

The Biblical City Of Ephesus

- I. **A Roman writer called Ephesus *Lumen Asiae*, The Light of Asia.**
- II. **“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 travelers 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.” (William Barclay, *The Revelation Of John*, Vol. 1, p. 58).
- III. **Ephesus was the chief commercial city of the province and the center of the mother goddess worship of western Asia.(Stories of Demeter and Artemis)**
 - a. In the New Testament era it was the fourth greatest city in the world, after Rome, Alexandria and Antioch of Syria.
 - b. Temple of Artemis is one of the Seven Wonders of the World
 - c. Pergamum was the capital of the province of Asia in Roman times, but Ephesus was the largest city in the province, with a population of 300,000.
 - d. Ephesus is now located about five to seven miles inland from the Aegean Sea in the Cayster River valley.
 - e. The harbor, which frequently silted up, made Ephesus the most favorable seaport in the province of Asia.
- IV. **Three great roads converged on Ephesus.**
 - a. One brought the east trade by way of Colosse and Laodicea.
 - b. The road from Galatia came via Sardis and brought the trade of Asia Minor.
 - c. The third important road was to the north.

Paul’s First Visit To Ephesus

- A. Paul visited Ephesus on the return from his second tour, when he “entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews” (Acts 18:19–21).
- B. Priscilla and Acquila, who had come from Corinth with Paul, and remained at Ephesus (Acts 18:18–28).
- C. 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).

Paul’s Second Visit To Ephesus

- A. Paul came to Ephesus and taught twelve disciples who knew only the baptism of John (Acts 19:1–7).
- B. Paul “went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8).
- C. He later taught the disciples in the school of Tryannus for two years.
 - a. All of Asia, Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19:9–10).
 - b. Paul worked at Ephesus a total of three years (Acts 20:31).

- c. The churches in Colosse, Hierapolis and Laodicea were probably the fruit of Paul's work in Ephesus.
- d. Many were healed and "this became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (Acts 19:11–18).
- e. Ephesus was full of wizards, sorcerers, witches, astrologers, diviners of the entrails of animals and people who could read one's fortune by the palm of the hand or the fall of knucklebones.
- f. The magicians publicly burned their books, "so the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed" (Acts 19:19–20).
- g. Timothy and Erastus were with Paul, but he sent them to Macedonia, "but he himself stayed in Asia for a time" (Acts 19:22).

D. The disturbance over Diana of the Ephesians (Acts 19:23–41).

- a. Diana is the Latin term; Artemis, the Greek term.
- b. here were 33 temples in the Roman world where Diana was worshiped.
- c. Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus (of Macedonia), were dragged into the theater.
- d. The disciples would not allow Paul to go into the assembly.
- e. Paul exhorted the disciples and left for Macedonia (Acts 20:1).

E. At the end of his third missionary tour, in the spring of A.D. 57, Paul stopped briefly at Miletus, "for Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16).

- a. Paul met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus (Acts 20:17–38).
- b. In his final words to the Ephesian elders he told them of his deep sorrow
 - i. that they would see his face no more (Acts 20:38).

Other New Testament Characters Associated With Ephesus

A. Timothy, a native of Lystra (a city of Lycaonia), was likely converted on Paul's first journey to the Galatian provinces (Acts 14:6–23).

- a. By the time of Paul's second journey, Timothy was well spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium (Acts 16:1–2, "Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.").
- b. Timothy joined Paul on the second journey and worked with him at Ephesus but was sent into Macedonia prior to the disturbance over Artemis (Acts 16:3; 19:21–22).
- c. After Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment, he left Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3).
- d. While there, Timothy received the letters known to us as First Timothy and Second Timothy.

- B. Priscilla and Aquila** went from Corinth to Ephesus with Paul on the return from his second journey, and they taught the way of God more accurately to Apollos (Acts 18:18, 19, 24–26).
- C. Apollos (Acts 18:24–28).**
- Apollos was an Alexandrian who knew only the baptism of John.
 - At Ephesus he was instructed by Priscilla and Aquila.
 - He soon went to Corinth and worked with those who had believed.
- D. Erastus**—maybe the same Erastus who is later mentioned as the city treasurer at Corinth (Acts 19:22; Rom. 16:23).
- E. Trophimus the Ephesian** was with Paul in Jerusalem.
- Paul was incorrectly accused of having taken him into the temple.
 - This incident led to the arrest of Paul (Acts 21:27, 31; 24:6, 12, 13).
- F. Tychicus** is mentioned as a traveling companion of Paul (Acts 20:4).
- He was probably one of the messengers of the churches who went with Paul to Jerusalem to deliver the collection for the poor saints which had been gathered by the churches of Macedonia and Achaia.
 - He carried the letters to Ephesus and Colosse (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7–9).
 - When Paul wrote his final letter to Timothy he stated that he had sent Tychicus to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12).
- G. Onesiphorus** helped Paul in many ways at Ephesus (2 Tim. 1:16–18).
- H. The Apostle John** (Rev. 1:11; 2:1).
- Our Lord's letter to the church at Ephesus is included in the book of Revelation (Rev. 2:1–7).
 - It is generally held that John's residence at Ephesus was during the last two decades of the first century.