

An Ancient Christian Church Reveals an Ominous Warning at Its Door

Archaeologists in southern Turkey uncovered a blunt message from the early Christian church, preserved in stone for more than 1,500 years. At the entrance of a fifth-century church in the ancient city of Olympos, a mosaic inscription spelled out who belonged inside and who did not.

“Only those on the right path may enter here.”

The warning was found during excavations at Church No. 1 in the Kumluca district of Antalya. According to the Daily Mail, the message was “left as a warning for all who dared to enter,” positioned at the threshold where every visitor would be forced to confront it before stepping inside.

"Only those on the right path may enter here," message for early christians found inscribed on a 5th century ce church in turkiye.

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The inscription was not symbolic or decorative. The excavation team explained that it was intended “to direct the conduct of those entering the sacred space, and was meant to deter those who did not follow Christianity.” The early church did not blur belief into culture. Faith was defined, visible and enforced in public spaces.

The mosaic was created using colored tiles laid directly into the ground, forming a circular design at the church entrance. Inside the structure, archaeologists uncovered additional

floor mosaics featuring geometric patterns and botanical imagery. Some mosaics recorded the names of the church's benefactors, documenting the individuals who supported the growing Christian community.

"These finds confirm Olympos as one of the richest ancient cities in the Lycia region in terms of mosaic flooring," said Göksen Kutlüs Öztaşkın, associate professor at Pamukkale University and excavation director. "Olympos continues to surprise us with its rich mosaic heritage."



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Excavations also revealed a civilian home constructed in the fifth century over a Roman-era necropolis. During the Byzantine period, older burial grounds were replaced as the population expanded and Christian life reshaped the city's layout.

The home suffered fire damage in the sixth century and was rebuilt. Archaeologists found that "the building's original layout and function remained mostly intact during the reconstruction," with stone-paved floors and multiple rooms still clearly defined.

Work at Olympos has continued since 2006, with uninterrupted year-round excavation over the past four years. Archaeologists have uncovered Churches No. 1 and 3, an Episcopal Palace, monumental harbor tombs, a bridge, a mausoleum and a mosaic-decorated building. Many of the recovered artifacts are now displayed at the Antalya Archaeological Museum.

Christianity arrived in the region of modern-day Turkey in the first century AD, shortly after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By the fifth century, cities such as Olympos functioned as established Christian centers, with churches and homes constructed over earlier pagan and Roman structures. The

archaeological record aligns with the biblical account of a faith that spread rapidly and reshaped societies.

This mosaic inscription stands as physical testimony to how the early church understood belief, belonging and accountability. It reflects a Christianity grounded in conviction and public allegiance, not private sentiment. Each excavation continues to expose the historical reality Scripture records, frustrating claims that the biblical world is fictional or exaggerated.

The message remains at the doorway, unchanged by time. The early church knew exactly who it was. The stones still say so.

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a background in journalism from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man's Commentary* and a contributor to *Charisma magazine*.