

“East” – A Prophetic Symbol

Introductory Thoughts

The Hebrew word for “east” is *kedem* or *qedem*.

- Anciently, it meant “in front of.”
 - When facing the rising sun, it was:
 - “In front of,” meaning the direction of “east” [right was south; left, north; and behind, west].
- This was tied to the rising sun.
 - It symbolized deliverance from darkness
 - A new beginning

As God chose to *decree* a seven-day clock, representing a week, He **adopted** *kedem* as a prophetic symbol for:

1. Life
2. Light
3. Newness
4. Deliverance (later)

“*And the Lord God planted a garden **eastward** in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had **formed**” (Genesis 2:8).*

- The Septuagint translates this place as “Paradise in Eden.”
- What it is “east of” is not defined in this pre-flood world.
 - But that Garden was “eastward” (*miqqedem*), and this direction is noted!
 - Then comes another **east** reference related to one of the four Garden rivers:

“*And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth **toward the east** of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates” (Genesis 2:14).*

- God chose to introduce directional messages related to:
 - The Garden – where life was given to man
 - The River – that brought it water to the east
- Why did He describe this?
 - We can capture more insight through noting its *continued* importance.

Adam and Eve were placed “**east**” of the Garden when driven from that “home” (Genesis 3:24).

On the Day of Atonement the blood was taken into the Most Holy Place first on behalf of Aaron himself as the High Priest, then for the people (Leviticus 16:11-15).

- This blood was sprinkled on the **east side** of the mercy seat

- And before the ark/mercy seat on the **east side**
- This signified the cleansing and deliverance from sin that the Messiah would bring.
- Immediately – east part of mercy seat
- Future – east of the ark towards the rising sun

The Tribe of Judah was encamped to the **east** of the tabernacle.

- It was through them that the Messiah or Deliverer would come (Isaiah 11:1).
- Jesse, David’s father, was of the lineage of Judah.
- The “standard” or symbol of the Tribe of Judah (a Lion) was to be placed “**on the east side**” of the camp “toward the rising of the sun” (Numbers 2:3).

Many other references are made related to the “rising sun” (Numbers 34:15) and the east in the Old Testament.

- When *qedem* was used with the name of God, *elohiym*, intriguingly, the “in front of” or “east” suddenly meant “eternal God.”
- Malachi recorded the words of “*the Lord of host*”: “*But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings*” (Malachi 4:2).
- As east was simply viewed as “toward the rising sun”:
 - It also drew a higher and more sacred intimation.
 - Deliverance would arise with healing or restoration in its wings.
- In Revelation 7:2 an angel “*ascended from the east*,” ordering the four angels with the “winds of strife” to hold them:
 - Until that healing or restoration was complete, i.e.:
 - The sealing

The Tabernacle and later the Temple entrance faced the **east**.

- In Solomon’s, and later, Herod’s Temple, **a straight line** could be made from the Most Holy.

Through the:

Holy Place

Temple court entrance

East gate of Jerusalem

Over the top of Mount of Olives

East – towards the rising sun

The gate of Jerusalem had beautiful relief work, typifying the city of Shushan.

- The gate was called the “Gate Beautiful” (Acts 3:2, 10) or the “Gate of Susa” (history).
- It commemorated “Deliverance.”
 - By Cyrus (of Persia when Shushan would be its capital) from Babylon
 - By Esther (who lived in Shushan) from Haaman’s deceptions

Thus, east, again, symbolized “deliverance.” The city of Shushan became a symbol for the City of Deliverance. That would later be seen as the “New Jerusalem” in Revelation.

- This gate was so sacred to the Jewish people in recognition of that city.
- They had special “keepers of the gate” (I Chronicles 31:14, Nehemiah 3:29) guarding it.

Christ, it is believed, entered Jerusalem at the onset of the Passion Week through that gate.

- He was to be the Deliverer.

The Fascinating Story of Ezekiel

God’s glory is about to depart from the Jewish temple – forever – (save for Christ’s actual presence at the first advent).

- Coals from the temple are scattered over the city (Ezekiel 10:2).
- This denotes either purification or, as here, final judgment (Revelation 8:5; cf. Deuteronomy 4:24).
- God’s glory journeys in a defined route as it departs:
 - From above the cherubim
 - To the Threshold of the temple
 - Moves to the “**east gate**” of the city
 - At this gate the wicked leaders of the city are judged.
 - God gives at this **east gate** His everlasting covenant promise (Ezekiel 11:16:20)
 - Restoration will come: “they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (vs 20).
- Glory moves to the Mount of Olives – “**east of the city**” (Ezekiel 11:22).
 - Now
 - Ezekiel’s vision of the departure of the Shekina stops.
 - God’s glory symbolically awaits “**in the east**” to return (which he implied in the covenant promise to His people and church).

The glory does return – in beautiful imagery of the second advent and restoration of man.

- Ezekiel 40–48
 - Concludes his prophetic book
 - *Yahweh* returns to the temple
 - Establishes His residence in the city
- This fulfillment vision begins on the 10th day of the first month.
 - That is the day the Passover Lamb is chosen (Exodus 12:3).
 - Ezekiel is taken to a high mountain
 - Where he sees a city to the south
 - A divine being with a measuring stick prepares to take him around the temple to measure it (Ezekiel 40–42)
 - They approach the temple through the “**east gate.**”

Then an awesome picture comes:

- From that eastern gate
- He sees “the glory of God” approaching **from the east**.
- The glory of God enters the temple “by way of the **eastern gate**.”

This is a beautiful depiction of the Latter Rain entering the hearts of God’s people at the end of time.

Finally, on the Sabbath of the New Moon (Feast of Trumpets):

- The eastern gate which had been closed for six days
- Is to be opened.
- The Prince will enter there (Ezekiel 46:1-2)
- To give inheritance (vss 16-18; 47:12; 48:29) to His people.

The name of the city?

“The Lord is there” (Ezekiel 48:35).

Thus, **east**

- Is the direction of:
 - Hope
 - Restoration
 - Movement of God’s glory
- *“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be”* (Matthew 24:27).
- In prophecy: east \cong deliverance.

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