

## *The Seven Churches – Greece and Turkey*

### *Day 1 | Depart to Athens*

Today we begin our journey east to follow in the footsteps of the first great missionary disciple, St. Paul.

### *Day 2 | Arriving to Athens*

After our morning arrival into Athens, our journey begins as St. Paul's journey often began; by diving into the secular world. While the remainder of our pilgrimage will be devoted to sacred sites of Christianity, we would be remised to not visit the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and the Ecrectheum. In Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17, St. Paul began his mission in Athens, gaining a handful of followers for Christ and thus planting the seeds of the faith in Greece. We will take time for prayer at Holy Apostles Church (which dates back to the 10th century) and the Mitropoli (Cathedral), the seat of the Archbishop and hub of the Greek Orthodox Church. (D)

### *Day 3 | Athens / Kalambaka*

Our journey continues north today as we leave Athens. Our first stop is at the Byzantine monasteries at Meteora that seem to precariously perch on the very edge of the cliffs. We will ascend to these sacred retreats via cable car, but you can only imagine how hundreds of years ago monks were ascending on foot! Our final place for prayer today will be the Kalambaka Cathedral, Church of the Dormition, for vespers with the community. (B/D)

### *Day 4 | Kalambaka / Thessaloniki*

St. Paul leads us further into his journey to Thessaloniki, home of another early New Testament community he evangelized. Mass will be offered at the "Dais of the Apostle Paul," in Veria and we will also spend time at the Byzantine basilica of the Resurrection of Christ. Once in Thessaloniki, we will have time for prayer at the Byzantine churches of St. George, St. Demetrius, and Agia Sophia. The evening will be free to explore the city. (B/D)

### *Day 5 | Thessaloniki / Kavala*

We begin our journey today toward Philippi, where St. Paul preached and baptized some of the first Christians in Europe, and descend into a crypt that served as a prison for St. Paul when he was held captive here. Mass will be offered alongside the river where St. Paul preached 2000 years ago and baptized Lydia, his first European convert. Our day ends in Kavala, the ancient port of Neapolis, where St. Paul landed with his disciples, Timothy & Silas. St. Luke the Evangelist also came here from Troas. We will have time for prayer at the Orthodox Cathedral of St. Paul and St. Nicholas Church. (B/D)

### *Day 6 | Kavala / Canakkale*

Today we leave Greece behind and cross the border into Turkey, taking a ferry across Straits of the Dardanelles to Canakkale. Overnight in Canakkale. (B/D)

### *Day 7 | Canakkale / Izmir*

Depart Canakkale and drive to visit Pergamum, the most favored of the Seven Churches of Revelation where Christianity was introduced very early. Here we will see the Temple of Zeus, the Temple of Athena, the fabled Acropolis and the Royal Gate. We will also visit Asclepion, one the foremost healing centers of the ancient world. Continue on to Thyatira, another of the Seven Churches. Then visit the Church of St. Polycarp, which is the oldest church in ancient Smyrna and is dedicated to one of the first Christian martyrs. Proceed to Izmir for overnight. (B/D)

### *Day 8 | Izmir / Pamukale*

Following breakfast, drive to Sardis, the Lydian capital city where money was first minted, to visit the Roman Gymnasium and the remains of the Artemis Temple, which symbolized one of the Seven Churches. We will then stop at Philadelphia which was referred to as the “New Jerusalem.” Proceed to the spa city of Pamukale, where we will see the cascading water from the cliffs forming crystallized, dazzling white “frozen waterfalls”.

Visit the ruins of the Roman health spa of Hierapolis and see the magnificently preserved Necropolis, the Main Street, and Gates. Overnight in Pamukale. (B/D)

### *Day 9 | Pamukale / Kusadasi*

Depart Pamukale and drive to Laodicea, one of the Seven Churches where Christians were chastised by John for being lukewarm. Then proceed to Ephesus to visit the site of the Temple of Artemis, which is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Paul spent two years in Ephesus, and it was to this community that he wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians. Paul implored the Ephesians to cease their worship of Artemis and to turn to Christianity. We will see the great theater where Paul addressed the crowds and visit the site of the scene of the riot from which Paul escaped. Visit the Church of the Virgin Mary, the House of Mary, and the Tomb of St. Luke. While driving to the colorful port of Kusadasi, we will visit the Basilica of St. John, which was erected over his grave in the 6th century A.D. by the Emperor Justinian. (B/D)

### *Day 10 | Kusadasi / Patmos*

Transfer to the pier at Kusadasi and take a ferry to the island of Patmos where St. John received the mystical Revelation which forms the last book of the New Testament. Once we reach the island, we will take an excursion to the Grotto of Revelation and the 11th century Monastery of St. John which houses the original script of the Gospel. We will then board an overnight ferry for Piraeus. (B/D)

### *Day 11 | Piraeus / Corinth / Athens*

This morning we will disembark from our overnight ferry in Piraeus and then drive to ancient Corinth, the city that inspired many of St. Paul's most familiar letters. Visit the Archaeological Museum, the Market Place, the Bema, and the Temples. Standing in the midst of the ruins of the church of Corinth and seeing the pillars, steps, and public worship place where Paul preached will enhance our understanding and love of I & II Corinthians. We'll celebrate Mass in Corinth before proceeding to Athens for check-in at our local hotel. Celebrate a farewell dinner on our last night. (B/D)

### *Day 12 | Athens / Bismarck*

Today we end our pilgrimage as we fly home to Bismarck. (B)

- Hotels: the following, or similar quality/standard hotels
- In Athens - Hotel Golden Age
- In Kalambaka - Hotel Grand Meteora

- In Thessaloniki - Hotel Capsis
- In Kavala - Hotel Galaxy
- In Canakkale - Hotel Kolin
- In Izmir - Hotel Double Tree
- In Pamukale - Hotel Doga Thermal
- In Kusadasi - Hotel Charisma Deluxe
- Airfare R/T
- Accommodation on BB, 2 nights in Athens, 1 in Kalambaka, 1 in Thessaloniki, 1 in Kavala, 1 in Canakkale, 1 in Izmir, 1
- in Pamukale, 1 in Kusadasi and 1 on board ferry from Patmos to Athens
- A total of 10 meals (10 dinners), either in hotels or at local restaurants, according to the above itinerary
- Deluxe a/c coach throughout the tour for all transfers and visits according to the above itinerary.
- Professional qualified English-speaking guide throughout the tour for all visits according to the above itinerary. There
- will be a total of 3 different guides. One for mainland Greece, one in Turkey and a local guide in Patmos
- Professional qualified English-speaking escorts/assistants for all transfers wherever necessary.
- The ferry tickets from Patmos to Athens with on board accommodation in inside cabins
- The chartered boat from Kusadasi to Patmos
- All Entrance fees to the various sites and museums
- Porterage in all hotels.
- All taxes and our services.

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