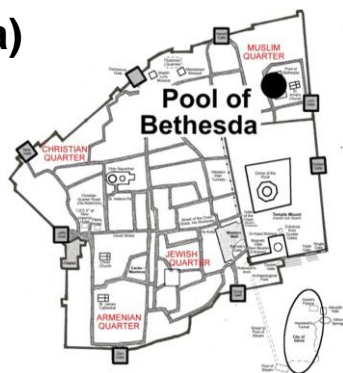


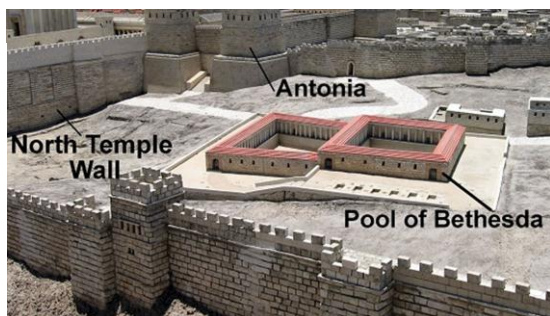
Bethesda (Pool of Bethesda)

The area of the Pools of Bethesda has always had a source of water. In the days of the Old Testament, the area was outside the city of Jerusalem to the north. It had a large pool that shepherds used and was called the Sheep Pool. The gate on the north side of Jerusalem was thus called the Sheep Gate. In the 700's BC a dam was built to turn the spring into a reservoir that would collect rain water which could then be channeled



into the city. The area was associated with sheep, sacrifice, and the Temple because of its proximity to the Temple. The Hasmoneans added a second pool on the south side of the dam and covered the channel to improve water quality. This site was uncovered in 1888 by K. Schick, but it had been known about since the days of the Byzantines and Crusaders, as evidenced by the remains of the church that was built over it. No ancient Jewish writers refer to this pool, although Josephus did write of the Pool of the Sheep-market. The spring that feeds the pools has been located, and water still collects in the lower areas.

This is a model of Jerusalem as it appeared in 70 AD. Notice the two pools that made up the Pools of Bethesda. The south and north pools can be seen, along with the five colonnaded porches that surrounded it (four on each side, one in middle)



The bridge-like structure on right of photo is the dam that separated the south (left) pool from the north pool



Looking down into the excavated SE corner of the southern pool. The top right side of photo is not excavated.