



CENTER FOR HOLY LANDS STUDIES

Uncovering Biblical Faith for All Generations

RV Maps Discipleship Journey

PROGRAM ITINERARY | October 11-24, 2021

Day 1 – Monday, October 11

Depart from the U.S.

Day 2 – Tuesday, October 12

Upon our arrival at Thessaloniki Airport, we transfer to the hotel for check-in, dinner & overnight stay.

Day 3 – Wednesday, October 13

Breakfast at hotel. In the morning we drive to **Vergina** (ancient Aigai), the old capital of the Macedonian kingdom (5th to 2nd centuries BC). There we visit the most important tomb ever discovered that of Philip II of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great, which was found intact. Here we see the fabulous findings from the tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, made by the archaeologist Manolis Andronikos.

We continue to **Berea** where the Apostle Paul arrived, and according to his custom went to the synagogue where, to his pleasant surprise, he discovered that these Jews were “more noble” than those he had encountered in Thessalonica. We see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching and visit the Jewish synagogue (if the time allows). According to the local tradition, it was at this place where he stood and delivered his sermons (Acts 17:10-11). Dinner and overnight at the hotel in Thessaloniki.

Day 4 – Thursday, October 14

Breakfast at hotel. In the morning, we depart for Philippi. We enjoy a brief photo stop at the Lion statue of **Amphipolis**. We then continue to **Philippi**, (Acts 16:12-40; 20:6) the site where the apostle Paul preached his evangelistic sermon to women who had gathered at the river. You will visit the river where Paul baptized Lydia, a purple fabric merchant, who became the first Christian woman to be baptized on European soil (Acts 16:14, 15, 40). You will see the crypt, dating from the Roman period, which according to church tradition may have been the place where Paul was flogged and imprisoned. Also at Philippi you will see, the ancient Roman forum built during the time of Augustus and mentioned in the Book of Acts as the place where Paul was publicly punished after he healed the demon-possessed girl (Acts 16:19). You will see the Basilica and the Greek Theatre (4th century BC), which was converted into an arena by the Romans and used during the persecutions of the early days of the church. Paul’s letter to the Philippians was addressed to the local Christians 14 years after his first visit there. Of all the churches Paul founded, probably none was as near and dear to him as the church at Philippi (Acts 16:9-33). Philippi was named after Philip II, king of Macedonia father of Alexander the Great. The Roman road Via Egnatia crossed this city and ran from Rome to Byzantium. After the visit, we continue to Kavala, the ancient port of Neapolis (Acts 16:11), Greece’s most picturesque mainland port. Paul arrived in this city with his coworkers Timothy and Silas. We drive to Alexandroupolis for check-in at hotel, followed by dinner and overnight stay.

Day 5 – Friday, October 15

After breakfast, we checkout and drive to the Greek/Turkish borders Kipi. Here we say goodbye to our Greek guide and bus driver. Proceed with border formalities (passport control, visa and customs procedures) and then meet our Turkish guide and bus driver. We then begin our drive to Eceabat where we will board our scheduled ferryboat and cross the **Straits of Dardanelles** to **Canakkale** where we will check in at the hotel. Dinner & overnight.

** Please note the itinerary is subject to local conditions at the time of the tour and may change at the discretion of the tour director(s) or land operators.*

Day 6 – Saturday, October 16

Breakfast at hotel. Check-out. Our first visit this morning is to ancient **Troy**, made legendary by Homer's story of Helen and the Trojans' wooden horse. We then continue to **Troas**, founded about 300 BC by one of the generals of Alexander the Great. During the Apostle Paul's second missionary 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 Paul's team at Troas. Returning from Macedonia during his third journey, Paul was in Troas for a week, when the young man Eutychus fell from the third loft as Paul preached. Paul soon walked some thirty miles to **Assos**, where we will follow the apostle's footsteps to the old city walls (Acts 20:5-14). Check-in at hotel. Dinner and overnight in Assos.

Day 7 – Sunday, October 17

After breakfast at hotel, check out. Drive to **Pergamum**, actually called Bergama. It is one of the sites of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 2:12]. Here we explore the impressive Acropolis, the steepest theatre in the world, the Asklepieion, famous medical centre of classical times, see the Altar of Zeus which is mentioned as the «Throne of Satan» in the book of Revelation, the marble columns of the Temple of Trajan and the Library which was foremost in the world and was long a rival of the equally famous Library of Alexandria in Egypt. Its wealth of volumes was estimated at over 200,000 which inspired the invention of parchment. We also visit the Red Basilica (St. John's Church). Check-in at hotel, followed by dinner & overnight.

Day 8 – Monday, October 18

After breakfast at hotel, check-out. Drive to **Thyatira**, now called Akhisar, another one of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 2:18-24; Acts 16:14]. It was a city famous for purple dyes. We visit the remains of a basilica and some architectural fragments from the Roman period. Lydia, the seller of purple in Philippi, was from Thyatira.

Our next visit is to one of the most picturesque areas of any of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 3:1-4], **Sardis**, presently Sart, the capital of the ancient Lydian kingdom of the 6th century BC, portrayed as a dying church. Here we visit the great Temple of Artemis and the Temple of Cybele, which became a Byzantine Church. We will also visit the restored gymnasium and reconstructed Synagogue and see the last several meters of the royal Persian Road from Susa to Sardis built by Cyrus the Great and the «golden» river Pactolos.

Our journey continues to **Philadelphia**, nowadays called Alasehir, another church of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 3:7], and the only church not censured. Here we see the remains of a Byzantine basilica built of brick, with a bit of high arch and some 11th century frescoes. We drive to the healing city of Pamukkale, the white «cotton fortress». Check-in at hotel for dinner and overnight in a thermal Hotel.

Day 9 – Tuesday, October 19

Breakfast at hotel. Our day begins with a visit to the healing city of **Hierapolis**, actually Pamukkale, the white «cotton fortress» where hot mineral water bursts from the earth and cascades over steep cliffs forming pools, channels and stalactites. The therapeutic waters were known to the founders of Hierapolis and of Laodicea in 190 BC. In Hierapolis [Col. 4:13] we visit the Martyrium of the Apostle Philip where he was martyred during the persecutions ordered by Domitian.

We proceed to **Laodicea** (present name Denizli) yet another of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor [Rev. 1:11; 3:14; Col. 2:1; 4:13-16]. We see the ancient theatre, church, agora, the remains of basilica and ancient stone water pipes.

After Laodicea, we will continue to **Colossae**, the location to which the Apostle Paul directed his Epistle to the Colossians. This ancient city has not been excavated yet. Return to the thermal hotel in Pamukkale for dinner and overnight stay.

Day 10 – Wednesday, October 20

Breakfast at hotel. Check-out. Morning drive to **Ephesus** to visit the ancient city including the **Basilica of St. John**. The Apostle Paul preached to the Ephesians and lived here for three years. This church also received an epistle from him. We tour the spectacular ruins where excavations continue in this once great and important city, which was founded in the 10th century BC. Walk through history along marble streets lined with wonderful

public buildings, among them the Baths of Scholastica, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian, visit the Terrace Houses and the Theatre. We see the remaining pillar of the Temple of Diana of the Ephesians, another of the seven wonders of the ancient world, which was built in this city. Our day ends with a visit the Basilica of St. John. Drive to Izmir for check-in at hotel, followed by dinner and overnight.

Day 11 – Thursday, October 21

Check-out. Escorted group transfer from hotel at 03:30 am early in the morning to Izmir International Airport for your 05:50 am flight back to Athens. Free Day.

Day 12 – Friday, October 22

Breakfast at hotel. Today we enjoy a full day tour of **Athens** (Acts 17:15). Our first visit this morning will be to the Acropolis Museum, focused on the findings of the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens, which houses every artifact found on the rock and on its feet, from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece. It also lies on the archaeological site of Makrigianni and the ruins of a part of Roman and early Byzantine Athens. We then climb up to the marble-capped Acropolis, the sacred rock of Athens, the citadel and the sanctuary of the city in antiquity. We visit the famous Parthenon and the Erechtheion. We continue to nearby Mars' Hill (or Areopagus) to read Acts 17:22 where Paul delivered his well-known sermon and spoke about the inscription: "to an unknown god". We walk down to the Agora, which was formerly the commercial hub of ancient Athens and birthplace of politics and philosophy. Here the apostle Paul reasoned with the most skeptical audience he met in the course of his travels. We see the very well preserved Doric Temple of Hephaestus (or Thesseion) and the Stoa of Attalos, an arcade built by Attalos II, king of Pergamum, used as a retail market. Today it is a museum, displaying statues, pottery and especially coins.

Day 13 – Saturday, October 23

Breakfast at hotel. Our excursion out of Athens takes us by the Saronic Gulf, where in 480 BC history's root was changed! The small Grecian fleet managed to defeat the enormously powerful armada of the Persians. From here, via the historic Corinthian Canal, we arrive at ancient **Corinth** (Acts 18:1-18). Here Paul stayed for one and a half years during his first visit, the longest he stayed in any of the cities he visited except Ephesus. Paul wrote at least four letters addressed to the church of Corinth two of which are found in the New Testament. From Corinth, he wrote three and possibly four epistles addressed to the first Christians in Rome, Thessalonica and Galatia. You will visit the ancient Agora (forum), the Temple of Apollo, the Roman Odeon, the Bema where Paul stood in front of Gallio (Acts 18:12-17), the Roman pro-consul of Achaea. You will see the inscription of Erastus, the treasurer of the city, mentioned in the epistle to Romans (Acts 19:22; Romans 16:23; 2 Timothy 4:20). The small local archaeological museum here is an absolute must! In Romans 16:23 Paul mentions his friend Erastus and we will see an inscription to him at the site. We continue to see the ruins of an early Christian 5th century basilica in **Cenchrea** before returning to the hotel in Athens for dinner and overnight stay.

Day 14 – Sunday, October 24

Transfer to Athens airport for return flight to U.S.