


EPHESUS (2)

THE STRUGGLE TO KEEP THE FAITH



LATER DEVELOPMENTS - PAUL

- Paul's Letter to Ephesus – c. A.D. 60-61
- Uncertain if originally/only sent to Ephesus – “in Ephesus” missing from some manuscripts.
- May originally have been a “circular letter” sent to several churches
- Contains no personal references; unusual for a church where Paul spent 3 years
- Main theme: Unity of Jews & Gentiles in “one body”; a likely challenge in most early churches, including Ephesus
- No indications of serious doctrinal threats or deviations

A lit torch with a flame, set against a warm, textured background. The torch is made of a dark material, possibly metal or wood, with a woven basket-like structure around the middle. The flame is bright yellow and orange, with a small amount of smoke rising from it. The background is a mottled, warm brown color.

For this *reason*
I *remind* you
to *kindle*
afresh the gift
of GOD which is
in *you...*

2 Timothy 1:6

LATER DEVELOPMENTS - TIMOTHY

- Paul had sent Timothy to Ephesus to deal with serious doctrinal threats; Paul's prediction (Acts 20) had become reality!
- Wrote 1 & 2 Tim to encourage him; obviously a difficult situation (A.D. 64-67)
- Nature of threat involved misuse/misunderstanding of the Law & the insistence of unqualified people on being teachers
- Also involved ascetic practices, myths, & a generally quarrelsome spirit
- Paul's antidote = (1) Orderly Worship & (2) Appointment of Qualified Leaders
- Also urges Tim to avoid "stupid controversies" that lead nowhere
- 2 Tim apparently Paul's last letter, shortly before execution


1 ■ Rome

Apostle Peter writes his First Letter, to the Christian Jews of much of Asia Minor, probably from Rome c AD64



LATER DEVELOPMENTS - PETER

- About same time Paul wrote to Timothy (early-mid 60s A.D.), Peter wrote 1 Peter from Rome to churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, & Bithynia
- Since Ephesus located in Asia, Ephesian church was apparently one of the recipients of this letter
- Theme = remaining true to Christ in face of persecution, living as “exiles” in a hostile environment
- Persecution obviously widespread; Peter later executed as a result
- Church in Ephesus apparently remained strong



7
Letters
to the
Churches

LATER DEVELOPMENTS - JOHN

- 1st of the “Letters to the 7 Churches” (Rev 2 & 3) addressed to Ephesus (A.D. 90-100)
- Commended by Jesus for the toil & endurance, & for resisting inroads of “false apostles” & exposing them, & for hating “the works of the Nicolaitans” (??)
- Criticized for abandoning “the love you had at first”
- Apparently their struggles with false teaching had left them somewhat sterile in their relationship with one another
- Christ challenges them to “remember, repent, & do”
- Later church history (Eusebius – 4th Cent.) records that John was a beloved figure in the church at Ephesus in his last years

LATER DEVELOPMENTS - IGNATIUS

- Approx. A.D. 115, wrote to Ephesus while on his way to martyrdom in Rome
- Commends their love & unity
- Warns them of false teaching, particularly the Gnosticism which had become prevalent
- Commends them for not listening to false teaching
- However, tells them to revere their “bishop” as they would Christ himself!

LESSONS FROM EPHESUS (2)

- 1. False teaching will inevitably arise, so it must be confronted & refuted.*
- 2. Orderly worship & good leadership are still the keys to avoiding/correcting false teaching when it happens.*
- 3. We don't want to become so overzealous in defending the faith that we fail to love the faithful.*
- 4. Any church can overcome lovelessness or false teaching by "remembering, repenting, & doing."*