

## What is the Dome of the Rock?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Dome-of-the-Rock.html>

The Dome of the Rock is a Muslim shrine that was built on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in AD 691. The Dome of the Rock is part of a larger Muslim holy area that takes up a significant portion of what is also known as Mount Moriah in the heart of Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock gets its name from the fact that it is built over the highest part (the dome) of Mount Moriah which is where Jews and Christians believe Abraham was prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God (Genesis 22:1-14).

It is also considered to be the location of the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where David built an altar to the Lord (2 Samuel 24:18). It is also on or very near the site that Herod's Temple stood before it was destroyed in AD 70 by the Roman army. Some even believe the rock might have been the location of the Holy of Holies that was a part of the Jewish Temple where the Jewish High Priest would enter once a year to make atonement for Israel's sins.

The Dome of the Rock is part of the larger Islamic area known as the Noble Sanctuary or Al-Haram al-Sharif. This area includes over 35 acres and contains both the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. After Muslims took control of Jerusalem in AD 637, Islamic leaders commissioned the building of the Dome of the Rock in AD 685. It took almost seven years to complete and today is one of the world's oldest Islamic structures.

The platform or Temple Mount area that houses the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque was built in the first century BC under the rule of Herod the Great as part of his rebuilding of the second Jewish Temple. Jesus worshiped at Herod's Temple, and it was

there that He prophesied its destruction (Matthew 24:1-2). Jesus' prophecy was fulfilled when the temple was destroyed by the Roman army in AD 70.

The Temple Mount area where the Dome of the Rock is located is important not only to the Muslims who control it now, but also to Jews and Christians. As the place where the Jewish temple once stood, the Temple Mount is considered to be the holiest place in Judaism and is the place where Jews and some Christians believe that the third and final temple will be built. This area is also the third holiest site in Islam. Because of its importance to both Jews and Muslims, the Temple Mount area is a highly contested religious site over which both the Palestinian Authority and Israel claim sovereignty.

The Dome of the Rock is an impressive structure, easily seen in many photographs of Jerusalem. Not only is it on top of Mount Moriah, but it was also built on an elevated platform raising it up another 16 feet above the rest of the Temple Mount area. Inside at the center of the Dome is the highest point of Mount Moriah. This bare rock measures about 60 feet by 40 feet and rises about 6 feet from the floor of the shrine. While many people mistakenly refer to the Dome of Rock as a mosque, it was actually built as a shrine for pilgrims, although it is located near an important Muslim mosque.

Some believe the Dome of the Rock was built because, according to Muslim legend, the Prophet Muhammad was taken to Mount Moriah by the angel Gabriel, and from there Muhammad ascended into heaven and met all the prophets that had preceded him, as well as seeing God sitting on His throne surrounded by angels. However, this story does not appear in any Islamic texts until several decades after the shrine was built, which leads some to believe the primary reason the Dome was built was to celebrate the Islamic victory over Christians at Jerusalem and not to honor the supposed ascension of Muhammad.

When Israel took control over that part of Jerusalem after the Six-Day War in 1967, Israeli leaders allowed an Islamic religious trust to have authority over the Temple Mount and the Dome of the Rock as a way of helping keep the peace. Since that time non-Muslims have been allowed limited access to the area but are not permitted to pray on the Temple Mount.