



**“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”
2 Peter 1:21**

Ephesus: The City and the Church by Alex Hale

[You may find the following information helpful for this evening’s sermon.]

Ephesus was one of the main urban centers of the Roman Empire. The Roman governor had his residence there and so for all practical purposes Ephesus was the Roman capital of Asia. Located only four miles off the coast of the Aegean Sea, the city’s harbor made it a center of trade and commerce. Of the seven cities in Revelation 2-3, Ephesus was the closest in proximity to Patmos. In addition, Ephesus was the center of the Roman communication network in Asia. One monument designated Ephesus as “the first and greatest metropolis of Asia,” explaining what the Ephesians thought of their own city.

Ephesus was a gathering place for false religion and idolatry. The temple of Diana (Artemis in Greek), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was in Ephesus. This temple had served as a sanctuary for criminals. It is said that any criminal who could reach the temple’s steps would be safe. Within the temple were hundreds of priestesses who were considered “sacred prostitutes.” Acts 19 speaks of a riot which occurred when Paul’s preaching against false gods caused a drop in idol sales.

By the time of John’s writing, much of the false worship in Ephesus centered around the Roman emperor Domitian. A large temple had been built in the late 80s AD, dedicated to Domitian. This is the first known temple dedicated to an emperor, and served as a centerpiece to the imperial cult. It is believed that there was much competition between cities to see who would be awarded the rights to host this temple. Ephesus viewed it as a distinct honor to be the site of this structure.

Within this ungodly culture, there was a body of believers. It could be argued that we know more about the Ephesian church than any other New Testament church.

- Paul helped to establish the church while on his second missionary journey (Acts 18).
- Apollos had preached at Ephesus; this is where Aquila and Priscilla corrected him regarding his teaching on baptism.
- Ephesus is where some followers of Apollos were re-baptized (Acts 19:1-5).
- Paul preached in Ephesus longer than he did anywhere else (Acts 20:31).
- We can read Paul’s epistle to the Ephesian brethren, as well as his letters to Timothy, who was preaching in Ephesus.
- Tradition says that John spent time in Ephesus, and some believe that his epistles are written to address issues within the Ephesian church.
- Tradition also holds that John brought Mary the mother of Jesus to live in Ephesus and that she is buried there.

What does the Ephesian church teach us? This church is an example that even in the midst of an ungodly society, the gospel can spread. However, the Ephesian church also shows us that having inspired preaching and solid teaching, as well as deeply devoted members, does not make a church immune from problems.

Works Consulted:

Seven Congregations in a Roman Crucible by Richard E. Oster, Jr.

I Saw the Heaven Opened: A Commentary on Revelation by Daniel H. King, Sr.



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When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
Kelly Kendall
Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale