

Revelation

The Churches

CHURCH 1: EPHESUS

Revelation 2:1-7



BACKGROUND

John writes from Patmos to seven churches in Asia Minor, now Turkey, that are situated along the postal route beginning at the coastal city of Ephesus. He has a message for each of the churches in a letter delivered in sequence by following the Roman roads. The letter to each church was to be read in all the churches similar to a Roman edict of the day.



INTRODUCTION

During the Protestant Reformation the idea of a “work ethic” was taught. In the Roman Catholic Church the priests worked for God and the congregation were lay people. The reformers changed this view so that all Christians, clergy and lay people, were considered to “work” for God in all that they did regardless of their role or job.

1. What do you think of this “Protestant Work Ethic”?
2. To what extent do you agree that all Christians “work” for God?

EPHESUS

Ephesus was a major, wealthy Roman port city and a centre for pagan worship, home to the Temple of Artemis (Diana). The church had remained faithful and had worked hard to avoid being corrupted or dragged down by the wickedness all around them. They are commended for sticking to the teachings of the apostles and for not falling into the error of adopting false teachings. They are recognised as hard workers and as a church that is patient and rejects evil.

THOUGHTS

1. How difficult do you think it is to remain faithful in a large city full of all kinds of distractions?
2. What do you think it means that they “tested those who call themselves apostles” and should we still do this today?
3. How do you think they reacted to being commended and then rebuked? How hard is it for people to hear these kinds of messages?
4. What do you think it looks like when a church is theologically accurate but still failing?
5. The NIV uses the word “forsaken” in v4. Does this suggest a deliberate choice?

APPLICATION

1. How easy is it to become focused more on “doing” for God rather than “being” with God?
2. How would you encourage someone who has lost their passion for Christ?
3. How do you think we can balance “hating” evil with a loving heart?



Revelation



THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

It is possible to visit Turkey today and see the remains of Ephesus, a once bustling city full of people visiting the temple and the noise of the ships in the port.



EPHESUS

Political & Commercial Hub: As the capital of the Roman province of Asia, it was a "Supreme Metropolis," boasting a population of 250,000–500,000 and acting as a primary trade center. It hosted one of the largest slave markets in the ancient world.

Religious Center: Home to the Temple of Diana (Artemis) that attracted international pilgrims and sustained a large economy.

Imperial Cult: The city was a major centre for Roman emperor worship, including the tyrannical Emperor Domitian (81 - 96), making it a hostile environment for Christians.

Cultural & Strategic Position: It was considered the "Light of Asia," connecting eastern and western trade routes, making it one of the wealthiest cities in the Roman Empire.

Cultural Grandeur: The city boasted a massive Great Theatre that could hold 25,000 spectators and the Library of Celsus, which was the third-largest library in the ancient world.

Spiritual Climate: While materially prosperous, it was spiritually bankrupt, rife with numerous teachings with a culture of greed and sexual immorality tied to its religious practices.



Temple of Diana



The Colosseum



Kusadasi port