



World Christian Fellowship

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Seven Churches Ephesus History

A Roman writer called Ephesus as, The Light of Asia.

Ephesus was the Gateway of Asia. One of its distinctions, laid down by statute, was that when the Roman proconsul came to take up office as governor of Asia, he must disembark at Ephesus and enter his province there.

For all the travellers and the trade,

- from the Cayster and the Maeander Valleys,
- from Galatia,
- from the Euphrates and
- from Mesopotamia, Ephesus was the highway to Rome.

In later times, when the Christians were brought from Asia to be flung to the lions in the arena in Rome, Ignatius called Ephesus the Highway of the Martyrs.

In the New Testament era it was the fourth greatest city in the world, after Rome, Alexandria and Antioch of Syria.

Although Pergamum was the official capital of the province of Asia, Ephesus was the greatest and largest city in the province, with a population of 300,000.

It claimed the title, “The first and greatest metropolis of Asia.”

Ephesus is now located about five to seven miles inland from the Aegean Sea in the Cayster River valley.

The harbour, which frequently silted up, made Ephesus the most favourable seaport in the province of Asia.

Three great roads converged on Ephesus.

1. One brought the east trade by way of Colosse and Laodicea.
2. The road from Galatia came via Sardis and brought the trade of Asia Minor.
3. The third important road was to the north.

During Biblical times it possessed the greatest harbour in the country. It lay at the entrance of the Cayster River and valley. All roads were centred on the city and passed through some of the other towns that contained the churches. It was rightly called the gateway of Asia. It was laid down by statute that when the Roman proconsul came to take up his office he must embark at Ephesus and enter his province through Ephesus. Later when Christians were sent to Rome to be executed

Ignatius one of the Early Church Fathers called this main road the Highway of the Martyrs.

Ephesus was called a free city. This meant that within its boundaries it was self-governing. It was exempted from ever having Roman soldiers garrisoned. It was also an assize town where Roman governors held court there.

Ephesus was the chief commercial city of the province and the center of the mother goddess worship of western Asia.

The Temple of Diana (Artemis).

The Temple of Artemis (or Diana, according to her Roman name) at Ephesus ranked as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. As the twin sister of Apollo and the daughter of Zeus, Artemis was known variously as the moon goddess, the goddess of hunting, and the patroness of young girls. The temple at Ephesus housed the multi-breasted image of Artemis which was reputed to have come directly from Zeus.

Acts 19:35,

The temple of Artemis in Paul's day was supported by 127 columns, each of them 60 meters (197 feet) high.

The Ephesians took great pride in this grand edifice. During the Roman period, they promoted the worship of Artemis by minting coins with the inscription, ‘Diana of Ephesus.’”

Originally build from the plans of Chersiphron from Crete and his son Metagenes during the first half of the 6th Century B.C.

The Lydian King Croesus, who ruled from 560 B.C. to 547 B.C., was most famous for funding the rebuilding of the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. Artemis was the goddess of the hunt, chastity, childbirth, wild animals and the wilderness.

In 356 B.C., a crazed man named Herostratus burned down the Temple of Artemis. The Ephesians rebuilt the temple even bigger. It was estimated to be four times larger than the Parthenon and became known as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

The temple was four times as large as the Parthenon.

Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23–79) said the temple was constructed on marshy soil to safeguard it against earthquakes.



“For over a thousand years this goddess with her temple provided a focal point for the rich religious, economic, and cultural life of her worshippers. Now hardly one stone can be seen of one of the most famous buildings in the world, the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. Built on marshy ground not far from the Cayster River, it arose on a site occupied from time to time by several temples of which at least one dates from pre-Greek days. It faced west, toward the sea and the setting sun. Pliny the Younger tells us that the columns in front of the temple were carved with notable events in the life of the Greeks and that the statue of Artemis stood in the inner sanctuary. Some of the statuary from this temple is displayed in the New

Hofburg Museum in Vienna. This temple was the first in the world to be constructed entirely of marble.”

One of the items recovered from the temple site was a sculptured marble column “drum,” which was found at the south-west corner of the later temple—it is now in the British Museum.

The Hellenistic temple which Paul saw was destroyed in A.D. 262.

It was to this temple Alexander came. The Macedonian wanted his name carved on one of the 127 pillars. He offered all the riches of his eastern campaign for the privilege. The city fathers turned down the offer. But nobody refused Alexander. The Ephesians did. They talked him into a calm acceptance by saying ‘If we put the name of another god on her temple it will upset her.’ So, the mightiest mortal on earth couldn’t even buy the privilege to have his name on a pillar in the temple of a god.



The Greek goddess Artemis, in Greek mythology, one of the principal goddesses, counterpart of the Roman goddess Diana.

She was the daughter of the god Zeus and Leto and the twin sister of the god Apollo.

She was chief hunter to the gods and goddess of hunting and of wild animals, especially bears.

Artemis was also the goddess of childbirth, of nature, and of the harvest. As the moon goddess, she was sometimes identified with the goddesses Selene and Hecate. Although traditionally the friend and protector of youth, especially young women, Artemis prevented the Greeks from sailing to Troy during the Trojan War until they sacrificed a maiden to her.

According to some accounts, just before the sacrifice, she rescued the victim, Iphigenia. Like Apollo, Artemis was armed with a bow and arrows, which she often used to punish mortals who angered her. In other legends, she is praised for giving young women who died in childbirth a swift and painless death. One of the functions of Artemis was to grant fertility to barren women. One of the many statues of Artemis is found the museum at Ephesus, alongside is one of them.

She derived from those early manifestations of religious belief, the mother-goddess figures to be found from Asia Minor to the Cyclades, and westward to Sicily. The embodiment of the female principle, she represented not only fertility but resurrection in the shape of new birth, the eternal return of life to the earth and, as found in a number of early carvings.



In the second century the temple was again destroyed this time by an earthquake, but local records show that the influence of Christianity was so great that the temple remained a ruin which can be seen as such today.

The Agora.

The agora is the open marketplace and was of vital importance in any Greek or Roman city.

Some shops in the Agora have been identified as belonging to silversmiths—also an inscribed lintel mentioning Augustus Caesar.

The Theatre.

This gives us some impression of the elegance of ancient Ephesus in the time of Paul and other early Christians.

Originally built during the Hellenistic Age, it was expanded during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41–54) and was completed during the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98–117).

This massive structure measured 495 feet in diameter and seated an estimated 25,000 people. It was cut into Mount Pion between A.D. 41 and 98.

Paul was restrained from going there when a riot ensued caused by Demetrius a silversmith who was losing trade as the whole city seemed to be turning to Christ and throwing away charms and icons. (Acts 19).



The Harbour.

Because of lack the of tides in the Mediterranean to clear out the debris, the harbour tended to silt up. The area can be detected at the end of the Arcadian Way.

It was probably from this harbour that Paul set sail for Macedonia after the riot (**Acts 20:1**), stopping first at Troas (**2 Corinthians 2:12**).

Library



The building is made of very good marble and decorated with figures of Eros, Nike, rosettes and garlands in relief. The building reflects the characteristics of the age of Emperor Hadrian. The facade is two-storeyed. On the lower storey, the columns with Corinthian capitals are placed on a 21 meters long podium reached by nine steps.

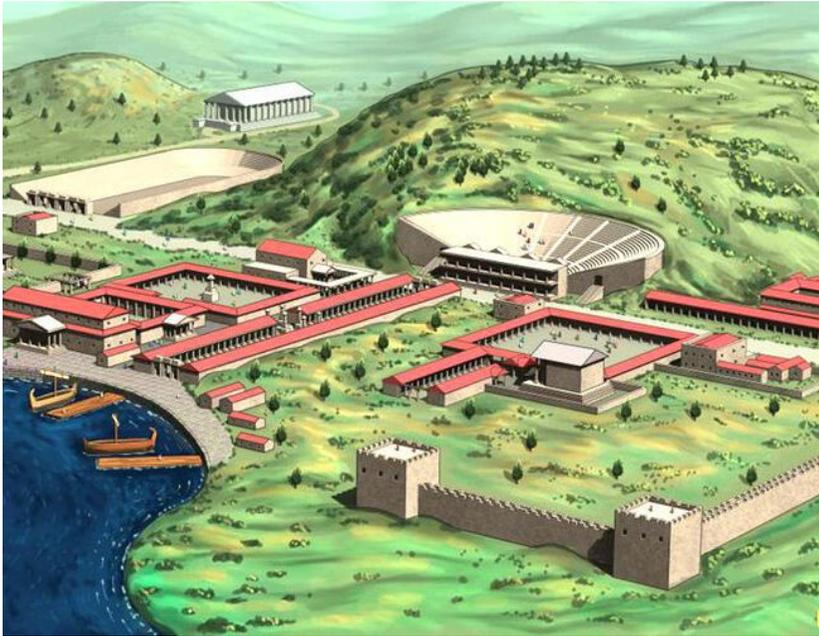
The columns are arranged in pairs and between them there are three doors with richly decorated frames. The door in the middle is wider and taller than the other two.

Statues seen in the niches between the doors, are copies of the originals which were taken to Vienna during the years when the library was being excavated.

As the inscriptions on the bases indicate, the statues symbolized the

WISDOM (SOPHIA),
KNOWLEDGE (EPISTEME),
INTELLIGENCE (ENNOIA) and
VIRTUE (ARETE) of Celsus.

Overview of Ephesus



Paul's First Visit To Ephesus

Paul visited Ephesus on the return from his second tour, when he “entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews”

Acts 18:19–21,

Priscilla and Aquila, who had come from Corinth with Paul, and remained at Ephesus.

Acts 18:18–28,

Apollos, and Alexandrian Jew, came to Ephesus and “Aquila and Priscilla heard him, (and) they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately” before he went to Corinth.

Acts 19:1,