

Second Edition: 06-11-14

A STUDY OF EPHESIANS

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH



Ephesus Ruins: Arcadia Street and Amphitheater

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Historical Background: Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 19:1-41)...	3
II. City of Ephesus: A Brief History.....	4
A. Description of the Discovered Ruins in Ephesus.....	5
B. The Grand Theater and the Temple of Dianna (Artemis).....	6
C. The Goddess Dianna and Her Influence.....	7
III. Outline of the Letter to the Ephesians.....	8
A. The Position of the Christian:	
1. Paul gives praise for the redemption we have in Jesus.	
2. Paul prays for their spiritual wisdom.	
3. Paul describes the position of the Christian.	
B. The Practice of the Christian:	
1. There should be unity in the church.	
2. There should be holiness in life.	
3. There should be responsibility in the home and at work.	
4. There should be proper conduct in the conflict.	
C. A Gracious Greeting:	
IV. The Church Through the Ages:.....	13

Historical Background: Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 19:1-41):

- A. Paul found disciples at Ephesus.
 - 1. They had been baptized in John's baptism (See Acts 18:24-28).
 - 2. They were baptized again, but "in the name of the Lord Jesus."
 - 3. They received gifts of the Holy Spirit when Paul laid his hands on them.
- B. Paul preached boldly in the synagogue for three months and reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus.
- C. God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul.
- D. The people burned their books of magic.
- E. There arose a great commotion about the Way.
 - 1. Those who made a profit off the goddess Dianna complained.
 - 2. They seized Paul's companions.
 - 3. Paul's other friends would not allow him to "venture into the theater."
- F. The city clerk appealed to the crowd to use reason and do nothing rashly.
 - 1. He reminded them that they had courts which are to determine such matters.
 - 2. He pleaded for a "lawful assembly" rather a "disorderly gathering."
 - 3. His plea dispersed the crowd.
- G. Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians during his stay in a Roman prison after his third missionary journey.

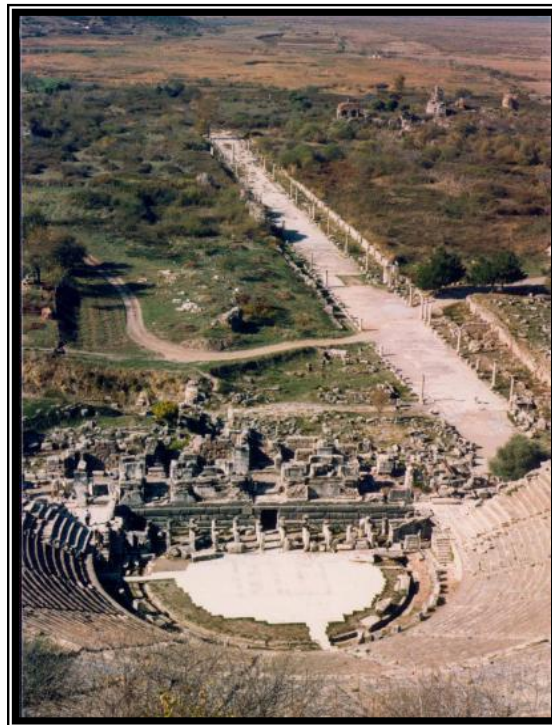
CITY OF EPHEBUS, A BRIEF HISTORY

Ephesus, one of the 12 cities of Ionia (an ancient Greek district on the western coast of Asia Minor), was located near modern Izmir, Turkey. As a port city at the mouth of the Cayster (modern Kucukmenderes) River, it was a major departure point for trade routes into Asia Minor. Known in antiquity for its sacred shrines, notably a famous temple (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World) to the goddess **Artemis** (Greeks) or **Diana** (Romans), the city was also an important center of early Christianity.

Probably founded in the 11th century B.C. by Ionian Greeks, Ephesus was conquered by the **Cimmerians** in the 7th century B.C.; by Croesus, king of **Lydia**, in the 6th century; and soon after, by Cyrus the Great, king of **Persia**. Later it was a tributary of Athens, but it sided with **Sparta** against Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.). Sparta ceded it to the Persians, who were driven out by Alexander the Great in **333 B.C.** Under this **Macedonian rule**, Ephesus flourished, and it was briefly renamed Arsinoe. The city passed to **Roman rule in 189 B.C.** and remained an important commercial center. **Paul established a congregation** in Ephesus in the 1st century A.D. It was the site of the third general counsel of the western Catholic Church, which condemned the Nestorian heresy in A.D. 431. The heresy was an attempt to separate Christ's divine nature from His human nature.

Having been **destroyed by the Goths in A.D. 262**, Ephesus, although rebuilt, never regained its former splendor. Under the Byzantine Empire it **declined**, and its harbor silted up. It was **abandoned in the 14th century**.

Excavations at Ephesus, begun in **1863**, have uncovered temples to Dianna, public buildings, works of the Greek sculptors Phidias and Polyclitus, and a portrait of Alexander the Great.¹



¹ "Ephesus," *Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia*. 1993-1997 Microsoft Corporation.

Ruins of Ephesus: Theater and Main Street

According to tradition, Ephesus, one of the most important cities of antiquity, was founded by Androclus, although it has been established that the Lelegians and Carians inhabited the place earlier. The city must have been colonized no later than the 10th century B.C. by the Ionians. The Persian invasion took place in the 6th century B.C. This was followed by an Ionian uprising against the Persians during the 5th century B.C. The ruins remaining are of the city established by Lyssimachos, one of the generals of Alexander the Great in the 3rd century B.C. The best remains of the city ramparts today are from this era. During its **Golden Age** (2nd century B.C.), the city had a **population of around 300,000**. It monopolized the wealth of the Middle East and was one of the principal ports of the Mediterranean. Finally, the Roman and Byzantine Empires took control of the city. When the Seljuks and later Ottomans claimed the control of the city, it had already lost its commercial and political significance.

Visits to the ruins of Ephesus usually begin in the eastern part of the city through the **Magnesia Gate**, around the important Upper **Agora** or also known as the State Agora. The Eastern **Gymnasium** is located just next to the Magnesia Gate on the Pion mountain side. Clustered around the State Agora were the Varius **Baths** and the Odeion, both from the 2nd century A.D., the Prythaneion or **Town Hall**, and the **Temple of Domitian - the first temple of Ephesus to be built in the name of an emperor** (A.D. 81 – 96) - located next to the Domitian Square.

Leading westwards from the Upper Agora is the famous Curettes Street. Of particular interest on the eastern part of the street are the Pollio (4th century A.D.) and Traian (2nd century A.D.) **Fountains**, the Memmius Monument (1st. century A.D.), the elegant facade of the **Temple of Hadrianus**, the Skolastica Baths (2nd cent. A.D.), and the Heracles Gate. Set on the hillside above the street are the restored **Terraced Houses**, containing interesting, often well preserved frescoes from the 2nd century A.D.

At the start of the Marble Street (built by Nero, A.D. 54-68) is the Lower Agora. Just to the left as one approaches the agora, is the **Celsus Library** (2nd century A.D.) with its very elaborate facade, which has been restored. The Gate of Mazaeus and Mithridates has been restored and is the most beautiful entrance to the Agora. One of the most interesting buildings in Ephesus, the **Serapis Temple**, is located right to the west of the Agora. **Paul gave sermons in the Grand Theatre, seating 25,000 - the most spectacular monument of Ephesus**. The Theatre has been beautifully restored and now serves as a setting for the artistic and folkloric shows of the international Ephesus Festival, held every year in spring. The Theatre Gymnasium, which was built in the 2nd century A.D., also contained a bath-house.

The Arcadian Way was the long main road, paved with marble and lined with columns on both sides that stretched from the Grand Theatre to the old port, now totally silted. On this road was the Four Evangelists Monument - four columns upon which stood statues of the four evangelists. The marvelous Hellenistic Fountain stood just across the Theater and next to the eastern end of the Arcadian Way. The Vedius Gymnasium was located to the north end of the city, right next to the Byzantine era city ramparts. The oval shaped stadium was built during the time of Emperor Neron and located to the south of the Vedius Gymnasium.

Down by the ancient harbor is the Harbor Gymnasium and Baths. These were constructed near the quay in order to receive with hospitality dignitaries who arrived from the sea. On the road from Ephesus to Selcuk is the ruin of the **Temple of Dianna**. Once numbered amongst the **Seven Wonders of the ancient world**, it was constructed entirely of marble. The marble road which was connecting the Temple of Artemis (Diana) to the State Agora through the Magnesia Gate was considered to be the holy road of the city.



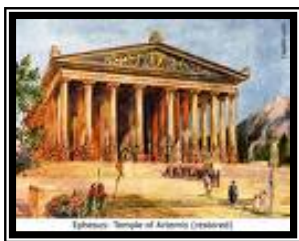
The biggest and the **most spectacular structure** of Ephesus was **the theater**. It was also the most important meeting place in the social and cultural life of the city. The theater is a large semi-circular structure leaning against the Pion Mountain. The audience was facing the stage and then the harbor at the background. The diameter of the theater is 476 feet and the height is 98 feet. It is mainly made up of marble. It has a seating capacity for **25,000 people**.

The original theater was built during the Hellenistic ages. Then it was enlarged in size during Emperor Claudius (A.D. 41-54) and completed during Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117). Initially one story, the small stage section was modified and made much bigger during the Roman ages. **The stage was a three story elegant part of the theater**. There were 8 rooms and a corridor on each floor. The ground floor had an entrance to the podium and a hidden access corridor to the orchestra place under the ground.

The first two floors of the stage were built by Roman Emperor Nero (A.D. 54-68). The third floor was added to the theater during the 2nd century. The final form of the stage has not been modified since then. The **stage is 82 x 131 feet**. On the outside is a building decorated with columns and statues of gods, goddesses and emperors. There were a number of gates into the theater. The center one was the biggest one. The outer side of the stage building was the most decorated one.

There was an altar (sacrifice place) in the middle of the stage podium. This **altar** was used to offer sacrifices to **Dionysus** (god of grapes and winemaking). The audience was able to access the theater from the marble road through the stairs without interfering with the stage building.

The players used to perform at the same place with orchestra members during the Hellenistic ages. This changed during the Roman Age and they started to perform at the extended place in front of the orchestra. The plays would start in the early morning and continue until midnight most of the time. The audience was charged an entrance fee. **The theater was also used as a meeting place for ordinary citizens to discuss important matters involving the city**. During the Roman Age it also became a venue for **gladiator fights** involving wild animals. The renovated Grand Theater of Ephesus has recently been a spectacular stage to a number of orchestral and theatrical performances during the famous annual Ephesus Festival.



The goddess Artemis (**Diana**), the most sacred of all in Anatolia, had a long history of evolution going back maybe thousands of years. The earliest forms of Artemis statues were found in Catalhoyuk and Hacilar, central Anatolia. The most famous of all the goddesses and gods in Anatolia was Kybele, first known name of Artemis. Then the same goddess **earned a wide respect and acceptance** from Roma to Mesopotamia and even in Arabia. **Arabs** named her **Lat**, **Egyptians** named her **Isis**, **Romans** named her **Diana**, and Greek **Ionians** named her **Artemis**. The very early statues of Kybele were carved of wood. Then in the western Anatolia as the Ionian civilization started to gain momentum, Kybele became Artemis, the goddess of nature and other gods and goddesses. She was also represented land fertility.



The Diana temple in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders because it was the **largest structure of the Hellenistic world** and the **first building fully made up of marble**. The Dianna (Artemis) temple of Ephesus was **demolished and rebuilt seven times**, according to the famous historian Strabon. It was always rebuilt on same site. The very first temple was built by the seaside. It is now 3.1 miles away from the sea because of the accumulation of silt into the harbor. Since the first construction it has seen certain modifications and improvements.



Before it was built by the architects, Theodores from Samos, Chersiphon and his son Metagenes from Knossos of Crete, there was a small Kybele temple in the same place. This first temple was faced west, typical to all the Kybele temples. Some ceramic bowls were found from the 7th century B.C. during the excavations. These certainly indicate that the site belonged to a Kybele temple during the early settlement periods of Ionians. It is widely believed that this first temple was destroyed during a Kimmer attack. The **first Dianna temple** was built by the above mentioned architects in **550 B.C.** This building was designed in Ionian style and the dimensions were **180 x 360 feet**. It was the **largest structure of the time**. According to Plynus the temple was standing on a marble base and the roof was supported by **127 dual row columns**. The 36 columns on the front side were decorated with high-reliefs. The columns were 62 feet high. This Archaic **Dianna** temple was burned down by someone named Herostratos, a citizen of Ephesus to immortalize his name. Most of the findings of gold and ivory statues were taken to the British Museum during early excavations. The new Dianna temple was built during the following years according to a plan very close to the original one. Only the marble podium on which the columns sit was heightened and 13 stairs were built around this podium. **The temple was then 180 x 345 feet**. The 'U' shaped altar (sacrificial place) was standing on a dual row thin columns in front of the temple. The statues and frescos decorating this altar are on display in the Ephesus Museum and also in the British Museum. Some of the columns and the statues, especially the Amazon statue, are known to be made by the most famous artists of the time.²

² FOCUS MULTIMEDIA @ METU.EDU.TR/FOCUS

LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Part One: The Position of the Christian (1:1-3:21)

I. Paul Gives Praise for The Redemption We Have in Christ, 1:1-14.

- A. Paul gives his greetings, 1:1-2.
- B. Christians are chosen by the Father, 1:3-6.
- C. Christians are redeemed by the Son, 1:7-12.
- D. Christians are sealed by the Spirit, 1:13-14.

II. Paul Prays For Their Spiritual Wisdom, 1:15-23.

- A. He ceases not to give thanks for them, 1:15-17.
- B. He prays that the eyes of their understanding be enlightened, 1:18.
- C. He acknowledges the glory and power of Christ in might and dominion, 1:19-21.
- D. He declares that Christ is the head of the church which is his body, 1:22, 23.

III. Paul Describes The Position of The Christian, 2:1-3:13.

- A. He describes the Christian's position individually, 2:1-10.
 - 1. The Old Condition: They were dead to God, 2:1-3. -
 - a. They once walked according to the course of this world,
 - b. They once fulfilled the desires of the flesh
 - 2. The New Condition: They are alive to God, 2:4-10.
 - a. They were saved by grace through faith.
 - b. They are His workmanship.

- B. He describes the Christian's position corporately, 2:11-3:13.
 - 1. There has now been reconciliation of the Jews and Gentiles, 2:11-22.
 - a. They are brought near by the blood of Christ, 2:11-13.
 - b. They have peace with one another and God, 2:14-16
 - c. They both have access to the Father by one Spirit, 2:17.
 - d. They are no longer strangers but fellow citizens, 2:19.
 - 2. There is now a spiritual building into which they have been built, 2:20-22.
- C. He describes the revelation of the Mystery of the Church, 3:1-13
 - 1. There is now a dispensation given by the grace of God, 3:1.
 - a. They have received God's revelation through Paul, 3:1-4.
 - b. They can understand his knowledge when they read what he has written,
 - c. They can know that the church has been God's eternal purpose, 3:5-13.
 - 2. There is an appreciation of the Mystery that has now been revealed, 3:14-21.

Part Two: The Practice of the Christian (4:1-6:24)

I. There Should Be Unity in the Church, 4:1-16.

- A. They are exhorted to keep the unity of the Spirit, 4:1-3.
- B. They are given an explanation of this Unity, 4:4-6.
 - 1. There is one God, one Lord, and one Spirit.
 - 2. There is one faith, one baptism.

3. There is one hope of your calling.
- C. They are told what the means for Unity is: The temporary Gifts, 4:7-11.
- D. They are told what the purpose of the temporary ("till") Gifts is, 4:12-16.
 1. They equip the saints with knowledge for ministry and edifying, 4:12.
 2. They give knowledge which enables them to no longer be tossed to and fro by false doctrines, 4:14.
 3. They will enable them to speak the truth in love and grow up, 4:15.
 4. They will enable the body (the church) to grow and be strengthened, 4:16.

II. There Should Be Holiness In Life, 4:17-5:21.

- A. They Are to Put Off the Old Man, 4:17-22.
 1. This is done by being enlightened by truth from God, 4:17.
 2. This is done by being sensitive to what they learned from Christ, 4:18-22.
- B. They are to put on the new man, 4:23-29.
 1. This is done by being renewed in the spirit of the mind, 4:23.
 2. This is done by putting off wrong and putting on righteousness, 4:24-29.
- C. They are not to grieve the Holy Spirit, 4:30-5:12.
 1. This is done by being imitators of God, 4:30-5:7.
 2. This is done by doing what is acceptable to the Lord, 5:8-12.
- D. They are to walk as children of light, 5:13-17.
 1. This is done by going to the source of our light, Jesus Christ, 5:13-16.
 2. This is done by understanding what the will of the Lord is, 5:17.

E. They are to be filled with the Spirit, 5:18-21.

1. This is done by speaking the truth to one another in songs, 5:19.
2. This is done by giving thanks always for all things, 5:20.
3. This is done by submitting to one another in the fear of God, 5:21.

III. There Should Be Responsibility in the Home and at Work, 5:22-6:9

A. Wives are to submit to their husbands, 5:22-24.

1. They should do this because the husband is the head of the wife, 5:22.
2. They should do this because marriage is like the church with Christ as the head of the body which is his bride, 5:23, 24.

B. Husbands are to love their wives, 5:25-33.

1. They should do this because Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.
2. They should do this because to do so is to love themselves, 5:28-28.
3. They should do this because they are one flesh, 5:29.

C. Children are to obey their parents, 6:1-4.

1. They should do this because it is right in the Lord, 6:1.
2. They should do this because it is the first commandment with promise, 6:2.

D. Fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

E. Employees (masters) are to give proper service on the job, 6:5-9.

1. They should do this because it is done as if done for Christ, 6:5.
2. They should do this because it is doing the will of God, 6:6.

F. Employers (servants) are to treat the employee properly, 6:7, 8.

1. They should do this because they have a Master in heaven, 6:9.

2. They should do this because there is no partiality with Him, 6:9.

IV. There Should Be Proper Conduct in the Conflict, 6:10-2

- A. They are to put on the armor of God, 6:10-17.
 1. They should do this to be strong in the Lord and be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, 6:10, 11.
 2. They should do this so they can stand in evil days, 6:12-17.
- B. They are to pray for boldness, 6:18-20.
 1. They should do this to help the saints persevere, 6:18.
 2. They should do this to help Paul be bold in preaching the mystery of the gospel for which he was put in chains, 6:19, 20.

Conclusion: A Gracious Greeting; 6:21-24



THE CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES

“...according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,”
Ephesians 3:11

1. When did the church begin?
2. According to Paul in Ephesians 3:5-13 and 5:32, the church had been in the mind of God throughout eternity, even before time began (Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:9).
3. In what way did it exist before it was actually built on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2 and as promised in Matthew 16:18 and the first chapter of Acts?

THE CHURCH EXISTED IN PLAN:

1. Genesis 3:15. Eve is promised that through her seed Satan would be crushed.
2. See Isaiah 7:14 and Romans 16:20 (“before time began,” Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:9).

THE CHURCH EXISTED IN PROMISE:

1. Genesis 12:1-3. Abraham is given the seed promise through his son that all nations would be blessed. See also Genesis 22:18.
2. This promise is fulfilled in Christ and His church. See Galatians 3:8.

THE CHURCH EXISTED IN PROPHECY:

1. Isaiah 11. Isaiah prophesies about the coming of Christ and the building of a nation into which all nations can flow.
2. See Acts chapter 10 and 11 and Acts 15:15-18.

THE CHURCH EXISTED IN PREPARATION:

1. Mark 1:1-5, 15; Matthew 3:1-3. John prepared disciples for Christ who were baptized for the remission of their sins. God used that material to build His church on the Day of Pentecost to whom were added some three thousand souls, Acts 2:47.
2. See Matthew 16:18;

THE CHURCH EXISTED IN PERFECTION:

1. Ephesians 4:1-16. Through Christ and His blood we are cleansed and made whole.
2. See 1 John 1:7-9.

THE CHURCH WILL EXIST IN PERPETUITY:

When Jesus comes, He will take the kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24).