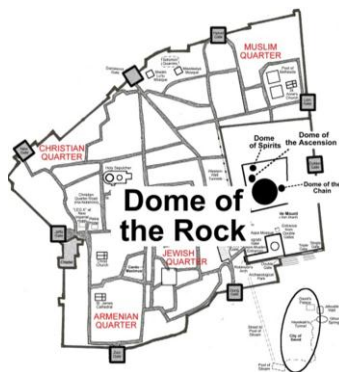


# Dome of the Rock

The Dome of the Rock is also called Qubbat Al-Sakhra. Caliph 'Abd al-Malik began construction on this building in 688 and finished it in 691 AD. 1300 years of tradition and recent archaeological evidence strongly suggests that the Dome of the Rock sets on the site of the destroyed Jewish Temple and Most Holy Place. This is the oldest existing Islamic building in the world. It is an imitation of a Byzantine martyrium, which was



an octagonal-shaped structure for honoring or preserving the relics of saints/martyrs. The construction of the Dome of the Rock was completed 1300 years ago in 691 by Caliph 'Abd al-Malik. It was designed to be a visual rival of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was the religious focus of the city when the Arabs conquered Jerusalem in 638. The golden dome is 66 feet in diameter. When the Muslims took the city of Jerusalem in 638 they realized the importance and impressiveness the Church of the Holy Sepulcher had inside the city. The Church had become the center of the city. The Arab historian Muqaddasi wrote in 985: *"is it not evident that 'Abd al-Malik, seeing the greatness of the martyrium of the Holy Sepulcher and its magnificence was moved lest it should dazzle the minds of the Muslims and hence erected above the Rock the dome which is now seen there?"* Some say it was from this rock that Muhammad ascended to heaven on a horse with the angel Gabriel. But, this is a 12th century tradition developed from a dream that involved Muhammad's night journey, as described in the Koran in Sura 17:1: *"Most gloried is the One who summoned His servant (Muhammad) during the night, from the Sacred Masjid (of Mecca) to the farthest place of prostration, whose surroundings we have blessed, in order to show him some of our signs. He is the Hearer, the Seer."* The Dome of the Rock was built 200 years before this tradition began to be told.



Koran verses cover the outside of the building. Inside glimmers with polished marble, stained glass windows, golden mosaic, woodwork..



Octagonal and covered with black, red and cream colored marble inlays. Glazed tiles of royal blue, white, yellow and green cover the walls (picture from Petra Hotel)