

## **ENDGAME:** **A Study On Revelation (Week #7)**

Pastor Jason Goss

**Revelation 2:1** "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: (NASB)

**Revelation 2:1** "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, (NKJ)

**Revelation 2:1** "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Ephesus. (NLT)

**Some Scriptural Background:** Acts 18-20, Ephesians, 1, 2, 3 John

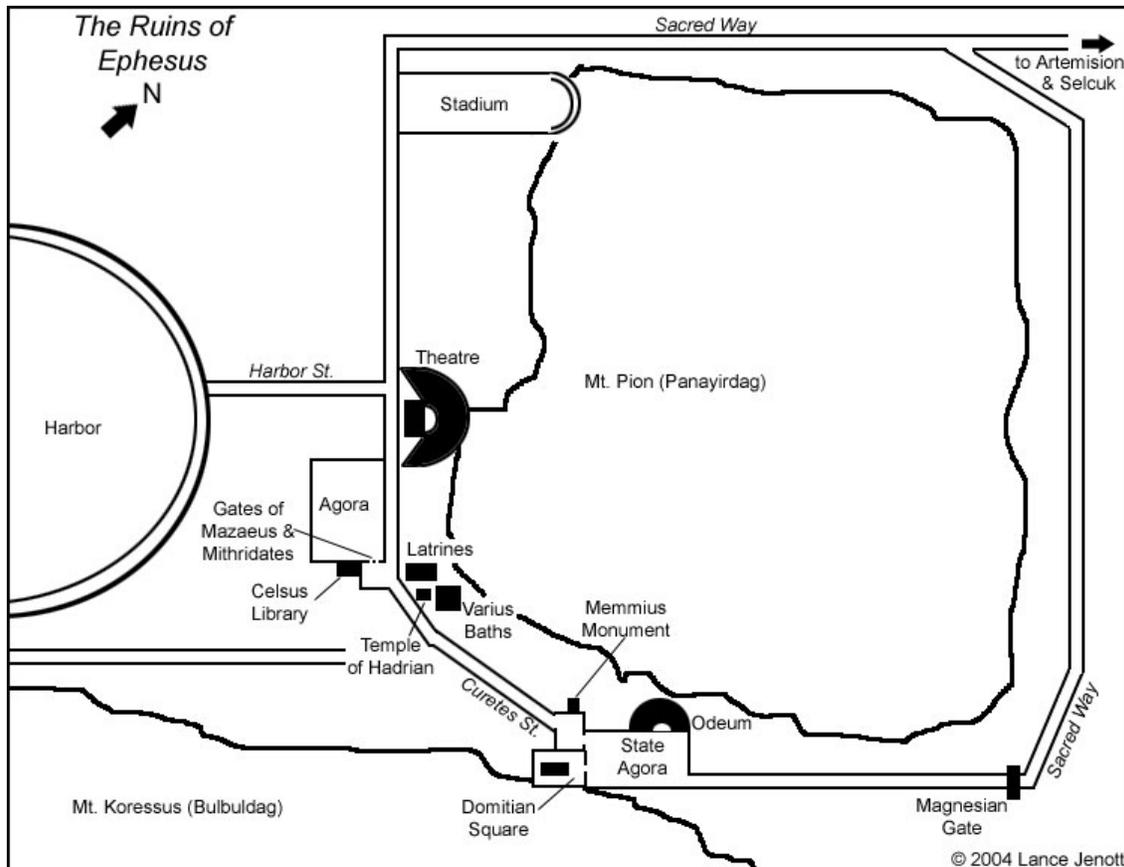
### **New Testament**

- In the New Testament period \_\_\_\_\_ was the largest city of its day. As the harbor gradually became unusable, traffic diverted to Smyrna (today is Izmir). Ephesus was the center for the study of arts and magic; renowned over the world for talismans, incantations, books, charms, etc. (Acts 19:19).
- Paul's first visit was brief and was directed toward the \_\_\_\_\_ community; he later made a second visit--he was driven from the synagogue and settled in the school of Tyrannus for two years until the uproar in 58 A.D. (Acts 19:24-41; 20:1). Ephesus later became the center for missionary operations throughout Asia. Imitators followed, but without power. (Seven sons of Sceva: Acts 19:12-17.) After Paul left Ephesus and journeyed through Macedonia, he returned (to Miletus) for his famed farewell to the Ephesian elders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is alleged to have become its first bishop (1 Timothy 1:3). It is here that we find Aquila, Priscilla and Apollos. 1 Corinthians was penned during his second visit. (Paul's Epistle to Ephesus was written from Rome.)
- John is said to have spent time in Ephesus with Mary, the Lord's mother. According to Eusebius and others, John returned there in 95 A.D. after Patmos, and spent his closing years there. His Gospel was apparently written from there. His tomb is there. The believed home of Mary is now a shrine. Possible that John, Mary, Timothy and Luke died and are buried here?
- Paul returned to \_\_\_\_\_ for his famed farewell to the Ephesian elders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was written during his second visit to Ephesus.
- Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: Written from Rome four years after his farewell, it is simply a letter springing from Paul's love to the church there, and indicative of his earnest desire that they should be fully instructed in the profound doctrines of the gospel. It is similar to The Epistle to the Colossians, which is mainly polemical, designed to refute theosophic errors that had crept into the church there.

## EPHESUS: LOCAL APPLICATION

### Background / History

- Tacitus records that the city was founded in 1400 B.C., with an early temple to the Mother Goddess and ancient Hittite fertility deity who subsequently became identified with Diana.
- Ionian colonists from Athens settled there about 1100 B.C.
- In the middle of the 6th century B.C., the Lydians captured the city.
- Croesus, their king, was routed by the Persians in 541 B.C. and Ephesus was joined to other cities in the Ionian confederation. Diana (or Artemis) "goddess of fertility," became the deity that "guarded" the city.
- \_\_\_\_\_ of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).
- Ephesus was involved to its own disadvantage in the Peloponnesian and Persian wars and served as a key naval base.
- In 334 B.C. it fell to the Macedonians under Alexander. After his death, Lysimachus (one of Alexander's 4 Key generals) became master of the city and added great improvements.
- Ephesus unwisely sided with Antiochus of Syria against the Romans.
- It eventually became the Roman capital of the province of Asia.
  - But as a free city, Ephesus had its own municipal government and senate (mentioned both by Strabo and Josephus).



## Geography

- Ephesus was called the “\_\_\_\_\_ of Asia”: she was the proud capital of Ionia and chief harbor of proconsular Asia.
- The most important city in Asia.
- It was an extremely wealthy and beautiful city, located near the mouth of the river Cayster (now Lower Meander).
- It was the principal line of communication between Rome and the eastern provinces.
  - One major road ran eastward through a pass to Sardis and then to Galatia and beyond.
  - Another led to Magnesia and up the valley of the river Meander to Iconium;
  - A third ran through Collasae and Laodicea to the Euphrates. Trade with Greece and Italy ran through the port regularly.
- World capital of the \_\_\_\_\_ trade.

## Architecture

- Magnesia Gate, triumphal (3) arch gate. South of the city facing Magnesia (8 miles south of Ephesus). Greek race called Magnets founded the city. Ancient philosopher Thales went to the city and saw two iron ored stones repelling each other - gave them the name... \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Marble Way, lined with statues and fountains, ran from the temple of Artemis through the city to the Magnesia Gate. The portion of the road from the Great Theater to Agora was made of marble. The “Sacred Way” portion was for those making a pilgrimage to the temple, went from the theatre around Mt. Pion to the temple and the Magnesian Gate.
- The Temple of Hadrian, build in honor of Roman Emperor.
- Celsus Library home of 200,000 volumes, about 12,00 scrolls (before printing).
- Vaulted gates of Mazeus and Mithridates. Built by the slaves Mazeus and Mithridates for their emperor, Augustus, who gave them their freedom. The front side facing the library is made of black marble, the back side is white marble.
- Marble way to the theater.
- Carved into pavement (first advertising?) picture. “if you want to make love with this particular lady who was as beautiful as queens, keep going in this direction and she is on the left-foot side of the street.”
- Archeologist discovered tunnels from the library to the brothels.
- \_\_\_\_\_ - Served not only for dramatic performances, but also for demonstrations of a social, political, economic, religious nature and for gladiator games.
- Architecturally superb, its theater was 495 feet in diameter and held 25,000 people. 24,000 seats and 1000 standing room only.

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- The Arcadian Way, another main road from the theater to the harbor, was 1735 feet long and 70 feet wide, lined with columns and shops and illuminated at night. (Only 2 other cities had street lighting; Rome and Antioch).
- The Stadium - It was purely used for ceremonies and sports activities. But during the 3rd and 4th centuries other than the sports activities and ceremonies, gladiator and wild animal fights became very popular especially in Roman Period.
- Also Christians were persecuted here and were thrown to the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Clay pipes supplied fresh water to 4 different points via aqueducts.
- The temple of Artemis (Greek) / Diana (Roman) (daughter of Zeus, twin sister of Apollo) was the most outstanding architectural feature of the city.
- People believed that, among other things, Artemis (Diana) protected the economy, cured diseases, granted credit extensions, and protected the citizens.
- The first \_\_\_\_\_ (in the world?) functioned at the temple under the chief priests.
- Ecstatic, sexual rites took place at the temple, involving both male and female prostitutes. Its income was threatened by Paul's preaching—this led to his departure.
- The temple was also an asylum for the criminals.
- One of the "\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_" of the ancient world, was four times as large as the Parthenon at Athens, and stood on a platform 425 feet by 225 feet. The building itself was 377 by 180 feet, had 127 Ionic columns, each 60 feet high. (As large as a soccer stadium and made almost entirely of marble.
- Other six wonders:
  - Great pyramid at Giza
  - Statue of Zeus at Olympia
  - Mausoleum at Halicarnassus
  - Colossus of Rhodes
  - Lighthouse of Alexandria
  - Hanging Gardens of Babylon
- Destroyed and rebuilt at least three times, notably damaged by flood and fire. Finally torched by the Goths in 268 AD and was never fully rebuilt after.
- Romans tore up all the trees, this caused erosion, the erosion then filled the harbor. The Ephesus harbor has filled with silt and the town is now about 5 miles away from the sea.

## Later History

- The bishop of Ephesus was accorded rank and authority of a patriarch over the churches in the province of Asia.
- In 431 A.D., Emperor Theodosius II called a general church council at Ephesus to consider the hotly argued question of the time whether the Virgin Mary should be described as the mother of God, and 200 bishops at this Third Ecumenical Council decided in the affirmative.
  - Nestorius (died about 451 AD), Patriarch of Constantinople, resided to accord the title "Mother of God" to Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ.
  - Proponents emphasized the separateness of the human and divine in Christ, claiming in effect that He was actually two separate persons, the one divine and the other human.
  - Accordingly, Mary was considered the mother of the man Jesus, not of the divine Jesus.
  - This was opposed to the accepted doctrine that Christ was a single person, and at once God and man.
  - The council deposed Nestorius and condemned his doctrine. It declared that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, that He has two natures (human and divine) joined into one person.
  - Council approved the title (Greek: Θεοτόκος) Theotokos: "\_\_\_\_\_"
  - This gets twisted and misinterpreted later... "Mother of God."
- Its chief rival city was Miletus, but alluvial deposits gradually silted up the harbor of Miletus; Ephesus (for a while) eclipsed its rival in importance. (The Romans stripped the land of its wooded mountain ranges; soil eroded and the resulting silt transformed the harbor to a swamp; today 20 miles of land has cut off the city from the sea. (Even in the first century, Paul landed at Miletus—after one of the many dredgings—in Acts 20.)
- The present unpretentious village of Seljuk (Ayasaluk?), built by the Byzantines, is but a sad remainder of its former glory. After its destruction by the Goths in 262 A.D. it never regained its former glory.
- Jesus' letter John writes in Revelation is about 35 years after Paul's departure.

### Paul's Farewell to the Elders

**Acts 20:16** Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus, for he didn't want to spend any more time in the province of Asia. He was hurrying to get to Jerusalem, if possible, in time for the Festival of Pentecost. **17** But when we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him. **18** When they arrived he declared, "You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now **19** I have done the Lord's work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews. **20** I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. (NLT)

### Home Fellowships

- Original form of \_\_\_\_\_ (all incidents in Book of Acts were in homes).
- Formal churches established in the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Home fellowships ostracized by:
  - Medieval Church.
  - Reformation Churches (Calvin & Luther).
  - Many churches today.
- We believe that is where people grow the most (small groups - "life groups").
- Viable form for \_\_\_\_\_ churches.

**Acts 20:21** I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus. **22** "And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me, **23** except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. **24** But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. **25** "And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the Kingdom will ever see me again. **26** I declare today that I have been faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it's not my fault, **27** for I didn't shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know. **28** "So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders. **29** I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. (NLT)

"false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you..."

The very thing that they apparently anticipated in Jesus' Revelation letter.

**Acts 20:30** Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. **31** Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you—

my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you.

**32** “And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself. **33** “I have never coveted anyone’s silver or gold or fine clothes. **34** You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me. **35** And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” **36** When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them. **37** They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye. **38** They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship. *(NLT)*

### John’s Epistles

- 1 John (possible letter to Ephesus / Home Groups)
- 2 John (possible letter to Mary / Home Groups in Ephesus)
- 3 John (possible personal letter to Gaius)

John—understandably—emphasizes \_\_\_\_\_ to his Ephesian flock!  
1 John 4:1-3 and 2 John 1:7-11 also includes warnings about false teachers.

**1 John 4:1** Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. **2** This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. **3** But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here. *(NLT)*

John is speaking of the “\_\_\_\_\_ of the Antichrist.” The one that we call the Antichrist has 33 names in the Old Testament, and 14 names in the New Testament.

**2 John 1:7** I say this because many deceivers have gone out into the world. They deny that Jesus Christ came in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver and an antichrist. **8** Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward. **9** Anyone who wanders away from this teaching has no relationship with God. But anyone who remains in the teaching of Christ has a relationship with both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to your meeting and does not teach the truth about Christ, don’t invite that person into your home or give any kind of encouragement. **11** Anyone who encourages such people becomes a partner in their evil work. *(NLT)*