

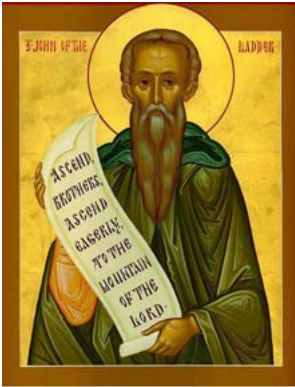
EXTRA

Turkey & Greece



Saint Paul

Going Further in March/April 2011



Saint John (P14)

Exiled to Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian in A.D. 95, St. John the Divine is said to have made his home in a cave, though Patmians insist quite reasonably that he walked every inch of the small island, talking with its people. The cave is said to be the epicenter of his earth-shaking revelation, which he dictated to his disciple and which has come down as the Book of the Apocalypse, or Revelation, the last book of the Christian Bible. The cave is now encased within a sanctuary, which is in turn encircled by a convent.

St. John had been banished to Patmos, an unimportant islet, whose condition in ancient times is little known. In the Imperial period banishment to one of the small rocky islands of the Aegean was a common and recognised penalty, corresponding in some respects (though only in a very rough way and with many serious differences) to the former English punishment of transportation. It carried with it entire loss of civil rights and almost entire loss of property; usually a small allowance was reserved to sustain the exile's life. The penalty was life-long; it ended only with death.

St. John wrote to the Churches in the words of Revelation 1:9, because he was suffering in the same degree as themselves.

Banished to Patmos, St. John was dead to the world; he could not learn much about what was going on in the Empire and in the Province Asia. It would be difficult for him to write his Vision in a book, and still more difficult to send it to the Churches when it was written. He could exercise no charge of his Churches. He could only think about them, and see in the heavens the process of their fate.

At last there came the assassination of the tyrant, the annulling of all his acts, and the strong reaction against his whole policy. The Christians profited by this. The persecution, though not first instituted by him, was closely connected with his name and his ideas, and was discredited and made unpopular by the association.

In particular, the exile pronounced against St. John was apparently an act of the Emperor, and ceased to be valid when his acts were declared invalid.

The Apostle was now free to return to Asia. There grew up later the belief that his exile had only been short; and that he was banished about two years before the end of Domitian's reign.

Seven Churches in Revelation – Their Ultimate Significance

The seven churches in Revelation are literal churches from the first century AD. However, the seven churches in Revelation also have spiritual significance for churches and believers today. Indeed, the primary purpose for John writing his letters to the seven churches was to deliver Christ's "report card" for the churches of that time. However, a second purpose for John's inspired writings was to describe seven types of churches (and individual believers) that would surface time and again throughout history. These short letters to the seven churches of Revelation act as quick and poignant reminders to those who call themselves "followers of Christ."

Seven Churches in Revelation – Then and Now

The seven churches in Revelation are located in western Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), accessible by way of the Aegean Sea and the ancient trade routes between the West and East. For various reasons, whether trade, military, these cities were major cultural hubs throughout history. During the first few centuries after Jesus Christ, these Roman-controlled cities were also important in early Christianity. Here are the seven churches of Revelation as described by the writer John in the late first century AD



Ephesus – (Efes) (P) The desirable church that left its first love (Revelation 2:1-7). Ephesus was the influential capital city of Asia Minor on the Aegean Sea. Ephesus is now known for its huge metropolis of ancient streets, arches and ruins.

The message of St John to the Ephesians introduces Jesus in the same way as does the introduction of the book of Revelation: with the seven stars — the seven angels of the churches — in his right hand and walking, among the seven golden lampstands, the symbol of the Seven Churches. The metaphor confirms that Christ is ever present in each of the churches. The light and lamps are often used in the New Testament for describing the function of disciples of Christ in the world. As the lamp on the candlestick lights up the surrounding darkness, so the disciples are to have an illuminating effect upon their environment.

The expression / know your works, your labour, and your endurance is encountered at the beginning of each of his letters and refers to the work and weariness in this world which one day will be over.

Things changed with the succession of Domitian (AD 81-96) who wanted to be addressed as 'our Master and our God' (an expression that Christians could only use to refer to Jesus) and those who questioned the idea were treated as atheists. The tension that the situation created for Jews and Christians was probably felt strongest in Ephesus where a temple was erected for Domitian. St John probably praises the Ephesian Christians for the persecutions they suffered without growing weary during this period.

He blames the Ephesian Christians for not maintaining their first love which is always regarded as being the strongest. Nevertheless there is always the chance to awaken before the corruption eats up the whole body; before the light goes out. Their original love can be renewed only by repentance. Otherwise they will be punished.

The Ephesian Christians are complimented for the hatred they have shown for the Nicolaitans. Nicolas, a convert to Judaism in Antioch (Acts 6:5), and one of the seven deacons of Jerusalem in the first century, became the originator of an early heresy which was named after him. His purpose was to achieve a compromise between Christianity and the prevailing social norms of the time, by reconciling the observance of certain pagan practices, such as the liberty to commit sexual sins, with membership in the Christian community. However, in his letter to Ephesus St John does not explain the nature of the teaching of the Nicolaitans. He is more explicit about them in his letter to the church in Pergamum. Although the word 'Nicolaitan' is not used, St John refers to the same heresy in his letter to the church of Thyateira.

The believer who endures the persecutions, or 'who conquers' will be granted to eat from the tree of life, a tree with supernatural qualities. According to the book of Genesis (3:22) the tree's fruit will allow people to live forever and it is guarded by a cherubim and a flaming sword (Gen 3:24). The tree of life imagery is mentioned towards the end of the book of Revelation:

Then the angel showed me the river of life-giving water, sparkling like crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of its street. On either side of the river grew the tree of life that produces fruit twelve times a year, once each month; the leaves of the trees serve as medicine for the nations. (Rev 22:1-2)

The message of St John to the Ephesians introduces Jesus in the same way as does the introduction of the book of Revelation: with the seven stars — the seven angels of the churches — in his right hand and walking, among the seven golden lampstands, the symbol of the Seven Churches. The metaphor confirms that Christ is ever present in each of the churches. The light and lamps are often used in the New Testament for describing the function of disciples of Christ in the world. As the lamp on the candlestick lights up the surrounding darkness, so the disciples are to have an illuminating effect upon their environment.

The expression / know your works, your labor, and your endurance is encountered at the beginning of each of his letters and refers to the work and weariness in this world which one day will be over.

NICOLAITANS [nick oh LAY ih tuns] — an early Christian heretical sect made up of followers of Nicolas, who was possibly the deacon of Acts 6:5. The group is mentioned explicitly only in Rev. 2:6, 14–15, where it is equated with a group holding “the doctrine of Balaam,” who taught Israel “to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.”

Therefore, the error of this group was moral rather than doctrinal. If the “Jezebel” of Revelation 2:20–23 was a teacher of this sect, as many believe, their sexual laxity was indeed strong. Most likely, they were a group of anti-law practitioners who supported a freedom that became self-indulgence. It may have been the same heresy condemned in 2 Peter 2:15 and Jude 11. Some early church leaders believed the Nicolaitans later became a Gnostic sect (Those who believed Jesus came in a spiritual body and could not be touched as he wasn't human).

To Ephesus *(Intro to this reading on Page 17)*

Write this to Ephesus, to the Angel of the church. The One with Seven Stars in his right-fist grip, striding through the golden seven-lights' circle, speaks:

“I see what you've done, your hard, hard work, your refusal to quit. I know you can't stomach evil, that you weed out apostolic pretenders. I know your persistence, your courage in my cause, that you never wear out.

“But you walked away from your first love—why? What’s going on with you, anyway? Do you have any idea how far you’ve fallen? A Lucifer fall!

“Turn back! Recover your dear early love. No time to waste, for I’m well on my way to removing your light from the golden circle.

*“You do have this to your credit: You hate the Nicolaitan business. I hate it, too
“Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches. I’m about to call each conqueror to dinner. I’m spreading a banquet of Tree-of-Life fruit, a supper plucked from God’s orchard.”*

Smyrna – (Izmir) (P11) The persecuted church that suffered poverty and martyrdom (Revelation 2:8-11). Smyrna was located north of Ephesus in a powerful trading position on the Aegean Sea known for its harbours, commerce, and marketplaces. The primary ruins of Smyrna are located in the modern Turkish city of Izmir.

To the church in Smyrna

In his letter to the church in Smyrna St John introduces Jesus as the first and the last, an expression repeated at the end of the Revelation as / am Alpha and Omega,' the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Rv 21:6), and as the living one who has passed through death and come to life. The same imagery is found at the beginning of his letters (Rv 1:8) as / am the Alpha and the Omega, (The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.)

He informs the Christians that he is familiar with both the suffering and poverty of their community, a material poverty probably caused by Roman oppression and that of the synagogue Jews who did not accept Christianity. The hatred of such Jews for Christians was known to extend to physical violence. The city was renowned for its loyalty to Rome and for the hatred of its Jews for Christians.

In his gospel St John sees the Jews as a symbol of human evil and as ally of Satan. Christians are known to have distinguished themselves not only from Jews but from pagans as well.

However, the ordeal St John has in mind would last only ten days — a period whose meaning is not clear. It is claimed that ten days may refer to a limited period of tribulation. In the book of Daniel (1:12) where the hero says to the official of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar: Please test your servants for ten days, it means just a certain period of time. On the other hand this may have been related to a specific tradition. An inscription on the base of a statue of a high priest of the imperial cult discovered in the agora mentions that he arranged gladiator shows for five days. Similar inscriptions from Thyateira, Pergamum and other cities of the Roman world show that during this period the mentioning of the duration of such spectacles was not unusual. St John may have had in mind such a meaning when he used the words an ordeal of ten days. The story of martyrdoms shows that the persecutions of Christians during such spectacles

— before the gladiatorial games began — was not uncommon.

According to St John their persecution for the faith has brought them spiritual richness. If they stick to their faith their reward will be the crown of life. This imagery commonly brings to mind Christ's crown of thorns, the symbol of martyrdom and suffering but essentially a crown of life 'everlasting'. The metaphor may have been inspired by the fact that the crown or wreath was the most common element on the coins issued in Smyrna and the prize of Christian martyrs.

To Smyrna *(Intro to this reading on Page 17)*

Write this to Smyrna, to the Angel of the church. The Beginning and Ending, the First and Final One, the Once Dead and Then Come Alive, speaks:

"I can see your pain and poverty—constant pain, dire poverty—but I also see your wealth. And I hear the lie in the claims of those who pretend to be good Jews, who in fact belong to Satan's crowd.

"Fear nothing in the things you're about to suffer—but stay on guard! Fear nothing! The Devil is about to throw you in jail for a time of testing—ten days. It won't last forever.

"Don't quit, even if it costs you your life. Stay there believing. I have a Life-Crown sized and ready for you.

"Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches. Christ-conquerors are safe from Devil-death."

Pergamum – (Bergama) (P) The worldly church that mixed doctrines and needed to repent (Rev. 2:12-17). Pergamum is located on the plains and foothills along the Caicus River in Western Turkey. It was considered a major city in Asia Minor since the 3rd century BC, and became a Greek and Roman hub for temple worship.

At the beginning of the letter to this church St John introduces Jesus as the one who has the two edged sword. The allusion comes from the letter to the Hebrews (4:12): Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart. Also in the book of Psalms (149:6) Jews are invited to stand with a two-edged sword in their hands to defend Zion.

When St John addressed the third of his letters in the Revelation to Pergamum, the city was one of the most important centres of paganism, including the imperial cult of the region. At the time that the letter was written, there was a statue of the divine Augustus in the temenos of Athena's Temple on the summit of the acropolis; there might also have been a statue of the goddess Roma. These were the earliest monuments of the Roman imperial cult in the city.

The Great Altar whose walls were decorated with reliefs showing the battle of Greek gods with the Giants also stood on the acropolis. Some scholars claim that when St John referred to the Satan's throne he had the Great Altar in mind. St John was probably concerned with the imperial cult more than the older Hellenistic cults, which had begun to loosen their hold on the people.

St John praises the Christians of Pergamum for not having given up their faith despite all the pressure on them. Antipas, one of the spiritual leaders of the Pergamene congregation, was martyred by being roasted in a brazen bull. In the New Testament the Greek word martyr meaning 'witness' or 'testimony'¹ is used for bearing witness to the faith in Christ to the end of one's life and used only twice meaning 'slain': at the stoning of St Stephen and here at the martyrdom of Antipas.

In Pergamum there are also those who believe in the teaching of the Nicolaitans, like their brothers in Ephesus.

After having acknowledged the problems in Pergamum, St John admonishes those who waver to repent and threatens them that Christ will come for them with the sword in his mouth — again referring to the impending Second Coming. The believers who conquer — who have not eaten food sacrificed to idols — will be rewarded. Their reward will be the hidden manna, the food that God gave the Israelites as they wandered in the wilderness, in the sense that it will nourish their spirits forever. Each member of the church is also to be given a white amulet, with a new name, a name of glory.

Excavations have brought to light the remains of a number of church buildings in ancient Pergamum. The best known of these is the Church of St John that was built into the so-called Red Court. This was probably built in the fourth century and served as the cathedral of the city.

It is assumed that in Pergamum as elsewhere, the Christian community included some Jewish converts.

To Pergamum *(Intro to this reading on Page 17)*

Write this to Pergamum, to the Angel of the church. The One with the sharp-biting sword draws from the sheath of his mouth—out come the sword words: "I see where you live, right under the shadow of Satan's throne. But you continue boldly in my Name; you never once denied my Name, even when the pressure was worst, when they martyred Antipas, my witness who stayed faithful to me on Satan's turf.

"But why do you indulge that Balaam crowd? Don't you remember that Balaam was an enemy agent, seducing Balak and sabotaging Israel's holy pilgrimage by throwing unholy parties? And why do you put up with the Nicolaitans, who do

the same thing?

“Enough! Don’t give in to them; I’ll be with you soon. I’m fed up and about to cut them to pieces with my sword-sharp words.

“Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches. I’ll give the sacred manna to every conqueror; I’ll also give a clear, smooth stone inscribed with your new name, your secret new name.”

Thyatira – (Akhisar) (P12) The false church that followed a seductive prophetess (Rev. 2:18-29). Thyatira is located in western Asia Minor about 42 miles inland from the Aegean Sea. The ancient city was known for its textiles and dyeing trade, and is now known as the Turkish city of Akhisar.

St John's letter to the church in Thyateira which was materially the most insignificant of the seven cities in fact is the longest. This is not a coincidence but probably caused by the gravity of the situation in the church in Thyateira. The city was known for the popularity of its pagan trade-guilds and the church here must have felt their strong pressure.

At the beginning of the letter St John uses the imagery he has already employed in the introduction of the book of Revelation. As in the book of Daniel, God is described like a pagan deity, with eyes like a flame of fire which could penetrate into everything and feet like polished brass which could walk on anything. He praises the church for enduring the stages of persecutions patiently.

The Christians of Thyateira, however, have another major problem. This is their toleration of the activities of a woman called Jezebel who claimed that she was a prophetess. This woman, for whom St John has used the nickname Jezebel, seems to have been able to lead many Christians in Thyateira to worship pagan gods like her Old Testament namesake. Jezebel alludes to the daughter of the Phoenician king of Sidon who married the king Ahab of Israel and he describes her teaching as that of Balaam (1 Kings 16:31; 2 Kings 9:22, 30-37), eating things sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality. The Lord gave her a chance to repent. But it was useless, she continued her evil ways. For this both the woman and those who are tempted by her teaching will be punished. The punishment will also cover her children, that is those who will follow her teaching even after her death. God sees, tests and searches the hidden depths of the human heart.

There are however, those who hold fast against such evil temptations, those who have not known the deep secrets of Satan and those who have not participated in the ungodly things of this world, probably the teaching of Nicolaitans. St John advises these to wait a little longer until Jesus comes when they will receive power over nations and the morning star.

To Thyatira *(Intro to this reading on Page 17)*

Write this to Thyatira, to the Angel of the church. God's Son, eyes pouring fire-blaze, standing on feet of furnace-fired bronze, says this:

"I see everything you're doing for me. Impressive! The love and the faith, the service and persistence. Yes, very impressive! You get better at it every day.

"But why do you let that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet mislead my dear servants into Cross-denying, self-indulging religion? I gave her a chance to change her ways, but she has no intention of giving up a career in the god-business. I'm about to lay her low, along with her partners, as they play their sex-and-religion games. The bastard offspring of their idol-whoring I'll kill. Then every church will know that appearances don't impress me. I x-ray every motive and make sure you get what's coming to you.

"The rest of you Thyatirans, who have nothing to do with this outrage, who scorn this playing around with the Devil that gets paraded as profundity, be assured I'll not make life any harder for you than it already is. Hold on to the truth you have until I get there.

"Here's the reward I have for every conqueror, everyone who keeps at it, refusing to give up: You'll rule the nations, your Shepherd-King rule as firm as an iron staff, their resistance fragile as clay pots. This was the gift my Father gave me; I pass it along to you— and with it, the Morning Star!

"Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches."

LYDIA – Acts 16: 11 – 15, 40.

The seller of purple

We heard in the second lesson about the meeting between Paul and a woman called Lydia in the city of Philippi. And we were told that Lydia was a dealer in purple cloth. Now, on the whole I prefer modern translations of the Bible, but they let us down a bit here. The old Authorized Version, sticking closely to the Greek, says that she's a seller of purple. Just that. A seller of purple.

The cost of purple.

Dyes were natural, not synthetic, and the dye for purple was made from a juice found in minute quantities in shellfish. It took thousands of crustaceans to make a yard or two of purple cloth. So it was very expensive, worth its weight in silver it was said. It was a statement of status and wealth, the Gucci handbag or the Rolex watch of Roman times.

And that's what Lydia is selling. She's selling purple; purple cloth, purple robes, the power of purple. She's not local. She's from Thyatira, a town well known for making purple cloth. She seems to be the head of her household, there's no husband around, even though she's a travelling trader. And if she's a seller of purple, she's not poor, because she couldn't have afforded her stock.

She's not Jewish, but she believes in God. She's what the Jews knew as a 'Godfearer' - someone who worships in the synagogue, but hasn't converted completely to Judaism.

But to have a synagogue you need ten men who will meet together to say prayers. Phillipi, it seems, doesn't have a synagogue. If there's no synagogue, then any Jews that happen to be in the town or passing through know to meet near the river on the sabbath to pray. That's where Lydia goes, and it's where Paul and Silas go too.

So here is this rich, confident woman, meeting Paul for the first time. Paul was never rich, and must have been anything but confident at that point in his ministry.

It had all started so well. Paul and Barnabas had travelled through Asia, founding churches and setting people on fire for the gospel. But they had come back to a less than rapturous welcome from the Jerusalem church, who wanted to know why they were baptising Gentiles. Then Paul had fallen out with Barnabas, and set off on his next journey with Silas instead.

In a way which he doesn't explain, Paul felt the Spirit had forbidden them to go back to Asia. Wherever he tries to go he feels he is rebuffed, until finally he is called in a dream to Macedonia. He goes to Philippi, on the outer fringe of the Jewish diaspora, where he finds no synagogue where he could preach the gospel; so he goes to the river probably looking for Jewish leaders, and finds 'only' women.

And there he meets Lydia.

Paul, who seemed this time to be on a mission that was going nowhere, meets the woman who will be the lynchpin of the church in Philippi. Other churches give him nothing but grief, the Philippians are a constant source of support for him, financial as well as spiritual. His letter to them is one of the warmest of the epistles. He's founded a church in what seemed an unlikely place, and it's been one of his success stories.

Purple wasn't just an indicator of wealth. It was a symbol of political power. The more important you were as a Roman senator, the more purple decoration you had on your tunic and your toga. The emperor, and only the emperor, would wear a toga made entirely of purple cloth. Purple was the colour of the Roman elite.

And here, as the message of the gospel crosses the Aegean and moves towards

the heart of the Graeco-Roman world, here the imperial purple and the message of the kingdom meet.

Sardis – (Sart) (P) The "dead" church that fell asleep (Revelation 3:1-6). Sardis is located on the banks of the Pactolus River in western Asia Minor, 60 miles inland from Ephesus and Smyrna. Popular ruins include the decadent temples and bath house complexes.

The message of St John to the church in Sardis begins with the introduction of Jesus as the one who possesses the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. The Spirit of God is symbolized as the seven spirits. The seven stars are the angels of the Seven Churches.

The abrupt manner in which St John begins admonishing the church in Sardis, contrasting their present state with the past, gives the impression that it has completely surrendered to the temptations against which St John tries to warn the Christians of the time. These were following the teaching of false prophets, worshipping the imperial cult or not embracing the faith heartfully. For this reason the church of Sardis is regarded as dead. It exists only in name. It is time that it wakes up from this dead state. Otherwise it will be punished without knowing when this will happen.

Nevertheless, there are those few Christians in Sardis who have kept their faith. They are the conquerors. They have not fallen into heresy. They are worthy of being rewarded with white garments, the symbol of eternal bliss, and their names will be confessed before God and his angels. Their names will not be erased from the book of life like those who did not endure the persecutions. The latter derives from Luke (10:20) where Christ tells the seventy-two men to rejoice because their names are written in heaven. It means they belong to God and God's kingdom. The metaphor is found in the book of Daniel (12:1) where the people whose names found written in the book escape distress. In the book of Exodus (32:33) God answers Moses: only who has sinned against me will I strike out of my book. Philippians (4:3) also refers to the book of life. In the book of Revelation St John says that after, the resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgement will take place and the people whose names are not found in the book will be cast into the lake of fire (Rv 20:15). The others (Rv 21:7) will be rewarded with eternal life on a new earth.

To Sardis *(Intro to this reading on Page 17)*

*Write this to Sardis, to the Angel of the church. The One holding the Seven Spirits of God in one hand, a firm grip on the Seven Stars with the other, speaks:
"I see right through your work. You have a reputation for vigor and zest, but*

you're dead, stone dead.

"Up on your feet! Take a deep breath! Maybe there's life in you yet. But I wouldn't know it by looking at your busywork; nothing of God's work has been completed. Your condition is desperate. Think of the gift you once had in your hands, the Message you heard with your ears—grasp it again and turn back to God.

"If you pull the covers back over your head and sleep on, oblivious to God, I'll return when you least expect it, break into your life like a thief in the night.

"You still have a few Christians in Sardis who haven't ruined themselves wallowing in the muck of the world's ways. They'll walk with me on parade! They've proved their worth!

"Conquerors will march in the victory parade, their names indelible in the Book of Life. I'll lead them up and present them by name to my Father and his Angels.

"Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches."

Philadelphia – (Alasehir) (We don't visit here)The church of brotherly love that endures patiently (Revelation 3:7-13). Philadelphia is located on the Cogamis River in western Asia Minor, about 80 miles east of Smyrna. Philadelphia was known for its variety of temples and worship centres.

Excepting Smyrna, Philadelphia is the only church among the seven about which nothing bad is said by St John. At the beginning of his letter to the members of the church in Philadelphia St John refers to Jesus as the truth itself, and as the holder of the key of David. This is the key to open the holy city Jerusalem. These keys are referred to by God in Isaiah (22:22): I will place the key of the House of David on his shoulder; when he opens, no one shall shut, when he shuts, no one shall open. These are the keys of Death and Hades mentioned in the book of Revelation (1:18). They are access to the eschatological kingdom of God. The door's shutting means the irrevocable loss of the opportunity. The open door he has set before them is himself through whom they could enter the kingdom of heaven.

St John's words give the impression that the Christians in the church of Philadelphia are either small in number or poor or both; but they have not denied Jesus. The Jews of Philadelphia are accused in the same way as the Jews of Smyrna, of being the 'assembly' of Satan: not true Jews but pretenders. These false Jews will come to the Christian Church and recognize that the Risen One loved the true believers, because the church of Philadelphia has followed the example of Jesus' patient endurance.

Although they have little power the Christians of Philadelphia have kept Jesus' word and if they keep to their faith they will be rewarded after the impending

Second Coming. At the hour of trial Jesus will stand by them. Among the promised rewards is that he who conquers will become a pillar in the temple of God and he shall never go out. The Greek word *stylos* means 'pillar' or 'support'. In both the Old and New Testaments it is often used both literally and metaphorically. The metaphor may refer to the two pillars which adorned Solomon's temple. In 1 Kings (7:21) and 2 Chronicles (3:17) Solomon sets up a pillar to the left of the entrance of his temple which he calls Boaz, and another one to the right named Yachin.'

The pillar bore three names: God, Jerusalem, and Christ. This is the final eschatological vision of St John in the book of Revelation and it describes the ultimate hope of the faithful which is a heavenly city. It will descend from heaven as the bride of the exalted Jesus. Those who are marked as conquerors will be its citizens.

To Philadelphia

Write this to Philadelphia, to the Angel of the church. The Holy, the True—David's key in his hand, opening doors no one can lock, locking doors no one can open—speaks:

"I see what you've done. Now see what I've done. I've opened a door before you that no one can slam shut. You don't have much strength, I know that; you used what you had to keep my Word. You didn't deny me when times were rough. "And watch as I take those who call themselves true believers but are nothing of the kind, pretenders whose true membership is in the club of Satan—watch as I strip off their pretensions and they're forced to acknowledge it's you that I've loved.

"Because you kept my Word in passionate patience, I'll keep you safe in the time of testing that will be here soon, and all over the earth, every man, woman, and child put to the test.

"I'm on my way; I'll be there soon. Keep a tight grip on what you have so no one distracts you and steals your crown.

"I'll make each conqueror a pillar in the sanctuary of my God, a permanent position of honor. Then I'll write names on you, the pillars: the Name of my God, the Name of God's City—the new Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven—and my new Name.

"Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches."

Laodicea – (Laodikea) (P19)The "lukewarm" church with a faith that's neither hot nor cold (Rev. 3:14-22). Laodicea is located in the Lycus River Valley of western Asia Minor, a primary trade route between the cultures of the West and East. Laodicea was known as a primary hub for the Roman aqueduct system.

In the opening words of his message St John introduces Jesus as the 'Amen' which is His divine title. Jesus is the true representation and the infallible witness of the glory of God and the firstborn or beginning of all creation.

St John does not accuse the church in Laodicea of apostasy. Neither does he charge them with following the teaching of a false prophet — worshipping the imperial cult. The Christians of Laodicea are accused of being 'lukewarm'. St John's play on the words 'cold, hot, lukewarm' shows that he is familiar with the rare luxury of the region in respect to springs in the hot Anatolian summer. The metaphor is based on the water supply of Laodicea and water sources of nearby Hierapolis (Pamukkale) and Colossae (Honaz). The water which reached Laodicea after covering some seven kilometres by a pipe-line was so hard or impure that it caused thick layers of encrustation in the pipes which have survived among the ruins. According to St John it was almost too hard to swallow. The water of Hierapolis is hot whereas that of Colossae is cold. Being 'cold' or 'hot' for a beverage is preferable to being 'lukewarm.'¹ The water of those cities is preferable to that of Laodicea.

St John's metaphor gives the impression that the rich church of Laodicea was unable to understand the real source of the richness of a church; what is the meaning of richness for a church? The Laodicean Christians are wealthy and self-content to a degree that they think that they do not need Jesus. They are 'lukewarm' or 'slackened'. This is a pitiable condition. They could only become rich by turning to the Lord. They are poor because what they own is material. They are blind because they cannot see their obligations. They are naked because their clothes do not give them any spiritual warmth. They have neither refused the new faith nor embraced it strongly enough to provoke persecutions. This is not acceptable. Their peaceful happy life is nothing but an illusion. St John's remark that they buy ointment to smear on your eyes so that you may see may derive from the fame of the eye medicine produced from powdered Phrygian stone in Laodicea. In a city famous for eye medicines the Christian church is blind.

St John informs them that in order to be rich in reality they must buy gold refined by fire that is the true Christian faith which will endure the test. Those who stand and die wear the white garments — contrasting the 'black wool' of the area — of a martyr. While the sought-after garment of Laodicea does not give anything but material warmth. At the end of his message the vision describes the Risen Lord standing at the door knocking, and inviting those inside to open and receive him. The Lord is addressing the spiritually lukewarm church in Laodicea to open itself and let Him in. The door of eternal happiness is opened by obedience and faith. Thus they must repent and join, returning to Christ at the festal meal, an allusion deriving from Mark (14:25) and Luke (22:30) where Christ refers to a messianic banquet which he would celebrate with his disciples in the Heavenly Kingdoms

To Laodicea (*Intro to this reading on Page 17*)

Write to Laodicea, to the Angel of the church. God's Yes, the Faithful and Accurate Witness, the First of God's creation, says:

"I know you inside and out, and find little to my liking. You're not cold, you're not hot—far better to be either cold or hot! You're stale. You're stagnant. You make me want to vomit. You brag, 'I'm rich, I've got it made, I need nothing from anyone,' oblivious that in fact you're a pitiful, blind beggar, threadbare and homeless.

"Here's what I want you to do: Buy your gold from me, gold that's been through the refiner's fire. Then you'll be rich. Buy your clothes from me, clothes designed in Heaven. You've gone around half-naked long enough. And buy medicine for your eyes from me so you can see, really see.

"The people I love, I call to account—prod and correct and guide so that they'll live at their best. Up on your feet, then! About face! Run after God!

"Look at me. I stand at the door. I knock. If you hear me call and open the door, I'll come right in and sit down to supper with you. Conquerors will sit alongside me at the head table, just as I, having conquered, took the place of honor at the side of my Father. That's my gift to the conquerors!

"Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches."

The Council of Nicea (Relevant to the Nicene Creed in the Mass) (P8)

When Constantine defeated Emperor Licinius in 323 AD he ended the persecutions against the Christian church. Shortly afterwards Christians faced a trouble from within: the Arian controversy began and threatened to divide the church. The problem began in Alexandria, it started as a debate between the bishop Alexander and the presbyter (pastor, or priest) Arius. Arius proposed that if the Father begat the Son, the latter must have had a beginning, that there was a time when he was not, and that his substance was from nothing like the rest of creation.

The Council of Nicea, a gathering similar to the one described in Acts 15:4-22, condemned the beliefs of Arius and wrote the first version of the now famous creed proclaiming that the Son was "one in being with the Father" by use of the Greek word "homoousias."

How Controversial was the Arian Controversy?

There were some three hundred bishops gathered at the Council of Nicea from all around the world. It should be remembered that many of those present had, because of the recent persecutions, suffered and had faced threat of death for their faith. These were not wishy-washy men. It might also be remarked, that they were extremely sensitive to details of doctrine. As evidence of this, the second major concern of the Council of Nicea was to address the hotly debated question of what the proper day was to celebrate the resurrection.

The bishops of the Council closed their ears on hearing the words of Arius and immediately rejected his teaching as distant and alien from the belief of the Church.

Originally seventeen of those bishops gathered at the council were unwilling to sign the Creed penned by the Council, and all but three of these were convinced to sign by the end. It is thus apparent that the Arians were a distinct minority among the bishops. Initially there was some resistance to the Nicene Creed, not because of what it said but because of how it said it. Many objected to the use of the word "homoousias" in an official document because it was not used in Scripture, despite their agreement with the meaning it conveyed.

It must be concluded, then, that the controversy was between a great majority who held the belief that the doctrine expressed by the Nicene Creed was ancient and Apostolic, and a minority who believed that Arius' new interpretation of the faith was correct .

The Word Homoousious

The Nicene Creed introduced the word "homoousious" or "consubstantial" meaning "of one substance."

Intro to each reading for the Seven Churches of Revelation

Lord, we thank for the the establishment of the church in and for the commitment of the Christians of the time.

We further thank you for the words of insight written by Saint John to the church where he said (The words of Saint John in **brown** is read)

At the end of the reading the reader says "Lord, we thank you for these words of insight"

We reply: **THANKS BE TO GOD**





The first journey begins when Paul, Barnabas, and Mark set out from Antioch (Acts 13:4). This journey started after 44 AD and ended a "long time" (Acts 14:28) before 50 AD.

They left Antioch for Seleucia and sailed to Cyprus, large island 100 miles off Syrian coast. There they went to Salamis and Paphos where Paul met Bar-Jesus the sorcerer. (Acts 13:4-6).

Then they sail to Perga in Pamphylia, which is now southern Turkey. From here, Mark returns to Jerusalem.

At Antioch in Pisidia (not to be confused with the one in Syria), Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46).

Then it was on to **Iconium**, where they abode a "long time" (Acts 14:3), Lystra, where Paul stoned, but lives (Acts 14:19), and Derbe. Then they retraced their steps back through Lystra, **Iconium**, and Antioch (in Pisidia) (Acts 14:21).

Paul and Barnabas went throughout Pisidia, Pamphylia, then to Perga, Attalia, and sailed back to Antioch in Syria (Acts 14:24-26)

The first journey ends in Antioch, Syria, where Paul and Barnabas stay there a long time (Acts 14:28).

The dates for the events from 50-60 AD are found by counting backwards from the succession of Felix's reign as Procurator in Judea by Porcius Festus in 60 AD. Should one want to check these dates for accuracy, one should start at 60 AD and work backwards.

In about 50 AD, Paul and Barnabas go to the council in Jerusalem 14 years after Paul's conversion (Galatians 2:1-9 and Acts 15:2). Judas and Silas return to Antioch (Syria) with Barnabas and Paul where they continued some days (Acts 15:35-36), possibly in the winter of 50-51 AD.

The second journey begins, possibly in the spring of 51 AD. Paul takes Silas through Syria and Cilicia (now southeastern Turkey). They came to Derbe and Lystra, where they find Timothy, who goes with Paul and Silas throughout Phrygia and Galatia. But they are forbidden by the Spirit to go into Asia or Bithynia. They passed through Mysia to **Troas**, the island of Samothracia, and then to Neapolis in Macedonia (now northern Greece).

At Philippi, God opens the heart of Lydia and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:14-34). Passing through Amphipolis and Appolonia, they came to Thessalonica, where Paul taught for 3 weeks.

After teaching some in Berea, Paul departed ahead of Silas and Timothy, southward into Achaia (now southern Greece), to Athens, possibly for the winter of 51-52 AD (Acts 17:14-15). Paul then makes his first visit to Corinth where he stays a year and a half (Acts 18:5). This may have been from the spring of 52 AD to the fall of 53 AD. Here, Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, who had just come from Rome, from which Claudius Caesar had banished all Jews. Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul. First Thessalonians was written from here in about 52 AD (1 Thessalonians 3:1-2, 6). We know that it was written from Corinth, and not from Athens, because Silas and Timothy had already rejoined Paul (1 Thessalonians 1:1 and Acts 18:5). Second Thessalonians was also written from Corinth. We know that it was soon after the first letter, because like the first letter, Silas was with Paul when second Thessalonians was written. After Paul leaves Corinth, there is no further mention of Silas traveling with Paul.

Paul left by boat with Aquila and Priscilla to Cenchrea and then across the Aegean Sea to **Ephesus**. Aquila and Priscilla stay there where they would later meet Apollos (Acts 18:19 and 26). Paul sails on to Caesarea and then goes up to Antioch in Syria, where **the second journey ends**. Paul stayed a while (Acts 18:23). This may have been the winter of 53-54 AD.

The third journey begins with Galatia (central region of Turkey) possibly in the spring of 54 AD and then Phrygia (Acts 18:23).

Then Paul arrives at **Ephesus** where he stayed for 3 years (Acts 20:31) probably from the fall of 54 AD to the fall of 57 AD. Paul meets disciples of John the Baptist. He preached in the synagogue for 3 months (Acts 19:8). He disputed daily in the school of Tyrannus for 2 years (Acts 19:9-10), so that all that dwelt in Asia heard the word. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead into Macedonia, but Paul stayed in Asia for a season (Acts 19:22). Paul wrote 1 Corinthians near the end of this stay in Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8,19), probably in 57 AD.

It was not written with Timothy, who Paul had sent ahead into Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Paul foresaw his route of travel for the next four or so years in Acts 19:21-22. This agrees with his plans in 1 Corinthians 16:1, 3, 5, 8-10. Note how the "great door" opened to Paul and "many adversaries" in verse 9 compares with the events in the **Ephesian** amphitheater in Acts 19:23-41. In 1 Corinthians 3:6, Paul says "Apollos watered". This refers to Apollos teaching in Corinth when Paul was at **Ephesus** (Acts 19:1).

Paul had rejoined Timothy when Second Corinthians was written (2 Corinthians 1:1). Paul had come to Troas and continued to Macedonia (2 Corinthians 2:12-13 and 7:5), where he was joined by Titus (2 Corinthians 7:6 & 13), which seems to correspond to Acts 20:1. Paul also talks of a third visit to Corinth in 2 Corinthians 13:1 and 12:14. So Second Corinthians was most likely written in the fall of 57 AD from somewhere in Macedonia (northern Greece), possibly at Philippi.

In 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, Paul says 14 years ago I ascended into heaven. From 57, going back 14 years to 43 AD, this puts us back before Paul's first journey, probably when he was at Antioch in Syria.

After going through Macedonia (northern Greece), Paul came to Achaia (southern Greece) where he stayed 3 months (Acts 20:2-3), making third visit to Corinth. This is where he spent the winter of 57-58 AD (1 Corinthians 16:5-8). Romans was written at this time (Romans 15:23-26 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Going back to Macedonia (Acts 20:1), they were at Philippi (northeastern Greece) in spring of 58 AD in the "days of unleavened bread" (Acts 20:6). Then they sailed to **Troas, where a young man fell out of a window**, and Paul raises him from the dead (Acts 20:7-12).

Then Paul went to **Assos, Mitylene**, Chios, Samos, Trogylium, and Miletus (now in southwestern Turkey). From here, Paul addresses **Ephesian** elders whom he had called to meet him (Acts 20:17-38) in the spring of 58 AD (Acts 20:16).

Sailing to Coos, Rhodes, Patara, and passing on the south side of Cyprus, they came to Tyre (which is now in Lebanon) where they stayed one week. Then they went south to Ptolemais and to Caesarea where they stayed many days (Acts 21:10). **Then Paul goes to Jerusalem, where the third journey ends.**

The third journey ends at Jerusalem in 58 AD. Paul is beaten by Jews, preaches to them (Acts 22:1-21), and is brought before Sanhedrin. Jesus Christ tells Paul that he will go to bear him witness in Rome. Many Jews vow to kill Paul (Acts 23:12).

Additional information about Saint Paul

In 58 AD, Paul is taken to Governor Felix (reigned 53–60) at Caesarea, "many years" (Acts 24:10) after 53 AD and 2 years before end Felix's reign. Paul then spends 2 years in prison in Caesarea in Judea. In 60 AD, Governor Portius Festus reign begins. Paul appeals to Caesar (Acts 25:11).

The voyage to Rome begins: Paul, still a prisoner, sails to Sidon with Luke and Aristarchus (Acts 27:1-2) on the way to Italy. They sailed to Myra (now southern Turkey) and on to Lasea, on large island of Crete, 50 miles southeast of Greece, where much time was spent (Acts 27:7-13).

In the fall of 60 AD, they reached Melita, a small island south of Sicily. Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake but lived. Paul healed the father of Publius and others. Paul (still captive) spends the winter of 60-61 AD (Acts 28:11) on island with his captors .

In the spring, they sailed on to Syracuse (on island of Sicily), then to Rhegium (on the southern tip of Italy), then to Puteoli (on the western coast of Italy). The voyage to Rome ends: Paul spends 2 years in his own hired house (Acts 28:30) as a prisoner in Rome from 61–63 AD. During this time he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. In about 62 AD, Paul wrote Ephesians before Timothy came to him (Ephesians 1:1) while in prison in Rome (Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, and 6:20). Also in about 62 AD, Paul wrote Philippians from prison (Philippians 1:7) in Rome (4:23) with Timothy (1:1). Paul wrote Colossians from prison (Colossians 4:18) in Rome in about 62 AD with Timothy (1:1) and fellow prisoner, Aristarchus (4:10). Paul, with Timothy, wrote Philemon from prison in 63 AD (Philemon 1:1).

Paul after the imprisonment in Rome: We know that Paul had further journeys after he was released from the prison in Rome in 63 AD. After his release, he wrote the epistles of Hebrews, Titus, First Timothy, and Second Timothy, not necessarily in that order, although Second Timothy was apparently his last. This took place after the events recorded in Acts, so all of our information comes from various statements that Paul makes in his letters. In them are clues that Paul may have traveled to some or all of the following places: Colossae, Spain, Corinth, Miletus, Troas, Crete, Nicopolis, Philippi, Italy, Judea, Ephesus, and Macedonia. This allows for the possibilities that Paul traveled to more about as many diverse places as in all of his previous journeys combined. There are probably several possible ways that one could reconstruct the sequence of these travels which would not disagree with scripture. Since I do not know which one would be correct, I will just list what I know about the journeys. Thus, the references below are not intended to be chronological, although they all occurred after Paul's release from prison in 63 AD.

In Philemon 22, Paul foresaw his release and tells those in **Colossae** to prepare him lodging. We know that Philemon was written to the Colossians because of Archippus (Colossians 4:17 and Philemon 2), Onesimus (Colossians 4:9 and Philemon 9-10), and others (Colossians 4:10-14 and Philemon 23-25).

Also, while in prison in Rome Paul wrote to those in Philippi that he may be coming to visit them (Philippians 1:26).

In Romans 1:10, 15:24 and 28, and 16:1, 3, and 5 Paul speaks of aspirations of eventually going to Spain. Did he ever do this in his final years? The Bible does not say whether he did or not. We do however have the account of the century author, Clement of Rome, regarding Paul. "After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects" The "extreme limit of the west" very well could be Spain.

At some time after being released from the prison in Rome, Paul went to Corinth and Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20). He also went to **Troas** (2 Timothy 4:13), Crete (Titus 1:5), and Nicopolis for the winter (Titus 3:12).

Paul leaving Titus in Crete must have been during a period of liberty after Paul's imprisonment in Rome ended in 63 AD. Paul did not go there during the first 3 journeys. There is no mention of Titus or of any preaching on Crete in Acts 27:7-13, on the voyage to Rome. Paul says he will send Artemas or Tychicus to Titus. He tells Titus to come to Nicopolis where Paul has determined to winter (Titus 3:12). The letter to Titus was probably written around 64-65 AD. There are three cities called Nicopolis: (1) in Achaia (southern Greece), most likely the one to which Paul was referring, (2) 15 miles west of Jerusalem, and (3) in the area that is now Romania.

The book of Hebrews was apparently written from Italy (Hebrews 13:24). Timothy had been released from prison (Hebrews 13:23) and was coming to Paul. Paul was apparently at liberty as well, since they planned to then go to visit the Hebrews. This could have been in Judea, as Paul says, "... ye had compassion of me in my bonds ..." (Hebrews 10:34). This must have been in reference to Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea from 58-60 AD. Hebrews was probably written around 64-65 AD.

Paul had told Timothy to stay and teach in **Ephesus** when Paul went to Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3). During the third journey, Paul had done the opposite, staying in **Ephesus** himself, and sending Timothy with Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). So First Timothy was written around 64-65 AD during a period of liberty after Paul's Roman imprisonment of 61-63 AD. Paul said he was hoping to come to Timothy in **Ephesus** shortly, but may have to tarry long (1 Timothy 3:14-15). Timothy was in **Ephesus** where he received both First Timothy and Second Timothy (1 Timothy 1:3, 2 Timothy 1:16-18, 4:14, 4:19, Acts 19:33, and 1 Timothy 1:20). Second Timothy was apparently written from prison (2 Timothy 1:8) with Paul ready to die (2 Timothy 4:6-8), possibly about 66 AD. Yet he asks Timothy to come to him before winter (2 Timothy 4:9 and 21). **Paul was probably martyred sometime around 67 AD. Since he was a Roman citizens, he was beheaded just outside of city wall, near to Ostian Gate at Salvian Springs.**

OTHER SNIPPETS

TROAS - Near Ezine (P11)

According to the historian Strabo, Troas was a renowned city. It was founded by Antigonus and Lysimachus at the command of Alexander the Great, and its fortifications date from that time. The city had a good but artificial harbor which helped it become a thriving commercial center. At the same time it was easily plundered so very little is left of what must once have been impressive. Among the thistles and trees that have grown up one can make out the city walls, theater, stadium, Herodes Atticus Bath and necropolis. The nearest village is Odun iskelesi about one kilometer to the north.

Paul visited Alexandria Troas at least twice; the first was when he and Timothy had wanted to go into Bithynia but had been prevented by the Holy Spirit. Instead they skirted Mysia and reached Troas where during the night Paul saw a vision of a Macedonian asking him to come help him (Acts 16:7-10). Probably Luke joined them here: from this point on in Acts the story is in the first person plural, "we." Rather than spending much time in Troas they found a ship quickly and sailed first to Samothrace and then went on to Neapolis (Kavala) and Philippi.

There is some doubt whether Paul went back through Troas again before he spent a week there on his way to Jerusalem and imprisonment; it is hard to follow Paul's movements with certainty from what is reported in Acts. Of course that is not Luke's fault: his purpose in writing is to show how Paul spread the Christian message, not where he spent the night. Luke, however, does give many more details about their sea voyages than their travels overland; perhaps he shows the eager curiosity of an amateur sailor.

In Troas the second time Paul spoke to the group that had gathered for the breaking of bread on Saturday night. The meeting went on until late, Paul himself speaking until midnight. Probably the room got stuffy from all the people gathered there and from all the lights burning. Finally a boy named Eutychus who was sitting on one of the window ledges went to sleep and fell three stories to the ground. He was picked up for dead, but Paul, who went down, looked at him and said, "Stop this commotion; there is still life in him" (Acts 20:10). After this incident Paul went back upstairs, had something to eat, and continued talking until sunrise. One supposes the room had gotten aired out a bit in the meantime.

It could be that during this visit to Troas Paul left his cloak behind in the excitement. Maybe it was used to cover Eutychus and keep him warm after his fall. Whatever the reason, Paul asks Timothy to "bring the cloak I left with Carpus at Troas, and the books, above all my notebooks" (II Timothy 4:13).

Troas is also mentioned in II Corinthians 2:12 when Paul comments that he was disappointed at not finding Titus there, and so he went on to Macedonia. This probably refers to his first visit to Troas when he did not stay but quickly took the ship and went to Philippi.

From Troas to Assos

This is the route described in Acts 20:13. After a sleepless night at Troas, Paul decides to walk more than 10 hours to Assos rather than board the ship where his companions are. In a typical Jesus fashion who used to withdraw himself into the desert and pray, Paul prefers the difficult and lonely prayer walk than the easy coastal ship ride with his companions.

Assos (Behramkale) (P11) (Acts 20:13-14)

This seaport is located on the southern Troad, opposite the Island of Lesbos (due south) is located near Cape Lectum. The harbor was engineered and is not a natural one.

The city that has such impressive remains today was built on a mound of rock over 700 feet high carefully surrounded by a wall. The ruins today stand as a marker for that C4 BCE city. Excavations have uncovered a temple to Athena that appears to have been built about 520 BCE. The agora, gymnasium, several baths, and a theatre complex resemble the organization of Pergamum.

In the New Testament Paul left by boat and sailed to across to Mitylene on Lesbos Island (Acts 20:14) before eventually giving his great address at Miletus to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:15-38).

HIERAPOLIS — PAMUKKALE (P18)

The presence of a hot spring at Hierapolis and the spectacular calcium deposits from its water spilling over the nearby hillside suggest that there should be evidence of an early settlement there. The oldest inscription found so far, however, indicates it was founded by Eumenes II, King of Pergamum, in the latter part of second century B.C.; it soon became a busy industrial center.

Traditionally St. Philip is connected with the early church in Hierapolis. Fairly recently Italian archeologists have discovered his Martyrium, an octagonal chamber forming a double cross surrounded by a square. This is almost due north of the theater, also on the side of the hill. It was a fifth century A.D. building and did not last much more than 100 years. No tomb was found with it although that was expected. There are several ruins of churches, one not far from the baths, one on the main road leading to the necropolis.

According to this account, through a miraculous healing and his preaching Philip converted the wife of the proconsul of the city. This enraged the proconsul, and he had Philip, Bartholomew, and Mariamne all tortured. Philip and Bartholomew were then crucified upside-down, and Philip preached from his cross. As a result of Philip's preaching the crowd released Bartholomew from his cross, but Philip insisted that they not release him, and Philip died on the cross. Another legend is that he was martyred by beheading in the city of Hierapolis. The Catholic Church regards the accounts of his death as legendary. No reputable source describing Philip's death has been found.

ICONIUM — KONYA (P19)

The Bible does not say much about what happened to Paul and Barnabas in Iconium except that their work was effective enough that they antagonized the people there and had to flee.

But in the apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla there is a legend which may have a grain of truth to it. In summary, the passage tells about Thecla's having heard Paul preach at Iconium and having embarrassed him in her determination to be baptised. There must have been a row because they were brought before the judge who condemned Paul to be whipped and expelled and Thecla to be burned. She was saved by a timely heavy rain and escaped to follow Paul to Antioch. She put on boys' clothes hoping to be allowed to stay with him in that disguise. That was unsuccessful, and she was next thrown to the wild beasts, but she managed to get away again and live to a ripe old age.

Much of the story is implausible, but if it is at all true some of it might lead one to wonder if Paul's attitude toward women was influenced by her importunities. Along with Thecla's romantic adventures, however, there is a description of Paul that may reflect what he actually looked like: A man "of a low stature, bald on the head, crooked thighs, handsome legs, hollow-eyed; had a crooked nose; full of grace; for sometimes he appeared as a man, sometimes he had the countenance of an angel." One wonders also if he was swarthy in complexion because of the Roman commandant in Jerusalem who confused him with an Egyptian who had instigated a riot (Acts 21:38).

As in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas used the synagogue in Iconium as their forum from which they could address those who would be interested in what they had to say. At each place they spoke first to the Jewish people and only when they had been rejected by them did they turn more of their attention to the Gentiles. In Iconium they caused a split among the people, both Gentiles and Jews being on each side. Those against them were more influential and got the support of the authorities, but Paul and Barnabas were warned in time enough to escape being stoned there.

Today the most interesting monuments in the city are the beautiful Selguk mosques and schools and the monastery of the great poet Celal-ed-din Rumi, mystic and head of the Whirling Dervishes (Mevlevi Dervisler). His mystic order has had a profound influence on Turkish Islam ever since the thirteenth century. An inscription on one of the walls of the tomb-museum in the monastery gives a typical saying of this Muslim Master: "Come in whoever you are, infidel, fire-worshipper, idolater. Ours is not a house of despair. Come in however often you may have broken your vows."

EPHESUS (P13)

Today, as the theater is being partially restored, one can almost hear the toga-clad audience cheering some hero on the stage or perhaps screaming against Paul. To the north of the theater one can see a decorated arch, the entrance to the stadium. A wide

marble-paved arcaded street called the Arcadian Way stretched from the base of the theater several hundred meters to the harbor. It was lined with statues, porticos, and public buildings, one of which may have been the lecture hall of Tyrannus where Paul held daily discussions (Acts 19:9). Just north of the Arcadian Way is the church of the Virgin Mary or the Double Church where the Third Ecumenical Council was held in 431.

Another marble street stretches from the theater south to the library of Celsus where thousands of parchments and papyri were stored, protected from dampness and worms by a double wall, but not from earthquake or war.

To the west of the library along the edge of the Hellenistic agora are stairs, the tumbled columns (each weighing eighty tons), and the exquisite decorations of the temple of Serapis, a composite Egyptian deity. Great drums of the eight marble columns supporting the architrave, each nearly a meter and a half in diameter, their capitals and entablature carved with the intricate acanthus leaves and universal egg and dart patterns, lie in front of the temple.

Returning to the library from the temple one continues on to the odeum, the little theater that held about 2,200 spectators. Here musicians played their flutes, lyres, and citharas, and poets recited from Homer and Hesiod.

Not far in front of the odeum is the foundation of what is thought to have been a temple that was later made into a church. A bull's head carved in the doorjamb once led people to believe this was the tomb of St. Luke since the bull's head was an ancient symbol for him.

Paul was able to continue speaking in the synagogue in Ephesus for three months before he withdrew his disciples and went to the lecture hall of Tyrannus. According to one source, Paul taught from the fifth to the tenth hour, that is, from eleven to four, during the hottest hours of the day when the hall was empty. This he did every day for two years.

The troubles that Paul encountered in Ephesus are scantily told by Luke, but the riot in Ephesus is one vivid example of how people with business interests can join with those who have strong religious beliefs to try to prevent change.

The sale of silver images of the temple and of Artemis declined when Paul preached that "gods made by human hands are not gods at all" (Acts 19:26). So Demetrius, a leader of the silversmiths, told a group of tradesmen that not only would a lot of people be out of work, but "the sanctuary of the great goddess Diana will cease to command respect; and then it will not be long before she who is worshipped by all Asia and the civilized world is brought down from her divine preeminence" (Acts 19:27).

Demetrius was right in his judgment of the situation, and perhaps he can be considered to have won this skirmish. His speech caused an uproar in the city and the mob rushed into the large theater shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" for about two hours. The city clerk was called in to tell the crowd that it had legal recourse through the court for redress of injuries if the missionaries had done anything wrong, but that the rioters were in danger of prosecution if they continued. By then most of the people in the theater did not know why they had come in the first place. So the clerk dismissed the meeting and the city calmed down. However it was apparent to Paul that he had better leave.

Calling the believers together, he said goodbye to them with words of encouragement and set off for Macedonia (Acts 19:28-20:1).

Many scholars now believe that it was during an Ephesian imprisonment that Paul wrote Philippians, and perhaps also other letters now in the New Testament. A mute reminder of Paul's possible imprisonment there is a solid stone building sitting on a hill about one kilometer west of the theater and known today as St. Paul's Prison.

Paul in Athens – Acts 17: 16 - 31

"Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of Idols. So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the market place every day with those who chanced to be there." (Acts 17:16-17)

Athens was the capital of Attica, a region of Greece in ancient times. Paul discovered that the city was quite idolatrous, but with a great altar to the "unknown God." He then set about to make known to the philosophical "thinkers" of the city the True God - with opposition, and some success.

They apparently caught Paul on one of his better days. Paul had a rather intense personality, and would usually have risen to being called a "babbler" with a response that the name-caller would not have soon forgotten. This day however, he remained (no doubt with the help of God's Holy Spirit) calm and collected.

His strategy of calm logic to present The Truth of God began to sow the seeds of success: "Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, "We will hear you again about this." So Paul went out from among them. But some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them." (Acts 17:32-34 RSV)

ANZAC REMEMBRANCE SERVICE - Tuesday March 22

Prayer and showing of the flag

God of love and liberty, we bring our thanks this day for the peace and security we enjoy, which was won for us through the courage and devotion of those who gave their lives in time of war. We pray that their labour and sacrifice may not be in vain, but that their spirit may live on in us and in generations to come. That the liberty, truth and justice which they sought to preserve may be seen and known in all the nations upon earth. This we pray in the name of the one who gave his life for the sake of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Introduction to Anzac

Today we remember those Australian men and women who died or suffered in the great tragedy of war.

On the morning of April 25th, 1915, Australian and New Zealand troops landed under fire at Gallipoli, and it was then and in the violent campaign which followed, that the ANZAC tradition was forged. The elements of that tradition have inspired and offered an enduring example to later generations of Australians.



Each year we pay homage not only to those original ANZACs, but to all who died or were disabled in their service to this country. They enrich our nation's history. Their hope was for the freedom of mankind and we remember with pride their courage, their compassion and their comradeship. They served on land and sea and in the air, in many places throughout the world.

Not only do we honour the memory of those Australians who have fallen in battle; we share the sorrow of those who have mourned them and of all who have been the victims of armed conflict.



Today we remember with sympathy those Australians who have suffered as prisoners of war, and those who, because of war, have had their lives shortened or handicapped. We recall staunch friends and allies, and especially those of the first ANZAC Day.

May we and our successors prove worthy of their sacrifice.

Prayer

O Lord, lover of souls, who through the mouth of your prophet of old declared that all souls are yours, we thank you for the brave and faithful dead, who willingly laid down their lives on the battlefields of war or succumbed to the perils of the deep or of the air. We bless you for the dauntless courage of those defenders of our country who have fallen in the cause of truth and righteousness. In your hand, O Father, we leave their departed spirits. Grant us to follow their good example in faithfulness and endurance, even unto death, that we may with them be found worthy of the crown of everlasting life. **Amen.**



Last Post

The Ode

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

We will remember them.



Poppies at Gallipoli

One Minute Silence



Poppy Laying

Final remembrance

Engraved forever at ANZAC Cove (see image below) are these words from Kemal Ataturk, the Commander of the Turkish 19th Division during the Gallipoli Campaign and the first President of the Turkish Republic from 1924-1938:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives. You are now living in the soil of a friendly country therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours. You, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.



The Red Poppy

Long known as the corn poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) because it flourishes as a weed in grain fields, the Flanders poppy as it is now usually called, grew profusely in the trenches and craters of the war zone. Artillery shells and shrapnel stirred up the earth and exposed the seeds to the light they needed to germinate.



This same poppy also flowers in Turkey in early spring - as it did in April 1915 when the ANZACs landed at Gallipoli. According to Australia's official war historian C.E.W.Bean, a valley south of ANZAC beach got its name Poppy Valley "from the field of brilliant red poppies near its mouth".

The red Flanders' poppy was first described as a flower of remembrance by Colonel John McCrae, who was Professor of Medicine at McGill University of Canada before World War One. Colonel McCrae had served as a gunner in the Boer War, but went to France in World War One as a medical Officer with the first Canadian Contingent.

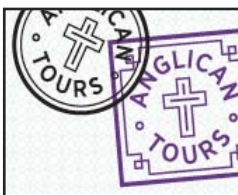
At the second battle of Ypres in 1915, when in charge of a small first-aid post, he wrote in pencil on a page torn from his despatch book:



*In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the dead, short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow.
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from failing hands we throw
The Torch: be yours to hold it high!
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies
grow in Flanders' fields.*



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