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**East
The East Side
and its
Significance**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

East, the East Side, and its Significance.

Topics.

- The eastern side of the Euphrates River and Assyria.
- The significance of the east.
- The east, west, north, south, and their symbolisms.
- Overview, of the east, west, north, and south.
- Burnt offerings and the east side of the altar.
- Events concerning the east.
- Events concerning the east and the west.
- Cast the bird's crop on the east side of the altar.

THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE EUPHRATES RIVER AND ASSYRIA

On the eastern side of the Euphrates is ancient Assyria, which is today broken up into the following countries:

- Baghdad (ancient Babylon).
- North western Iran (ancient Persia).
- Northern Iraq.
- North-eastern Syria.
- South eastern Turkey.
- Russia, China, India, and Mohammedan.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EAST

The east is significant for the following reasons:

- The sun rises from the east.
- It is from the east that God's glory often manifests itself.
- The garden of Eden, was planted in the east. (Gen. 2:8).
- The blood of the bull was sprinkled on the east side of the mercy seat. (Lev 16:14).
- Judah camped on the east toward the sunrise. (Num. 2:3).
- The cherubim stood at the entrance of the east gate of the House of the LORD. (Ezek. 10:19).
- The glory of the LORD stood on the east side of the city. (Ezek. 11:23) (Ezek. 43:1-2).

- The people of Israel entered the temple by the east gate. (Ezek. 43:4).

There are many other reasons that East is significant, but one of the greatest is that the river spoken of in the following verse is seen following toward the east:

- **Ezekiel 47:1:** Then he brought me (Ezekiel) back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

The significance of this is that east of Jerusalem are the nations of:

- Moab.
- Ammon.
- Edom.
- Assyria.
- Babylon.
- Syria.
- Iraq etc.

This means that the river flowing from under the throne of God toward the east can be, seen as a symbol of the Spirit and the Gospel going out to the Gentile nations and establishing God’s Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy, and peace, not only in the land of Israel and the Middle East, but out into the entire world.

THE EAST, WEST, NORTH, SOUTH, AND THEIR SYMBOLISMS

The compass today, is set in the following way, and we orientate ourselves by facing north.

North
West East
South

In contrast to this the point of orientation for those in the ancient world was east. They orientated themselves by facing east.

East
South North
West

For those in the ancient world the east was before them and the west behind them. The reason the east was given prime importance during ancient times is most likely because the sun rises in the east and begins the new day.

- The garden placed in the east (Gen. 2:8) was a place of safety, security, and unity with God, and therefore represented peace with God.
- After sin God drove Adam and Eve toward the east (Gen. 3:24), Cain moved eastward (Gen. 4:16) and later the entire human race migrated from the east to the land of Shinar and the beginning of Nimrod’s kingdom. (Gen. 11:1-2). In these verses the east lead away from the Garden of Eden and so lead away from safety, security, and unity with God and therefore the east in this context represented alienation from God.

- Ezekiel, in his vision sees the glory of the God of Israel coming from the east. (Ezek. 43:1-2). Here the east represents the place that God's glory flows from.

These verses and many others like them show that the symbolism of the east is dependent upon the context, that it is used in.

THE WEST

Depending upon the context the west can symbolise something positive or negative. To the west of the land of Israel is the sea, which in the book of Daniel represents powerful worldly kingdoms destruction and death (Dan. 7:2-3), added to this the sun sets in the west and therefore symbolises a place of darkness. However, Abram left the east and went to Canaan in the west in obedience to God. (Gen. 11:31). When the Israelites were set free from their Babylonian enemies in the east, they travelled west to the land of Israel and the LORD Himself travelled with them. (Ezek. 43:2-5).

Though the tabernacle (and later the temple) faced east, one had to move toward the west to enter it and when the Israelites worshipped in the temple they faced west, and had the rising sun in the east behind them. In the context of these verses the west symbolises restored unity with God; a return to the Garden of Eden (i.e., the presence of God), and divine blessing.

THE NORTH

Depending upon the context the north can symbolise something positive or negative. Jeremiah talks of the enemy of God's people coming from the north bringing disaster upon Jerusalem and Judah. (Jer. 1:14-15) and Ezekiel speaks of Gog, with all his hordes (enemies of God), coming from the uttermost parts of the north against the people of Israel. (Ezek. 38:6). In this context of these verses the north represents disaster and destruction. However, Isaiah, in his vision implies that God's celestial dwelling place is in the north (Isa. 14:13), and Job, pictures Gods golden splendour and awesome majesty coming out from the north. (Job 37:22), showing the symbolism of the north depends upon the context it is used in.

THE SOUTH

Depending on the context the south can represent something good or bad. The wilderness is a place where life struggles to survive and nothing prospers, and Egypt, which greatly opposed God's power and oppressed His people is south of Israel, so in this sense the south symbolises enemies of God and oppression. However, the south was also the place where the LORD appeared to Moses; went with Him to Egypt; liberated His people and appeared to them on Mount Sinai, showing that depending on the context the south can represent something positive or something negative.

OVERVIEW, OF THE EAST, WEST, NORTH, AND SOUTH

Each of the four cardinal directions, east, west, north, and south can represent evil or good, highlighting the truth that good and bad is present everywhere and that God's saving presence is always accessible no matter which corner of the world a person is dwelling in.

- **Psalm 139:7-12:** Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! ⁹If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," ¹²even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

BURNT OFFERINGS AND THE EAST SIDE OF THE ALTAR

The ashes of the altar of burnt offering were placed at the east side of the brazen altar of burnt offerings. The most likely reason for this was because the tabernacle faced east which means that the east side was the furthest side away from the entrance to the tabernacle and the Most Holy Place which was at the west end of the outer court.

The Most Holy Place signifies the cleanness and purity of Christ which means that the symbolism here is that sinners should not presume to approach God, except through His way of salvation, should anyone attempt to do so they will be banished from His presence (i.e., placed on the ash heap).

EVENTS CONCERNING THE EAST

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The Garden of Eden was in the east.

- **Genesis 2:8:** The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

After Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden Cherubim (celestial beings) were placed on the east side of the Garden.

- **Genesis 3:24:** He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (Gen. 3:24).

After murdering Abel Cain fled from the LORD to the east.

- **Genesis 4:16:** Cain went away from the presence of the LORD and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

When Lot separated from Abraham he settled in the east.

- **Genesis 13:11:** Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east, thus they separated from each other.

God promised Jacob (Israel) that his offspring would spread abroad from the west, east, north, and south.

- **Genesis 28:14:** Your (Jacob) offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

The high priest sprinkled the blood on the east side of the mercy seat.

- **Leviticus 16:14:** He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

In Ezekiel's vision the temple faces east; its gate faced east; God's glory comes from the east and enters the temple from the east and the water of the river flows from the temple toward the east.

- **Ezekiel 43:1-2:** Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing east. ²And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east.
- **Ezekiel 43:4:** The glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east.
- **Ezekiel 47:8:** He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water will become fresh.

The wise men who saw the star that led them to Jesus came from the east.

- **Matthew 2:1-2:** After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.
- **Matthew 2:9:** After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

Added to these:

- If one is travelling toward the east they are moving toward the sunrise.

EVENTS CONCERNING THE EAST AND THE WEST

Jesus told his disciples many in the Kingdom of God will come from the east and west.

- **Matthew 8:11:** I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. (also, Luke 13:29).

Jesus' return will be as the lightning comes from the east and west.

- **Matthew 24:27:** For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

CAST THE BIRD'S CROP ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE ALTAR

- **Leviticus 1:16:** He shall remove its crop with its contents (feather in KJV) and cast it beside the altar on the east side, in the place for ashes.

When an animal was offered its skin was flayed off before it was put on the fire on the altar, likewise the feathers of the bird were removed from its body, before it was placed on the altar. This is the logical sense to be drawn from the context, since it is hardly likely that birds would be burnt with the feathers and cause a terrible smell on the altar.

The place of the ashes: as the offering burned on the altar the ashes fell through the grate, to prevent them piling up under the altar they were daily removed with shovels to the east side of the altar (except on certain holy days). When the heap became far too large, it was removed in vessels appropriated for this purpose to a spot without the camp.

- **Exodus 27:3:** You shall make pots for it (the altar) to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and fire pans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze.
- **Leviticus 4:12:** The rest of the bull—he (the priest) shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, to the ash heap, and shall burn it up on a fire of wood. On the ash heap it shall be burned up.
- **Leviticus 6:10-11:** The priest shall put on his linen garment and put his linen undergarment on his body, and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar and put them beside the altar (on the east side). ¹¹Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place.

The ashes were placed on the east side of the altar for the east side was the furthest place from the Most Holy Place which was in the west end of the outer court. The symbolism signifies the cleanness and purity of Christ and that sinners should not presume to approach God, except through His way of salvation for if they do, they will be banished from His presence (i.e., placed on the ash heap).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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