

6 Ephesus

Names (also known as)

Ephesus - Greek: "Ἐφεσος Ephesos.

Turkish: Efes.

Etymology

Strong's Concordance - Ephesos: Ephesus, a city in Asia Minor. Original Word: "Ἐφεσος, ου, ἡ. Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine.

Location/Description

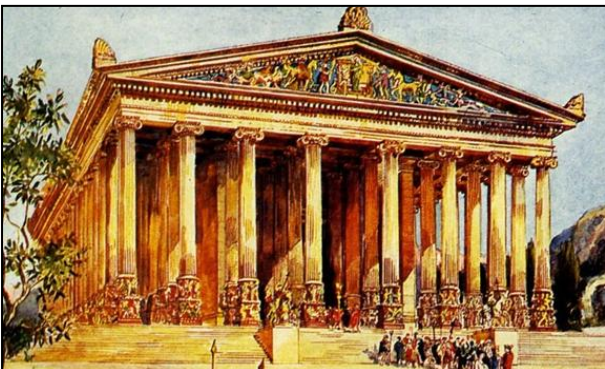
Ephesus was an ancient Greek city on the coast of Ionia, three kilometres southwest of present-day Selçuk in İzmir Province, Turkey. In its time it was the capital of the Roman province Asia.



Notable Features

Diana's Temple

Dian'a, Latin (Greek, Artemis). The twin sister of Apollo, the sun-god. She is the moon goddess. Diana was called the goddess of hunting, chastity, marriage, and nocturnal incantations.



The services were performed by women, and eunuchs, and with a high priest. The great temple at Ephesus built in 356 BC, and grove

at Daphne were the most noted shrines of this worship. The image at Ephesus was said to have fallen out of heaven complete! The great temple was 425 by 220 feet, and had 127 columns of marble, each 60 feet high.



All that remains of the temple of Diana today

Commercial Agora

This market area is known as the “Square Agora” because of its dimensions 360 feet square. It arose in the Hellenistic period and was surrounded on all sides by arched shops about 40 feet deep. It is located next to the harbor and was the city's main commercial center. It is quite possible that Paul worked here with Priscilla and Aquila in their tent-making business.

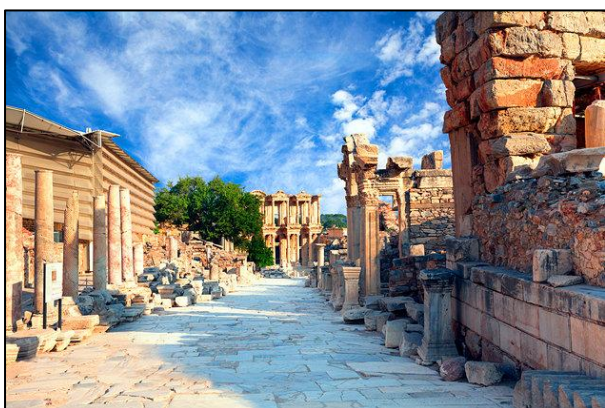


The Theatre

The famous theatre, originally seating 25,000 people, was built in the Hellenistic period and was renovated by several Roman emperors. Designed for theatrical performances, later alterations allowed gladiatorial contests to be held here. When Paul was accused of dishonouring Artemis and her temple, the enraged mob gathered together in this theatre (Acts 19:23-41).



The Library



Brief History

Ephesus was built in the 10th century BC on the site of the former Arzawan capital by Attic and Ionian Greek colonists. During the Classical Greek era it was one of the twelve cities of the Ionian League. The city flourished after it came under the control of the Roman Republic in 129 BC. According to estimates Ephesus had a population of 33,600 to 56,000 in the Roman period, making it the third largest city of Roman Asia Minor after Sardis and Alexandria Troas.

The city was famed for the Temple of Artemis (completed around 550 BC), one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In 268 AD, the Temple was destroyed or damaged in a raid by the Goths. It may have been rebuilt or repaired but this is uncertain, as its later history is not clear. Emperor Constantine I rebuilt much of the city and erected new public baths. Following the Edict of Thessalonica from emperor Theodosius I, what remained of the temple was destroyed in 401 AD by a mob led by St. John Chrysostom. The town was partially destroyed by an earthquake in 614 AD. The city's importance as a commercial centre declined as the harbor

was slowly silted up by the Cayster River (Küçük Menderes).

Ephesus was one of the seven ecclesias of Asia cited in the Book of Revelation. The Gospel of John may have been written here. The city was the site of several 5th century Christian Councils (see Council of Ephesus). It is also the site of a large gladiators' graveyard.

The apostle John, according to tradition, spent many years in Ephesus, where he died and was buried.

A part of the site of this once famous city is now occupied by a small Turkish village, Ayasaluk, which is regarded as a corruption of the two Greek words, *hagios theologos*; i.e., “the holy divine.”

The ruins of Ephesus are a favourite international and local tourist attraction.

Scriptural References

Many Jews took up their residence in this city, and here the seeds of the gospel were sown immediately after Pentecost (**Acts 2:9; 6:9**). At the close of his second missionary journey (about AD 51), when Paul was returning from Greece to Syria (**Acts 18:18-21**), he first visited this city. He remained, however, for only a short time, as he was hastening to keep the feast, probably of Pentecost, at Jerusalem; but he left Aquila and Priscilla behind him to carry on the work of spreading the gospel.

During his third missionary journey Paul reached Ephesus from the “upper coasts” (**Acts 19:1**), i.e., from the inland parts of Asia Minor, and tarried here for about three years; and so successful and abundant were his labours that “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (**Acts 19:10**). Probably during this period the seven ecclesias of the Apocalypse were founded, not by Paul's personal labours, but by missionaries whom he may have sent out from Ephesus, and by the influence of converts returning to their homes.

On his return journey from Macedonia, Paul touched at Miletus, some 30 miles south of Ephesus (**Acts 20:15**), and sent for the elders of Ephesus to meet him there. He delivered to them that touching farewell charge recorded in **Acts 20:18-35**. Ephesus is not again mentioned till near the close of Paul's life, when he writes to Timothy exhorting him to “abide still at Ephesus” (**1 Tim. 1:3**).

Two of Paul's companions, Trophimus and Tychicus, were probably natives of Ephesus (**Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Tim. 4:12**). In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul speaks of Onesiphorus as having served him in many things at Ephesus (**2 Tim. 1:18**). He also “sent Tychicus to Ephesus” (**2 Tim. 4:12**), probably to attend to the interests of the ecclesia there. Ephesus is twice mentioned in the Apocalypse (**Rev. 1:11; 2:1**).

“Apocalypse was given to the end that the servants of Deity who are keeping their garments might be able to discern the signs of the times preceding the apocalypse of Christ; and the real nature of things extant in their several generations. No believer, understanding this prophecy, could be seduced into fellowship with the clerical institutions of the world; because he would see them in all their native deformity and sin.” (John Thomas – Eureka)

The Ephesians lost their first love

Timothy's part in Ephesus seems to have been successfully performed, if we are to judge by the message the ecclesia received from the Lord Jesus, through John in Patmos, about 35 years afterwards. “I know thy works and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil: (these were the ‘some’ referred to by Paul) and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted.” The career of the ecclesia during all these years had thus been a satisfactory one, as regarded their repudiation of the “some” who sought to entangle them in irrelevant and profitless controversies about the law and other things; and, as regards their perseverance in the course required by their profession, as the servants of Christ. In this we have an example.

But there is another feature in the case of Ephesus to be noted, which brings warning with it. It is this: “nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” This is an intimation that the good things commended in the early career of the ecclesia had ceased to be characteristic of it. It is not that as a matter of sentiment, their enthusiasm had cooled with the progress of time and trial, which is natural enough; but that the fruits—the “works” that spring from faith—had abated from a weariness in well-

doing against which Paul had warned the believers. That this is what is meant is evident from the counsel with which the reproof is associated. “Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works.” They had stopped doing the first works, which was “leaving their first love.” “Love” and “works” are synonymous in the vocabulary of the spirit. A sentimental love, unaccompanied by obedience, is not accepted. “This is the love of God,” says John, “that we keep His commandments” (1 John 5:3), which is equivalent to the declaration of Christ, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). The Ephesian believers had slackened in their obedience. In this they had left their first love. Herein is a warning for all believers of all ages:

“...what may not our danger be who have no living apostle to recall us to our duty? Against this danger there is only one secure defence, and that is, holding daily interviews with the spirit in the reading of “what it saith” in its appointed channels of utterance, viz., the writings of the holy men of old who were moved by it. By this, as Peter intended in the writing of his epistles (2 Peter 1:15; 3:1,2), we shall be enabled to have “these things always in remembrance.” Giving, thus, an earnest heed to the things we have heard, we shall not let them slip (Heb. 2:1). Continuing in prayer without ceasing, we shall be built up in our most holy faith, and strengthened to that continual abounding in the work of the Lord, which shall secure for us at the coming of the Lord the commendation he bestowed on the ecclesia at Ephesus, without its accompanying rebuke of evil omen.” - The Christadelphian: Volume 11, pg. 64 (1874)

Sources

Christadelphian : Volume 11 (1874)
 Wikipedia
 Smith's Bible Dictionary
 Strong's Concordance
 Eureka – Bro. John Thomas

(Compiler – Ron Leadbetter)