

Walking Worthy Of Our Calling

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Text: Ephesians 4:17-5:21

Introduction:

- I. In many ways Ephesus is the epicenter of the clash of ancient idolatry and the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - A. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians,” a confused crowd shouted for two hours (Acts 19:34).
 1. *Artemis Ephesia* is a champion and representative of a religion, a culture, and a worldview. We will explore some reasons why this is so.
 2. Into her city of Ephesus comes a group of gospel preachers, Paul particularly.
 3. These new preachers are calling the people to leave Artemis, expose Artemis, even repudiate Artemis for Jesus Christ.
 4. The gospel called people to question and ultimately change the way they thought, behaved, believed, and worshiped.
 5. “Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands,” (Acts 19:26).
 - B. The Temple of Artemis was located at Ephesus.
 1. The Ephesian episode in Acts 19 gives us a picture of the clash between idolaters and Christians for the souls of men.
 2. Acts 19 is a case study of the calling, the conversions, the push-back, and the persecution as the gospel confronted idolatry in Asia minor.
 3. All of the gospel ministry was conducted in the shadow of one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
 4. Pilgrims came to Ephesus for religious services to Artemis at her Temple.
 5. “So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship,” (Acts 19:27).
- II. Imagine shockwaves emanating from Ephesus and pulsing over the Roman Empire.
 - A. Images of Diana and her Temple had been crafted in Ephesus and exported all over the world.
 - B. Even competing pictures, forms, and mythologies of Artemis found elsewhere in Greece had to recognize the unique Diana and her Temple at Ephesus.
 - C. Pilgrims, travelers, and traders carried the images of Diana and her Temple in every direction from Ephesus.
 - D. Yet now it is the gospel and Christianity moving out from Ephesus into Asia.
 - E. “And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks,” (Acts 19:10).
- III. Living imitators of God – living images, Christians – travel out from Ephesus. As they walk worthy of their own calling, they continue the call.

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- IV. Furthermore, an encyclical letter written first to Ephesians details the call. The letter is to be read aloud, copied, and circulated throughout Asia and the world, beginning at Ephesus.
 - V. Our study is Walking Worthy of Our Calling. Together we will explore two questions which then lead us to our own imperative to walk worthily.
 - A. Called Out... Of What?
 - B. Called To... What?
 - C. Walk Worthily As Living Images of God.

Body:**I. Called Out... Of What?: The Background of Ephesian Christians****A. The world of first century Ephesus**

- 1. An important city in the Roman Empire.
 - a. Ephesus began as an Athenian colony in the eleventh century BC. It changed hands with the shifting winds of political powers through the centuries including Lydians, Persians, Macedonians, and the king of Pergamum. By 133 BC, the city was assigned to Roman control.
 - b. It was top 3 in terms of population and economic importance to the Roman Empire: Rome, Alexandria and Ephesus.
 - c. These cities were centers of trade, learning, entertainment, and social activity.
 - d. We associate Rome with power and the seat of government. We associate Alexandria with its library and center for knowledge. What made Ephesus prominent?
- 2. Population of Ephesus
 - a. Ephesus is estimated to have a first century population of 250,000.
 - b. While Rome is estimated at 650,000 population; Alexandria: 400,000.
 - c. Ephesus was in a solid 3rd place of population. The next closest, Antioch, was 150,000.
 - d. Other notable cities such as Corinth, Sardis, and Pergamum all ranged in population from 100,000-150,000.
- 3. Geography of Ephesus
 - a. The city was the gateway to Asia.
 - b. In the first century, it was a port city, situated at the mouth of the Cayster River and the Aegean Sea. Over the centuries, silt build-up filled in the bay. Archaeological work is done on land-locked ruins today.
 - c. A major road ran East from Ephesus through the highlands of Asia. Trade caravans coming from Mesopotamia, Persia, and India made their way to, or through, Ephesus.
- 4. Economy of Ephesus
 - a. A nexus of travel, trade, and religion.
 - b. Because of the port and the road, Ephesus is the natural hub of commerce. Traders from the Mediterranean would land there to take their goods inland to Asia, Mesopotamia, and Persia. Likewise, goods of Asia traveled to Ephesus to launch and travel the ocean for trade.

- c. Religion was big business. Ephesus was the site of the Temple of Artemis, one of the 7 Wonders of the Ancient World. Thus, a place of religious pilgrimage. The Temple of Artemis, as well as her idol and pagan contemporaries created livings for all sorts of priests and priestesses.
- d. Financial Market. The Temple of Ephesus had a significant treasury and bank inside. The building commanded respect and was seen as a sacred place, thus a safe place to keep funds.
- e. Tradesmen crafted trinkets and idols of the Temple and Diana out of silver, clay, and marble.

B. The Religious Milieu of Ephesus

1. Judaism – Synagogue and Second Temple Era

- a. We are mindful of the Jewish population in Ephesus. It's estimated the Jewish population was about 10 percent of the total population so, 10,000-25,000 Jews in Ephesus at Paul's time.
- b. Judaism is the only monotheistic religion in town until Christianity arrives. The Jews had achieved an uneasy religious exemption from the expectations of the pagan, Roman religious leaders of Ephesus.
 - 1) Josephus, *Antiquities*, records how the Jews in Ephesus had achieved good standing as well as concessions to practice their religion.
 - a) "The decree of the Ephesians. When Menophilus was Prytanis; on the first day of the month Artemisius, this decree was made by the people. Nicanor, the son of Euphemus, pronounced it; upon the representation of the pretors. "Since the Jews that dwell in this city have petitioned Marcus Julius Pompeius, the son of Brutus, the pro-consul, that they might be allowed to observe their sabbaths; and to act in all things according to the customs of their forefathers, without impediment from any body; the pretor hath granted their petition. Accordingly it was decreed by the senate and people, that, in this affair that concerned the Romans, no one of them should be hindered from keeping the sabbath day, nor be fined for so doing: but that they may be allowed to do all things according to their own laws." (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14.10.25)
 - b) "Agrippa also did himself write after the manner following, on behalf of the Jews. "Agrippa, To the magistrates, senate, and people of the Ephesians, sendeth greeting. I will that the care and custody of the sacred money that is carried to the temple at Jerusalem be left to the Jews of Asia, to do with it according to their ancient custom: and that such as steal that sacred money of the Jews, and fly to a sanctuary, shall be taken thence and delivered to the Jews; by the same law that sacrilegious persons are taken thence. I have also written to Sylvanus the pretor, that no one compel the Jews to come before a judge on the sabbath day." (Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.6.4)
 - c) "Nor did Julius Antonius the proconsul write otherwise. 'To the magistrates, senate, and people of the Ephesians, sendeth greeting. As I was dispensing justice at Ephesus, on the ides of February, the Jews that dwell in Asia demonstrated to me, that Augustus and Agrippa had permitted them to use their own laws, and customs; and to offer those their first fruits, which every one of them freely offers to the deity, on account of piety; and to carry them in a company together to Jerusalem, without disturbance. They also petitioned me, that I also would confirm

what had been granted by Augustus and Agrippa by my own sanction. I would therefore have you take notice, that according to the will of Augustus and Agrippa I permit them to use and do according to the customs of their forefathers, without disturbance.” (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 16.6.7)

- d) Other readings from *Antiquities* 14, 16 show decrees and pronouncements concerning the Jews in various cities all over Asia. Ephesus is highlighted here.
 - 2) Jews could obtain citizenship.
 - 3) Jews were exempted from military service.
 - 4) Jews observed the Sabbath. Couldn't be forced to appear in court on Sabbath.
 - 5) Kosher food regulations.
 - 6) Jews had right of assembly in the synagogue.
 - 7) Jews collected their own temple tax and first fruits offerings and were granted safe passage to deliver it to their own temple in Jerusalem. Robbing the Jewish temple money to be taken to other temples is a specific crime.
- c. Jews were a known and tolerated quantity for the Ephesian people, yet it's clearly understood they were not on board with the pagan religions, especially Artemis (Acts 19:33-34).
- d. Paul was wrapping up his second missionary journey when he came to Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21). He seemed to be warmly received and likely converted some Jews to the gospel at that time. Yet he couldn't stay long.
- e. Early on his third missionary journey we find Paul returned to Ephesus and preached in the synagogue for 3 months in the early days of the church (Acts 19:8-9). Yet this time he is largely rejected by the Jewish community and he focuses on the Gentile population (Acts 19:9-10).
- f. Certainly, outside the church there is enmity and animosity from the synagogue toward the local church. The Jewish population is significant and influential.
- g. Ephesians 2:11-3:13 demonstrate that within the church Jews and Gentiles must be encouraged to unity as the one body in Christ.
 - 1) “[A]ll of the New Testament documents that are indisputably associated with Ephesus reflect concern over the relationship between Jews and Christians: Acts (18.19-21; 19:1-10, 13-17, 33-34; 20.18-21; 21:27-29; 24.17-19), 1 Corinthians (1.24; 9.19-23; 12.13), Ephesians (2.11-3.6), 1 Timothy (1.3-11), 2 Timothy (1.5; 3.8-15; 4.4?14?, 17), and Revelation (2.9; 3.9, 12). For the fifty years covered by the New Testament data, including the period after AD 70, the Jewish community continued to supply an important context for the Christians in Ephesus.” (Hamilton, 82)
- h. Strengths of the Jews and areas of agreement with Christianity at Ephesus.
 - 1) Monotheism
 - 2) Antithetical thinking and worldview
 - 3) Respect for inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

- i. The Jewish community and synagogue would be a source of converts to the gospel but more often a source of persecution and difficulty for Christians in first century Ephesus.
2. The Imperial Cult
 - a. Approximately 29 B.C. Augustus established an imperial cult in Ephesus for the recently “divine” Julius Caesar, especially for the province’s Roman citizens.
 - b. Approximately AD 89/90, Domitian granted Ephesus the right to build and dedicate an imperial temple. From this time, the Roman government pushed greater participation of the imperial cult upon the population.
 - c. Romans deified Caesars. For Example: The Calendar Inscription of Priene (so named because it was found on two stones in the town of Priene in Asia Minor).
 - 1) “It seemed good to the Greeks of Asia, in the opinion of the high priest Apollonius of Menophilus Azanitus: “Since Providence, which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus, whom she filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a savior, both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war and arrange all things, and since he, Caesar, by his appearance (excelled even our anticipations), surpassing all previous benefactors, and not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, and since the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good tidings for the world that came by reason of him,” which Asia resolved in Smyrna.¹
 - 2) Notice what is said of Augustus
 - a) Providence...she...gave Augustus
 - b) Augustus is full of virtue
 - c) Augustus benefits all humankind
 - d) Augustus is a savior for us and our descendants
 - e) Augustus ends war, makes peace
 - f) Augustus’ birth was the beginning of the good tidings
 - g) Good tidings for the world came by Augustus
 - 3) Jesus Christ is preached in terms overlaying the imperial verbiage.
 - a) Father... He... gave His Son (Isa. 9:6-7; John 3:16; 12:27-28).
 - b) Jesus is full of grace and truth (John 1:14-18)
 - c) Jesus blesses all families of the earth (Acts 3:25-26; Gal. 3:7-9)
 - d) Jesus is the savior for us and our descendants (Acts 2:36-39; 4:12)
 - e) Jesus ends enmity and makes peace (Eph. 2:14-18)
 - f) Jesus’ birth is glad tidings for the world (Luke 2:10-17)
 - g) Gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16; Col. 1:15-16)

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calendar_Inscription_of_Priene#Inscription_text

- 4) Clearly, as the gospel was faithfully articulated, Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords. Christians could not confess such things about any Caesar nor ever worship a Caesar.
- d. The prayer of Ephesians 3:14-15 may also be making a statement about the superiority of Christianity to the Imperial Cult.
- 1) “There is here an emphasis on God as Father of all humans and especially of those who worship and properly serve him...It may well be that this way of phrasing things is a deliberate attempt to counter imperial cult rhetoric, for in many inscriptions the emperor would call himself the ‘father of the fatherland’ (i.e., of Italy). Here a greater claim is made for God: he is Father of all such family or ethnic groupings (Acts 3.25), or fatherlands (and even extraterrestrial locations).” (Witherington, 272)
- e. In the decades following the letter to the Ephesians, the Imperial Cult became a great stumbling block and source of persecution for Christians, especially in Asia minor.
- f. Toward the end of the first century, a generally accepted religious syncretism pervaded the thinking of the day.
- 1) “[A] dramatic change of attitude had taken place concerning religious life in the Greco-Roman world. Coinciding with the progression toward deifying the emperors even within their own lifetimes, the various cults of the numerous deities scattered across the empire were now viewed as complimentary rather than as in competition with one another. In fact, the worship of all deities was in a sense unified and subsumed under the singular reverence of the emperor, as if to say that all the gods support the emperor and manifest their will through him preeminently...” (Hamilton, 79)
- g. The ascension of the imperial cult assured persecution for saints in Ephesus and throughout Asia. But this issue relates chronologically more to the church at Ephesus which received the book of Revelation (AD 95-96) and not the church which received the book of Ephesians (AD 60). However, Ephesians clearly asserts Jesus Christ is in the preeminent position of all authority – Head of all – and not a Caesar (Eph. 1:20-22).
3. Magic and Mystery Cults – The occult
- a. Early Gentile converts to the gospel from Ephesus had practiced magic. Signs of their repentance included burning their magic scrolls (Acts 19:18-20).
- b. Magic/ Sorcery (Acts 19:18-20; Gal. 5:20). The Greek word for sorceries is *pharmakia* – where we get our words pharmacy and pharmaceutical. It speaks to potions, concoctions, substances. Pagan “miracle workers” used drugs to induce people into dissipated states and work magic.
- c. The Magic was about slight of hand and trickery. It was about mind altering substances in these temple environments. These things were tied to religious elements in pagan religion and the occult. But if you take these miracle workers out of their temple context, what you have is David Copperfield, David Blaine, Chris Angel mixed with Albert Hoffman (who invented LSD) and Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey who popularized LSD.
- d. Given Ephesus’ geography and population it would be surprising to think there were not dark practices associated with some of the Greek gods and the slight of hand and chicanery involved with “miracles” attributed to the gods.
- 1) For example, the Greek god Asclepius

- a) The most famous of the Greek healing gods. We can know about this Greek god from both literary sources and archaeological discoveries.
- b) His temple, where people went for healing miracles was called the Asklepion. A large one from ancient Corinth has been excavated.
- c) They found artifacts including sculptures of legs, arms, eyes, ears and other body parts that the devotee believed had been healed. They were given in fulfillment of a vow or as a Thank offering. You got your sickness healed and then you commissioned or purchased the sculpture of that body part in some fine stone or metal. That was money!
- d) From literature, shrines, and artifacts we can piece together what it was like for a devotee seeking a miracle of healing from Asklepios:
 1. “There was a sacrifice of small animals in the section containing the altar...there were ritual bathings from a sacred spring which seemed to be associated with each of the shrines. Near the Asklepion there was located an amphitheater where drama would be added to the ritual involved in the healing process. A basic factor in seeking healing at the Asklepion was spending the night...After making an offering and washing in the sacred spring, the devotee... was expected to have a vision of Asklepios who would advise him of the method of treatment...Sacred snakes, which were believed to be the visible form of Asklepios, were associated with the healing ceremonies. These snakes lived in the confines of the Asklepion and were used by the priest for prescribing cures.” (Jividen, 94-94)
 2. “The pilgrims were required to spend the night within the shrine, so that they might receive communications from the god, either directly by an epiphany or indirectly through dreams, or by an intermediary in the form of a dog or snake. It is easy to imagine the vigil of the suppliants, lying in total darkness...listening for the padding of the feet of the priests or sacred dogs, or nearly noiseless slithering of sacred snakes.” (Kee, 85)
 3. Some of the Asklepios which have been excavated revealed medical procedures were performed at times on these devotees. They have found operating theaters, primitive surgical instruments, beams to reset bones, sick rooms, and facilities for apothecaries.
- e) If the priests of Askleopis were pioneering medicine and biology, that’s not miraculous. But some people were just taking drugs and laying down with snakes.

e. Dark ceremonies and mind-bending drugs produce curiosity and mystery in people. Yet Ephesians shows the actual mystery of God’s plan for redemption has been revealed in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:9-10; 3:1-13; 5:32).

4. But at Ephesus, these all take a back seat to the Artemis cult. (see below)

C. Diana of the Ephesians – *Artemis Ephesos*

1. Artemis Ephesos was the matriarch goddess of Ephesus.
 - a. She is a syncretic deity. Acquiring layer after layer of identity as years and cultures swept through Ephesus. She is the product of overlaying Oriental and Asian goddess mythology with Greek goddess mythology.

- b. Artemis was worshiped in many ancient towns in the Greco-Roman world. The Greek goddess looked and functioned somewhat uniformly in other towns. Ephesus was different.
- c. Artemis Ephesos (Diana of the Ephesians) had some of the Greek Artemis mythology but also incorporated the mystique and powers of the Mesopotamian goddess Asherah and the Asian mountain mother goddess, Cybele.
- 1) “Artemis Ephesia had almost the same attributes as the mother-goddess of Phrygia, Kybele. In fact, Artemis was named Kubaba (Cybele) in several Anatolian dialects.” (Trell, 87)
 - 2) “But in Asia Minor during Roman times she was identified with the Phrygian mother-goddess Cybele, a sensuous nature goddess, although images taken from the earlier yellow limestone temple at Ephesus picture her in a less degrading light.” (Price, 456)
 - 3) “It is more reasonable to assume only two [deities worshiped at the Temple of Artemis], the related cults of Artemis and Cybele, who later by syncretism became one goddess with a dual nature, Artemis. It is a common phenomenon in the Near East that Greco-Roman gods imposed themselves on the Oriental.” (Trell, 90)
- d. Artemis Ephesos does not look much like the virgin huntress Artemis who the Greeks would paint and sculpt in other towns. She carried a bow and arrow. Usually looked like a young woman and Amazon with one breast exposed.
- e. Artemis Ephesos is representative of Greco-Roman pagan idolatry. She is a product of religious syncretism.
- 1) A meteorite struck the ground in Ephesus. Artemis landed?
 - a) “Her image (Acts 19:35) probably was a meteorite” (Jeffers, 94)
 - b) “The very earliest, most sacred, image was said to be a stone fallen from the heavens, probably a meteor. Worshipping stones was not strange.” (Trell, 98)
 - 2) Eastern identity is attributed to it: Asherah, Cybele
 - 3) Western identity is added on to it: Artemis, Diana
 - 4) A feat of architecture is built for it – her temple.
 - 5) A religio-socio-economic identity is tied to it.
2. Her description
- a. Goddess
 - b. Great Mother
 - 1) “The Phrygians also worshipped a goddess who made a ritual appearance, Cybele, the great mother-goddess... Artemis was named Kubaba (Cybele) in several Anatolian dialects. The frequent use in the Greek of megale-, great-, with her name suggests she was *magna mater*, the great mother-goddess, and in this great goddess of Ephesos differs from the huntress goddess of purely Greek mythology.” (Trell, 87)
 - c. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” (Acts 19:28, 34)
 - d. Diana, a patron goddess for women and slaves

- 1) “Diana, originally an Italian goddess of the woods, came to be identified with the Greek Artemis, and became a special goddess of women and slaves.” (Jeffers, 95).
- e. Graven images: Idols of Diana
 - 1) “Diana of the Ephesians (Acts 19:24-37), as known from many statues of her image and as depicted on coins, had her thorax covered with three or four rows of pendant breasts, or possibly ostrich eggs, either of which were symbolic of fertility. The front of her garment was trimmed with sequences of lions, goats, and other sacrificial animals. Down the sides of her garment were alternate rows of nymphs, sea shells, sphinxes, bees and roses. Her mural crown was decorated with signs of the Zodiac denoting the seasons...” (Price, 456)
 - 2) Idols/shrines (Acts 19:24) were made of silver, clay and marble. (Jeffers, 94)
3. The Temple of Artemis – called the Artemisium
 - a. The temple was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.
 - 1) Archaeology
 - 2) Coins (Trell, 91)
 - b. The Artemisium was 4x larger than the Parthenon in Athens, Greece. It was much grander than the Parthenon. Antipater rated it #1 of the 7 wonders!
 - 1) “I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheius, and the hanging gardens, and the colossus of the Sun, and the huge labour of the high pyramids, and the vast tomb of Mausolus ; but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, ‘Lo, apart from Olympus, the Sun never looked on anything so grand.’” (Antipater, *Grk. Anth.* 9.58)
 - 2) Pliny the Elder described the Artemisium as “Graecae magnificae.” (Trell, 79)
 - 3) “The Artemisium was more than a simple, over-sized, rectangular edifice surrounded on all sides by a colonnade. It was a vast gleaming marble building in a great courtyard open to the skies to be viewed from afar.” (Trell, 79).
 - 4) It was made of Marble. Marble steps built around the whole building like a giant frame with receding moldings laid flat on the ground. The high platform was 255 ft. wide and 425 ft. long.
 - 5) It had 127 columns, and each was 60 feet tall. The columns were slender and beautifully fluted. Elaborate carved decorations on the column drum at the base and top.
 - 6) It’s been speculated some of the columns were taken to be used in building the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.
 - 7) The temple was roofed with a decorative pediment. Three windows across the roof façade. The windows allowed for Artemis’ epiphany.
 - c. Ephesus had the special role of *neokoros* (Temple Warden) of Artemis and her image which fell from the sky (Acts 19:35).
 - d. Riches and Wealth at the Artemisium.
 - 1) “The temple of Artemis was also a bank where people all over the Roman world deposited money. The temple also lent money and received legacies

and private donations. It owned revenue-producing property, including sacred fish and herds of deer (Dio Chrysostom 31.54). It was an asylum for debtors and for the helpless (Achilles Tatius 7.13).” (Jeffers, 268)

- 2) “[T]he influence of the cult of Artemis extended far beyond the religious sphere to permeate the cultural, civic, and economic life of the city as well... the Temple of Artemis was actually the largest bank in the entire region, because of its own immense wealth coupled with the vast holdings of many far-flung wealthy depositors, including nations and kingdoms, who considered the Artemisium one of the most sacred (and therefore safest) places to keep their money (Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 31.54). All of this accumulated wealth granted the Temple the ability to lend money at interest, dominate the mortgage market, and virtually control the economy of Ephesus, illustrating how impossible it was for the early Christians to escape Artemis’ impact entirely.” (Hamilton, 76)
- e. Trinkets and idols of the Temple sculpted and sold. The guild which Demetrius’ incited in Acts 19 also sculpted small replicas of the Artemisium out of silver, clay, and marble. These were tourist’s trinkets but also devotional aids which went all over the world.
- 1) “As the guild master [Demetrius, Acts 19:27] by implication admitted, the temple was the core of Ephesus’ commercial prosperity. Around the great shrine, to which worshipers and tourists poured from far and near, tradesmen and hucksters found a living, supplying visitors with food and lodging, dedicatory offerings, and the silver souvenir models of the shrine that the guild of Demetrius was most interested in making and selling.” (Blaklock, “Ephesus,” 328)
4. Artemis of Ephesus was “powerful.”
- a. Fertility goddess – life giving
 - 1) “Archaeologists have located several silversmith shops in Ephesus. The statue was a stiff, upright figure resembling the trunk of a tree or mummy, covered with sculptured animals and plants, including twenty-four or more rounded objects on the goddess’s chest. Scholars traditionally believed that these were multiple breasts symbolizing the fertility goddess, but they may in fact have been ostrich eggs, which also signify fertility and are found today in many Greek village churches. Some scholars think they were fruit, also signifying fertility.” (Jeffers, 268)
 - 2) Artemis was a hybrid of Greek Artemis (virgin) with Cybele (mother goddess). Pregnant women appealed to Artemis because of high infant mortality rate.
 - b. Ruled over cosmic powers – Zodiac signs
 - 1) “Among the attributes given her was her ability to rule over cosmic powers, symbolized by the zodiacal signs on her statues (cf. Eph 1:21; 3:10; 4:8; Col 1:16; 2:8, 15, 20).” (Jeffers, 269)
 - 2) The idea she fell from Zeus or fell from heaven implies she is from above and part of the powers of the sky. So, she can influence those things (Acts 19:35).
 - c. Savior
 - 1) “Hellenistic writing about Artemis of Ephesus typically concentrates on her role as a savior (Strabo *Geography* 14.1.22).” (Jeffers, 268)

d. Huntress with arrows.

- 1) “In historical times her sphere was the uncultivated earth, the forests, and the hills. Homer gave her the title, ‘lady of wild things,’ the virgin huntress, armed with bow and arrows.” (Blaiklock, “Artemis,” 341)
- 2) “In classical Greek mythology, Artemis was the sister of Apollo, equated by the Romans with Diana, the moon goddess, huntress and protector of womanhood.” (Jeffers, 93)

5. Artemis’ worship

a. Priests and prostitute priestesses.

- 1) “Associated thus with the various fertility cults she became the patroness of ceremonial prostitution, which was part of her worship at Ephesus.” (Price, 456)
- 2) “Her worship was characterized by sensuous orgies. Great throngs attended. Multitudes of female temple slaves or ‘priestesses’ who came as virgins were here dedicated to service in the temple which may have included ritual or cultic prostitution” (Price, 456)

b. The *Orgia* (Orgiastic Festivals)

- 1) “The Phrygian Orgia were overseen by eunuch priests called Gallai who led devotees in nocturnal mountain rites involving much drinking, and frantic dancing accompanied by the music of rattles, kettledrums, flutes and castanets and the ritual cry, “evoe saboe,” “hyes attes, attes hyes.” Young men armed with shield and sword also performed the high-footed, shield clashing Korybantic dance (which Greek legend described as the dance of the Kourete-protectors of the infant Zeus). The rites involved ritual mutilation, ranging from flagellation to the act of self-castration performed by the Gallai priest.” (“Kybele”)
- 2) “*Pindar, Dithyrambs Heracles the Bold (trans. Sandys) (Greek lyric C5th B.C.):* ‘In the adorable presence of the mighty Meter Theon (Mother of the Gods) the prelude is the whirling of timbrels; there is also the ringing of rattles, and the torch that blazeth beneath the glowing pine-trees. There, too, are the loudly sounding laments of the Naidēs, and there the frenzied shouts of dancers are aroused, with the thong that tosseth the neck on high.’” (“Kybele”)
- 3) “*Plato, Ion (trans. Lamb) (Greek philosopher C4th B.C.):* ‘Sokrates: The Korybantian revelers [of the Meter Theon] when they dance are not in their right mind... by divine inspiration and by possession; just as the Korybantian revelers too have a quick perception of that strain only which is appropriated to the god by whom they are possessed, and have plenty of dances and words for that, but take no heed of any other.’” (“Kybele”)

c. Holy Days/ Festival Days and activities.

- 1) “The great temple of Diana at Ephesus, called the Artemision and considered as one of the seven wonders of the Hellenistic world, was the scene of an annual festival in her honor during the month of Artemisios (March-April). The religious ceremonies included athletic, dramatic and musical contests...” (Price, 456)
- 2) “Pilgrims came to Ephesus from many places. No work was done for a month. There was much activity, entertainment and excitement. There were many games and athletic contests. Magicians, sorcerers and exorcists were

abundant. Shrines of Diana were purchased by the thousands as souvenirs and as objects of veneration. And though Ephesus was a Greek city, the manners of its people were in part Oriental. Dark superstition, magic and the worship of Diana were all very much interrelated.” (Bullock, 167-168)

- 3) “Two major festivals were held each year: an elaborate birthday celebration which drew attendees from all over the empire, and the Artemisia held during the month of, what else, Artemision (March-April). The Artemisia involved Olympic-style athletic competitions, as well as similar contests in theater and music, and became the traditional time when young people got engaged.” (Hamilton, 77)
- 4) “[O]n special days (which would average at least one every two weeks) an elaborate procession was staged, beginning and ending at the Artemisium, involving 260 participants and 31 gold and silver images (nine of Artemis), and shutting the city down for the one-and-a-half hour duration of the parade...” (Hamilton, 77)

d. Epiclesis – the Summoning Power of Musical Instruments

- 1) Ancients believed they could and should summon their gods to them to attend sacrifices and cultic worship activities. Making music through various instruments had the power and exercised the power to call a god down to a place and events.
- 2) Part of the importance of music at sacrifice, to the pagans, was to exercise a power over the gods and call them to attend. “This is epiclesis, the power to summon a deity... the god to whom the sacrifice is to be offered.” (McKinnon, 18-19)
 - a) “Plutarch speaks of the Argives who call up Osiris from out of the water by the sound of trumpets and at the same time cast into the depths a lamb as offering.” (McKinnon, 19)
 - b) “Menander bears witness to the existence of a belief in *epiclesis* when he criticizes it: ‘For if a human being can by cymbal’s clash deflect the god to whatsoever he desires, then greater than the god is he that doeth this.’” (McKinnon, 19)
- 3) The worship of Cybele, (Diana’s core identity) is notable for musical instruments played loudly and even disorienting.
 - a) “*Homeric Hymn 14 to the Mother of the Gods (trans. Evelyn-White) (Greek epic C7th to 4th B.C.)*: ‘[The Meter Theon] is well-pleased with the sound of rattles and of timbrels, with the voice of flutes and the outcry of wolves and bright-eyed lions, with echoing hills and wooded coombes.’” (“Kybele”)
 - b) Origen, *Contra Celsus*, “And if he [Celsus] should reply that ‘we weave together erroneous opinions drawn from ancient sources, and trumpet them aloud, and sound them before men, as the priests of Cybele clash their cymbals in the ears of those who are being initiated in their mysteries;’ we shall ask him in reply, ‘Erroneous opinions from what ancient sources?’ For, whether he refers to Grecian accounts, which taught the existence of courts of justice under the earth, or Jewish, which, among other things, predicted the life that follows the present one; he will be unable to show that we who, striving to believe on grounds of reason, regulate our lives in conformity with such doctrines, have failed correctly to ascertain the truth.” (Origen, 470)

4) Early Christians, like Clement of Alexandria (AD 150-215), called out Cybele by name. They contrasted Jesus Christ and Christ's worship with the musical practices of idolatry.

a) Clement of Alexandria used Menander's critique of the epicletic power of music, along with a chorus of antiquity's poets to refute idolatry. Like the apostle Paul (cf. Acts 17:28), Clement brings observable, universal truth to bear on the discussion, advancing his case to non-Christians by quoting known and respected poets.

b) "For if, at the most, the Greeks, having received certain scintillations of the divine word, have given forth utterances of truth, they bear indeed witness that the force of truth is not hidden, and at the same time expose their own weakness in not having arrived at the end.... Let the strictures on your gods, which the poets, impelled by the force of truth, introduce in their comedies, shame you into salvation. Menander, for instance, the comic poet, in his drama of the *Charioteer*, says: --

'No God pleases me that goes about
With an old woman, and enters houses
Carrying a trencher.'²

For such are the begging priests of Cybele. Hence Antisthenes replies appropriately to their request for alms: --

'I do not maintain the mother of the gods,
For the gods maintain her.'

Again, the same writer of comedy, expressing his dissatisfaction with the common usages, tries to expose the impious arrogance of the prevailing error in the drama of the Priestess, sagely declaring: --

'If a man drags the Deity
Whither he will by the sound of cymbals,
He that does this is greater than the Deity;
But these are the instruments of audacity and means of living
Invented by men.'

And not only Menander, but Homer also, and Euripides, and other poets in great numbers, expose your gods...." (Clement, 193)

- 5) The pagans believed their gods, like Artemis, were greatly pleased by playing musical instruments. In fact, as the instruments were played loudly and raucously, people would get whipped up into frenzies. Even the gods would come to the place for sacrifice.
- 6) Artemis/Cybele was a goddess who responded to the epicletic power of instrumental music.

b. Epiphanes – meaning “God manifest.”

- 1) “Artemis Ephesia was epiphanes, a divinity who ‘appeared’ in order that her worshippers could behold and revere her. She might take a place in a sacred window or be transported in a processional vehicle, a kind of chariot. This

² A “trencher” is a wooden plate or platter for food.

ritualistic appearance of the goddess in an Oriental convention centuries-old in Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt. High in the gable of the temple Artemis had a large opening at which she could be seen by the worshippers below. Such a ‘window of appearance’ came from the temples of Phrygia...” (Trell, 87).

- 2) Epiphanes goes hand in hand with Epiclesis. As the music is played, summoning the gods, some supposedly showed up at the place.
- 3) As people are whipped into a frenzy by the music and sacrifices and orgies, one can hardly doubt that some pagan reveler thought he saw something appear in one of the windows of the Artemisium and called out. Or a priest might declare he had just seen her briefly in the window. Then others would follow the suggestion or at least trust in such declarations. Artemis was in this place!
- 4) The environment is highly suggestive. The people are highly impressionable. They are told by priests/priestesses Artemis appears.
- 5) Sometimes they would take a statue of her along to other places in the woods where they wanted to do ceremonies in the hope she’d find them out there as well.

D. The Indirect Polemic Against Artemis Found In Ephesians

1. Directly, idolatry is subject to short and blanket condemnation (Eph. 5:5-7).
2. Indirect because you do not find “Artemis” or “Diana” directly mentioned in Ephesians. Yet much in the letter contrasts Jesus Christ and the gospel to Diana. It’s hard to think it is merely coincidental.
3. A goddess versus the God (Eph. 4:6).
4. A mother goddess versus the God and Father (Eph. 1:2-3, 17; 3:14-15; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23).
5. Male spiritual leadership follows from spiritual patriarchy not spiritual matriarchy (Eph. 5:22-33).
6. “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” versus great is the God of all (Acts 19:28, 34).
 - a. Creator God of all (Eph. 3:9)
 - b. Powerful God over death (Eph. 1:19-20)
 - c. Preeminence of Jesus exulted (Eph. 1:20-23) – that’s great
 - d. Circumcised and uncircumcised are reconciled to God (Eph. 2:11-17) – that’s all people
7. Not a special goddess of slaves, rather slaves are genuine servants to their masters, as to Christ. Jesus Christ is the Lord and Master to both slave and master (Eph. 6:5-9).
8. No graven images – Diana idols – all idolatry is disobedient and brings wrath (Eph. 5:5-7)
9. The Temple of Artemis compared to the living Temple of God (Eph. 2:20-22).
 - a. While God’s ordained temple was in Jerusalem, and Jews knew about it, the first temple to come to mind of an Ephesian audience, and likely an Asian audience would be the Temple of Artemis. It was significant!
 - b. God’s Temple, His Church is greater than one of the 7 Wonders of the World.

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- c. God's Temple lives because He lives.
 - d. God dwells among His people in the Spirit.
 - e. Christians don't go to Temple, they are the Temple. And they are built upon the sure foundation of Jesus Christ and His apostles.
 - f. Ephesians particularly understood the role and honor of *neokoros* (Temple Warden). This is no longer for Artemis. It is the true Temple of God which they compose in Christ and maintain in their holy, faithful, loving, walk.
10. The riches of Artemis or the true riches of Christ?
 - a. Riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7; 2:7)
 - b. Riches of glory (Eph. 1:18; 3:16)
 - c. Rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4)
 - d. Riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8)
 11. Fertility goddess versus the life-giving God
 - a. Resurrection showed God's power to give life over death (Eph. 1:19-20; 5:14).
 - b. God brings the spiritually dead to life (Eph. 2:1-7).
 - c. God has a household (Eph. 2:19)
 - d. God has a whole family in heaven and earth (Eph. 3:14-15).
 12. Artemis is a ruler of cosmic powers? No, this mythology is a lie.
 - a. First, the devil is behind all idolatry – the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2-3). Ephesians really lays down the Satanic connections to several Artemis attributes, such as cosmic power.
 - b. Christians wrestle against the devil along with powers and rulers of the darkness of the age (Eph. 6:11-12).
 - c. Jesus is triumphant over all cosmic powers – spiritual or physical (Eph. 1:19-21).
 - d. Jesus ascended on high (Eph. 4:8).
 13. Is Artemis a savior? Can Artemis intervene and save? No! God is the Savior, by grace through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:4-10). Jesus is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23).
 14. Artemis' Greek form is a huntress with a bow and arrows. Notice Christians take up the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16).
 - a. Christians need a shield of faith to extinguish incoming "flaming arrows" (NASB, NIV, CSB).
 - b. Flaming arrows come from the evil one.
 - c. I see an implicit connection made between Artemis and the devil.
 - d. Certainly, the devil is the primary evil one (Eph. 6:11). Of all the weapons to choose from in a war metaphor, the bow and arrow call to mind the goddess Diana of Ephesus
 15. How is the true God to be worshiped?
 - a. God teaches monogamous marriage (Eph. 5:22-33). Marriage is important in teaching the true Christ and church/temple. Whereas fornication teaches Artemis and her Artemisium.
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- b. God condemns sexual immorality (Eph. 4:19, 22; 5:3, 5, 11-12). God is not worshiped by prostitute priestesses.
 - c. Not drunken revelries and loud musical instruments (Eph. 5:18-19). That is Artemis' cult. God is not honored by dissipation and the raucous orgies of Artemis.
 - d. God teaches corporate speaking and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. God teaches thanksgiving for worship (Eph. 5:19-20).
 - e. God teaches Christians to speak and sing, expressing fullness of the Spirit – not to summon Him into their midst. There is no epicletic power in instrumental music exercised over God. There is no instrumental music at all mentioned in Eph. 5:19. People are not greater than God. But God has given the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-19). Christians sing because they already have the Spirit not in order to call down the Spirit to themselves.
 - 1) From the 2nd century into the 4th century, Christian writers used the pagans' magical epicletic power in instrumental music to demonstrate the falsehood of idolatry. It is a false god that shows up and is manipulated by the skilled playing of musical instruments.
 - 2) Arnobius (d. cf. AD 330): "Is the anger and outrage of the gods appeased... by the jangle of brass and the clashing of cymbals? Or by tympana or other instruments? What effect has the clatter of the scabellum?³ That when the gods hear it they consider themselves honored and set aside their seething wrath in forgetfulness? Or is it that as little boys are frightened by rattles to stop their silly whimpering, so omnipotent deities are soothed by the whistling of tibias and relax, their anger softened, to the rhythm of cymbals?" (Arnobius, McKinnon, 50)
 - 3) Arnobius: "You [pagans, idolaters] are persuaded that, by the crash of cymbals and the sound of pipes... and theatrical plays, the gods are both delighted and affected, and that their resentful feelings conceived before are mollified by the satisfaction which these things give; we [Christians] hold it to be out of place, nay more, we judge it incredible, that those who have surpassed by a thousand degrees every kind of excellence in the height of their perfection, should be pleased and delighted with those things which a wise man laughs at, and which do not seem to have any charm except to little children, coarsely and vulgarly educated" (Arnobius, Roberts/Donaldson, 532-533)
 - 4) There's something to be said for declaring, "Our God is not your gods. Our God is not like your gods. We do not speak to our God or worship our God the way you speak and worship your gods." In the difference one discovers the true God and the true worship.
16. Artemis/Diana might appear here or there, allegedly. A quick passing phantom in a window at the Artemisium. She is Ephiphanes. Yet the gospel shows an abiding fellowship and fullness of the true God in the midst of His people. God does not come and go!
- a. Strengthened through His Spirit in the inner man (Eph. 3:16).
 - b. Christ may dwell in your hearts (Eph. 3:18).
 - c. Filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19).

³ The "scabellum" is a foot clapper used by musical directors.

E. The gospel of Jesus Christ called the Ephesians out of this culture and a variety of religious backgrounds to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ unites all men (Jew and Gentile), lords over all men (not Caesar), reveals the mystery before all men (no more mystery cults), and He lives (unlike graven images). The letter indirectly confronts and vanquishes the mythology, imagery, as well as cultic practices of Diana of the Ephesians.

II. Called To... What?: The Ideal for Ephesian Christians

A. Called to the living God

1. The world of idolatry was a frustrating, futile, and lustful world.
2. Paul describes it in Rom. 1:21-32 and also Eph. 4:17-19.
3. The majority of Ephesian Christians were called out of idolatry and the syncretic religious worldview of paganism. The Old Man was an idolater (Eph. 5:5).
4. Others were called out of Judaism, Imperial cult, and/or Mystery religions.
5. But we especially focus on being called out of the Diana cult and the shadow of the Artemisium.

B. Called to be the image of God - living representations of God

1. Recall what Artemis had in place at Ephesus.
 - a. The Artemisium – yet God has the true and living temple (Eph. 2:20-22).
 - b. The temple guardians (*neokoros*; cf. Acts 19:35) – Christ has given gifts for His church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers to equip and mature the church (Eph. 4:11-14).
 - c. Idols – silver images (Acts 19:23-27). Archaeology also tells us of both statues of Diana and the Temple, Artemisium, itself. These idols were made of silver, marble, and clay.
 - d. The idols went all over Asia and the world (Acts 19:27).
2. Jews already understood and accepted what was a difficult worldview shift for the pagans: there is only one living God and all the idols are dead images (Acts 19:26).
 - a. The Old Man was an idolater (Eph. 5:5). Not Jews though. Ephesian Gentiles and other Gentiles in the Greco-Roman world were idolaters.
 - b. Old Testament prohibition – no gods of silver (Exo. 20:23).
 - c. The Egyptians and Canaanites had gods of silver. This is outlawed for God's people, Israel (Deut. 29:16-18).
 - d. Clearly, the story of the Old Testament is how Israelites fell into idolatry over and over again. But by AD 1st Century they were galvanized against idolatry and had even gained exemptions from State idolatrous expectations (See above I.B.1.).
3. In the beginning, God made them male and female “in Our image” (Gen. 1:26-27). God's intent was His people bearing His image to His creation. Human life's inherent dignity is rooted in the truth that people are made in the image of God (Gen. 9:3-7).
4. Christianity returns to the Edenic ideal. God's people are created new to be His image and represent Him to a world marred by sin.
5. Wisdom of Psalm 115:8 shows you become like your god. This is exactly what Paul calls the Christians to – be like your God (Eph. 4:23-24; 5:1). Idols are dead things. Serving idols alienates you from life in God (Eph. 4:18). God is alive!

6. It's so clear as we make the contrast between the silver goddess Diana and the living images of God, Christians. Psalm 115 offers a suspiciously providential correspondence to the New Man teaching of Ephesians 4 and 5.
 - a. Our God is in heaven (Psalm 115:3; Eph. 1:20-23). The silver idol, Diana, is made by men's hands (Psalm 115:4; Acts 19:24-26).
 - 1) In Acts 19:24, a silversmith made Diana. Diana is Demetrius' workmanship.
 - 2) In Isa. 44:10-20, the prophet shares God's view of idol-makers. The absurdity of the industry is exposed. They worship one part of a tree and burn another for fuel. It's ridiculous.
 - 3) In Eph. 2:10, God has created Christians. We are His workmanship. He has created us to walk in good works He has created and ordained.
 - 4) In Eph. 4:24, God has created a new man in true righteousness and holiness.
 - 5) As Christians become the new man, they are imitating God. As Christians walk in His good works, they are the opposite of idols like Artemis. They are living images of God.
 - b. The silver idol, Diana, has a mouth but does not speak (Psalm 115:5). The new man has a mouth and speaks!
 - 1) Speak truth (Eph. 4:25)
 - 2) No corrupt words (Eph. 4:29)
 - 3) No evil speaking (Eph. 4:31)
 - 4) No foolish talk, coarse jest, etc. (Eph. 5:4)
 - 5) Give thanks (Eph. 5:4, 20)
 - 6) Speaking psalms, hymns, spiritual songs (Eph. 5:20)
 - c. The silver idol, Diana, has eyes but does not see (Psalm 115:5). The new man has eyes and sees!
 - 1) Idolatry was a blindness of the heart (Eph. 4:18).
 - 2) Old man had deceitful lusts (Eph. 4:22). Cf. the lust of the eyes (1 John 2:17).
 - 3) Covetousness (again relates to lust of the eyes) is not to be named among the new man (Eph. 5:3)
 - 4) They are light and expose darkness. Walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8-14).
 - 5) Now they bear fruit of the Spirit, fruit of light (Eph. 5:9).
 - a) Goodness
 - b) Righteousness
 - c) Truth
 - 6) Exposing works of darkness (Eph. 5:11-13). This identifies particular repentance and change from idolatry or magic/mystery practices. As Christians opened their eyes, practiced light and exposed darkness, one can see how magic books were burned or Demetrius became so concerned that idolatry with its practices was on the decline. Now people could see!
 - d. The silver idol, Diana, has ears but does not hear (Psalm 115:6). The new man has ears and hears!

- 1) They heard and learned Christ (Eph. 4:20-21).
 - 2) They heard and learned Truth (Eph. 4:21; 4:15).
 - 3) They heard – they were called (Eph. 4:1).
 - 4) What they heard, were called to, and obeyed, they continue (Eph. 4:22-24).
 - 5) Hearers of grace (Eph. 5:29). Speak it and hear it. One to another.
 - 6) No more hearing filthy language (Eph. 5:3-4).
 - 7) No more hearing empty words and deception (Eph. 5:6). Don't listen and be deceived then ultimately judged (Eph. 5:7).
 - 8) Hear songs (Eph. 5:19). Speak it and sing it. One to another.
- e. The silver idol, Diana, has a nose but does not smell (Psalm 115:6). The new man takes on the aroma of Christ!
- 1) Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the sweet-smelling aroma of sacrifice to God (Eph. 5:2).
 - 2) The new man takes on the attributes of the living sacrifice to God (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 2:15-16).
 - a) Be kind and tenderhearted (Eph. 4:32)
 - b) Forgive one another like Christ did (Eph. 4:32)
 - c) Imitate God as children (Eph. 5:1)
 - d) Walk in love toward others, even sacrificial love (Eph. 5:2, 21, 25, 28).
- f. The silver idol, Diana, has hands but does not handle (Psalm 115:7). The new man does good works with hands!
- 1) Stop stealing (Eph. 4:28)
 - 2) Work with your hands, honest labor to help the needy (Eph. 4:28)
 - 3) Put away wrath – uncontrolled angry outbursts (Eph. 4:31)
- g. The silver idol, Diana, has feet but does not walk (Psalm 115:7). The new man walks worthily of his calling (Eph. 4:1)!
- 1) "You [Ephesians] are fellow citizens with the saints, a dwelling place for God in the spirit, God's eternal purpose; Therefore, I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of that calling. His [Paul] appeal to them is on the basis of their exalted standing as God's inheritance and his own willingness to suffer hardship on their behalf. Walking worthily is going to require living in such a manner as to facilitate a unity within the body." (Smelser, 62-63)
 - 2) "Eight times in this letter, we see the word *walk* (περιπατέω). The Gentile readers had formerly *walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience* (2.2). But, in Jesus, they have been created for good works in which they should *walk* (2.10). Having previously referred *to the hope of his calling* (1.18), Paul now urges the Gentiles to *walk worthily* of their calling (4.1). He will use the word twice, warning them how not to *walk* (4.17), and then he will urge them to *walk in love* (5.2), *as children of light* (5.8), and *carefully as wise* (5.15)." (Smelser, 170)
 - 3) He walks in good works (Eph. 2:10)

- 4) He walks worthy of His calling (Eph. 4:1)
 - 5) He does not walk like the gentiles (Eph. 4:17)
 - 6) He walks in love (Eph. 5:2)
 - 7) He walks as light (Eph. 5:8)
 - 8) He walks wisely (Eph. 5:15)
- h. The silver idol, Diana, makes no sounds – no muttering (Psalm 115:7). The new man sings from the heart (Eph. 5:19-20)!
 - i. God has created a living new man, brought back from spiritual death, and so he will praise and bless the Lord from this time forth, forevermore (Psalm 115:17-18; Eph. 2:5-7; 5:14, 19-20).
- C. Christians are called to go everywhere and represent Christ and teach Christ.
1. Where did the idols of Diana go from Ephesus? All Asia and the world (Acts 19:27).
 2. Where are these Christians to go and take the truth of Christ? All Asia, both Jews and Greeks (Acts 19:10). They were going into all the world (Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20).
 3. Just as time with a silver shrine could influence one for Diana and put one in mind of Diana, so time with a Christian could influence one for Jesus.
- D. Christians will be distinguished, as well as despised and persecuted (soon enough) for showing the world the truth of God and rejecting all aspects of pagan idolatry, so well summarized in the existence of Diana of the Ephesians.

III. Walk Worthily As Living Images of God Today

- A. Christians are living images of God as God's New Man in Christ. To walk worthy is to live in accordance with this God-given identity. What does that new man look like? Four things:
1. *Think Antithetically* (Eph. 4:23).
 - a. Christians think as God's New Man (Eph. 4:17-18, 23).
 - b. The new man walking in light means an end to syncretistic religion. This is a reorganizing of the idolater's mind and worldview.
 - 1) This is a great challenge.
 - 2) For the Ephesians, everything they had believed about the gods, even the goddess Diana, turned out to be lies (Eph. 4:17-18).
 - 3) Things they had done to worship their gods/goddess were actually horrible, immoral, sinful things (Eph. 4:19, 22; 5:3-7, 12).
 - 4) In the name of religion, they had been pawns of the devil (Eph. 2:1-3; 6:11-12).
 - c. It's an end to idolatry. It's an end to polytheism. It's an end to the thinking and approach to religion and truth that could even produce the amalgamation goddess of Diana of the Ephesians.
 - d. Antithetical Thinking: Thesis and Antithesis.
 - 1) Death (Eph. 2:1-3) vs. Life (Eph. 2:4-7).
 - 2) Old Man (Eph. 4:22) vs. New Man (Eph. 4:24).
 - 3) Darkness (Eph. 5:8) vs. Light (Eph. 5:8).

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- 4) Fools (Eph. 5:15-17) vs. Wise (Eph. 5:15-17).
 - 5) Drunk on wine (Eph. 5:18) vs. Full of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
 - e. Ephesian Jews coming from the background of Torah Observance (especially Leviticus) were trained in antithetical thought. There is God's way and then there are all others. Christians must be renewed in their mind (Eph. 4:23).
 - f. Christians do not worship God like they worshiped the gods, such as Artemis (Eph. 5:18-20). In fact, the ways of worshiping the idols were shameful (Eph. 5:5-12). There's no confusing or amalgamating God with idols (Eph. 5:5).
 - g. What about today? Christians yet need to think antithetically so they can walk worthily.
 - 1) Perhaps some lack the ability to do it. There's a lack of knowledge of God's Word.
 - 2) Perhaps some lack the resolve to do it. There's a lack of courage to practice what we know to be true.
 - h. Our society's choice philosophy is Post-modernism coupled with moral relativism. Total rejection of antithetical thought. And the "Church World" is eaten up with this.
 - 1) Acceptance of Ecumenism is a lack of antithetical thought.
 - 2) Acceptance of Denominationalism is a lack of antithetical thought.
 - 3) The "Church World" is fearful to say anyone is wrong or in doctrinal error.
 - a) Not even Catholicism/Protestant distinctions are maintained
 - b) Mormonism is positioning itself as just another denomination in popular thought.
 - c) UMC is currently dividing into 2 denominations because a large segment refuse to say homosexual behavior is a sin.
 - 4) An unchecked overtaking by Charismatic theology and worship practices into much of Evangelicalism.
 - i. Ephesians challenges us:
 - 1) There is Truth (Eph. 4:20-21; 4:15)
 - 2) There is One Way (Eph. 4:4-6)
 - 3) There is Light (Eph. 5:8-13)
 - 4) The Lord has an understandable will (Eph. 5:17).
 - 5) There is a war, pick a side and go to war (Eph. 6:10-20)!
 - a) This is consistent with so many calls for discernment throughout the NT (cf. Matt. 7:15-20; John 7:24; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 1:9-10; 1 Thess. 5:21; Heb. 5:12-14; 1 John 4:1).
 - j. Let us train our mind and teach others to think antithetically. Let us discern from the Bible God's will and way and truth on a matter and then exercise the courage to teach it and practice it.
2. *Walk Worthily* (Eph. 4:1)
 - a. Christians Behave as God's New Man
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- b. Attitudes and Speech reflect Christ and represent God appropriately.
- 1) *Do Not Lie, But Speak The Truth* (Eph. 4:25)
 - a) Lies hurt the body and divide the body.
 - b) Lies and deceit have never been for God's people. Zechariah 8:16-17, shows that honesty is part of being a neighbor.
 1. We are to love our neighbors as ourselves.
 2. Love and truth go hand in hand.
 3. It's not loving to lie and deceive our neighbors.
 4. The Zechariah passage also associates lying with false judgements, false oaths, bearing false witness.
 5. God hates these things (Rev. 21:8).
 - c) Truth respects the body and builds the body (Eph. 4:15-16).
 1. The members of Jesus' body speak truth in love to build up one another to Christlikeness.
 2. Truth and honesty build unity and strength. It protects unity and strength.
 3. Love speaks truth.
 - 2) *Do Not Lose Your Temper, But Be Righteous In Anger* (Eph. 4:26-27)
 - a) There is a time for anger, even righteous anger.
 1. Anger is permitted but restrained.
 2. There are two kinds of anger or wrath.
 - a. Unrighteous anger – put it off (Eph. 4:31)
 - b. Righteous anger/wrath or righteous indignation (Eph. 5:6)
 - b) The challenge and the shame is what angers us vs. what does NOT anger us which should.
 - c) The Devil lurks in lost tempers and wrath (Eph. 4:27).
 - d) How do I handle anger correctly?
 1. Do not sin (Eph. 4:26)
 2. Do not let the sun go down on wrath (Eph. 4:26)
 3. Do not give place to the devil (Eph. 4:27).
 - 3) *Do Not Steal, But Work And Give* (Eph. 4:28)
 - a) Theft signals selfishness. Dishonest gain.
 - b) Gifts signal generosity. I'm more like Jesus when I give than when I take.
 - c) Honest work with your hands is for God's people. Instead of taking, we are givers and helpers. Greed and covetousness can eat away at hearts and wreck us just like uncontrolled anger.
 - 4) *Do Not Speak Evil, But Impart Grace* (Eph. 4:29-30)
 - a) Speech proceeds from the heart (Luke 6:43-45). What is inside of you?

1. Is corruption inside of you? Then corruption will come out in your speech.
 2. Is the Holy Spirit inside of you? We are a temple for the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19)
 3. Sealing is a mark of identification and ownership. Don't sorrow and wound the Spirit with your speech (Eph. 1:13; 4:30).
 4. If the Spirit is in you, then wholesome, edifying language comes out in speech.
- b) Words are powerful. Too many people have never heard a kind word.
1. Don't underestimate the power of a positive word to someone else.
 2. The devil has battered people through unkind, harsh and abusive speech.
- 5) *Do Not Maliciously Slander, But Kindly Forgive* (Eph. 4:31-32)
- a) Six attitudes of meanness. Old attitudes and outlooks are like old habits, old friends.
1. Bitterness – sour attitude and sour speech
 2. Wrath – goes with anger. The idea of outbursts, uncontrolled anger
 3. Anger
 4. Clamor – shouting matches
 5. Evil speaking – slander, evil speech against others to tear them down.
 6. Malice – ill will. Often associated with plotting evil against someone.
- b) We need to be shown, reminded, and encouraged to be New (Eph. 4:32).
1. Be Kind
 2. Be tenderhearted
 3. Forgive
- c. Actions and Practices reflect Christ and represent God appropriately.
- 1) Prohibitions Against Unbecoming and Ungodly Practices (Eph. 5:3-8, 18)
 - a) Fornication (Eph. 5:3, 5)
 - b) Uncleanness (Eph. 5:3, 5)
 - c) Covetousness (Eph. 5:3, 5)
 - d) Filthiness (Eph. 5:4)
 - e) Foolish Talking (Eph. 5:4)
 - f) Coarse Jestings (Eph. 5:4)
 - g) Disobedience (Eph. 5:6)
 - h) Darkness – works of darkness (Eph. 5:8, 11-12)
 - i) Drunkenness (Eph. 5:18)

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- 2) Exhortations to Greater Godliness (Eph. 5:1-21)
 - a) Imitate God as children (Eph. 5:1)
 - b) Love like Christ loved us – walk in love (Eph. 5:2)
 - c) Give Thanks (Eph. 5:4, 20)
 - d) Show the fruit of light/Spirit – walk in light (Eph. 5:8-9)
 1. All goodness
 2. Righteousness
 3. Truth
 4. There are parallel ideas to Fruit of Light/Spirit and works of darkness (Eph. 5:8-12), to Fruit of the Spirit and works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-23. Living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25) parallels being children of light and walking as light (Eph. 5:8).
 - e) Learn and continue to gain knowledge and wisdom (Eph. 5:10, 15, 17)
 1. Christians are learners, students of the Master Jesus Christ.
 2. Find out what is acceptable to the Lord (v.10)
 3. Be wise – walk circumspectly (with wisdom) (v.15)
 4. Understand what the will of the Lord is (v.17)
 - f) Expose works of darkness (Eph. 5:11-13)
 - g) Redeem the time (Eph. 5:16)
 - h) Speak and sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to one another (Eph. 5:19)
 - i) Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21)
 3. *Worship Spiritually* (Eph. 5:18-20)
 - a. Christians Sing as God's New Man
 - b. The new body (church) had a distinct revealed worship for Jesus Christ.
 - 1) Jesus Christ is not one of the Greco-Roman deities and so He is not worshipped like them.
 - 2) His worship is uniquely revealed by His apostles and prophets, once for all. Disciples in succeeding generations were not crafting worship practices in reaction to paganism.
 - 3) They sing and offer spiritual sacrifices because they were taught to do so. This is worship handed down. This is truly apostolic. Apostolicity is the value and reason for the church's songs of praise.
 - c. A common tactic of early Christian apologists was distinguishing Christian worship from other gods and decrying the false worship practices of false gods.
 - 1) Frankly, it was low hanging fruit for Church Fathers and Apologists to observe and critique the sensual, even Bacchic, practices of pagan worshippers, such as Diana of the Ephesians.
 - a) Clearly their gods were less than divine. Their "worship" appealed to the basest appetites of men. While the music was delightful to the
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worshippers, it also supposedly invited the gods to appear and enticed them to act.

- b) However, the idols couldn't be God if men could direct them by playing musical instruments.
- d. It is a great shame that today Pentecostals and Charismatics have crafted a theology of worship which (whether wittingly or unwittingly) restores the ancient pagan's magical properties of epicletic power over God via contemporary worship music.
- 1) "When God's people praise, God will be present. The teachers of praise and worship are confident in this instrumental effectiveness for praise... in the 1980s and early 1990s, the confidence was evident in book titles (e.g., *God's Presence through Music*), statements (e.g., 'praise and worship is one of the simplest forms of entrance into the presence of God'), and church musician job searches (we want someone who can 'make God present through music'...)" (Lim & Ruth, 134)
 - 2) "[Contemporary Worship]... has also had an epicletic dimension in praise and worship. The epiclesis in Eucharistic prayers is the petitioning of God to send the Holy Spirit in the sacrament. There is a strong, recurring similarity in contemporary worship's music although the desired divine coming is not as tightly focused on the Holy Spirit's coming." (Lim & Ruth, 137)
 - 3) "Throughout contemporary worship's history there has been a strong desire (and expectation) that God would come, both in terms of Christ's return and, especially, of God's arrival in corporate worship. The name of one of the original music companies (Maranatha! Music, which means "Come, Lord" in first-century Aramaic) verbalized this dimension." (Lim & Ruth, 137)
 - 4) "The role of the worship leader was explicitly critical by the late 1980s: this was the person who would 'bring the congregational worshippers into a corporate awareness of God's manifest Presence.' Or... a worship leader's job was to 'make God present through music.'" (Lim & Ruth, 131)
 - 5) "But the real evidence of the epicletic, sacramental quality of contemporary worship is how common the petitioning in song for God (or Jesus or the Spirit) to come in worship. Come is one of the most used verbs in the lyrics of contemporary worship songs. Among the most popular songs, it stands equal with save as the most common divine actions." (Lim & Ruth, 137)
 - 6) "A related way, especially in Pentecostal circles, for expressing this epicletic quality of contemporary worship, including the music, is to speak of an anointing on or in worship. Although a widespread term, it is also a vague one having a variety of different meaning. Its basic thrust is to affirm a perceived sense of the Holy Spirit, whether it is the community's or an individual's discernment of the Spirit's special touch. To affirm that contemporary worship has been anointed is to feel as if the Spirit has come upon it." (Lim & Ruth, 137)
 - 7) "Indeed, so confident was the theology that praising brought about the active presence of God in worship that later writers took time to explain the difference [between] God's constant presence everywhere and the presence experienced during times of worship. A common approach was to make a difference between divine omnipresence and the manifest presence experienced in praise and worship." (Lim & Ruth, 135)

- 8) “As one stated it, praise and worship ‘combine the anointing of three different vehicles for contact with God: God’s Word, God’s Spirit, and God’s music.’ This anointing is indeed an epiclesis fulfilled.” (Lim & Ruth, 137)
- e. As of now, there is actually a crafted system of musical performance
- 1) After 35 or 45 minutes of singing accompanied by powerful and suggestive sensual rhythms and volume through musical instruments (enhanced by electronics and state of the art stagecraft), the worshipers are then told that God – the Holy Spirit – “shows up” or “breaks in” or “breaks through.”
- f. But this is not a new movement from God. This is a resurgence of old paganism! This is an ancient perspective and employment of music in cultic worship. Diana/Cybele is exhibit A.
- 1) It is very old. It had been exposed and rejected as the sensual, worldly, pagan, approach to music it was by Christians from the earliest years of the church.
 - 2) The Christians’ singing and chanting of psalms and hymns was taught to them by apostles. They were given good reasons to sing and chant.
 - 3) However, invoking God’s presence and manifestation was not on that list. It is altogether impossible to manipulate God through sensual music.
 - 4) But the flesh, human beings, are easily manipulated by music. Playing musical instruments was not part of the church’s worship.
 - 5) Musical instruments were known and appropriated by all the other gods but not the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g. Singing – yes. Singing verbally – yes. Singing as sacrifice – yes. Playing musical instruments – no. Bands and minstrels and priestly orchestras – no.
- 1) The Christians sang so as to be heard by the pagans. Pagans heard them and recognized the difference in Christian chants and the music they were accustomed to in their idol cults.
 - 2) Eusebius (d. AD 340) wrote in his *Commentary on Psalms* 65:10-15: “Throughout the world – in cities, in villages, and in the country – in all the churches of God the people of Christ, who have been chosen out of all the nations, send up, not to the native gods nor to demons but to the one God spoken of by the prophets, hymns and psalmody with a loud voice so that the sound of those singing [*psallonton*] can be heard by those standing outside. (PG 23:657D-660A; cf. also 648A and 648D-649A)” (Ferguson, 2013, 62)
 - 3) “A passing hostile comment in the second-century pagan critic Celsus shows that the chants used in Christian worship (which he seems to have heard) were not only unusual to his pagan ears but so beautiful that he actually resented their emotive effect as an instrument for dulling the critical faculty.” (Chadwick, 274)
- h. Today, ancient pagan concepts and superstitions of musical epiclesis has been repackaged and presented as a Third Wave from God to the 20th/21st century western church. It is heresy.
- 1) However, it is a theological underpinning of the beginnings of the CCM movement (Chuck Smith at Calvary Chapel; John Wimber at Anaheim Vineyard) and is carried on today (Hillsong in Australia, Soul-Survivor in UK, Bill Johnson and Jesus Culture in CA).

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- i. Sadly, the Contemporary Worship Movement has transformed people's expectations for worship. Most people today expect a worship experience that leads them to rejoicing.
 - 1) In fact, the way some people talk about worship shows the expectation that the church worshipping together is supposed to create emotional joys, emotional highs – emotional catharsis. They use the word, “Experiences.”
 - 2) Monique Ingalls, Music Professor at Baylor University wrote: “An experience, by definition, makes you feel something, and it also holds out the tantalizing possibility of transformation. Worship *service*, by contrast, can sound old, stuffy, and ritualistic – at least to certain evangelicals. One gets the impression of going through the motions, without experiencing any growth or transformation. I think the irony, here, however, is that worship *experiences* can fall prey to the same tendencies. They can ritualize a certain set of feelings as preconditions of worship. In other words, as long as you experience this set of feelings, you've really worshiped. You don't have to do the hard work of examining whether your life shows the fruit of the Spirit.” (Ingalls, CT, 2019)
 - j. “[S]elf-control’ (*enkrateia*) is the final quality named as ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ in Galatians 5:22-23. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit we do not lose control; we gain it.” (Stott, 204)
 - 1) Emotional Catharsis is not the fruit of the Spirit.
 - 2) Joy and tears and emotions are not the object of our worship, not the reason we come together.
 - 3) The Lord is the object of our worship and the reason we come together.
 - 4) Of course, there can be joy and tears, and aspects of worship can be intensely personal. But the purpose of worship is not to trigger emotional responses.
 - k. Let's speak and sing to worship God but be mindful that our songs do not call Him to this location or that.
 - l. Let's be wary of music designed to disengage people's minds and manipulate their emotions into suggesting that emotional catharsis is synonymous with experiencing God the Holy Spirit.
 - m. Let's eschew music that is designed to produce all manner of alleged “spiritual exercises.”
 - n. A proper relationship with the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the Fruit of the Spirit (Eph. 5:9; Gal. 5:22-23).
 - 1) Worship is natural thanksgiving expressed for the harvest of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.
 - 2) Worship is not the magical power to bring God to us and have God perform “signs and wonders” at appointed times.
4. *Evangelize Boldly* (Eph. 4:20-24)
- a. Boldly teach Christ because you are God's New Man.
 - b. You were once darkness – we all were (Eph. 5:8).
 - c. Now you are children of light (Eph. 5:8).
 - d. What changed? What changed you?

- e. Great is our God! not “great is Diana of the Ephesians”
 - f. Be vocal. The way people hear Jesus and learn Christ is to be taught Christ (Eph. 4:20-22).
 - g. Evangelistic boldness. Boldly teach Christ. The hour is now (Eph. 5:16).
Secularism and pluralism are on the rise.
 - 1) 36% of millennials in the United States are now religious “nones” – people unaffiliated with any type of faith at all. (*Pew Research*, 2015)
 - 2) One-third of all Americans now consider themselves non-religious, saying that “religion is not an important part of their daily life and that they seldom or never attend religious services.” (*Newport*, 2013)
 - 3) In 2015, a 6% increase in religious “nones” was reported along with an 8% decrease in the number of self-identifying Christians in the U.S. (*Pew Research*, 2015)
 - 4) If all non-religious people formed a single religion, it would be the world’s third largest. 1) Christianity (2.3 billion adherents); 2) Islam (1.8 billion adherents); 3) Non-religious – Secular/Agnostic/Atheist (1.2 billion adherents); 4) Hinduism (1.1 billion adherents). (*Hackett & McClendon*, 2017)
 - a) Notice Hinduism, 4th largest religion, is an idolatrous religion. Meaning there are well over 1.1 billion idolaters around the world today.
 - h. Whether images are cast in silver or not, all competing gods and loves are idols which the gospel confronts and vanquishes (Eph. 5:5).
 - i. To be the living images of God we must be the children of light who preach the message of light (Eph. 5:8, 13-14).
- B. The duty to be living images of God to the world is the timeless privilege of Christians. It is as fresh and immediate today as it was to the first readers.
- 1. Some of us start from a different place than Gentile Artemis worshipers when we learned Christ.
 - 2. Some of us did not start from such a different place.
 - 3. Regardless, our minds must be renewed to think in the ways of God, to walk consistently with our convictions, worship God to praise Him not prey upon people through musical manipulation, and faithfully take the message of Christ to the world around us.

Conclusion:

- I. The book of Ephesians serves to encourage, instruct, and edify congregations of people who are recently called out of idolatry into Christianity.
 - A. Ephesus was the focal point of a significant pagan goddess, Diana of the Ephesians. Throughout Asia and the Roman Empire, Artemis/Diana/Cybele was well known and worshiped.
 - B. The Ephesian epistle indirectly refutes her mythology and cult as well as warns Christians against the temptations to foolish thinking and wicked behavior associated with their former idolatrous ways.
- II. Unlike the dead silver shrines representing the goddess, Diana, Christians are living images of the true God. They are called to walk (live) for the Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. The practical prohibitions as well as positive charges written in Ephesians 4:17-5:21 put on a New Man in Christ.
 - B. Every aspect of the New Man corresponds to an aspect of futility and foolishness within idolatry. The Christian's worthy walk is a daily indictment and repudiation of idolatry, especially the cult of Diana.
- III. The calling to Christians today is still to distinguish themselves from the world and broader culture. There are many modern-era echoes to the Ephesian culture.
- IV. To learn Christ (Eph. 4:20), we renew minds to understand the world like Jesus, we practice what we preach and walk as the new man, we sing to God thanksgivings without mystical expectations, and we teach Christ: calling to a world lost in idolatries.
- V. It is unsearchable riches of grace, lavished upon us, that we should be called by the gospel of Christ; may we be strong in the might of God to walk worthy of our calling.

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