

**In the Footsteps of Paul & the Early Church: Turkey-Greece Tour**  
**Mount Vernon Nazarene University**  
**Hosted by Dr. C. Jeanne Serrão**  
**February 21-March 7, 2020**

**Itinerary highlights\***

**February 21, Friday: U.S.A. to Istanbul**

- Departure from U.S. gateway city to be announced destination Istanbul, Turkey. Meals will be served on board.

**February 22, Saturday: Istanbul**

- We arrive in Istanbul, are met by our guide, Macit Saszade, and take a quick tour of the city. Historically known as Byzantium and Constantinople, Istanbul was established in 660 BC and today is the most populous city in Turkey and the country's economic, cultural, and historic center. It straddles the Bosphorus strait (which separates Europe and Asia) between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea. We transfer to the [Mövenpick Golden Horn Hotel](#) overlooking the Bosphorus, for dinner and overnight.

**February 23, Sunday: Istanbul - Hippodrome, Blue Mosque, Hagia Sophia, Topkapı Palace**

- We'll visit Istanbul's ancient Hippodrome and the famous Blue Mosque, with its six minarets and sparkling interior.
- We walk through the Hagia Sophia, Constantine's famous church that, for 1,000 years, was the largest church in Christendom and today is a museum.
- Tour the Basilica Cisterns that supplied water to the growing capital of the Byzantine empire.
- Explore the Grand Bazaar, the world's first shopping mall and the largest middle eastern bazaar. Over 4,000 shops sell everything from herbs to gold. The Grand Bazaar is one of the world's most visited sites.
- Visit Topkapı Palace, the lush palace from where the Ottoman sultans ruled their vast empire. We return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

**February 24, Monday: Istanbul - Spice Bazaar, Bosphorus Boat Tour, Ortaköy Village**

- This morning begins with a visit to the colorful Spice Bazaar (also known as the Egyptian Bazaar) built in AD 1660 and then enjoy a leisurely boat tour along the European and Asian shores of the Bosphorus.
- After lunch at a local seafood restaurant, we'll visit the Istanbul Archaeology Museums.
- We end the touring today with a visit to the artistic seaside area of Ortaköy Village.
- The evening is yours to explore and soak up the ambience of one of the world's most historically rich and atmospheric cities.

### **February 25, Tuesday: Gallipoli, Çanakkale, Troas, Troy, Assos**

- Drive to Gallipoli peninsula, then cross the Dardanelles strait by ferry and drive to Alexandria Troas through Çanakkale.
- Alexandria Troas was founded by Alexander the Great. In its heyday the city may have had a population of about 100,000. The Greek geographer and historian Strabo mentions that a Roman colony was created at the location in the reign of Augustus. The apostle Paul visited here at least twice.
- We then visit Troy and see the site of the Trojan War immortalized in Homer's Iliad.
- We drive to the small fishing village of Assos for dinner and overnight at the [Assos Dove Hotel](#).

### **February 26, Wednesday: Assos, Pergamum, Izmir (ancient Smyrna)**

- Visit Assos, a stop on Luke's and Paul's journeys, but also where Aristotle opened an Academy where he and other philosophers made important observations in the fields of zoology and biology.
- We drive to Pergamum, the site of one of the churches addressed in the book of Revelation (Rev. 2:12–17). Towering 1000 feet above the town and commanding a spectacular panorama is the scenic Acropolis.
- In the lower city we visit the Asclepeion, the most famous healing facility in all of Asia Minor.
- Then we proceed to Izmir, ancient Smyrna, for dinner and overnight at the [Mövenpick Hotel Izmir](#).

### **February 27, Thursday: Miletus, Dydimas, Priene, Kuşadası (near ancient Ephesus)**

- We start the day with a visit to the excavations at Miletus, where Paul bid farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus at the end of his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 20). The site contains a large theater where an important inscription refers to the Jews and "God-fearers" of the city. The God-fearers were monotheistic Gentiles who constituted a large portion of Paul's converts.
- We visit the Temple of Apollo in Didymas, an ancient Greek sanctuary on the coast of Ionia. It contained a temple and oracle of Apollo, the *Didymaion*.
- From there we drive to Priene, with a recently discovered synagogue. There was a substantial Christian community in Priene during the Byzantine period and was the seat of a bishop.
- We overnight in Kuşadası at the [Charisma Deluxe Hotel](#).

### **February 28, Friday: Ephesus, Ephesus Museum, Kuşadası,**

- Ephesus is one of the Seven Churches of Revelation and Paul wrote his epistle to the Ephesians in this city while imprisoned in Rome. In ancient days, Ephesus was a bustling port town of 250,000 or more people, graced with wide, colonnaded streets. Today you will be impressed with the excavations of the major streets and the slope or terrace houses containing spectacular frescoes and mosaics from 2,000 years ago. You'll view the Celsus Library, the huge Agora and the temple of Domitian.
- We drive by the Temple of Artemis once declared one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, although today only a single column remains to mark the site. Some of the columns you saw at Hagia Sophia in Istanbul came from this temple.
- We'll drive up to the Basilica of St. John, the traditional site of the apostle's tomb. From the basilica, enjoy a commanding view of the area.

- We proceed to the Museum of Ephesus for an up-close look at the interesting and important artifacts from the ancient city.
- We return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

### **February 29, Saturday: Aphrodisias, Laodicea, Pamukkale**

- Visit Aphrodisias excavated by the New York University and see the Stadium, the Theater, the Agora, the Sebasteion and more. The museum on site contains beautiful reliefs and statues from the city, which served as a sculpture school.
- Proceed to Laodicea. The Christians of Laodicea, one of the Seven Churches, were chastised for being lukewarm, "You are neither cold nor hot" (Rev. 3:14) and for being too lax by incorporating pagan and Christian beliefs. Today, the site is being rapidly excavated and by archaeologists from the local university and the ancient city is coming to life in all of its glory with theaters, a stadium, several baths and columned streets.
- We drive to exotic Pamukkale for dinner and overnight at the [Pamukkale Doğa Thermal Hotel](#).

### **March 1, Sunday: Hierapolis, Sardis, Izmir**

- Hierapolis, one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites, is blessed by hot mineral springs and some of the best-preserved Roman ruins in Asia Minor. Christianity came to Hierapolis via Paul (Colossians 4:13) and the ruins cover more than a mile. You'll see the impressive theatre with seats still in perfect condition along with the City Gates, column-lined streets and the Ploutonion (Pluto's Gate) thought to be the entrance to the underworld. The city is crowned with the Philip Martyrium and the recently discovered tomb of the apostle Philip. In addition to the ruins, the site is distinguished by massive Travertine formations and hot springs that cascade from one white edged terrace pool to the next.
- We then visit Sardis another of the Seven Churches of Revelation. It is notable for the important Persian Royal Road, the gymnasium & palaestra complex and the synagogue.
- Down the road we'll also visit the huge Temple of Artemis. Most of what remains today dates from the Roman rebuild in the 2nd century. Only two complete columns and a few partial ones still stand, but the temple remains an impressive sight against the backdrop of the acropolis. On the western side of the temple is a freestanding altar to Artemis that dates from the 6th-5th century BC. Built against the southeast corner of the temple was a small Christian chapel of the 4th century.
- We continue on to Smyrna, modern day Izmir, to visit the Agora with its intricate streets. We proceed to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

### **March 2, Monday: Athens**

- Transfer to Izmir airport and fly to Athens, Greece via Istanbul. Free afternoon to explore.
- We will gather back at the [Acropolis Select Hotel](#) for dinner and overnight.

### **March 3, Tuesday: Athens**

- Our day begins at the world renowned Acropolis where we will visit the Propylaea, the Parthenon, and the Erectheum.
- Leaving the Acropolis we arrive at Mars Hill (site of the Aeropagus) where the apostle Paul stood before the city council and preached his famous sermon.

- We can walk the Agora, the market place of Athens where Socrates, among many, strolled the narrow streets. Dinner and overnight in Athens.

#### **March 4, Wednesday: Delphi**

- We make the beautiful drive north to Delphi the center of the Ancient world, the “omphalos” (navel) of the earth – whose prestige extended far beyond the boundaries of the Hellenic world. Located on the slopes of Mt. Parnassos in a landscape of natural beauty and majesty, we will walk the Sacred Way (Via Sacra) to the Treasury of the Athenians, the Theater and the Temple of Apollo where the Oracle or Pythia, performed her prophetic rituals.
- Visit the ancient site, the Tholos and the museum.
- We return to Athens for dinner at our hotel.

#### **March 5, Thursday: Corinth**

- We begin our day with a drive to ancient Corinth. In route we will visit the Corinthian Canal which is a 4 mile (6.5 km) man-made cut across the narrow Isthmus of Corinth.
- Before arriving in the ancient city, we will drive up the hill to Acrocorinth, the acropolis of Corinth. The city's archaic acropolis, already an easily defensible position due to its location, was further heavily fortified during the Byzantine Empire. It was defended against the Crusaders for three years.
- Arrive at ancient Corinth, where Silas and Timothy rejoined Paul and where the Apostle lived and preached for a year and a half. While in ministry at Corinth, Paul wrote First and Second Thessalonians to the newly established church in Thessalonica. Later, the church at Corinth would receive two letters from Paul (First and Second Corinthians). Paul met Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth who came to Corinth from Rome due to persecution during the reign of Claudius.
- We will see Corinth's Greek and Roman sites associated with Paul's ministry: the Agora, the Temple of Apollo, the Roman Odeon, the Bema and Gallio's Seat.
- After visiting the newly restored Corinth Museum, we will drive to Cenchreae, Phoebe's home for a short visit.
- We return to Athens for dinner and overnight at our hotel.

#### **March 6, Friday: Athens**

- We take the morning to visit to the new Acropolis Museum, which showcases the statuary art, relief panels, vases and votive offering associated with the Acropolis.
- After lunch enjoy afternoon shopping in the famous Plaka district.
- We return to Athens for dinner and overnight at our hotel.

#### **March 7, Saturday: Return to the U.S.A.**

- After an early pick up from the hotel we are transferred to Athens Airport to fly back to the U.S.A. Meals will be served on board.

*\*Itinerary sequence and days may be altered to adjust to religious holidays, special closings of sites, air schedules, etc.*