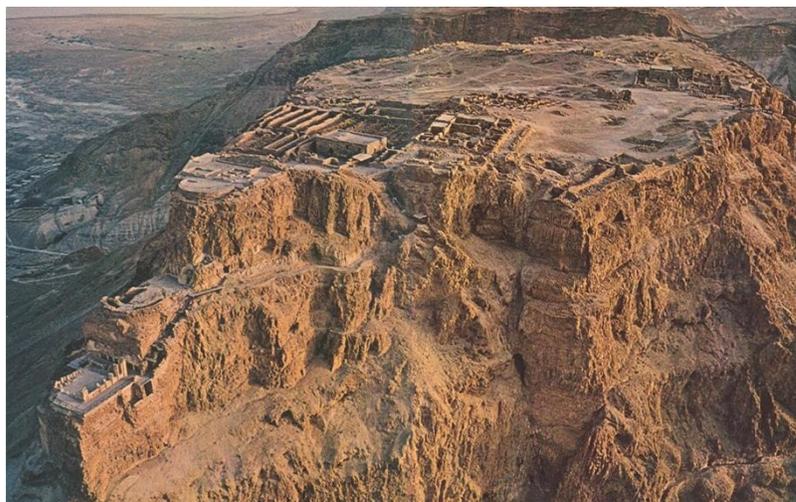


History of Masada – Matzada

Masada, atop an isolated rock cliff, overlooks the Dead Sea. It is as intimidating today as it was to those who stood at its base thousands of years ago. Steep cliffs on all sides make it appear to



be impregnable. It is a place of gaunt and majestic beauty where the rock falls in a sheer drop of 1300 feet to the Dead Sea.

King Herod the Great came to the mesa between 37 and 31 BCE to fortify it and build palaces. Herod, an Idumean by birth, was made King of Judea by his Roman overlords. He was fiercely hated by his Jewish subjects for his oppressive government. The villainous Herod had issued the order to kill all the male children in Bethlehem, two years old and under, to eliminate the baby Jesus or **Yeshua**. In the event of a revolt, he needed a desert fortress as a refuge.

Meaning of the name Masada - Matzada

Masada or Matzada is a biblical word meaning fortress or stronghold. It comes from a Hebrew word which means siege works, hunting, and net.

We find the word matzada in Psalm 18:2, “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress (*matzad*), and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower.”

He furnished his fortress at Masada with all the modern luxuries – a swimming pool, Roman baths, and beautiful mosaic floors that are still in place. Masada had a protective wall around the plateau, storehouses, large cisterns ingeniously filled with rainwater for drinking, cooking, and bathing, four palaces, comfortable living quarters for officials and their families, Roman baths, a synagogue, a barracks, and an armory. In the scorching desert climate, thick stone walls covered with plaster kept the buildings cool.