

# What is the meaning and significance of the Temple Mount?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/temple-mount.html>

The Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism, the third holiest site in Islam, and a revered site to Christians. To the Jews it is known as Har HaMoriyah (“Mount Moriah”) and Har HaBayit (“Temple Mount”); to Muslims it is known as Haram el Sharif (“the Sacred Noble Sanctuary”). In the Bible it is also called Mount Zion (Psalm 48:2; Isaiah 4:5). Because of its importance to three major religions, its ownership has been hotly contested for nearly two thousand years. Today the Temple Mount is under the control of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf, a trust that was established in 1187 to manage the Islamic structures in Jerusalem. Under their current rules, access to the holy sites is prohibited to all non-Muslims.

According to the Bible (Genesis 22:1-14), God told Abraham to bring his son Isaac to the land of Moriah (meaning “Chosen by Yah”) and offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain there. As Abraham was about to complete the sacrifice, God stopped him and provided a ram as a substitutionary sacrifice. In this same location, nearly 1,000 years later, God led Solomon to build the First Temple (2 Chronicles 3:1). David had identified this location as the place for worshiping God because it was here the plague was stayed when he confessed his sin, and he purchased the place so he could build an altar (1 Chronicles 21:18-26). Solomon’s Temple stood until the Babylonians destroyed it in 586 BC. Zerubbabel led the efforts to build the Second Temple, which was completed in 516 BC, then enlarged by Herod the Great in 12 BC. The Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, fulfilling Jesus’ words in Mark 13:1-2.

As the Roman Empire was fading, Mohammed and his teaching of Islam was rising in the

Middle East. According to the Quran (Surah 17:1), Mohammed made a miraculous night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem in AD 621. There he led worship at “the farthest mosque,” was lifted to heaven, and returned to earth to carry on his teachings. At that time there was no mosque in Jerusalem, but 15 years later, Caliph Umar built a small mosque to commemorate the prophet’s night visit. The Al Aqsa Mosque (“the farthest mosque”) was built in AD 705, then rebuilt in 754, 780, and 1035. The Dome of the Rock was built in AD 692 over the place where Mohammad supposedly ascended to heaven. This rock is also identified by Christians and Jews as the place where Abraham offered Isaac and the location of the Holy of Holies in the Jewish temple. During the Crusades, Christians took temporary control of the Temple Mount, and the Al Aqsa Mosque was used as a palace and church in 1099.

The Temple Mount continues to be the center of controversy today. Though they are barred from entering the Muslim areas, Jews pray at the Western Wall (also known as the Wailing Wall), part of the remaining structure of the Temple Mount from the time of the Second Temple. The Islamic Waqf has created controversy with their decision to allow major renovations to the underground areas of the Temple Mount without regard to archaeological artifacts. Huge loads of earth have been removed from the area and dumped elsewhere. Archaeologists sifting through the dumped earth have recovered several artifacts of Jewish origin, though nothing that can be directly tied to the Jewish temple. Many Jews are making preparations for the Third Temple to be built on the site, and Christians also look with interest on those preparations. According to the prophecy of Daniel 9:27, it appears that there will be another temple built, for there will be sacrifices that are stopped by the Antichrist. Since the other parts of Daniel’s prophecies were fulfilled literally, leading up to Jesus’ life and death, we look for this part to be literally fulfilled also.