

Turkey Sacred Sites with The Interpreter Foundation

9-Day Land Tour (With 5-Day Extension)

10/09/2023 - 10/18/2023

The apostle Paul was born here. Along with Peter, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Jude, and Simon, they lived, preached, and prayed here. Come with Dan Peterson and Steve Densley on this Interpreter Foundation tour of Turkey, â€œthe other Holy Land.â€• Two-thirds of the 27 books in the New Testament were either written in Turkey or were addressed to communities there, including Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Galatians, 1 & 2 Timothy, 1 & 2 Peter, and Revelation, which was addressed to the seven churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. Join us and enhance your study of the New Testament like never before.

Headliners:



Daniel Peterson



Steve Densley

Itinerary:

Day 1: Depart From Home

October 9, 2023 (Monday)

Depart for Istanbul. Overnight on the trans-Atlantic flight.

Day 2: Arrive in Istanbul

October 10, 2023 (Tuesday)

Enjoy a relaxing dinner and, if you like, a traditional Turkish bath experience at *Ä±emberlitaÄ±* HamamÄ± which dates back to the 16th century. (D)

Day 3: Hippodrome - Blue Mosque - Hagia Sophia - TopkapÄ± Palace, and Harem - Basilica of Underground Cistern - Grand Bazaar Shopping

October 11, 2023 (Wednesday)

Today is full of surprises! After breakfast, we will first visit the Ancient Hippodrome, the scene of chariot races, and the three monuments: the Egyptian Obelisk, the Serpent Column, and the Column of Constantine. The next stop will be the Blue Mosque. Its name comes from the beautiful, blue ceramic tiles that line the interior. Then we will go to the Hagia Sophia, previously known as the Church of Divine Wisdom. For 1000 years it was the largest church in the world. Then, weâ€™ll see the TopkapÄ± Palace, one of the largest and oldest surviving palaces in the world. After lunch, we will visit Basilica Cistern which is built in 532 A.D. Our last stop will be the Grand Bazaar, the largest covered market in the world! Tonight, we have an optional Whirling Dervish Ceremony at the HodjaPasha Culture Center. You wonâ€™t want to miss this. (B,D)

Day 4: Archeological Museum - Great Palace Mosaic Museum - Chora Church (if open) - Spice Bazaar

October 12, 2023 (Thursday)

We will start our day at the Istanbul Archeological Museum which is one of the world's largest museums with over one million works. Afterward, we will visit the Great Palace Mosaic Museum. After lunch, we will go to the Chora Church (Mosque) which has remarkable Christian mosaics. Our last stop, the Spice Bazaar, built in 1664, is one of the most colorful bazaars in Istanbul and offers numberless souvenirs, spices, Turkish delights, dried nuts, and more. We then head to the airport to fly to Antioch which was once called *â€œThe Cradle of Christianity.â€•* (B,D)

Day 5: Antioch - Tarsus

October 13, 2023 (Friday)

This morning we first visit Antioch, the third largest city of the Roman Empire and the headquarters of

St. Paul's missionary journeys. We will visit the Apostle Peter's Church where he preached and founded what some believe to have been the first Christian community. We then visit the Antakya Archeology Museum, known for its extensive collection of Roman and Byzantine Era mosaics. We then drive to Tarsus where Saul (Paul) was born, and where Antony and Cleopatra first met. We will visit the ruin of the house and the well of Saint Paul and see the remains of a Roman road in ancient Tarsus. (B,D)

Day 6: Cappadocia (Optional Hot Air Balloon at Sunrise) - Gövünlü Valley with the Church of St. John - Paçaba

October 14, 2023 (Saturday)

This morning, we embark on a new adventure in the famous Cappadocia, home to underground cities used by Christians to hide from the Roman soldiers. The region is mentioned both in the New Testament and also in Doctrine and Covenants 138:5. At sunrise, you'll have the option of joining us on a world-famous hot air balloon trip. When you rise to the sky in Cappadocia, you can enjoy the bird's eye view of this Biblical region adorned with unique rock formations. You will feel as if you are flying on another planet. After breakfast, we will visit Gövünlü, an abandoned village with old cave houses. We'll also see the amazing church of St. John. Then we'll continue to Paçaba where you can see three-headed fairy chimneys. After Paçaba, if we have time, we will see more valleys with unique rock formations and fairy chimneys. (B,D)

Day 7: Uşhisar Castle - Göreme Open Air Museum - Avanos Pottery Making - Kaymaklı Underground City

October 15, 2023 (Sunday)

This morning, we have another chance to have a hot air balloon trip (Sometimes the hot air balloons are canceled due to the wind or rain.) After breakfast, we will visit Uşhisar Castle, the highest point in Cappadocia where you can enjoy amazing views of the unique landscape. Then, we'll continue to Göreme Open Air Museum, the heart of Cappadocia. Göreme Open Air Museum is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its frescoes that date back to the 10th century and depict the life of Jesus Christ. After lunch, we will see a pottery workshop that reflects thousands of years of history. Pottery production in Avanos has been continuous since the Hittites. You will have the opportunity to buy some of the finest ceramics in the world which have been shaped, fired, glazed, and painted all by hand. To end the day, we will go to the Kaymaklı underground city. We will be flying to Izmir tonight and will end the day in Kuşadası. (B,D)

Day 8: Mary's House - Ephesus Terrace Houses - St. John's

Church - Carpets, and Kilims of Turkey - Temple of Artemis

October 16, 2023 (Monday)

Today is filled with archaeological wonders: First, we will visit the House of the Virgin Mary. Pope John Paul II came and declared this a place of pilgrimage for Christians. Next, we will go to Ephesus, the second most important city of the Roman Empire. Paul lived here and it is widely believed that the Gospel of John was written here. It had a population of 250,000 and monopolized the wealth of the Middle East. It holds treasures such as the impressive Roman Theater which housed more than 25,000 spectators, the magnificent Library of Celsus (the third largest library in the ancient world), Hadrian's Temple, and Marble Street. We will also see the Terrace Houses of Ephesus, which are luxury Roman Villas. Our lunch today will be at the "Bizim Ev Hançmeli Restoran." You will be amazed by the Turkish cuisine made by the famous Hatice Hançm, from whom you can get buy a signed copy of her cookbook. After lunch, we will visit the impressive ruins of the Church of Saint John, where many believe John to be buried. We then visit a world-famous Turkish handcraft village. We learn the process of carpet making starting with live silkworms at this award-winning carpet factory. Our last stop is at an overlook where we can view the ruins of the Temple of Artemis (completed around 550 BC), which is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. (B,D)

Day 9: Laodicea - Hierapolis - Pamukkale - Colossae

October 17, 2023 (Tuesday)

After breakfast, we will be on our way to Laodicea. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot" was told to the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:16) who were lukewarm. Then we will visit the ancient Hierapolis and Cotton Castle, a natural wonder of gigantic white waterfalls, stalactites, and natural pools formed over the centuries by the sliding of waters laden with limestone salts from hot springs. The Apostle Phillip lived and was martyred in Hierapolis, and we will visit his recently-discovered tomb. It was likely the hot springs of Hierapolis and the cold mountain springs near Colossae that contrasted with the "lukewarm" Laodiceans. You don't want to miss a chance to swim in the Pamukkale antique pool between the historical monuments (optional). Last, we will visit Colossae where the Church members lived anciently who were the recipients of the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians. (B,D)

This is the last day of the main tour. Those who are continuing with the second part of the tour will stay in Pamukkale. Others will fly from the Denizli Airport to Istanbul and then, the next day, home to the USA with many unforgettable memories from Turkey. (B,D)

Day 10: Arrive Home - Or Extension

October 18, 2023 (Wednesday)

Arrive Home - For those not continuing with the extended tour.

Day 10: Philadelphia - Sardis - Thyatira

October 18, 2023 (Wednesday)

The second exciting part of the tour starts in Philadelphia, the youngest of the Seven Churches of the Book of Revelation. The church members here were challenged to "hold fast" and look forward to the coming of the "new Jerusalem" in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 3:7-13). In the afternoon we will visit, the ancient city and ruins of the famous church of Sardis, the ancient Lydian capital, the city berated by John for its facade of strength when, in reality, it was weak (Rev. 3:1-6).. Later, we will see the remains of the Church of Thyatira, famous for its dyeing facilities and a center of the purple cloth trade. We will stay in Izmir tonight. (B,D)

Day 11: Smyrna - Pergamum - Assos

October 19, 2023 (Thursday)

The Church of Smyrna was also one of the Seven Churches. We will visit the most important historical structure, the Agora, one of the best-preserved structures of ancient Ionia. We will then drive to Pergamum and visit the Asclepion, one of the major healing centers of antiquity, and the Acropolis. The church of Pergamum was praised for its forbearance; (Rev. 2:12-17) and it was here that the first Christians were executed by Rome. Then we will be going to Assos and see the Temple of Athena. (B,D)

Day 12: Alexandria Troas - Troy

October 20, 2023 (Friday)

Today, we will visit Alexandria Troas, an important port that was the starting point for St. Paul when he set sail to Europe during his second missionary journey (50 - 52 A.D.). The Apostle visited the city again, during his third missionary journey (53 - 58 AD). Here, 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 and Eutychus was resurrected here (Acts 20:6-12). Our next stop will be ancient Troy. It is one of the richest cities of ancient times. It was made famous in Homer's epic poem, the Iliad. For most of the last 3000 years, people assumed that Homer's Iliad was fiction and that Troy never existed until the 1860s when its ruins and treasures were found. (B,D)

Day 13: Nicea - Cruise on Bosphorus

October 21, 2023 (Saturday)

Today, we will depart from Bursa and go to an important city in early Christian history, Nicaea (known in ancient times as Nicaea) which was the site of the First and Second Councils of Nicaea and where the Nicene Creed originated. After visiting Nicea, we will return to Istanbul and do a cruise on the Bosphorus. The Bosphorus Strait is the heart of Istanbul and this cruise provides the best view of many of Istanbul's most popular and beautiful attractions including the Dolmabahçe Palace and the Rumeli Fortress. Tonight, we will say farewell to Turkey and İstanbul by eating our last supper on the terrace of the Arcadia Blue Hotel. It has a breathtaking view looking out over the Old Town and the Bosphorus. (B,D)

Day 14: Return Home or Continue to Egypt

October 22, 2023 (Sunday)

Today is our departure day. You will be transferred from your hotel to the Airport. If you have a later flight, you are welcome to attend Church at the Istanbul Branch in Levent, which was dedicated by Elder D. Todd Christofferson. (B,D)

Information:

INCLUDED

Main Tour: 9 Days and 8 Nights at 5 Star or Best Available Hotels

Main Tour with Add-On: 13 Days and 12 Nights at 5 Star Hotels or Best Available Hotels

Daily Breakfast

All Dinners at the hotels

Sightseeing as per itinerary

All entry fees to the sites and museums

English speaking, Bible-oriented tour guide

Brother Murat Akar, a native Turk, who grew up by Ephesus and has served in Church leadership in Turkey, will share insights about ancient and modern Church history.

All transportation by private bus (water included)

All Airport-Hotel-Airport transfers

2 or 3 Domestic Flights

Tips to restaurant staff

Parking fees

Local service charges & taxes (18% VAT)

NOT INCLUDED

International Airfare

Lunches and all drinks (Budget about \$15 per day for lunches)

Food or snacks not listed

Tips to the guides and drivers (plan on \$5 per person, per day for the guide, \$3 per person per day for the driver)

Optional activities listed in the itinerary

All personal expenses, travel and health insurance

Anything not mentioned in the above "Included" section

Pricing:

10-Day Land Tour (With 4-Day Extension)

10/09/2023 – 10/18/2023 (Extension From 10/18/2023 – 10/22/2023)

Price (Base Tour)

- \$3,720 per person based on double occupancy, a 3% fee will be added to bookings paid with a credit card
- \$1,245 single supplement for hotels, a 3% fee will be added to bookings paid with a credit card

Optional Extension (4 day)

- \$1,140 per person based on double occupancy, a 3% fee will be added to bookings paid with a credit card
- \$570 single supplement for hotels, a 3% fee will be added to bookings paid with a credit card

Payment Schedule

- \$250 per person due at time of booking (deposit is non-refundable – it can be transferred to another person on the same tour date. We will attempt to find someone to take your spot if you cancel but we cannot guarantee it).
- Final Payment: Final payment is due three months before the tour departure date.

Cancellation Policy

- If you cancel: Deposit is non-refundable; however, it is transferable to another guest on a new booking, traveling on the same tour date. After final payment, the full amount is non-refundable. If you cancel and you can find someone to take your spot, we will refund the deposit. If we have a waiting list, we will refund your deposit by placing someone in your spot.
- If we cancel the tour for any reason: Deposit is non-refundable; however, it can be transferred to any other tour or kept as a future tour credit to be used at any time on one of our advertised tours (cannot be transferred to a cruise). The balance will be refunded or applied to a future tour as a credit.
- The only way to avoid trip cancellation penalties is to buy trip cancellation insurance. If you are interested in the insurance, we can help you purchase it.

Check Your Invoice Names: Please check to see that your names are spelled correctly. Your first and last names must appear as they appear on your passport for International travel and Driver's License for domestic tours.

COVID: Vaccines are currently required to enter Israel

PASSPORTS ARE REQUIRED and should be valid 6 months after the end of the tour.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Due to the nature of this tour you must be able to climb stairs and walk unassisted at a moderate pace.

Please note that minor changes to the itinerary may occur due to local conditions and to better accommodate our group.