



NEW MUSLIM  
ACADEMY



# Palestine

*The Blessed Land - Past, Present, & Future*

God designates certain places as holy sites so humans may worship Him therein and to honor them (28:68). This designation is not arbitrary, rather it is the Divine Will of the One True God. Humans must honor what God elects as special and sacred. Those who consecrate and honor the sanctity of these symbols of God do so out of God-consciousness [22:32].



# Palestine

Palestine is part of the Holy Land, the blessed area that surrounds Masjid Al-Aqsa, the Further Mosque, which is the third holiest site on earth.

This area is special and significant in Islam, as God mentions it in the Quran in multiple places. “God is exalted from everything not appropriate for Him. It is He who took His servant, Muhammad, on the night journey from the Sacred Mosque of Mecca, to the Further Mosque of Jerusalem. The Further Mosque, whose surroundings God has blessed with fruit, crops and dwellings of the messengers.” [17:1] After the Exodus, God commanded His Messenger Moses and the believers with him to enter this land and referred to it as the Holy Land [5:21].

This geographic area is known as the Levant, and includes the modern countries of Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Its epicentre is Masjid Al-Aqsa, the Further Mosque, located in Jerusalem.



# The Land of the Messengers of God

Masjid Al-Aqsa and its surrounding area was the land of the Messengers of God. Many of the men of God settled in this blessed part of the world. Abraham migrated from his land and established a home here for part of his family, in following God's command. His first son Ishmael was to settle in Mecca of Arabia. His second son, Isaac, settled here, followed by Jacob and his children. It is from this land that Jacob's son, Joseph, was taken to Egypt as a slave. Lot also migrated to this land as God says about him and Abraham, "I saved Abraham and I also saved Lot and delivered them to the land that I had blessed and scattered many forms of goodness in it for the creation." [21:71]

This area is where Moses sought to bring back his people, "Moses said, 'O my people, enter the land that has been purified – Jerusalem and the surrounding area – which God has promised that you will enter, and fight the disbelievers in it.'" [5:21] David and Solomon's kingdoms were based here. Zachariah, John, Jesus and his mother Mary all came from this part of the world. Thus, the mosque and its surrounding area is blessed by God, as mentioned in 17:1. Muslims claim all the previous Messengers of God as their own. Muslims honor the Messengers of God and follow in their footsteps. Part of honoring the Messengers of God is honoring the land where they lived, preached and worshipped the One True God. This is why this land is so important to Muslims.

# The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ & Masjid Al-Aqsa

Approximately ten years into the Messenger Muhammad's ministry, God took him on a special and miraculous night journey. In a single night, he was taken from Mecca to Jerusalem in the company of the Angel Gabriel, and then from there to the heavens, to speak directly with God. This journey is what is being referred to in 17:1,

“God is exalted from everything not appropriate for Him. It is He who took His servant, Muhammad, on the night journey from the Sacred Mosque of Mecca, to the Further Mosque of Jerusalem. The Further Mosque whose surroundings God has blessed with fruit, crops and dwellings of messengers. In order to show Muhammad some of our signs which show God's power and ability. He is the One Who hears everything, no sound escapes Him, and the One who sees everything, nothing is hidden from Him.” This journey is also referenced in 53:13-18.





There in the Mosque of Jerusalem, the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ was given a special task of leading all of God's previous messengers in a prayer. After this special honor, he was taken by Gabriel from the Aqsa Mosque, and ascended to the heavens. They passed through each of the seven heavens, meeting and speaking with a number of God's Messengers along the way, including Adam, Moses, Jesus and Abraham. The climax of the journey is when Muhammad was granted an audience with God Himself. Here, God instructed Muhammad to teach people to observe the five daily ritual devotions, while the reward for them will be fifty. After this amazing and extraordinary experience, the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ returned to Mecca.

# The Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem: Virtues & Rewards

The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ was asked by one of his disciples which was the first mosque ever built on earth for the worship of the One True God. He replied that it was the Sacred Mosque in Mecca. He then asked which mosque was next. The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ replied that it was the Further Mosque in Jerusalem. He then asked how many years were between the construction of the two mosques. The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ replied that it was 40 years.

In a previous Ebook we discussed the significance of the Kaba. It is the first House of Worship dedicated to the One True God on earth 3:96. Its foundations were built by the angels of God and the first man Adam. It was then rebuilt by Abraham and his son Ishmael 2:127.

The Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem is the second House of Worship dedicated to the One True God on earth. Its foundations were built either by the angels of God, or by Adam the first man and his descendents. It too was rebuilt by Abraham. It was later rebuilt by Solomon. Within the complex stands the original direction of prayer and which the Messengers of God and their followers faced in worship. It is under the Dome of the Rock.



The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ said that to offer ritual devotions in the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem will multiply one's reward by 500. The reward for performing Salah in the Messenger's Mosque in Medina is multiplied by 1000. The reward for performing Salah in the Sacred Mosque in Mecca is multiplied by 100,000. These three sites are the holiest sites on earth and are the only locations where Muslims go for pilgrimage. This is why Muslims long to visit these three sites and worship God there.

At the start of the ministry of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, he was instructed to perform the prescribed ritual devotions twice a day in the morning and the evening. The command was to face Jerusalem as that was the practice of the previous Messengers of God. The early Muslim converts faced Jerusalem for their ritual devotions from the beginning Muhammad's ministry during the Meccan period, and for about two years of the Medinan period, a time period of 15 years. God then instructed Muhammad and the believers to face Mecca as a test of faith 2:143-144.



# **The Muslims Rule Jerusalem**

After the passing of Muhammad, his disciples were tasked to spread his message to the world and they took on this momentous task. The Muslims conquered Jerusalem in 636 during the era of the Caliph Umar shortly after the passing of Muhammad, the final Messenger of God. The Aqsa refers to the whole complex, which includes multiple structures, mosques and the Dome of the Rock. The Qibli mosque in the complex was built by Umar. The Dome of the Rock was built around 715 and covers a rock which is the original direction the messengers and their followers faced in worship. The Muslims maintained control over Jerusalem since that time and have allowed others, (ie Jews and Christians), to worship God in the Holy Land.

During the crusades there was a temporary loss of Jerusalem, but the area was returned to the Muslims. For the last 100 years, due to British colonialism, followed by the establishment of the colonial settler imperialis zionist state, the area has been in crisis. The zionist military illegal occupation has been directly responsible for the genocide and displacement of millions of local Muslim and Christian Palestinians for the last 75 years.

# The Return of Jesus

Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified, but rather was raised up to the heavens by God. God says in the Quran, "I cursed them because they proudly, but falsely, said, 'We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the Messenger of God.' They did not kill him as they claimed, nor did they crucify him; but it seemed as such to them. Those Jews who claimed to have killed him and those Christians who surrendered him over to them are in doubt and confusion regarding the matter. They have no knowledge, but make guesses that are of no worth against the truth. Truly, they did not kill Jesus nor crucify him. Instead, God saved Jesus from their plot and raised him in body and spirit to Himself. God is Mighty in His dominion and nothing can overpower Him. He is Wise in His planning, decisions and laws. There is not one of the People of the Scripture except that they will believe in Jesus before his death after he descends towards the end of time." [4:157-159]





It is in the area of the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem where Jesus resided, was raised from, and will descend once again. Muslims believe that towards the end of time when the False Messiah, antichrist, will appear claiming to be God, and many people will follow him, the believers will remain steadfast upon their faith and will eventually gather in the Holy Land in and around the Aqsa Mosque. Before a major battle between the faithful and the armies of the False Messiah, Jesus will descend in the area. Jesus will then fight and kill the False Messiah and defeated his armies of corruption.

The Aqsa Mosque is special to Muslims. It is part of the history and creed of Islam. It plays a major role in the stories of many Messengers of God and is mentioned many times in the Quran. It is also directly linked to the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ.



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