

the wood for the offering, and stood up and went to the place of which G-d had spoken to him.

(Genesis 22:1–3)

EXAM TIP

Remember the Western Wall is not part of the wall of the Temple.

FOR DISCUSSION

How do you think Jews might feel when they visited the Western Wall for the first time?

Today the Muslim Dome of the Rock 'Qubbat al-Sakhra' and the al-Aqsa mosque stand on the Temple Mount. All that remains at the original site of the Temple is the Western Wall, Ha-Kotel Ha-Ma'aravi, part of the retaining wall of the second Temple built by Herod the Great. The wall dates from the second century BCE. It is about 50 metres long and 20 metres high although a large part is under the ground.

Jews are requested not to walk on the Temple Mount itself in case, by accident, they should walk on the original site of the Holy of Holies in the Temple.

Many Jews go to the Western Wall to pray as it is as near as they can get to the original Temple. Many



The Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

boys are also brought to the Wall to celebrate their Bar Mitzvah. People place prayers on folded pieces of paper in the cracks of the Wall.

The rabbis said that 'the divine Presence never departs from the Western Wall'.

ICT FOR RESEARCH

Visit <http://english.thekotel.org> and see the Western Wall live on a webcam.



The Western Wall.

Masada

Jewish visitors to Israel may also visit Horvot Mezada – ‘Ruins of Masada’, an ancient fortress in south-eastern Israel on a mountain near the south-west coast of the Dead Sea.

After the fall of the Temple (70 CE), the people at the Masada garrison were all that was left of Jewish rule. They refused to surrender to the Romans and 1000 men, women and children held out for two years against 15,000 Roman soldiers besieging the garrison. The Romans built a ramp of earth and stones to reach the stronghold, where they had to make a breach in the walls. The Jews chose death rather than become Roman slaves and, led by Eleazar ben Jair, took their own lives (15 April 73 CE). Only two women and five children – who had hidden in a water conduit – survived. When the Romans finally managed to break down the walls on 15 April 73 CE the Jews committed suicide. Many thousands of people visit Masada every year to remember this event.

A synagogue and a mikveh have been found on Masada and are the earliest in Israel. Masada has come to be a symbol of Jewish heroism, and is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Israel.



Map showing the location of Masada.

Yad Vashem

The Holocaust Memorial, Yad Vashem, is just outside Jerusalem.

In My house and within My walls I will give them a place of honour and renown ... eternal renown [a 'yad Vashem'] I will give them, which will never be terminated.

(Isaiah 56:5)

Yad Vashem, ‘a place and a name’, which is run by the Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority, was set up in 1953 by the Knesset (Israeli government) to commemorate the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War, the Jewish communities which were destroyed in the attempt to wipe out the name and culture of Israel as well as the heroism of the Jews and the Righteous Among the Nations.

The Hall of Remembrance is a solemn building where visitors can pay their respects to the memories of the dead. On the floor are the names of the six death camps and of 22 concentration camps throughout Europe. An eternal light marks the place where ashes brought from the various crematoria are buried.

The Children’s Memorial is an underground cavern, where yahrzeit (memorial candles) are reflected infinitely in many mirrors. Approximately 1.5 million Jewish children perished during the Holocaust.



Holocaust sculpture at Yad Vashem.