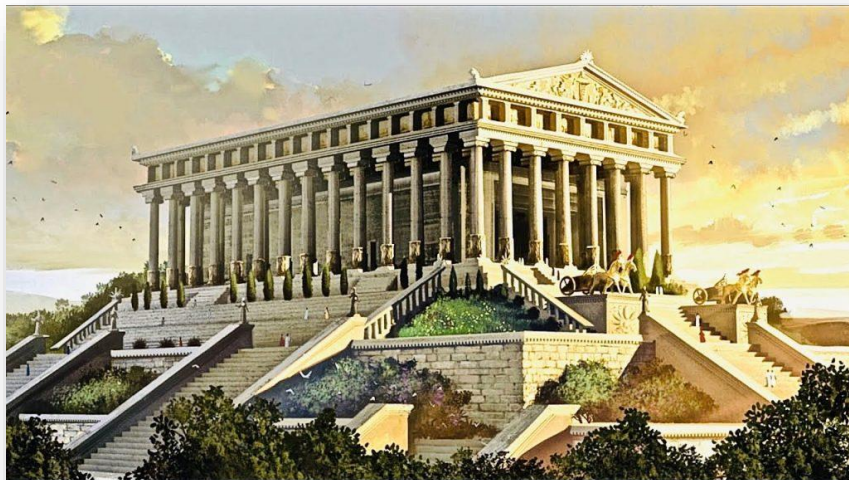


TOUR OF ANCIENT EPHESUS AND THE TERRACE HOUSES

We will enjoy touring one of the most important and complete classical cities in Europe, even though only a fraction of it has been uncovered. **We pass through the Magnesian Gate and wander through the Agora, Odeon, the magnificent and restored Library of Celsus, the marble-paved Main Street of Curetes, Baths of Scholastica, The Great Theatre, Trajan's Fountain, the Houses of the Patricians, Prytaneum and the Temple of Hadrian, and the Terrace Houses.** Our tour includes time to shop for carpets, souvenirs, jewelry, leather, and other goods.

Ephesus was the Hellenistic capital city of a Roman province in Asia and the second largest city in the Roman Empire. It was a significant center of trade, located near a harbor in a long, fertile valley at the mouth of the Cayster River. Major roads connected Ephesus to all the other significant cities in Asia Minor.



Ephesus was dedicated to the goddess Artemis, or Diana, and the magnificent temple built in 550 BC to honor her took 120 years to complete. This temple, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, was “425 ft. long and 220 ft. wide; each of its 127 pillars which supported the roof of its colonnade was 60 ft. high” Much Ephesian industry was related to this temple. Craftsmen sold shrines and household images of the goddess that worshippers could take on long journeys. The Ephesians were proud of their religious heritage ([Acts 19:35](#)).

THE GREAT THEATER: Ephesus was also known for its amphitheater - the largest in the world, designed to hold up to 50,000 spectators.



TERRACE HOUSES: Opposite Hadrian's Temple, at the foot of the Bulbul Hill and the covered part of the archaeological site, protected from the heat and natural elements, lie the Houses of Koressus or the Terrace Houses, the homes of the wealthy families of Ancient Ephesus. These villas are excellently preserved, especially the interior decor. The oldest houses so far unearthed date from the 1st Century BC, were built on two stories and even had hot and cold water and a heating system, clay pipes under the floor.



EPHESUS IN THE BIBLE

Ephesus is mentioned often in Scripture. Paul journeyed to Ephesus during his [second missionary trip](#) and stayed there for two years so that “all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” ([Acts 19:10](#)). Ephesus was a prime site for evangelizing the whole province, due to the city’s accessibility and prominence in the region. It was in Ephesus that Paul and his companions were taken into the massive amphitheater where for two hours the mob shouted, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians” ([Acts 19:23–41](#)). Despite the strong objections to the gospel, many Ephesians came to faith in Christ through the faithful ministry of Paul and his companions. A church began there, and a few years later, Paul wrote to them a letter that we now call the [book of Ephesians](#). Four hundred years later, Ephesus was also the site of the [Council of Ephesus](#).

Ephesus was the setting for many New Testament events:

- God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, such that even handkerchiefs and aprons touched by him healed sickness and cast out demons ([Acts 19:11](#)).
- Paul wrote the epistle of 1 Corinthians.
- The [seven sons of Sceva](#), Jewish exorcists, attempted to imitate Paul’s power and were attacked by demons because the demons did not recognize their spiritual authority ([Acts 19:13–16](#)).
- Many new believers “who had practiced magic arts brought their books and burned them in front of everyone” ([Acts 19:19](#), BSB). The total value of the sorcery books they destroyed was 50,000 silver pieces.
- [Priscilla and Aquilla](#) discipled Apollos ([Acts 18:24–26](#)).
- [Timothy](#) had his first pastorate ([1 Timothy 1:3](#)).
- It’s thought that the apostle John and Jesus’ mother, Mary, lived in Ephesus after Jesus returned to heaven (see [John 19:26–27](#)).
- Paul may have faced wild beasts in the amphitheater ([1 Corinthians 15:32](#)).
- Jesus directed to Ephesus one of His seven letters in the book of Revelation ([Revelation 2:1–7](#)).

Jesus’ letter to the [church at Ephesus](#) contains Jesus’ famous rebuke: “You have left your first love” ([Revelation 2:4](#)). The believers at Ephesus, struggling beneath the weight of a

godless and immoral culture, had maintained the letter of the law but had lost the Spirit of the law (see [Romans 2:29](#)). Jesus commended them for their hard work, perseverance, rejection of false teaching, and hatred of sin. But He was grieved that they had become routine in their service for Him rather than serve Him with the passion they once had. Their actions were there, but their hearts were not.

Jesus' words to the believers in Ephesus should challenge all servants of the Lord. It is easy to get caught up in the busyness of ministry, church work, or volunteering and not realize our passion for the Lord has cooled. We are no longer propelled into service by love, but by some other selfish or worldly motivation. We may think God doesn't mind, as long as we are outwardly obeying, but He does mind. It hurts Him, and it violates the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength" ([Mark 12:30](#)).

Jesus gave the church at Ephesus time to repent, and He gives us time as well. Every moment we resist His call to humble ourselves and return to our first love is one more moment that we forfeit the love, joy, and peace He offers ([1 Peter 5:6](#); [Galatians 5:22-23](#)). Jesus was so concerned about the church at Ephesus that He dictated a letter through the apostle John ([Revelation 1:1-2](#)). And He is so concerned about the church of today that He made certain that letter was preserved for us ([Revelation 1:3](#); [22:18-19](#)).