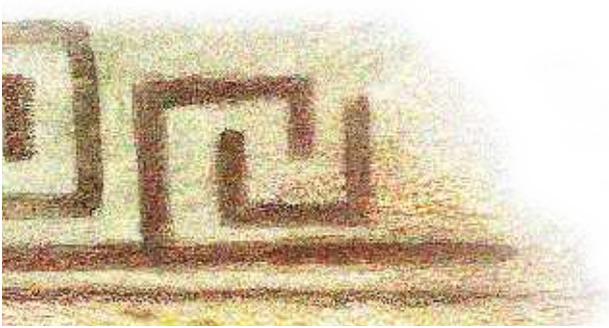
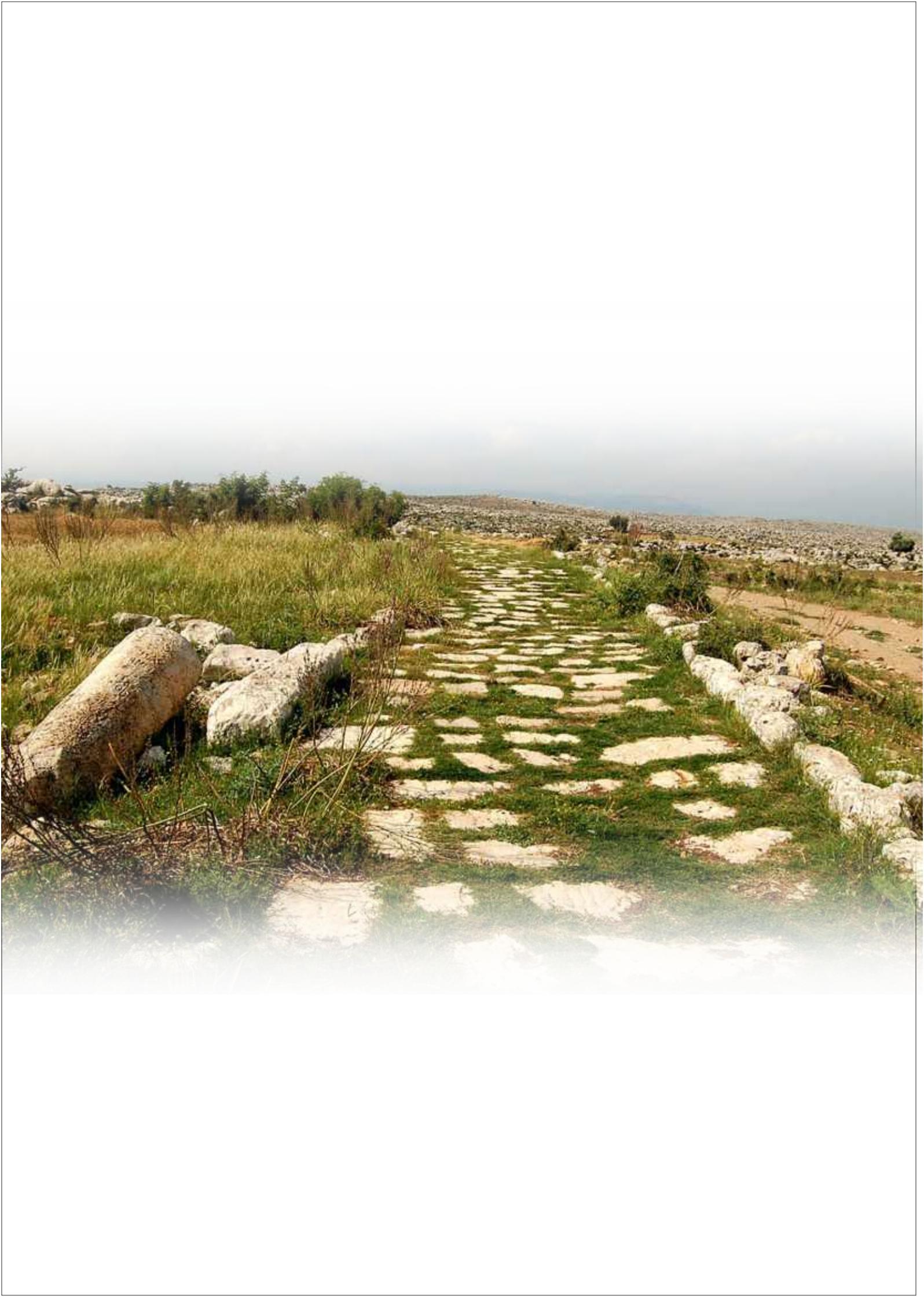


BIBLICAL ASIA MINOR

Meander Travel
the art of travel...





*on frequent journeys, in
dangers from rivers,
dangers from robbers,
dangers from my own race,
dangers from Gentiles,
dangers in the city,
dangers in the wilderness,
dangers at sea,
dangers among false brothers;*

(2 Cor 11.26)



Abdullah GUR
President of Meander Travel

Turkey is called the Other Holy Land as it has more biblical sites than any other country in the Middle East. Many Christians are unaware of Turkey's unique role in the Bible because Biblical references works usually refer to this strategic peninsula, that bounded by the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Seas, as Asia Minor or Anatolia.

Turkey is very important in understanding the background of the New Testament, because approximately two-thirds of its books were written either to or from churches in Turkey where the three major apostles; St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John either ministered or lived in.

Turkey's rich spiritual heritage starts at the very beginning in the book of Genesis.

Biblical Importance of Asia Minor (Modern day Turkey)



A Gateway Between Continents

Christianity has a long history in Anatolia, which is the birthplace of numerous Christian Apostles and Saints, such as Apostle Paul of Tarsus, Timothy, St. Nicholas of Myra, St. Polycarp of Smyrna and many others.

Two out of the five centers (Patriarchates) of the ancient Pentarchy are in Turkey: Constantinople (Istanbul) and Antioch (Antakya). Antioch was also the place where the followers of Jesus were called "Christians" for the first time in history, as well as being the site of one of the earliest and oldest surviving churches, established by Saint Peter himself. It was in Alexandria Troas that Paul had the vision of a man appealing to him to extend his work to Macedonia. For a thousand years, the Hagia Sophia was the largest church in the world.

Turkey is also home to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, where the Revelations to John were sent. It is believed that Apostle John is reputed to have taken Virgin Mary to Ephesus in western Turkey, where she spent the last days of her life in a small house, known as the House of the Virgin Mary, which still survives today and has been recognized as a holy site for pilgrimage by the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

All of the first seven Ecumenical Councils which are recognized by both the Western and Eastern churches were held in Turkey. Of these, the Nicene Creed, declared with the First Council of Nicaea (Iznik) in 325, is of utmost importance and has provided the essential definitions of present-day Christianity.

Damascus Road Experience

“

Saul of Tarsus – known to many as Saint Paul, brought people what he believed was good news, the truth of God for their lives. Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles in "pagan" world. His leadership, influence and legacy led to the formation of communities dominated by Gentile groups to follow his steps in God's words.

What happened at this turning point in his life while travelling on the road to Damascus also led him change our lives to humanity, love, reconciliation and salvation were the messages of the Apostle.

He continued to travel to spread the word, still travels among us...

”

“ *You believe because you can see me.
Blessed are those who have not
seen and yet believe... ,,*

(John 20:29)

Tarsus: Paul's Home City



Roman Road - TARSUS

Tarsus was a significant port on the southern coast of Asia Minor, called "Tarshish" in the Old Testament, prominent city in the Seleucial Empire, regional capital within the Roman province of Cilicia. One of the few passes through the neighbouring Taurus Mountains was just to the north of Tarsus, was known in ancient times as the "Cilician Gates". Tarsus was therefore a significant gateway for

traders and travellers going inland.

Paul describes Tarsus as "no ordinary city" (Acts 21:39). Indeed the city was famous throughout the empire for its educated culture and university learning with a reputation disproportionate to its size.



*Chora Museum
ISTANBUL*

Antioch: Home for 'Christians'



The Church of St. Peter
ANTIOCH

Barnabas found Paul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch. The tent-maker now had to build up a church here and develop its mission and ministry among the Gentiles. Antioch became Paul's "home church" and also his "sending church" – the place that gave him prayerful support when he set out on his various journeys (to Jerusalem, Cyprus, Syria, Cilicia and Ephesus.) Today when we speak of his "missionary journeys" Paul regularly touched base

with this "sending church" in Antioch. It was from here that he set out on his "first", "second" and "third" journeys.

Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, founded by Seleucus I Nicator on the banks of the Orontes River at the foot of Mount Silpius, soon became known as "Antioch on the Orontes" or simply, the "Great".



Interior View Of The Church

*“ It was in Antioch that
the disciples were
first called 'Christians' „
(Acts 11:26)*

Letters of St. Paul

Paul has regarded himself as responsible, in addition to the churches he established, for "all the churches" he knew (2 Cor 11:28) and corresponded with them. This was a period during which, except the military service, people had to rely on other people going in the same direction of their letters to correspond with others. He has also visited most of them once or more.



*St. Paul's letter to Romans
A.D. 180-200*

Carrying the 'Good News' of Jesus Christ to Gentiles, Paul's letters to his fledgling congregations reveal their internal tension and conflict. Paul writes letters to people everyday trying to deal with the circumstances in which they are living. He gives advice and instruction and encouragement for living.

If the Corinthian community is suffering from too much division and strife he turns it into a 'letter of instruction on harmony and unity'. In the case of Thessalonian congregation when they are not sure about what is going to happened to them he turned it into a 'letter of consolation comfort'. In the case of Galatian community when they seemed to be ready to turn their back on Paul entirely and became much more Jewish in their orientation he turn into a 'scolding parent' and blister them with purple prose about how they cannot turn back on the Gospel of Christ that he had given them.



EPHESUS



Journeys of St. Paul

Converted on the road to Damascus, he travelled tens of thousands of miles around the Mediterranean spreading the word of Jesus and it was Paul who came up with the doctrine that would turn Christianity from a small sect of Judaism into a worldwide faith that was open to all.

- Paul's first missionary journey
- Paul's first missionary return journey
- Paul's second missionary journey
- Paul's third missionary journey
- Paul's third missionary return journey
- Paul's journey to Rome

Book of Revelation



The Entrance of The Holy Cave - PATMOS

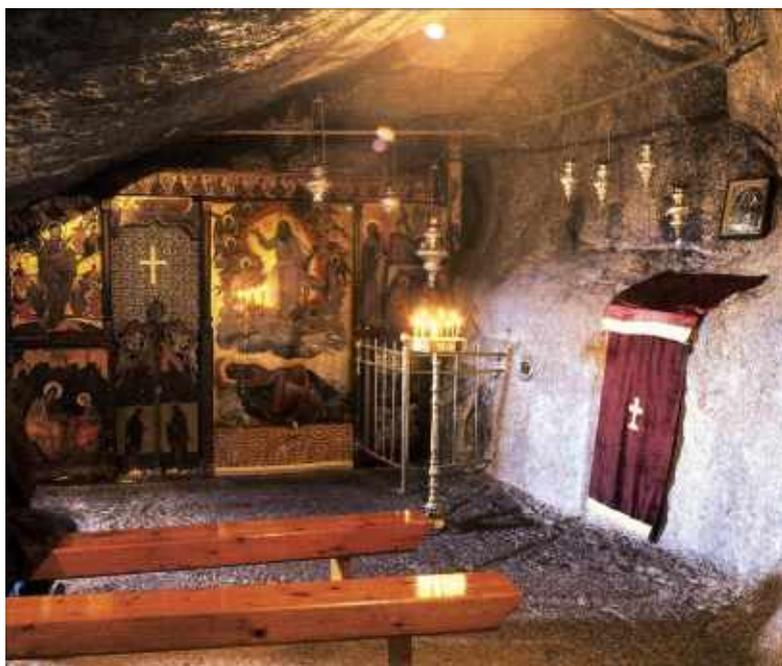
Church tradition indicates that St. John moved to Ephesus with many Palestinian Christians around A.D. 65 before the fall of Jerusalem in 70. During Nero's persecution against Christians in Rome at that time, both St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred in Rome. As the leader of the Asian church St. John was targeted by Roman authorities and exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1:9) during the reign of Emperor Domitian in 95 AD.

While on the island, St. John received his apocalyptic vision about the spiritual situation of seven churches in Asia Minor as well as about the future of the church and the world (1:10-11, 19). The order of the seven churches "Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea" follows a route that a messenger would naturally follow in visiting the cities.

During St. Paul's ministry in Ephesus many churches were established in Asia. Church tradition indicates that the St. John moved to Ephesus with many Palestinian Christians around A.D. 65 before the fall of Jerusalem in 70. During Nero's persecution against Christians in Rome at that time, both St. Peter and St. Paul were martyred in Rome. As the leader of the Asian church St. John was targeted by Roman authorities and exiled to Patmos (Rev. 1:9) during the reign of Emperor Domitian in 95 AD.

*“Be faithful, even to the point of death,
and I will give you the crown of life.”*

(Revelation 2:10, NIV)



The Holy Cave - PATMOS



Monastery of St. John - PATMOS

Seven Churches of Asia Minor



Ephesus

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



Smyrna

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



Pergamum

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



Thyatira

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



Sardis

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



Laodicea

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



Philadelphia

The church of brotherly love that endures patiently (Revelation 3:7-13). Philadelphia is located on the Cogamis River in western Asia Minor, about 80 miles east of Smyrna. Philadelphia was known for its variety of temples and worship centers.



PATMOS ISLAND

Patmos

*“I will return again
to you, God willing.”*
(Acts 18:21)

In the Book of Revelation St. John does not give any detailed information about the cause of his exile. He merely says that he was exiled to Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Christ (Rv 1:9). A late Greek tradition has it that after arriving in Ephesus the story of St. John's miracles reached the ears of Domitian and he was called to Rome. Here his power was tested in front of the emperor by making him drink a cup of poison which killed a criminal but did not harm him, and by asking him to raise a girl who had supposedly been slain by an evil spirit. Domitian, impressed by what he had witnessed, decided only to banish him to Patmos .

His banishment lasted until the death of the emperor. The place chosen to banish St. John was one of the volcanic islands scattered in Aegean about fifty miles south of Ephesus, and was used as a penal colony. A later Byzantine chronicle refers to the island as being “deserted and uncultivated, covered with a made impassable by thorns and shrubs, and by reason of its aridity completely barren”. The length of his exile is claimed to have been one and half, or five or fifteen years. During his stay there he did not stop preaching the Gospel and converting the inhabitants.

In Patmos St. John was unchained and free to go wherever he wished. It was in a grotto on Patmos that he wrote the Fourth Gospel and received the visions of the last book of the New Testament known as the Book of Revelation. Some of the imagery, for instance:

"The sky was divided like a torn scroll curling up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place."
(Rv 6:14)

"Every island fled, and mountains disappeared."
(Rv 16:20)

is thought to have been inspired by the island. The Book of Revelation gives few facts about St. John's life, except for the fact that he had a Jewish background and probably a priestly ancestry. So far as is known, he remained celibate. In art he is often shown as an old man on Patmos, seated and writing his book, standing or sitting in front of a cave and looking up into heaven, and writing or dictating to his disciple Prochorus. Sometimes he is shown sitting alone writing the Fourth Gospel.



Monastery of St. John - PATMOS



A church in PATMOS



In such representations the inscription on the Gospel or open scroll in his hand or in front of his disciple Prochorus reads " In the beginning was the Word " (Jn 1:1). St. John's Patmos exile terminated with Domitian's death. However, his ship was wrecked on leaving Patmos and swimming on a cork St. John landed at Miletos; from there he went to Ephesus.

He is thought to have died at a great age, claimed to have been a hundred and twenty, around the year 100 and to be buried on a hill. According to the tradition, after his tomb was dug, he laid himself down in it and gave up his spirit. The following day his body was not found because presumably he had ascended to heaven.

By the end of the second century most of the churches in western Anatolia regarded him as their founder.



The Church of Virgin Mary - EPHESUS

Ecumenical Councils

By the reign of Constantine the Great (324-37, sole ruler) it had become possible to summon general councils which were called Ecumenical Councils to find answers to such questions. It was believed that if all the bishops came together the Holy Spirit would descend and guide their decisions. The number and sort of participants and the decisions of these meetings, however, would often be decided by the politics of the period, being manipulated by the emperor.

There were seven such Ecumenical Councils before

the disagreements between Latin (Western) and Greek (Eastern) Christians prevented the holding of any more councils recognized by the whole Church. Except the last one which dealt with Iconoclasm the main topic of the councils was to answer the questions about the Person of Jesus or the Holy Spirit or to reassert the already defined dogma against heretical views such as Arianism, Monophysitism, and alike.

However, in addition to such major questions, regulations about Church discipline were also made. Apart from these Ecumenical Councils there were some which the Roman Church regards as ecumenical, because the Roman Church believes itself to be the one legitimate Christian communion in the whole world; but these later councils were not attended by the representatives of the Greek Orthodox Churches, and are not regarded by those Churches, nor by the Anglican Church, as having been really ecumenical.

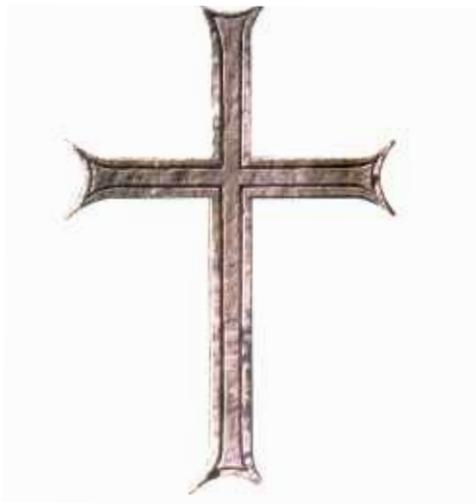
Councils

- First Council of Nicaea (325)
- First Council of Constantinople (381)
- Council of Ephesus (431)
- Council of Chalcedon (451)
- Second Council of Constantinople (553)
- Third Council of Constantinople (680-1)
- Second Council of Nicaea (787)

Biblical Tours in Asia Minor



A scene from one of our Biblical Tour - PERGAMUM



Marble cross from the baptistry of the Church of Virgin Mary in Ephesus

The course on the Bible, study of geography, books on history or archaeology can never give more insight into the Bible and its message than a personal trip to the Asia Minor, today's Turkey itself. You should see, hear, touch, feel, smell and experience the land where the apostles and prophets lived and the great events of the Bible took place. This is an event of a lifetime.

We welcome you to join us for a trip across this second holy land following the footsteps of the Apostles. It is sure to build your faith and forever enrich your reading of the Bible. These tours will definitely be the trips you will never forget!

“We will not only follow in their steps but will find and follow something of their hearts.”

Footsteps of St. Paul



PERGA

Day 1 ISTANBUL

You will be met upon arrival by our airport representative and transferred to your hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 2 ISTANBUL - ADANA

The bejeweled city of Istanbul sits between two continents and is home to 3000 mosques. Today's visits begin with Istanbul's Hippodrome, once a stadium with 100,000 seats, where chariot races and circuses often degenerated into violence. Then the famous Blue Mosque, with its six minarets and sparkling interior. You'll visit the Topkapi Palace, once home to royal Sultans. Inside, you'll see the fabled jewels of the Treasury, delicate displays of Chinese porcelain in the Kitchen Quarters. Walk through St. Sophia (Hagia Sophia) which, for 1000 years, was the largest church in Christendom. Built by Justinian (532-537 AD), the church has 107 columns, fossil imbedded white marble floors and beautiful glass mosaics. Today, it is the Museum of Byzantine Art. Catch a whiff of cinnamon, cloves, thyme and other exotic spices as you explore the Grand Bazaar. Over 4000 shops sell everything from herbs to gold. This afternoon, you'll fly to Adana, known as the "biggest village in Turkey" due to its

known as the "biggest village in Turkey" due to its rural atmosphere. Adana is also home to the 5,000 US service men and women at Incirlik Airbase. Overnight in Adana.

Day 3 ANTIOCH (ANTAKYA) - TARSUS

Ancient Antioch was the center of Hellenistic civilization in the region and home to a massive temple and oracle complex dedicated to Apollo. The temple functioned until the visiting Emperor Justinian threw out the last remaining priest and ordered the place burned to the ground. Christian roots go deep into Antioch's soil. It was to Antioch that many Jerusalem Christians fled after the death of Stephen (Acts 11: 19-21).

St. Paul and St. Barnabas stayed in Antioch for a year and assembled with the church and taught many people (Acts 11:22-26). Later, the city became the center from which St. Paul performed his missionary labors (Acts 13: 1-5, 14-44; 14: 26-28; 15: 22-41; 18: 22-23). It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians", and it was here that the first non-Jews were accepted into the early church. You will visit one of the oldest churches in Antioch, Church of St. Peter.

Paul (Acts 22:3) and he visited on his second and third missionary journeys. Reaching back to the 14th century B.C., Tarsus is a city with a resplendent history. Back to Adana for an evening flight to Antalya.

Day 4

PERGA - HIERAPOLIS

Perga, a Hellenistic city where St. Paul preached (Acts 14:25). The ruins of a large stadium, baths and tomb give ample evidence of its former greatness. St. Paul and St. Barnabas visited here on their first journey. Hierapolis is blessed by hot mineral springs and some of the best preserved Roman ruins in Asia Minor. Paul mentions Hierapolis in his Letter to the Colossians in saluting Epaphras, a fellow laborer, for his love of the brethren there (Colossians 4: 13). The ruins cover more than a mile. You'll see the impressive theatre with seats still in perfect condition. You'll see the City Gates, column-lined streets and arches which have stood through time and earthquakes. Today, the area is known as Pamukkale, meaning the "Cotton Castle", named for the limestone-laden hot springs, which cascade from one white-edged terrace pool to the next. Overnight in Pamukkale.

Day 5

COLOSSAE - LAODICEA

You' Famous as the receiver of St. Paul's Letter to Colossians, the town of Colossae has fallen into obscurity. While you can still see traces of the theatre, the Necropolis and the Church, the ancient city is mostly indistinguishable ruins. Not far away is Aphrodisias, another town whose fame has been obscured by time. This city of marble thrived as the major center for worship of the pagan goddess Aphrodite until 500 years after Christ. The Christians of Laodicea, one of the Seven Churches, (Rev. 3: 14-22) were chastised for being lukewarm, "You are neither cold nor hot" (Rev. 3: 15), and for being too comfortable incorporating pagan and Christian beliefs. In the famous scripture from Revelation (3: 20-21), Jesus says to the Laodicean church: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock...". Today, there are many acres of ruins to see, including the stadium and columned streets. Overnight in Kusadasi.

Day 6

EPHESUS

Ephesus is one of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev. 1: 11). In ancient days, Ephesus was a bustling



St. Paul's Well - TARSUS

port town of 250,000, graced with wide, colonnade bordered streets. Today, you will be impressed with the spectacular excavations of the major streets of ancient Ephesus. You will view the Library and the huge Agora. The Temple of Artemis was declared one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Today, only a single column remains to mark the site.

You will visit the Basilica of St. John, traditional site of his grave. From the basilica, enjoy a commanding view of the area. You will visit the Museum of Ephesus for an up-close look at artifacts from the ancient city. You will have time to explore this powerful city on your own and recreate some of the footsteps of Paul. Overnight in Izmir.



Temple of Hadrian - EPHESUS



Grand Theatre - HIERAPOLIS

Day 7

SMYRNA - SARDIS - PHILADELPHIA

The third largest city in modern Turkey is Izmir, long a center for Jewish and Christian communities. In St. Paul's day, the town was known as Smyrna. It was one of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev. 2: 8-11). You'll see the Agora, the colonnaded commercial center where Roman statues can still be seen. Continue to Sardis, another of the Seven Churches of Revelation.

Jesus told Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3: 1-6). Coins were minted and the dyeing of wool originated in Sardis. You will be impressed by the massive scale of the Temple of Artemis, by the white marble Royal Road, by the gymnasium, and by the synagogue.

Visit the site of Philadelphia also one of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev. 3: 7-13). Christ told those who overcame that He would write upon them "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem." (Rev.3: 12) Today, not much is left to mark the spot. You will see an ancient wall and the remains of a Byzantine basilica. Back to Izmir and overnight.

Day 8

THYATIRA - PERGAMUM

Depart for the visit of Thyatira; was once a busy trading center and famous in dyeing of purple clothes. Thyatira is one of the Seven Churches mentioned in Revelations tolerated the false prophetess, Jezebel (Rev. 1: 11; 2: 18-29). Continue to Pergamum which was another of the seven churches mentioned in Revelations (Rev. 2: 12). It displeased the Lord because it tolerated the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which Christ hated (Rev. 2:13-17).

Towering 1000 feet above the town and commanding a spectacular panorama is the fabled Acropolis. As you pass through the Royal Gates, you will enter one of the great centers of classic Greek culture. You will see the foundations of the Temple of Zeus, the Temple of Athena, and the ruins of the Library which once held 200,000 parchment volumes. You will see the remains of the Temple of Trajan, the Grand Theatre, the Gymnasium, and the Health Center (Asclepion). Overnight in Ayvalik.



*The Baths of Herodius Atticus
ALEXANDRIA TROAS*

Day 9

ASSOS - ALEXANDRIA TROAS

Today you begin your tour with Assos where Paul rejoined his companions after walking across the headland on his own and visit the ruins of the city. Then drive to Troas, founded about 300 B.C. by one of the generals of Alexander the Great. During St. Paul's Second Journey, it was from Troas that he received the "Macedonian call" to Europe. This is where Luke's account changes from "they" to "we" (Acts 16:6-12), indicating that he joined St. Paul's team at Troas. Returning from Macedonia during his third journey, St. Paul was in Troas for a week, when the young man Eutychus fell from the third loft as St. Paul preached. Overnight in Canakkale.

Day 10

ISTANBUL

Continue to Istanbul via the beautiful Dardanelles and you will visit the Church of St. Saviour in Chora which is located at the city walls and famous for its mosaics and frescoes.

Day 11

DEPARTURE

Transfer to airport for the flight home.

Notes

- We can design shorter or longer itineraries according to your interest.
- You may add one day trip to Patmos Island with private boat including the tour of St. John Monastery, The Museum and The Cave of St. John to above program.
- You may combine "St. Paul in Greece Tour" with above program.
- We may organize Mass at the sites where possible if demanded in advance.

Istanbul and Seven Churches

Day 1

ARRIVAL in ISTANBUL

We will meet you at the Istanbul airport and start our tour with the visit of Hagia Sophia; the church of the Divine Wisdom which was changed into a mosque and later to a museum.

The Topkapi Palace; the former imperial residence of the Ottoman Empire with its large collection of porcelain and silverware, unique pieces of jewellery like the 'spoon makers diamond'.

We visit the Hippodrome; the former center of sports and political activities, the Blue Mosque; so called because of its stunning color of the tiles and the frescoes and have free time for shopping at the Grand Bazaar.

Dinner and overnight at your hotel.

Day 2

IZMIR (SMYRNA) - PERGAMUM

Fly to Izmir for the visit of Smyrna poor and persecuted, the church at Smyrna suffered amidst prosperity for its refusal to worship the Roman Emperor. This proved to be the last stronghold of Christianity in Asia Minor.

Home of the great second century Bishop Polycarp who was burned alive at the age of eighty-six.

Continue to Pergamum; a most memorable experience will be Pergamum, with its acropolis and Great Theatre, the steepest of the ancient world. Revelation 2:12-16 describes the city as "where Satan's seat is", a reference to the altar of Zeus, where we pause for reflection on the fulfillment of Scripture.

Nearby, visit the Red Basilica; once a pagan temple, it later converted into a Christian church.

Finally, walk through the Asclepion, the famous medical center of antiquity.

Dinner and overnight at your hotel in Izmir.



Hagia Sophia - ISTANBUL



Temple of Trajan - PERGAMUM



Red Basilica - PERGAMUM

Day 3

THYATIRA - SARDIS - PHILADELPHIA

Depart for the visit of Thyatira; was once a busy trading center and famous in dyeing of purple clothes. Thyatira is one of the Seven Churches mentioned in Revelations tolerated the false prophetess, Jezebel (Rev. 1: 11; 2: 18-29).

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Christ told those who overcame that He would write upon them "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem." (Rev. 3: 12) Today, not much is left to mark the spot. They will see an ancient wall and the remains of a Byzantine basilica.

Dinner and overnight in Pamukkale.

Day 4

HIERAPOLIS - LAODICEA

After the breakfast at the hotel, depart for the visit of Hierapolis; an ancient city of pagan cults, Hierapolis or "holy city" was evangelized by Paul and Epaphras. The Apostle Philip lived and is said to be buried here. Pamukkale, or "cotton castle" is a spa and resort center with its hot springs and cascading limestone pools. Col. 4:12-13.

The Christians of Laodicea, one of the Seven Churches, (Rev. 3: 14-22) were chastised for being lukewarm, "You are neither cold nor hot" (Rev. 3: 15), and for being too comfortable incorporating pagan and Christian beliefs. In the famous scripture from Revelation (3: 20-21), Jesus says to the Laodicean church: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock...". Today, there are many acres of ruins to see, including the stadium and columned streets and witness the newest excavations in Laodicea.

Dinner and overnight in Kusadasi.



Temple of Artemis - SARDIS



Main Street - LAODICEA



HIERAPOLIS

Day 5 EPHESUS

Full day tour of Ephesus; Ephesus is one of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev. 1: 11). In ancient days, Ephesus was a bustling port town of 250,000, graced with wide, colonnade bordered streets. St. Paul's first visit to Ephesus was brief - during his second missionary tour (Acts 18:19-21). His second visit lasted about three years - during his third missionary tour (Acts 19:1 to 20:31). Luke's account of the worship of Diana appears in Acts 19:34-35.

The Great Theatre (stadium) mentioned in Acts 19:29-31 could seat 24,000 people. Walk the marble-paved street with grooves made by chariot wheels. See the Fountain of Trajan, the Library of Celsus, and the Great Theatre. Visit the Chapel of the Virgin Mary (Double Church), where the Third Ecumenical Council convened.

Continue to visit the Basilica of St. John; early tradition associated John, the disciple of Jesus, the author of the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation with the city of Ephesus. As early as the 4th or 5th century a Christian church was built over a simple grave, supposedly the grave of St. John. In the 6th century Emperor Justinian had an impressive domed basilica built to replace the earlier church.

The church, known as the Church of St. John the Theologian, is located on Ayasuluk Hill, which can be reached by a street leading up from the center of the town called Selcuk.

Visit the Museum of Ephesus for an up-close look at artifacts from the ancient city. Dinner and overnight in Kusadasi.

Day 6 END OF TOUR

Transfer to Izmir airport for your flight home.

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- You may combine "St. Paul in Greece Tour" with above program.
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Grand Theatre - EPHESUS



Celsus Library - EPHESUS



The Church of Virgin Mary - EPHESUS



THE BASILICA OF ST. JOHN

Asia Minor



CAPPADOCIA

Day 1

ARRIVAL IN CAPPADOCIA VIA ISTANBUL

Istanbul is the modern name of the old Constantinople (Byzantium). Upon arrival at Istanbul's Ataturk International Airport, we will meet our guide, who will join us on the brief flight to Nevsehir; a very old Ottoman city in Cappadocia area. Overnight in Cappadocia.

Day 2

CAPPADOCIA

Welcome to Central Anatolia, where a dozen empires have risen and fallen, as their massive armies moved back and forth across this "land bridge" between Europe and Asia. Cappadocia, with its center in Caesarea (Kayseri), was once the heart of the Hittite Kingdom of the Old Testament.

This vast area is one of the most photogenic landscapes in the world. Extraordinary rock formations have become symbolic of this region, where you will enjoy the Valley of the Fairy Chimneys and Goreme's breathtaking Open Air Museum.

Watch the potters at their craft, in the famous pottery producing town of Avanos. Finally, savor the natural wonders of the Citadel of Uchisar and Zelve Valley. Overnight in Cappadocia.

Day 3

KAYMAKLI UNDERGROUND CITY IHLARA VALLEY - ADANA

In Acts 2:9, pilgrims from Cappadocia were assembled with the thousands in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when they received the initial baptism of the Holy Spirit and heard the Apostle Peter preach his powerful message.

We will travel to Cappadocia's scenic Ihlara Valley, where early Christians carved some 3,500 cave churches from the tufa rock.

The beauty and quaintness of these chapels, with numerous wall paintings and Christian symbols, is astonishing. Persecuted Christians - tens of thousands of them - escaping into the earth to flee Arab invaders in the tenth century, tunneled out more than twenty underground cities of refuge here in Cappadocia.

Such cities, with carved rooms for kitchens, sleeping quarters, stables, and chapels for worship, descend five to ten stories into the earth. You will enjoy your own-guided tour to one of the best-preserved underground cities in Cappadocia, the city of Kaymakli. Continue to Adana; the country's fourth largest city. Adana is situated some thirty miles east of Tarsus, birthplace of the St. Paul. Overnight in Adana.

Day 4

ANTIOCH - SELEUCIA PIERIA - TITUS TUNNEL

Antioch was the headquarters journeys of St. Paul. It was the third largest city of the Roman Empire, rivaled only by Rome and Alexandria. St. Peter, St. Paul, Barnabas and Timothy all preached in this place where Jesus followers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

We will visit the cave where they met in secret where St. Peter first celebrated Mass. South of the church, The Iron Gate was one of the actual entrances of Biblical Antioch; strolling through the old part of the city, you cannot help recalling the saints who walked these old streets, for little has changed since that time. St. Paul and Silas departed from here on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:35-36). Discover the impact of leaders such as Ignatius of Antioch and John Chrysostom. Continue to visit the archaeological remains of Seleucia, the port from which St. Paul, St. Barnabas, and John Mark departed from Antioch on the St. Paul's First Journey (Acts 13:4). Then you will visit an unbelievable Tunnel system carved through the mountains by the emperors Vespasian and Titus. Overnight in Antioch.

Day 5

TARSUS - ICONIUM

After breakfast at the hotel, we will drive to Tarsus to visit the St. Paul's well, the Gate of Cleopatra, and the latest excavations. Then depart for Iconium (Today's Konya), where St. Paul preached and encouraged believers during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:1-6). Iconium was once the home of the sect of mystical Muslims called Swirling Dervishes. Overnight in Konya.

Day 6

LYSTRA - ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA - COLOSSAE

We will drive to Lystra, where a mob stoned St. Paul during his first journey (Acts 14:6-19), and where Timothy joined him during the second journey (Acts 16:1-3). Then to Pisidian Antioch, where nearly the whole city came to hear St. Paul preach during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:14-52). The marvelous excavations include the ancient church and the great first-century Temple of Augustus.

Today, we will travel the Royal Road that once connected Ephesus with distant Babylon. Visit the unexcavated site of ancient Colossae by the village of Honaz. St. Paul wrote one of his prison epistles to the church at Colossae, a city situated on the Lycus River. Overnight in Pamukkale.



The Church of St. Paul - TARSUS

Day 7

HIERAPOLIS - LAODICEA

At Hierapolis (Pamukkale), enjoy the "Cotton Castles" of brilliant white calcium rock formations and hot-water travertines, where hot mineral waters emerge from the earth and cascade over cliffs. As the water cools, the calcium precipitates and clings to the cliffs, forming snowy white travertines (waterfalls of white stone), which give credence to the name Pamukkale, which means "cotton castle", from the two words "pamuk" (cotton) and "kale" (castle).

The travertines form shallow pools supported by colorful stalactites. This enchanting place is one of the natural wonders of Asia Minor. The churches here in Hierapolis, Colossae, and Laodicea once flourished under the ministry of Epaphras (Colossians 4:12-13).



LYSTRA



The Dark Church - CAPPADOCIA

We will explore incredible excavations at Hierapolis, including a Byzantine church, the Great Theatre, the Temple of Apollo, and the Plutonium, which pagan cults once called "the entrance to hell". Then continue to Laodicea one of the Seven Churches, (Rev. 3: 14-22) were chastised for being lukewarm, "You are neither cold nor hot" (Rev. 3: 15), and for being too comfortable incorporating pagan and Christian beliefs. In the famous scripture from Revelation (3: 20-21), Jesus says to the Laodicean church: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock...". Today, there are many acres of ruins to see, including the stadium and columned streets and a chance to witness the newest excavations in Laodicea. Dinner and overnight in Kusadasi.

Day 8

EPHESUS - MILETOS

Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7), major port city on the Aegean, was the commercial, political, and religious center of all of Asia Minor. After a lunatic completely burned the Temple of Diana (Artemis) on the night that Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C., the Ephesians worked for 120 years to complete a magnificent reconstructed temple, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. The city became part of the Roman Empire in the second century B.C. As a Roman capital of Asia Minor, Ephesus boasted a population approaching 250,000 people. The St. Paul's first visit to Ephesus was brief - during his second missionary tour (Acts 18:19-21). His second visit lasted about three years - during his third missionary tour (Acts 19:1 to 20:31).

Luke's account of the worship of Diana appears in Acts 19:34-35. The Great Theatre (stadium) mentioned in Acts 19:29-31 could seat 24,000 people. Walk the marble-paved street with grooves made by chariot wheels. See the Fountain of Trajan, the Library of Celsus, and the Great Theatre. Visit the Chapel of the Virgin Mary (Double Church), where the Third Ecumenical Council convened. Enjoy St. John's Basilica (built on the site of the St. John's tomb), and ponder the remains of the Temple of Diana. Finally, enjoy a visit to the Ephesus Museum.

Drive to Miletos, home of ancient philosopher Thales (640-546 B.C.), one of the fathers of Greek geometry, astronomy, and philosophy. It was here, in the first Christian century, that the St. Paul, on his third missionary journey, called for the Ephesian elders and preached a powerful message to them (Acts 20:15-38). It was also here that St. Paul left his friend Trophimus, who was too ill to continue (II Timothy 4:20). As a port at the mouth of the Meander River, Miletos was a natural outlet for Phrygian trade. Like the one at Ephesus, however, Miletos's sea harbor



Harbour Monument - MILETOS

eventually filled with silt, and commerce dwindled. The city's remote quietness makes it special to devout students of Scripture. Its ancient ruins include the marvelous 15,000-seat theatre. Overnight in Kusadasi.

Day 9

SARDIS - PHILADELPHIA - SMYRNA

Travel to Sardis, another of the Seven Churches of Revelation. Jesus told Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3: 1-6). Coins were minted and the dyeing of wool originated in Sardis. You will be impressed by the massive scale of the Temple of Artemis, by the white marble Royal Road, by the gymnasium, and by the synagogue.

Visit the site of Philadelphia also one of the Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev. 3: 7-13). Christ told those who overcame that He would write upon them "the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem." (Rev.3: 12) Today, not much is left to mark the spot. You will see an ancient wall and the remains of a Byzantine basilica. Continue to Smyrna; poor and persecuted, the church at Smyrna suffered amidst prosperity for its refusal to worship the Roman Emperor. This proved to be the last stronghold of Christianity in Asia Minor. Home of the great second century Bishop Polycarp who was burned alive at the age of eighty-six. Overnight in Izmir.

Day 10

THYATIRA - PERGAMUM

Today, we will visit our final two of the Seven Churches of Book of Revelation. At Thyatira (Rev. 2: 18-28), you will see the ruins of an ancient commercial center, located in the fertile valley where the trade route passed. One of the town's cloth and dye merchants was a woman named Lydia, who conducted business as far away as Philippi, where she became the first European convert to Christianity, during St. Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-15). A most memorable experience will be Pergamum, with its acropolis and Great Theatre, the steepest of the

ancient world. Revelation 2:12-16 describes the city as "where Satan's seat is", a reference to the altar of Zeus, where we pause for reflection on the fulfillment of Scripture. Nearby, visit the Red Basilica; once a pagan temple, it later converted into a Christian church. Finally, walk through the Pergamum Asclepion, the famous medical center of antiquity. Overnight in Ayvalik.

Day 11

ASSOS - ALEXANDRIA TROAS

Today you begin your tour with Assos where Paul rejoined his companions after walking across the headland on his own and visit the ruins of the city. Then drive to Troas, founded about 300 B.C. by one of the generals of Alexander the Great. During St. Paul's Second Journey, it was from Troas that he received the "Macedonian call" to Europe. This is where Luke's account changes from "they" to "we" (Acts 16:6-12), indicating that he joined St. Paul's team at Troas. Returning from Macedonia during his third journey, St. Paul was in Troas for a week, when the young man Eutychus fell from the third loft as St. Paul preached. Overnight in Canakkale.

Day 12

NICEA - ISTANBUL

At Nicea, you will see remains of Constantine's palace, now covered by the water at the shore of Lake Iznik. It was here in this palace chapel that the First Ancient Church Council convened in A.D. 325 to produce the Nicene Creed. Enjoy Nicea's St. Sophia Church, where the Seventh Church Council convened in 787. Continue to Istanbul for lunch at the Spice Bazaar. Istanbul, the world's only city that spans two continents, was originally "Byzantium"; it became "Constantinople" in 4th. A.D. 330, when Emperor Constantine renamed it for himself and built a palace here. It became "Istanbul" in 1453. Experience the unique markets, peddlers, and stalls selling almonds, pistachios, iced drinks, and black coffee - a vigorous anthill of Turkish life. Relax on a Bosphorus cruise on a private boat. Finally, enjoy an orientation drive of the city.

Day 13

ISTANBUL

Today's visits begin with Istanbul's Hippodrome, once a stadium with 100,000 seats, where chariot races and circuses often degenerated into violence. Visit the nearby Blue Mosque. The Second Church Council (381) met in the Church of St. Irene, the first church ever built in Istanbul. You will visit the fifteenth-century Topkapi Palace of the Ottoman Sultans. In the first court of this palace stands the Church of St. Irene, the city's cathedral church until the Church of

Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) was completed in 360. After rioters burned both churches to the ground in 532, Emperor Justinian rebuilt them to their present grand scale. Upon entering his newly built Hagia Sophia for the first time, Justinian exclaimed, "Glory to God that I have been judged worthy of such a work. Oh Solomon, I have outdone you!" Enjoy your visit to the Hagia Sophia, where the 5th Church Council met in 553. For a thousand years, this was the largest church in Christendom. When Mehmet the Conqueror made it a mosque in 1453, he added four minarets (prayer towers). The building has not been used as a mosque since 1935, when it became the Museum of Byzantine Art. The four minarets remain. Conclude your day with a visit to the Grand Bazaar, an ancient covered market of some 4,000 shops.

Day 14

ISTANBUL - HOMEBOUND FLIGHT

Memories of these two weeks will last a lifetime. Your own Bible will constantly remind you of the storehouse of riches obtained from these ancient and Biblical sites where you have walked and studied.



Hagia Sophia - ISTANBUL



Temple of Athena - ASSOS

Notes

- We can design shorter or longer itineraries according to your interest.
- You may add one day trip to Patmos Island with private boat including the tour of St. John Monastery, The Museum and The Cave of St. John to above program.
- You may combine "St. Paul in Greece Tour" with above program.
- We may organize Mass at the sites where possible if demanded in advance.

St. Paul in Greece

Day 1

ATHENS

Arrival Athens and take connecting flight to Thessaloniki for overnight.

Day 2

PHILIPPI - KAVALA - THESSALONIKI

Visit Philippi where St. Paul delivered his first sermon in Europe, sowing the seeds of Christianity.

Here St. Paul baptized a "certain woman named Lydia" the first Christian convert in Europe.

The Roman forum, completely excavated, is from after St. Paul's time.

Among the ruins, located on the rocky ledge above the town's main road is the prison where St. Paul and Silas were thrown.

Continue into the modern port city of Kavala, ancient Neapolis, where St. Paul accompanied by Silas, Luke and Timothy, first set foot in Europe.

Overnight in Thessaloniki.

Day 3

THESSALONIKI - METEORA

Thessaloniki city tour. St. Paul preached in Thessaloniki during the winters of 49-50 AD and wrote two epistles to the ancient Thessalonians.

See the ramparts of the city, the triumphal Arch of Galerius staddling the Via Egnatia, once a strategic artery of the Roman Empire. Depart for Meteora Monasteries.

Overnight in Kalambaka.

Day 4

METEORA - DELPHI

Visit Meteora Monasteries, among striking scenery, perched on top of huge rocks, which seem to be suspended in mid-air, stand ageless monasteries, where you can see exquisite specimens of Byzantine art.

Continue to Delphi for overnight.



Acropolis - ATHENS



Ancient Agora - THESSALONIKI



METEORA



METEORA

Day 5

DELPHI - ATHENS

Visit Delphi, the center of the Ancient world - the "omphalos" (navel) of the earth - whose prestige extended far beyond the boundaries of the Hellenic world.

On the slopes of Mount Parnassus, in a landscape of unparalleled beauty and majesty, lie the ruins of the Sanctuary of Apollo Pythios.

Visit and continue to Athens for overnight.



DELPHI

Day 6

CORINTH - ATHENS

We will visit the Acropolis to see the ruins of the Parthenon, Erectheum and Propylae. We shall also ascend Mars Hill, view the Agora (ancient market place where St. Paul spoke to the ancient Athenians).

We will also see the House of Parliament, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Presidential Palace, Hadrian's Arch and the Panathenaic Stadium. We continue our tour to Ancient Corinth. Here under the shadow of the towering Acropolis.

St. Paul preached and lived for two years. The vigorous and mostly Gentile Church he founded here in 50 AD caused him much grief and prompted him to write at least four letters to them.

Visit the ruins of the ancient city where St. Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla.

See the remains of first century shops, the agora where St. Paul's trial by Gallio took place, the Fountain of Peirene, Temple of Apollo and the Bema.

Return to Athens for overnight.



Temple of Apollo - CORINTH



Acropolis - ATHENS

Day 7

DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

Notes

- We can design shorter or longer itineraries according to your interest.



CORINTH



*In Greek it reads:
Jesus Christ, Nika (Victory).
Arycanda*

Meander Travel

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Kibris Cad. No:1/A 09400
Kusadasi/AYDIN, TURKEY PB.192
Phone : + 90 256 614 73 44 (pbx) Fax: + 90 256 612 72 95
www.meandertravel.com contact@meandertravel.com