



# **Handbook of Bible manners and customs: Illustrated by one hundred and sixty-eight engravings**

*James M Freeman*

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## **Handbook of Bible manners and customs: Illustrated by one hundred and sixty-eight engravings**

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Bible is adapted to all nations, it is in many respects an Oriental book. It represents the modes of thought and the peculiar customs of a people who, in their habits, widely differ from us. One who lived among them for many years has graphically said: Modes, customs, usages, all that you can set down to the score of the national, the social, or the conventional, are precisely as different from yours as the east is different from the west. They sit when you stand; they lie when you sit; they do to the head what you do to the feet; they use fire when you use water; you shave the beard, they shave the head; you move the hat, they touch the breast; you use the lips in salutation, they touch the forehead and the cheek; your house looks outwards, their house looks inwards; you go out to take a walk, they go up to enjoy the fresh air; you drain your land, they sigh for water; you bring your daughters out, they keep their wives and daughters in; your ladies go barefaced through the streets, their ladies are always covered. The Oriental customs of to-day are, mainly, the same as those of ancient times. It is said by a recent writer that the Classical world has passed away. We must reproduce it if we wish to see it as it was. While this fact must be remembered in the interpretation of some New Testament passages, it is nevertheless true that many ancient customs still exist in their primitive integrity. If a knowledge of Oriental customs is essential to a right understanding of numerous Scripture passages, it is a cause of rejoicing that these customs are so stereotyped in their character that we have but to visit the Bible lands of the present day to see the modes of life of patriarchal times. The design of this volume is to illustrate the Bible by an explanation of the Oriental customs to which it refers. The Bible becomes more than ever a real book when we

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