

Doctrinal Studies: EPHESUS

1. The city of Ephesus had one of the greatest shopping centers in the world.
2. At one time had a population of some 300,000 people (now only 30 – 50 thousand).
3. It was a large city in the Roman empire, located 3 miles from the west coast of Asia Minor, in what is called *Turkey* today. It is opposite the island of Samos, at the mouth of the Cayster River. At one time, Ephesus had a tremendous harbor, thus was a center for shipping via the river to places such as Laodicea.
4. It was said that the “mother goddess” of the earth was born here, where a city and a temple was built by the Amazons for their heathen worship.
5. Ephesus was originally said to be the capital of the Amazons. It is unclear whether these people really ever existed, but they were said to be a very large and tall race, with most beautiful women. It was thus a place of great interest, and when the temple was built, many people were said to have come to look for the Amazons. The area declined when the people sought to solve their problems by violence.
6. Ephesus was founded by the Athenians in 1000 BC. The temple of Artemis (or Diana) was the largest in the world, and became one of the 7 wonders of the world, along with the hanging gardens of Babylon.
7. Ephesus was also known for its expensively gowned and beautiful women.
8. The church at Ephesus had three great Greek pastors; Paul was the first pastor of the church, Timothy was the second, and John was the third, among the greatest pastors of the ancient world. All three of them brought new life and wonderful new Biblical concepts to this great city. The Word of God indeed came to Ephesus. That what needs to happen to the city of Baytown, the state of Texas, and the nation of the United States of America.
9. Ephesus was conquered by Croesus in 560 BC, and became a part of the great “enlightened” kingdom of Lydia. Three years later, the city was occupied by Cyrus the Great. These two conquests lead to the people adopting the language and culture of these two conquerors. Eventually it became the first world-wide language, and over a period of about 200 years, after the death of Alexander the Great, it became known as *KOINE* (common) Greek, the Greek of the New Testament. We should be thankful for the people of Ephesus, and for these circumstances of language that lent itself to the availability of the written Word of God.
10. After the death of Alexander his empire was divided, and Ephesus fell into the hands of Lysimachus, a military general of the time.
11. Next, Ephesus became a part of the kingdom of Pergamum. The last king of Pergamum, a bachelor named Atalios III, just before his death, willed the city to Rome in 133 BC. Under the Roman rule, Ephesus became the first port in the Roman province of Asia.
12. Ephesus became the richest city in the world during the time of the Roman Empire.

Doctrinal Studies: EPHESUS (Continued)

13. Ephesus became famous for its open-air theatre, built on Mt. Pion, on the side of Ephesus. The theater seated 24 to 25 thousand people, and was known for its excellent acoustics.
14. The temple of Diana had 120 pillars, each one dedicated to a king or a prince. The temple was 4 times larger than the Parthenon in Athens, and was adorned with the work of some of the greatest sculptors in history.
15. The vault of the temple came to store the greatest wealth the world had ever known; so the Temple of Diana became the number one bank of the Roman Empire.
16. The ground floor of the temple occupied 80 thousand square feet, and its columns were sixty feet high.
17. The temple of Diana became a sanctuary for criminals, where it is said that they were allowed to remain without being subject to arrest as long as they stayed in the shadow of the temple. The temple was about 425 feet long, and about 225 feet wide.
18. This temple housed priests, prostitutes, beautiful paintings and art treasures, plus much of the wealth of the ancient world. Every king of note in the ancient world had a deposit at the temple of Diana, much like the Swiss Banks of today.
19. During the time of Paul, Timothy and John, the sale of statues of Diana was a great industry in the city of Ephesus.
20. There was also a large colony of Jews in Ephesus, and Christianity there began when the Apostle Paul visited there on his second missionary journey (Acts 18).
21. Aquilla and Pricilla seem to be the first known Christians in Ephesus, around 52 AD.
22. On Paul's third missionary journey, he stayed two years in Ephesus teaching God's Word. Thus, he was the first pastor in Ephesus. Then he left Timothy behind to be the substitute pastor, the second pastor. Eventually, John became the most famous pastor of Ephesus.
23. John's ministry extended to the six other churches in Revelation 2 and 3.
24. Ephesus was not a small town; it was a huge city with a population of 300,000 – very large for those ancient times. There were about nine different Greek races represented there; there were Jews, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, various Asiatic people, remnants from Troy and the Hittite empires. These people known as "animates" because they were very animated and unusual. Ephesus was the center of Christianity for approximately 100 years. The influence of the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna actually kept the Roman empire strong for over a century.

Just seven churches carried the entire Roman Empire: They kept its prosperity going, kept its freedom intact, and made it possible for Rome to function as the world's first gentile client nation to God.