

IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS' SPECIAL TO TURKEY

Footsteps of St. Paul Program



Paul was an Anatolian, born in the Roman city of Tarsus on the eastern Mediterranean coast of what is now Turkey. He traveled extensively in "Asia" (ie, Asia Minor, or Anatolia) spreading Jesus's teachings.

Paul's First Journey

About 47-49 AD Paul went on his first journey, traveling from east to west along the Mediterranean coast stopping at Antioch (Antakya), Seleucia (Silifke), Side and Attaleia (Antalya).

The Second Journey

Paul traveled much farther afield on his second trip. After visiting some of the same cities he had seen on his first trip, he went to the region called Mysia to visit Troy (Truva), then, crossing the Dardanelles, he ventured into Macedonia (northern Greece, southwestern Bulgaria).

The Third Journey

On his third trip (53-57 AD), Paul revisited some of these cities, and also saw Ancyra (Ankara), Smyrna (Izmir), Adramyttium (Edremit) and Ephesus (Efes, Selçuk), capital of Roman Asia.

DAY 01 Istanbul Arrival:

Arrive Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul. Meet your guide and transfer to the hotel. Upon arrival, enjoy a welcome briefing and orientation walking tour of the hotel area. In the evening we will have a welcome dinner at a Turkish restaurant located near the hotel.

Included meals: D

DAY 02 Istanbul:



After breakfast, drive to the old city to visit the ancient Hippodrome and then on to the Blue Mosque. The **Hippodrome** once seated as many as 100,000 zealous fans witnessing chariot races, executions, and mock battles. Once the centre of Byzantine civic life, it is still decorated by the Egyptian Obelisk, the Bronze Serpentine Column, and the Column of Constantine. The famous Sultan Ahmet Mosque, built between 1609 and 1616 is more familiarly known as the **Blue Mosque** because its interior gleams with a magnificent panel of blue and white 17th Century Iznik tiles.

Next we will visit **Hagia Sophia**, one of the greatest religious and architectural marvels of all time. Once the Church of Holy Wisdom, Christendom's crowning glory, and now a museum, the church once glittered with mosaics, and art treasures filled every corner. Today, Haiga Sophia is the fourth largest building made as a church in the world. It was dedicated to Hagia Sophia which means Divine Wisdom, an attribute of Christ.

Then it's on to the **Basilica Cistern**, a wonder dating back to the 6th Century. Istanbul was one of the most often besieged cities in the world and has always needed permanent water supplies. As a result, many underground cisterns were built during the Byzantine Empire. The largest and most ornate of these cisterns is the Basilica Cistern, which is also called "Underground Palace". In its construction, columns and capitals of earlier temples were used and this provides a very decorative appearance.



After lunch we will also visit the huge **Topkapi Palace** complex, built as a home for the Ottoman Sultans. It includes a maze of opulent buildings at the center of the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. This palace, where the sultans and their courts and harem lived and governed, is now one of the world's richest museums.

Included meals: B, L

DAY 03 Istanbul / Adana / Antioch:



After breakfast, we fly to Adana and drive straight to **Tarsus**, the birth place of St. Paul. Tarsus was located in a fertile area where linen and linen cloth production was a key early industry. Linen cloth was also major material for tent making, which was the main occupation of St. Paul.

During St. Paul's time, Tarsus was also a university city surpassing Athens and Alexandria. Cicero was governor here in 51-50 BC and the romantic meeting between Cleopatra and Mark Anthony took place in Tarsus. Highlights will be a visit to **St. Paul's well** and **Cleopatra's Gate**. Finally, drive to Antioch at Orontes for a good night's rest.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 04 Antioch-on-the-Orontes:

Today after breakfast in the hotel we journey East from **Antioch-on-the-Orontes** to Daphne and Seleucia Pieria. Antioch is thought to have been founded in 300 BC. Referred to as "golden and beautiful" Antioch, it was designed in the Hippodamic style, and was one of the earliest places to have city lighting. First to preach here was St. Peter followed by St. Paul and Barnabas whose extensive efforts proved to be very fruitful for Christianity. Incidentally, the word Christians was first coined in Antioch. The strong and wealthy community of Antioch contributed financially to the Christian community of Jerusalem.



Highlights of the tour include the Museum which houses a superb collection of mosaics from Antioch, Daphne and Seleucia Pieria as well as **St. Peter's Grotto**, the cave church which came to be known as the meeting place of early Christians. The next site we will visit is **Seleucia Pieria** which was the port city of Antioch in ancient days. The most interesting monument here is the **Tunnel of Titus** which is a tremendous canal dug for the purpose of diverting the waters of the Orontes River. Another highlight here will be the rock tombs with their impressive facades of the Hellenistic period.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 05 Antioch / Cappadocia:



After an early breakfast we drive north to Cappadocia stopping first at **Derinkuyu**. This is an underground city, carved into soft rocks resembling a huge labyrinth of tunnels, rooms, kitchens, wine cellars and passageways. A huge chimney ventilates this 8-levelled dwelling which was used by Christians hiding from their Roman and Byzantine persecutors. Their colorful frescoes remain as vibrant as when they were first made. This is a fascinating place.

Further on we come to **Cappadocia** whose effect on the visitor is like that of a village out of Grimm's Fairy Tales. What Turks commonly call "Fairy Chimneys" are jutting pieces of volcanic rocks that have been beaten and shaped by the wind and rain. Highlights will be The Apple Church, The Chapel of St. Basil, and the biggest church in Cappadocia, the Buckle Church of Goreme.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 06 Cappadocia :

Today we visit the **Göreme Valley** to see the rock carved churches, dating from the second half of the 9th Century and later, hollowed out of volcanic ash. Then we'll make picture stops at the **Valley of the Birds** and at the foot of the **Uchisar Castle**. This 60 meter-high fortress was not built but carved out of a natural hill dominating the area with a breathtaking view of all the surrounding Cappadocia formations. Lunch will be at Avanos Village followed by the famous local pottery and carpet shows allowing ample time for shopping in the Afternoon before returning to the hotel. Overnight in Cappadocia.



Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 07 Cappadocia / Konya:



After an early breakfast we will drive to **Konya (Iconium)**. St. Paul visited this city during his missionary trips. Arriving to Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went to the Synagogue and had many Greek and Jewish converts.

Konya is also an important place of pilgrimage for Sufi (Mevlevi) Muslims, because their spiritual leader, **Mevlâna Celaleddin Rumi** was buried here. Rumi, the great philosopher, poet and writer, founded the Mevlevi Order in the 13th century.

The ritual of the Mevlevi Order, known as the *sema*, is a serious religious ritual performed by Muslim priests ("Whirling Dervishes") in a prayer trance to Allah. Mevlevi believed that during the *sema* the soul was released from earthly ties, and able to freely and jubilantly commune with the divine.

After visiting the tomb of Mevlana, we will enjoy our lunch. Later we will visit the 13th century Selcuk's era "Buyuk **Karatay Medresesi**" which houses a magnificent collection of tiles.



After that we will visit the Alaeddin Mosque, the largest of the town's Selçuk mosques. Finally we will visit "**Ince Minare Medresesi**", the Medrese of the Slender Minaret. The Medrese has been re-opened as a museum of stone and wood carving.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 08 Pisidian Antioch (Yalvac) / Antalya:



After an early breakfast we will drive to **Pisidian Antioch (Yalvac)** where St. Paul opened Christianity to the world. Yalvac's history goes back to 280 B.C. During St. Paul's time the population was a mixture of Jews, Romans and Greeks. Antioch played an important role in the life of Paul and in the history of the Christian Faith. Very little is left of Pisidian Antioch today. There is the propylaea of the acropolis with a number of carved stones and the remains of a Byzantine church. Finally we will drive to Antalya for dinner and overnight.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 09 Antalya / Perge:

After breakfast we will drive to Perge, which is the best example of a complete Roman city in the Pamphylian plain. Perge developed from a Hellenistic hilltop settlement into a proper Roman city. This city produced many famous personalities; among them we can mention Varius, the philosopher, the physician Asklepiades, the famous mathematician Apollonius and female Roman ruler of the city Plancia Magna. St. Paul and Barnabas visited Perge on their first journey on the way to and from Antioch. However, St. Paul and his friends did not stay in Perge for long as St. Paul got ill there. It is suggested that he contracted malaria and left to get away from the marshy grounds of the south.



Back in Antalya we visit the **Antalya Archeological Museum**. Here we see exhibits from every age of this historically rich region, including an excellent gallery of fifteen classical gods and goddesses. For the remainder of the afternoon, you may relax, or explore this bustling and colorful port city on your own.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 10 Antalya / Myra:



After breakfast we will drive west from Antalya along the beautiful Turquoise Coast to the ancient city of Myra . Myra was always one of the most important cities in Lycia. Many splendidly carved rock tombs overlook the magnificent Roman theatre. When St. Paul was taken as a prisoner to Rome in 60 AD, his ship called at Myra. Another important sight that we will visit is the Church of St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas (Santa Claus) was the bishop of this Mediterranean city during the fourth century and died here in 342. Every year on December 6th the "Santa Claus/Father Christmas Commemoration Ceremony" is held, attracting many tourists who spend their Christmas holiday on the sunny coast of ancient Lycia.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 11 Antalya / Laodicea / Pamukkale:

After an early breakfast we will drive to Laodicea , stopping for lunch in a nice local restaurant. After lunch we will visit Laodicea where we find two Theaters, a large Stadium, a Water Tower and an Odeon. The city was named by Antiochus II in honor of his wife, Laodicea. Laodicea is the most southerly of the Seven Churches of Revelation. Although it is not known when the seeds of the new church were sown there or when the church took its roots there, the letter addressing the church in Laodicea is the sternest of the seven letters, containing much reprimand but no praise.



Then we will continue to **Pamukkale** . Pamukkale is one of the most interesting places in the world, justly famous not only for the entrancing beauty of its unique geological formations but also for its historical remains. It features a shimmering white cascade, formed by limestone-laden hot springs, which have formed stalactites, potholes and magical fairy-tables. The water is reputed to be beneficial to the eyes and skin and to alleviate the ills of rheumatism, asthma and dermatitis. Here we will stay for dinner and overnight.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 12 Hierapolis / Philadelphia / Izmir:



Today we visit Hierapolis which was founded by the Pergamon King Telephos and named after his wife Hiera. During the Byzantine period the city became the seat of a diocese with a large Christian Church dedicated to St. Philip, martyred here in 80 A .D. Highlights include the Roman Baths, the Temple of Apollo and the Theater. Next we drive to Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, to see the remains of its churches.

There is no mention of the first establishment of the Philadelphian Church. Like Smyrna church, Philadelphia stands out because of its faithfulness. The city was located on the eastern edge of the Ionian civilization, and it had the most difficult task of spreading Christian faith to the east, outside the Ionian region. Philadelphia, together with Smyrna was considered as one of the distinguished churches out of the seven churches of the Revelation about which nothing bad was mentioned by St. John.

Next, continue to Izmir, ancient **Smyrna**, also having one of the Seven Churches of the Revelation. During Roman times, Smyrna became a rival city to Ephesus. It prided itself as being Rome's most faithful ally, and built a temple for Goddess of Rome as early as the 2nd Century BC and later for Emperor Tiberius. Christian faith in Izmir started with the activities of St. Paul who sent some of his disciples there. The church in Smyrna had a great struggle against tremendous political and religious opposition and experienced poverty and tribulations.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 13 Izmir / Ephesus / Izmir:

Today we will drive to see the **ancient site of Ephesus** where St. Paul spent more than 2 years. St. Paul's preaching in the area resulted in the uproar of the Guild of Silversmiths and eventually the whole population of Ephesus. Today Ephesus is perhaps the world's best-preserved ancient city and its ruins attract visitors from across the globe. The most significant relic of the site is the immense amphitheater that holds 24,000 people and is still used today. Walk along the Sacred Way, where the rich once lived; see the Temple of Hadrian, a Corinthian-style building with the head of Medusa on the porch to keep away evil spirits; and the Library of Celsius, which held 12,000 ancient scrolls which were stored in niches around the walls.

We will also visit the **House of the Virgin Mary**. It is believed that she spent her last days here. Mary came to Ephesus together with St. John and was taken up to Panaghia Kapulu Mountain to survive the Roman persecutions. Now the House of the Virgin Mary is recognized as a shrine by the Vatican. After a visit to the **archeology museum** in Selcuk, we will drive back to Izmir.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 14 Izmir / Sardis / Thyatira / Pergamum / Izmir:

After breakfast, we drive to **Sardis** whose history dates back to the 12 th century B.C. Sardis felt the influence of Christianity very early and was included in the Seven Churches of the Revelation. Highlights will be a Synagogue, Gymnasium, Byzantine Church and the Temple of Artemis.

We will then proceed to **Thyatira** which was another one of the towns where Christianity spread quickly. Thyatira was the hometown of Lydia, a rich and notable merchant, who became Paul's first convert on the European Soil in Philippi. Lydia traded in materials colored with Thyatira's purple dye, and she is mentioned by Luke as "a dealer in purple cloth". Evidently she had moved from her town Thyatira to Philippi for business. It is not known whether Lydia returned to Thyatira to spread the Christian faith or not, but the time when the Revelation was written, Thyatira had a prosperous church.

Then we drive to **Pergamum** which rises high on a hill as one nears the town of Bergama. Highlights will include the Altar of Zeus (mentioned in St. John's letter as "the seat of Satan"), Temple of Trojan and the Theatre. Coming down the mountain we will stop at the **Asclepion**, a leading health center of the ancient world.

Christians in Pergamum suffered from persecutions during the time of Decius. In the 4th century, the bishops from Pergamum took part in religious meetings in Sofia and Constantinople. Having a revolutionary character, the people of Pergamum were always after anti-Roman and anti-Byzantine policies.



After visiting Pergamum we will drive back to Izmir for dinner and overnight.

Included meals: B, L, D

DAY 15 Return home:

Today after breakfast we will transfer to Adnan Menderes airport and fly to the US via Istanbul .

Included meal: B

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