

"IN SEARCH OF PAUL" ITINERARY

APRIL 6-22, 2027

Tuesday, April 6

Fly out of a Turkish Airlines hub, direct flight to Istanbul. Tutku Tours can arrange departures with other carriers at cost. You can also book your own flights. See brochure.

Wednesday, April 7

Arrive in Istanbul, meet our guide for Türkiye, Cenk Eronat, and travel to our hotel. "Welcome" Dinner together in the hotel dining room.

Thursday, April 8

We start at Istanbul where we glimpse the "imperial church" of the early 4th century under Constantine. We visit the Hippodrome, Hagia Sophia, Hagia Irene, Blue Mosque, and the Topkapi Palace.

Friday, April 9

We depart early for the Greek border, meet our guide for Greece, Voula Kalapoda, and then travel to Philippi. We visit the traditional river site where Paul met Lydia and see the magnificent baptistery built there. At the river we discuss Paul's letter to **Philemon** and its patronage subtext. 1st century city life then emerges in the ruins of ancient Philippi. Overnight in Kavala, modern Neapolis.

Saturday, April 10

We get another glimpse of the Via Egnatia that Paul walked from Neapolis to Philippi, then on to Thessaloniki where we see the Roman forum, the arch and mausoleum of Galerius, and the archeological museum. We stop at the tomb of Phillip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, to appreciate the roots of imperial theology. Overnight at Kalambaka/Meteora.

Sunday, April 11

Visit Varlaam Monastery, built 1541, high atop the rocks of Meteora, reflecting upon the medieval theological worldview of its art. After visiting Varlaam Monastery, we have a traditional Sunday lunch and take the afternoon off. Evening meal at the hotel, a discussion of **Philippians**, and Eucharist.

Monday, April 12

We stop at a studio where icons are hand painted and can be purchased, then go to Delphi to explore the cult of Apollo. After visiting the archeological museum, we overnight in Delphi; taking a look at **Galatians** before turning in.

Tuesday, April 13

In Athens, we visit the Areopagus where Paul delivered his sermon about "an unknown God" and then climb the Acropolis to see the temples of Athena, Nike, Poseidon, and Augustus. There will then be free time to visit the new archeological museum or to have a leisurely meal "al fresco".

Wednesday, April 14

We visit the site of ancient Corinth with its excellent ruins and museum. While on the grounds, seated in view of the Temple of Apollo and the ancient meat market (1 Cor. 8), we will discuss **1st Corinthians**. After lunch we head for the port of Athens, say "Goodbye" to Voula Kalapoda, and board our 6:00 PM ferry to Patmos. Good dining aboard and cabins with clean linens and bath. Arrive in Patmos about 2:00 AM, ride a short distance to our hotel, and go back to bed!

Thursday, April 15

Still in Greece, we will visit the traditional “Cave of St. John”, reflect upon the imperial context of Revelation, and then visit the Monastery of St. John. Lunch will be by the seaport and then we take a 4-hour boat ride to the Turkish port of Kusadasi. TK. At Kusadasi we meet up again with Cenk Eronat and go to our hotel.

Friday, April 16

The ancient city of Ephesus gives the most impressive glimpse of 1st century urban life. The Library of Celsus, Temple of Artemis (one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world) Temple of Hadrian, Temple of Domitian, and the “terrace houses” are but a few of the restorations. After a “1st century lunch” we will visit a local “cottage industry” store to see how Turkish carpets are made; and an opportunity to purchase carpets!

Saturday, April 17

Leaving Kusadasi, we will see the magnificent Temple of Apollo at Didyma, Asian counterpart to Delphi – complete with oracle – and discuss **1 Thessalonians**. Then on to Aphrodisias with the Temple of Aphrodite, the Sebasteion (the best example of Roman imperial theology), monumental gateway, stadium, and museum—where “the god fearers” are mentioned. Overnight at a relaxing thermal spa hotel at Pamukkale.

Sunday, April 18

At Hierapolis we see the tomb of Philip the Apostle (?) and the thermal springs, then journey to Laodicea with its many newly excavated and restored ruins, including a magnificent 4th century church. After a scenic bus ride, we will arrive at Izmir (ancient Smyrna) and have dinner on the waterfront.

Monday, April 19

We head for the acropolis of Pergamum with its great theater and temples to Athena, Zeus, and Trajan; then visit the Asklepon, a center of healing where the great physician Galen practiced. Overnight at the picturesque seaport of Assos. Eucharist in the evening.

Tuesday, April 20

After climbing the acropolis of Assos – Turkish coffee on the climb – that has a temple to Athena dating from 530 BCE, we head north to Alexander-Troas (Acts 20). After walking a portion of the road Paul walked from Troas to Assos, we again overnight in Assos, discussing **Romans** before turning in.

Wednesday, April 21

We cross the Dardanelles via the new suspension bridge and drive through the area where the Battle of Gallipoli was fought in WWI. Arriving back in Istanbul, we visit the Spice Market before going to the hotel to enjoy our farewell dinner.

Thursday, April 22

After a leisurely morning and breakfast, we leave for the airport for our flights home.

PLEASE NOTE

- 1) While many sites are visited, this is not primarily a “sight-seeing” tour. It is a continuing education emersion in which participants, through personal reflection and mutual conversation, seek to grow in their understanding of Paul’s theology and the context of his 1st communities. The program assumes sharing and participation.
- 2) The many archeological sites visited may have uneven footing, ramps, stairs, changes in elevation, and are certainly not ADA compliant. Some days may require 5000 footsteps. Over 190 people of diverse ages (see brochure pictures) have participated, but please inquire if you have concerns, questions, or mobility issues.
- 3) We will travel over 1500 scenic miles by bus, ferry, and water taxi.
- 4) Minor changes to the itinerary may occur due to unforeseen circumstances.