Christ to Pilate in John 19:11 - “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin,” confirms the Gospel message of the “things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.” All who understand the Gospel and reject it are in essence delivering the Lord Jesus Christ to be crucified.

Sources:

Zion My Chiefest Joy – Adelaide Suburban Young People’s Committee

Jerusalem In The Year 30 AD – L & K Ritmeyer

See The Holy Land.net / Gabbatha

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance & Enhanced Lexicon – J. Strong

(Compilers – Tom and Leslie Colby)