

**The REVELATION
PART ONE
The Seven Churches of Asia**

EPHESUS



The first church we will study is the Church at Ephesus.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

ATTENDANCE:

The required minimum attendance for the course overall is 10 weeks.

The required minimum attendance for this lesson is 1 week.

You may take more than 1 week for each lesson should you choose to do so; without any penalty. In fact, some lessons probably will take more than a week to complete for some students. However, though you can take more than the minimum required attendance for each lesson, under no circumstances are you to take less than 1 week for each lesson.

TESTS:

Lesson tests must be taken not less than one week apart.

If you fail a test you may not retake that test on the same day that you failed it.

You must wait at least one day before retaking the test. Use that time to restudy the material and find all of the correct answers to every question missed on the test. The copy of the test automatically sent to you has all of the correct answers on it. Use that copy to make sure you have found all of the correct answers in the study materials.

SCRIPTURES:

Each scripture referenced in this lesson must be looked up and read in your KJV. Reading the scriptures in the lesson, even if they are fully quoted in the lesson, will not fulfill this requirement. They must be looked up and read in your KJV.

LESSONS:

Each lesson is followed by a test. You will find a link to the course main page at the end of each lesson. When you click that link you will be returned to the course main page where you will find a list of tests. There will be instructions concerning whether a particular test is open book or closed book.

If a test is open book you will not need a password to access that test. Click the link for it and it will open and you can then take the test. Your next lesson attendance begins the day after you pass the current lesson test.

If a test is closed book, then you will be instructed to submit a Closed Book Test Contract form. When we receive that form, then you will be sent the password that you will need to access that test. In answer to your request, the password will be sent in 1-2 days, not including weekends when the college offices are closed.. Your next lesson attendance begins the day after you pass the current lesson test.

You may now proceed to the next page to begin the study of the Church at Ephesus.



The City: A large commercial center, often called, "The market of Asia." This city was the capital of the Roman province of Asia during the New Testament period, it was also the largest City in that province.

Ephesus Politically important, it also was the ranking city in both commercial and religious interests; and

was easily accessed by and from all major highways in the interior.

It was said that, "all roads eventually led to Ephesus."

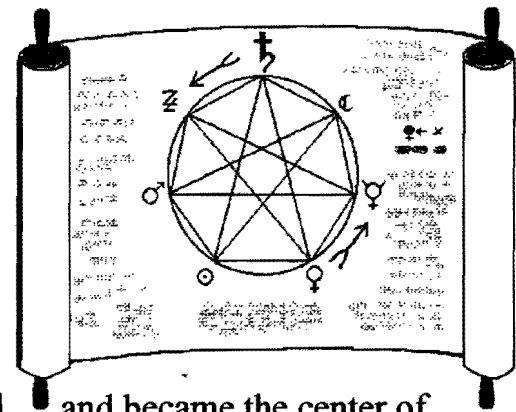
The harbor at Miletus, situated 30 miles south of Ephesus and one of the principle seaports of Asia, was easily accessed by a Roman highway. In addition, the Cayster river, from Ephesus to the Aegean, (at that time four miles from Ephesus) was dredged and converted for small ships to give them access to an inland harbour. The outlines of canals from the temple and city areas can still be seen. Foundation stones of the warf as well as remains of the piers are still evidenced at and before the ruins of the city in what used to be the waterway but now is only a marsh.

Religion: The city's chief claim to fame was in this area, religion. It was the, "worshipper of the great goddess Diana (Roman, Diana; Greek, Artemis) and of the image (a sacred stone) which fell down from Jupiter." (Acts 19:35) The temple, considered one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, was actually the second temple built here to Diana. The first one was burned to the ground on the night of the birth of Alexander the Great. (323 B.C.) Liberal contributions from all over Asia Minor were sent to rebuild it in even greater splendor than before. In New Testament times the rebuilt temple stood on a plain approximately one and one-half miles NE of the city and was reached via a marble-paved street averaging 35 feet wide. This street was probably colonnaded and lined with hundreds of statues dedicated to various gods, goddesses, and rulers. Because of this temple, the city assumed the title of, "Temple warden." Later it extended its sphere, as temple warden, to include the two or three temples dedicated to the worship of the Emperors.



Magic: Ephesus was well know for the magical arts.

In fact, Greek and Roman writers made reference to books or rolls of incantations and magic as "Ephesian writings." During Paul's time in Ephesus those converts to Christianity that once practiced magic brought their books and burned them publicly. The total worth of them was 50,000 pieces of silver, which figures to be in the neighborhood of \$8,000. (Acts 19:11-20)



Christianity: The church at Ephesus was founded by Paul and became the center of evangelization for the entire region. The city was also the residence of the apostle John; as well as the site of the school of Tyrannus where Paul taught daily for two years after opposition arose, which was triggered by his teaching in the Jewish synagogue during the previous three months. His teaching in the synagogue probably began the winter of

A.D. 52/53; and then moved to the school shortly thereafter. The time of his stay in Ephesus lasted until early A.D. 55. (Acts 19:8-10)

Extent and size of the city: Ephesus was a city of pagan splendor and preeminence with buildings of colossal size in the central area, with streets leading outward. A theater with ascending aisles and tiers of seats, the site of the riot instigated by the craftsmen against Paul (Acts 19:33-41) was a structure of stone seating 25,000 people. This massive site was located at the end of the 35 foot wide marble street leading out through the stately double South Gate. From this "Magnesian Gate," this magnificent thoroughfare extended a full 1.5 miles to the temple which, at that time, was the epitome of pagan glory. To the north of the theater was a magnificent stadium, the sight of the contests between men and beasts spoken of by Paul. (I Cor 15:32) To the west of the stadium lay the shrine of Serapis, an Egyptian deity. Also on this side of the city were the harbor and a man-made canal. This canal, along with another one from the temple area, gave access to the channeled out Cayster river; which in turn gave access to the sea, thirty miles away at Miletus.

History: Ephesus was destroyed by the Goths in A.D. 262. It was rebuilt and later attacked by the Arabs, then the Turks, and, finally, by the Mongols in 1403. Today its harbor is nothing but a shallow, reedy marsh. And the once splendid, world-renowned city is a scene of utter desolation and ruin.

NOTE: We know that the church at Ephesus is gone, its candlestick removed, and the city along with it. The church went astray, true, but we also know it had good leadership at the beginning. Either later leaders led it astray or the church refused to follow its good leaders.

1. Paul taught there for at least three years. (Acts 20:31) In addition he taught them in a letter on such topics as: Christ, reconciliation to God, grace, Christ the Creator, the unsurpassed love of Christ, unity of the Spirit, unity of the body, the Christian walk of purity, love, separation, and Christ the head of the church, His body, obedience within the family, the Christian relationship and duties between servants and masters, and use of the full Christian armour against the rulers of the darkness of this world. (Book of Ephesians)
2. Timothy also labored there. (I Timothy)
3. Tradition has it that John himself even presided over this church some time after his release from Patmos.

Lesson: From these observations we can learn that there are two possible reasons that will culminate in God removing (closing) a church: bad leadership or bad followship. (Scriptures: on leadership, I Pet 5:2-4; on followship, Heb 13:17)

THE LETTER TO EPHESUS

Rev 2:1-7

2:1 COMMISSION: The Pastor and the church at Ephesus.

Who from and who to? From Jesus Christ to the pastor & church at Ephesus.

2:1 CHARACTER:

- A. Christ holds and empowers the pastors. ("... holdeth the seven stars...")
- B. Christ must remain the center of each church.
("... walketh in the midst of...")



2:2-3 COMMENDATION:

- A. "... works... labour... patience (patient endurance)..." (:2)
"... born... patience... labored... not fainted (not wearied)." (:3)
- B. They wouldn't put up with evil people. (:2)
There was a lot of sorcery and magic at Ephesus. (Acts 19:19)
- C. They checked out false apostles and proved them to be liars.

2:4 CONDEMNATION: "... left thy first love..."

Christ was no longer the center of the church. (cf. :1) They were doing works either for prestige or out of a desire to help others. Or else they were simply doing them mechanically or for various other reasons. Regardless of why they were doing them it was definitely not out of love for Christ; nor to show the love of Christ in them and through them to the world! (Eph 3:16-19) They had disobeyed the first and greatest commandment, they had lost their love for God. (Mt 22:37-38)

2:5 CORRECTION: "Remember... repent... do the first works; or else..."

2:6 NOTE: God adds one more commendation to the church at Ephesus.

- A. They hated the, "deeds of the Nicolaitans."

There are two theories as to what that heresy was:

1. An extreme form of Gnosticism; i.e., matter, including the flesh, is evil and spirit is good. Therefore, God could not have personally created the material (evil) universe. This meant that Christ (evil, because of His flesh) could not have been the Son of God (nor God the Son) because God is Spirit and good. Therefore, good Spirit and evil flesh could not have combined, co-existed, in Christ. The Nicolaitan heresy (according to this theory) espoused the idea that since their physical bodies were inherently evil, then only what their "good" spirits did was important. This freed them (they thought) to indulge in licentiousness, i.e., total immorality. This would include adultery, free sex (fornication), eating food offered in idolatry, anything they pleased. This gave rise to an "eat drink and be merry," lifestyle; and an "I'm saved, I can do anything I want," attitude.

This seems much like the prevalent attitude of many so-called Christians today, doesn't it.



2. The second theory is that the Nicolaitan heresy was the type of clergy/laity dichotomy that eventually gave rise to the Roman Catholic Church.

[From the word "Nicolaitans," a follower of Nicolaus, a leader of a heretical sect of that time. Dissecting the root word (Nicolaus) we get: "Nico," (Gk ΝΙΚΟ) meaning "the conqueror, the name of the principal Roman battering-ram," and "laus," (Gk ΛΑΟΣ) meaning "the people." From these we get the combined meaning of, "to conquer the people;" which, as I said, is Roman Catholicism.

3. Regardless which theory is espoused, the ringleader was from earliest times considered to have been Nicolas, one of the seven, a proselyte of Antioch. (Acts 6:5)

B. Christ said, "... I also hate," this heresy.

Whether it is a Roman Catholic type of "conquering the people," or if it is, "conquering the people," with gnostic heresy that leads to licentiousness (total immorality) makes no difference. Any time the people are under the sway of other people (Nicolas, priests, etc.) rather than Jesus Christ, then Christ says He hates that. (Jas ch.2 and I Jn ch.1-2; Good works and righteous living are outward signs that you really are saved. Also, in the New Testament, all Christians are priests. See: I Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6)

2:7 CALL: "... he that hath an ear, let him hear..."

The call is to anyone who will listen.

2:7 CHALLENGE: Overcome and live forever.

- A. The tree of life (Rev 22:2) is symbolic of everlasting life.
 B. The twelve fruits, yielded each month, i.e., perpetuity, year-round, everlasting life.

NOTE: "Overcomer." (I Jn 5:4-5)

I Jn 5:4-5 "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"