

REVELATION

THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS

- **ORIENTATION:**
- A seaport city on the western coast of the province of Asia.
- The closest of the seven churches to Patmos.

- **EARLY HISTORY:**
 - Scholars believe that Ephesus was founded on the settlement of Apasa (or Abasa), a Bronze Age-city noted in 14th century BC.

 - About 560 BC Ephesus was conquered by the Lydian's under the mighty king Croesus. Even if he rules harshly, he treated the inhabitants with respect, and even became the main contributor to the construction of the temple of Artemis

- **Roman Ephesus:**
 - When the Seleucid king Antiochus III the Great tried to regain the Greek cities of Asia Minor, he came in conflict with Rome.
 - After a series of battles, he was defeated by Scipio Asiaticus at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BC.
 - As a result, Ephesus came under the rule of the Attalid king of Pergamum Eumenes II (197-133 BC).

 - When his grandson Attalus III died without male children of his own, he left his kingdom to the Roman Republic.

- When Augustus became emperor in 27 BC, he made Ephesus instead of Pergamum the capital of proconsular Asia, which covered the western part of Asia Minor.
 - It became the seat of the governor, growing into a metropolis and a major center of commerce.
 - It was second in importance and size only to Rome.
- Ephesus has been estimated to be in the range of 400,000 to 500,000 inhabitants in the year 100 AD, making it the largest city in Roman Asia and of the day.
- The city was distinguished for the Temple of Artemis (Diana), who had her chief shrine there, the Library of Celsus, and its theatre, which was capable of holding 25,000 spectators.
 - This open-air theater was used initially for drama, but during later Roman times gladiatorial combats were also held on its stage, with the first archaeological evidence of a gladiator graveyard found in May 2007.
- The city and the temple were destroyed by the Goths in 263 AD.
 - This marked the decline of the splendor of the city.

- **The Church:**
 - The church at Ephesus was established by Paul where he reasoned with the Jews, he left Priscilla and Aquila there (Acts 18:19).
 - Paul came back to Ephesus and found some disciples who had not received the Holy Spirit, they had only been baptized into John's baptism, when they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 19:1-7).
 - Paul spoke in the synagogue for three months (Acts 19:8) and then in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for 2 years (Acts 19:9-10).
 - Many obeyed the Gospel (Acts 19:18-20)
 - Then there was a disturbance because of the fertility goddess Artemis who brought the Ephesians wealth through making silver images of her (Acts 19:23), they were afraid that through Paul's preaching about Christ they would lose business.
 - Paul left Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). He said good-bye to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus before going to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17-38) where he warned them that savage wolves will come in among them (Acts 20:29).

- **LETTER TO THE CHURCH:**
 - THE LORD'S SELF-DESIGNATION (1)
 - "He who holds the seven stars in His right hand"
 - *Revealed in 1:20 as the seven churches*
 - "Who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands"
 - *Jesus is always with the churches*
 - COMMENDATION (2-3,6)
 - For their works, labor and patience
 - They cannot bear those who are evil, having tested those who say they are apostles but were liars.
 - Their perseverance, patience and labor for His name's sake, not growing weary
 - They hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, as does the Lord.
- THE NICOLAITANS:
 - Several of the early church fathers, including Irenaeus, Epiphanius, and Theodoret mentioned this group.
 - Irenaeus discusses them but adds nothing except that "they lead lives of unrestrained indulgence."
 - With the exception of the statement in Eusebius that the sect was short-lived, none of the references in Epiphanius, Theodoret etc. deserve mention, as they are taken from Irenaeus.
 - Hippolytus of Rome based his narrative on Irenaeus, though he states that the deacon Nicholas was the author of the heresy and the sect.

- Clement of Alexandria exonerates Nicholas, and attributes the doctrine of promiscuity, which the sect claimed to have derived from him, to a malicious distortion of words harmless in themselves.
- The "Hatred" is toward the "deeds" and the Nicolaitans.
 - It's reference is probably meant to symbolize false doctrine wherever it is taught.
- **CONDEMNATION AND WARNING (4-5)**
 - CONDEMNATION:
 - The Lord has something against them
 - They have left their first love
 - A Look at their history reveals that for 50 years they set a proper example.
 - Some had been re-baptised (Acts 19:1-7)
 - They had seen special miracles (Acts 19:11-12)
 - They destroyed costly books of curious art (Acts 19:18-19)
 - Paul wrote them an epistle
 - Christ ceased to be the center of their affections!
 - WARNING:
 - Remember from where they have fallen
 - Repent and do the first works
 - Or the Lord will come quickly and remove their lampstand from its place
 - The Lord will no longer recognize the church as His own.

- **EXHORTATION AND PROMISE (7)**
 - Hear what the Spirit says to the churches
 - We have the physical ability to hear.
 - With that comes the responsibility to listen.
 - To him who overcomes, He will give to eat from the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God
- **LIFE APPLICATION:**
 - Remember where we came from
 - Do the things we did before we fell
 - Evangelism
 - Benevolence
 - Edification
 - Worship
 - Morality