

Facing the East



Some Questions

- Are there Biblical reasons for doing it?
- Is it of such great importance?
- Is God not everywhere?

Is God Only in the East?

- "But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth" (Exodus 9:16)
- "He comes from the north as golden splendor; With God is awesome majesty" (Job 37:22)

Is God Only in the East?

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where
can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are
there. If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me"
(Psalm 139:7-10)

Is God Only in the East?

- The Church is not trying to confine God to the East only
- The Church believes that God is Omnipresent (present everywhere at the same time)
- The Church believes that while the Lord Christ walked the earth, He was still in the bosom of the Father in heaven and He still filled all the earth

So Then, Why the East?

- Why is special importance placed on the East?
- Why not the north, south or west?
- Why any direction at all?

In the Old Testament

- In which direction did the Israelites face in the Old Testament?
- They prayed toward the west because Man was banished from the presence of God
- What are the reasons, then, that we face the East now?

1. Paradise was in the East

"The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed" (Genesis 2:8)

- When we look toward the East, we remember the Paradise we left and the Paradise we hope to return to
- We remember our condition before the Fall, that of sinless Man and we struggle to return to this condition again

2. The Lord Christ was Born in the East

- When we face the East we remember the Lord's visit to our earth
- We remember His Incarnation on our behalf
- We remember the Nativity scene with the shepherds and the wise men in Bethlehem
- We remember His great humility

3. The Wise Men Came from the East

"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem" (Matthew 2:1)

- We remember the journey of these men and how diligently they sought this New King
- We remember the gifts they presented
- We are reminded that "wise men still seek Him"

4. The Star Rose in the East

"For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2)

- I remember the Lord's guidance and direction in my life
- I submit to Him and say "where He leads me, I will follow"
- I am reminded that He is the Lord of all creation, the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them

5. The Second Coming

"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be"

(Matthew 24:27)

- I remind myself to be ready to meet the Lord
- I remind myself that my days on this earth are numbered
- I remind myself that I have another home and that I am here only temporarily

6. The Sun Rises in the East

"From the rising of the sun to its going down The LORD's name is to be praised"
(Psalm 113:3)

- We are reminded of the Resurrection: "very early in the morning"
- I am reminded that the Lord is the light of the world
- I am reminded that the Lord is the "The Sun of Righteousness" who "shall arise With healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2)

7. Salvation was Accomplished in the East

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12:32)

- I remember the love demonstrated on the Cross
- I remember the perfect Sacrifice offered for my sake
- "Truly this Man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39)

8. The East is the Direction of Accepting Christ

- In the Sacrament of Baptism, the parents renounce Satan while facing west.
- Then, they accept the true faith on behalf of their child while facing East.

9. The Virgin Mary

"Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. And the LORD said to me, 'This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut'"

(Ezekiel 44:1-2)

Review

1. Paradise was in the East
2. The Lord Christ was born in the East
3. Wise Men came from the East
4. The star rose in the East
5. The Second Coming will be from the East
6. The Sun rises in the East
7. Salvation was accomplished in the East
8. Accepting Christ in the direction of the East
9. The Virgin Mary