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Ephesus: The Church That Lost Its First Love

Revelation 2:1-7

Introduction

This church was without a doubt the most famous of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation. It was known as the "metropolis of Asia." Perhaps for that reason it is listed first. The city was the nearest church to the Island of Patmos where John was imprisoned. Paul had wanted to visit the churches in Asia on his second missionary journey but was forbidden by the Holy Spirit, and he was redirected to Macedonia, see Acts 16:6-9. When Paul did finally go to Ephesus on his third missionary journey, His teaching produced a riot when he addressed and opposed those who worshiped the goddess Diana. The temple to Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. In John's letter to the church at Ephesus, we learn much about the church that Paul started, and to whom he wrote his letter while imprisoned in Rome in AD 60-63, see Acts 28:16-31.

Ephesus, the City: Microcosm of a Lost World, 2:1

- A provincial capital - largest city in the area
- A port city - commercial center
- A free city - political independence
- A sports center - Pan Ionian Games
- An assize city - Roman courts - seat of justice
- A prosperous, port city - wealthy center of commerce
- A perverted city - religious, idolatrous, immoral, corrupt, degenerate
- A potential center of the Gospel - the city was in need of the Gospel
- A church that Christ evaluates - listed first it was an important city

The Church: Good, Bad, Ugly, 2:2-3, 6

- Commendations: Their good works, orthodoxy, and endurance
- Complaints: Lost first love, needed to repent, power hungry, witness compromised
- Suggestions: Do these things - sincere worship, prompt obedience, sacrificial service

The Commands of the Lord, 2:4-5

- Reflect on and evaluate former successes
- Repent of failures and change direction and return to success
- Restore the first works and love for God: the basis for success

The Goal: Lessons for Ephesus and for You and Me!, 2:7

- Renewed and genuine worship, not superficial worship
- Renewed fruitfulness of works, not just activity or entertainment
- Renewed direction and goal, seeking God's will, work, and way