

GOSPEL TRAVEL



Day 1: Departure from US

Today we embark on our Journey to the lands of ancient treasures and Christian history with an overnight flight to Turkey. Prepare yourself for a life-changing experience.

Day 2: Arrival Istanbul

We transfer to our hotel in Istanbul, Turkey for the next two evenings. Istanbul, the largest city in Turkey is a thriving seaport and commerce center with a marvelous Bazaar and Spice Market allowing for a perfect opportunity to pick up those souvenirs and unique gift items.



Day 3: Bustling Istanbul

The tour today will be an unusual combination of Greek Orthodox, Roman, Ottoman and modern day Islam including entrance into the famed Blue Mosque and St. Sophia Church. After lunch we visit the fascinating Topkapi Palace housing the many priceless treasures and colorful stories of Ottoman Sultans. We return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 4: Sea of Marmara

This morning we depart Istanbul and travel west across "Trace," the European portion of Turkey. The Sea of Marmara with thousands of summer homes will provide the scenery as we travel. Views of the bunkers on the hillside and the ocean going vessels give clear understanding to the commentary of the British major losses and World War I defeat in the Dardanelles Strait. Our bus boards a large ferry for the scenic crossing of the Dardanelles to our lodging this evening in picturesque Çanakkale.



Day 5: Ancient Troy, Pergamum & Izmir

We pass by the area known as Troas, where Paul had a vision during his second missionary journey and was called to Macedonia (Acts 16:8-13). Paul later spent a week in Troas preaching here and Eutychus was resurrected (Acts 20:6-12). Ancient Troy is well known for its 3rd and 4th Century BC excavations. Don't forget to have your picture taken from the top of the Trojan Horse. Our next visit of the day is Pergamum. Once a busy trading center and famous as a "seller of purple," the most favored of the Seven Churches, the church of Pergamum was praised for its forbearance (Rev. 2:12-17). It was here that the first Christians were executed by Rome. We'll visit the fabled Acropolis, pass through the Royal Gates, view the foundations of the Temple of Zeus and visit the ruins of the library, which once held 200,000 volumes. We continue south to Izmir the third largest city in Turkey and a long time center for Jews and Christians. In Paul's day, Izmir was known as Smyrna and was another of the Seven Churches (Rev. 2:8-11). Here we'll see Polycarp's Church and the ancient agora. Our lodging this evening will be in Izmir.



Day 6: Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Pamukkale

A stop will be made in Thyatira to view the ancient roadway and period columns en-route to Sardis. Sardis was berated by John for its facade of strength when in reality; it was weak (Rev. 3:1-6). Here coins were minted and the dyeing of wood originated. We'll visit the gymnasium and synagogue. Our next stop is nearby Philadelphia which was referred to as the "New Jerusalem" (Rev. 3:7-13) in the Book of Revelation. Not much is left of the city except for the ancient wall and the remains of a Byzantine basilica in the modern city of Alasehir. Our lodging this evening will be in a lovely spa hotel in Pamukkale.



Day 7: Hierapolis, Laodicea & Colossae

Hierapolis, meaning "Sacred City," was an ancient center for pagan cults until it was transformed into a Christian center in the first century. According to tradition, the Apostle Philip lived and was martyred in Hierapolis. It was likely the hot springs of Hierapolis in contrast to the cold mountain springs near Colossae that combined to bring application to the "luke warm" Laodiceans. (Rev 3:14-22) This connection between the cities lies behind Paul's reference to Hierapolis and Laodicea in his epistle to the Colossians (Col 4:13). **Laodicea** contains many acres of ruins to visit including a stadium and remnants of a sophisticated water system. Nearby **Colossae** is well-known throughout Christian circles as the receiver of Paul's letter to the Colossians. Today, the town has fallen into obscurity and nothing remains. We spend the remainder of the day traveling through the Turkish countryside arriving in the port city of Kusadasi where we spend two nights. The day will not be complete without a visit to a local Turkish Rug cooperative.

Day 8: Ephesus

We travel to the nearby town of Selcuk for a visit to the Basilica of St. John, housing an immersion baptismal and believed to be resting place of John. From here we have an excellent overview of the Ephesus harbor and the Temple of Artemis, completed in its most famous phase around 550 BC and listed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Next, we travel a short distance down the hill to visit the Mosque of Jesus (Jesus is a respected prophet to Muslims). A wealth of artifacts awaits us at the nearby Museum of Ephesus. We spend the remainder of our day in **Ephesus**, the city of the Bible and one of the largest restorations still in progress with miles of ancient treasures. Ephesus was once a thriving port town of 250,000 people. Today you can still see the spectacular excavations of the major streets in this ancient city where we view the Library, Agora, Temple of Artemis, theatre, colorful mosaics, a panoramic view of the surrounding ancient port area including a wealth of church history and cultural insight.

Day 9: Depart for Home

This morning we transfer to the Izmir airport for our flight back to the USA.