

The Temple Mount

After Moses led Israel out of Egyptian slavery, the Israelis erected a tent. (Exodus 38:21) They placed the arc of the covenant inside the tent; the arc was God's dwelling place on earth. Centuries later Israel moved the arc into the First Temple on the Temple Mount. This First Temple was an initiative of King David. (2 Samuel 7:2) His son, King Solomon, actually built the Temple. (1 Kings 6:1) Construction took seven years; the labor force was 30,000 men. (1 Kings 5:13; 2 Chronicles 2:2) Outside the Temple, Israel sacrificed lambs to atone for sin.

Jerusalem, with its Temple Mount, fell to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 586 BC. (Jeremiah 39:1) Babylon took the nation of Israel captive. In 539 BC, Darius the Mede overthrew the conquering Babylonians and imposed the Medo-Persia Empire. (Daniel 5:30-31) The following year Cyrus, King of Persia, released a large number of Israelis and instructed those returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple. (Ezra 1:1-3) In 515 BC, the Temple was rebuilt; this second building on Mount Moriah became known as the Second Temple. (Ezra 6:15)

Joseph and Mary dedicated Jesus at this Second Temple. (Luke 2:27) This also is where Jesus' searching parents found him teaching as a young man. (Luke 2:41-50) Jesus forcefully cleared profiteering merchants from this Temple. (John 2:13-16) Jesus and Apostles preached at the Temple. (John 2:13-16; Acts 3:1-10; 6:42) When Jesus died, the *curtain* (veil) inside the Temple that *separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place* tore from top to bottom. (Exodus 26:33; Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45) This tearing signified that man now had unimpeded access to God.

Because Israel rejected its Messiah, Jesus foretold this Temple would be destroyed. (Matthew 24:1-2) This occurred when Israel fell to the Roman Army in 70 AD. With the Islamic capture of Jerusalem centuries later, the Dome of the Rock shrine and the Al Aqsa Mosque were built on the Temple Mount. The most visible building on the Temple Mount today is the Dome of the Rock, which is built over a "sacred" rock. Islam understands that on God's holy mountain, this Temple Mount, that a rock should be honored. Unfortunately Islam is blinded to the real Rock—Jesus himself. (Psalm 19:14; Isaiah 26:4)



THE ROCK OF ISLAM

Trust in the LORD forever,
for the LORD, the LORD,
is the rock eternal.
(Isaiah 26:4)