

BIBLICAL TURKEY & GREECE WITH BORDER CROSSING



Day 01 June 15 – Depart USA

Day 02 June 16 : İstanbul

Arrive in Istanbul, meet by your guide and transfer to the hotel for dinner and overnight. (D)

Day 03 June 17 : İstanbul

In the morning depart from the hotel to visit Topkapı Palace, the residence of the Ottoman Sultans from the 15th to the 19th centuries to see the famous Topkapı Dagger and one of the biggest diamonds of the world: The Spoon Maker's Diamond. Then walk into Hagia Sophia (6th c. AD), a masterpiece of the Byzantine Christian Architecture and one of the oldest and biggest cathedrals of the world.

Drive down to seaside and embark on a Private Boat for a cruise along the Bosphorus to enjoy the old wooden mansions of the Ottoman Turkish Aristocracy.

Disembark and visit the 16th century Egyptian Spice market by the Golden Horn. Enjoy shopping for the all kinds of spices, nuts, Russian caviar, Turkish pastrami and delicious Turkish delights. Return to your hotel for dinner and overnight . (B,L,D)

Day 04 June 18 : İstanbul - Sardis – Philadelphia – Pamukkale

Morning departure at 6:00am, crossing the Sea of Marmara over the new suspending bridge and while driving on highway see the Lake of Nicea from a distance, talk about Nicene Creed and the Ecumenical Councils that were held in Nicea in 325 AD and 787 AD.

Continue to visit Sardis (Rev.3:1-6), the capital city of Lydian Kingdom. Sardis was one of the very rich metropolises of Asia Minor with crowded populations of Jews which might have enabled the Good News to be heard at a faster . The site is presently under the excavation of Harvard and Berkeley Universities. The city was where the richest man on earth, King Croesus enjoyed an incredible power and wealth. Lydians invented and minted the first coins in the world.

Visit one of the oldest synagogues of the world which was later converted into a church. Also visit the monumental Artemis Temple and the impressively restored Roman Imperial Hall.

En route you will have a short visit at ancient Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13) to see the remaining walls of a monumental church. Philadelphia together with Symrna was one of the two seven churches of Asia Minor which did not receive any criticism about applications of Christianity.

Continue to Pamukkale, where is a unique site in the world, declared as World Heritage Site by UNESCO Cultural Department. Dinner and overnight in Pamukkale. (B,L,D)



Day 05 June 19 : Pamukkale – Hierapolis – Laodicea – Kuşadası

Morning visit to Hierapolis where Apostle Philip came to spread the Christianity, and is believed to have lived and martyred here. Hierapolis is mentioned in St. Paul's epistle to the Colossians (Colossian 4:13). Explore one of the richest cemetery grounds of the ancient world, the main Domitian Gate and the main avenue. Before leaving enjoy the cotton white travertine cascades of Pamukkale. And then to Laodicea, Laodicea was one of the seven churches (Rev 3:14-22) where John called its Christians Lukewarm. Recent Turkish

excavations on the site are revealing the walls of a what might have been a monumental church. Drive to Kuşadası for dinner and overnight at hotel. (B,L,D)



Day 06 June 20 : Ephesus

Today visit the glorious city of Ephesus (Rev 1:11, 2:1-7) (Acts 18:19-28, 19:1-41 Ephesians).

Ephesus was the capital city of Roman Province of Asia Minor; the site of One of the Seven Wonders of the World; Temple of Artemis, and the site of the third richest library of the ancient world; Celsus library.

St. Paul came to Ephesus in 54 AD and stayed for three years. He preached the Gospel, gained followers and also established the church of Ephesus.

St. John (author of Revelation according to the New Testament) also spend his last years in Ephesus. believed to have been buried within the Basilica of St. John. A strong tradition in the Catholic Church claims that St. John brought Virgin Mary to Ephesus and she ascended to heaven from Ephesus. Your visits include Ephesus

archaeological site, the Basilica of St. John and the House of Virgin Mary.

Drive back to your hotel for dinner and overnight. (B,L,D)

Day 07 June 21 : Kuşadası – Patmos - Kuşadası

Board on the ferry at 8;00am and sail to the island of Patmos where St. John was exiled prior to writing the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:9) Visit the island with its 11th century monastery of St. John the Theologian and the traditional cave of Apocalypse. Arrive and get on the bus for the picturesque alleyways wind upwards, towards the Monastery of St. John the Evangelist, founded in 1088 by St. Christodoulos. The visit will open the doors for you of the Monastery's yard, the place where the monks take their meals and the old bakery. Of exquisite beauty is the tour of the Byzantine Church of St. John, which is adorned with a wood-carved icon screen, important frescoes from several periods, with both mosaic and other icons.

Next stop, the small museum which hosts religious treasures of inestimable value, like manuscripts, medieval textiles, sacerdotal vestments and others.

Walking down the stairs, the religious energy that you will experience is soul touching.

Behind the chapel of St. Anne lies the entrance to the Grotto of the Apocalypse. You will see the cross engraved by St. John the Evangelist, according to tradition, the triple fissure in the wall of the cave, from where



St. John heard God dictating to him the Apocalypse. And also the spot where he lay down to sleep. After finishing visits board on your boat at 5;00pm and sail back to Kuşadası for dinner and overnight at your hotel. (B,L,D)

Day 08 June 22 : Kuşadası - İzmir – Pergamon – Thyatira - Troy – Çanakkale

İzmir is ancient Smyrna which houses one of the seven churches (Rev 2:8-11) and St. Polycarp was the bishop of Smyrna, one of the disciples of St. John. A brief visit to the church in early morning and then continue to visit to Thyatira for a very short stop at the remains of the church mentioned in the Book of Revelation (Rev 2:18-29). Then to Bergama-ancient Pergamon (Rev 2:12-17). Early Christian martyr Antipas was tortured to death here. Pergamon was the site of many temples to pagan Gods. Yet Christianity took a stronghold here as early as 2nd century, attested by the monumental size of Basilica of St. John.

We have no evidence about Paul visiting in Pergamon. But it is clear that he walked through the area as he was on his way to Macedonia. Pergamon was the capital city of Hellenistic Kingdom of Pergamon. Pergamenes Library was the second richest library of the ancient world after the library in Alexandria, Egypt. The city of Pergamon was also where parchment paper was invented. See the site of Zeus Altar, Temple of Emperor Trajan, the Hellenistic theatre, the library site. Continue to Troy, the legendary stage for Homer's Iliad.



A comprehensive visit of the city's 9 different settlements at the hill of Hisarlık and the replica of the famous Trojan horse. Arrive in Canakkale for dinner and overnight. (B,L,D)

(Visits will be shorter than usual)

(There will not be any lunch stop on this day – just a sandwich box.)

(And late arrival to the hotel)

Day 09 June 23:Çanakkale– Turkey/Greece Border – Kavala - Philippi-Thessaloniki

Following an early breakfast cross the straits of Dardanelles over to Gallipoli and drive to Turkey and Greece border. Welcome to Greece



Welcome to Greece

Meet and greet by our guide and driver at the Greek part of the Greek/Turkish Borders in Kipi.

We drive through the picturesque landscapes of Northern Greece.

First, we travel to Lydia Springs & Philippi. Accompanied by Silas, Timothy and possibly Luke, it is believed that St. Paul first preached on European soil in Philippi in 49 or 50 AD.

We visit the site where Lydia (dealer of expensive purple cloth) converted to Christianity and see the ruins of a small church or prayer house known as the Basilica of St. Paul as it was identified by a mosaic inscription on the pavement dated around 343.

Lunch on a local tavern.

After lunch, we visit a crypt from the Roman Empire which is believed to have served as a prison for St Paul. Rich in scriptural history in accordance with the Acts of the Apostles, Philippi is home to an abundant spiritual treasure of our faith.

We travel to the beautiful seaport of Kavala. Renamed Christoupolis ("City of Christ") in the Middle Ages, it was the first city in Europe to accept Christianity.

Evening arrival at the hotel in Thessaloniki for check in, dinner and rest (L, D)

Day 10 June 24 – Thessaloniki, Berea, Meteora, Kalambaka

Enjoy your breakfast at hotel in Thessaloniki.

Today we visit Berea with the famous mosaics of Paul

Paul visited Berea as part of his second tour (49-51 AD) coming from Thessaloniki. In each place he visited he taught at the Synagogue for the Jews of the place, but also in a different place for the Gentiles. There was already a Jewish community in the city at that time, in which Paul must have appeared and taught.

Lunch at a local tavern

After lunch, we depart to the town of Kalambaka in Thessaly.

The most fascinating characteristic of this modern settlement is the Meteora rocks that form a spectacular precipice on the northern part of the skyline. Kalambaka is renowned for its monasteries which are perched precariously on the cliffs of these towering rock formations. These ancient Monasteries of Meteora create an "otherworldly" atmosphere to say the least!

A visit of one monastery if time permits, prior to check in at the hotel.

Dinner and overnight (B, L, D)

Day 11 June 25 – Kalambaka – Athens

Enjoy your breakfast at hotel in Kalambaka

Today, we check out from the hotel for visiting of one more of Meteora Monasteries.

Lunch at a local tavern.

After the visit of the Monastery and the lunch, departure to the capital of Greece, Athens, by passing through Thermopylae village to admire the statue of Leonidas.

Arrival to the hotel, check in and free time to relax or to stroll around the centre of Athens.

Dinner at the hotel and overnight (B, L, D)

Day 12 June 26 – Athens – Corinth

Enjoy your breakfast at hotel in Athens

Today we start our touring to the capital of Greece

For starters, we make a short stop at the Panathenaic Stadium, site of the first Olympic Games in 1896. This historic stadium was rebuilt on the excavation site of the stadium built by Herodes Atticus around 144AD. It is the only stadium in the world built entirely from marble and remains the point from where the Olympic Flame handover ceremony to the host nation takes place.

Passing by the Roman Temple of Olympian Zeus and Hadrian's Arch, the panoramic drive continues around National Garden, Syntagma Square, Parliament, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Schliemann's House, St. Paul's church, Academy, University and National Library.

We conclude touring Athens by visiting the Acropolis of Athens first, with its' Parthenon, the monument that "puts order in the mind". From here you can see the Herodion amphitheater (The Odeon of Herodes) and the Dionysus Theatre, as well as Mars Hill where St. Paul preached against the idolatry of the Greeks (Acts 17: 16-34).

Lunch at a local tavern

After lunch, heading to Ancient Corinth, one of the most historic cities in the world. St. Paul lived and preached here between 51 and 52 AD. Tradition maintains that he loved Corinth more than any other city in the pagan world. Two of his epistles are named in honor of this beloved city. We visit the Corinth Canal for its awe-inspiring and breathtaking views and then on to Ancient Corinth. It is here where St. Paul wrote his letters. We see the Bema of St. Paul, a large, elevated rostrum at the center of the Roman Forum. The Bema is where St. Paul was accused of false teachings and where his trial took place.

Return to the hotel for relaxation, dinner and overnight (B, L, D)

Day 13 June 27 – Transfer to airport

Enjoy your breakfast in Athens

Meet and greet by our driver and English-Speaking escort and departure to the airport in order to reach your flight back home (B)

End of services