

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL

**DAY 1 – ISTANBUL** Arrival in Istanbul, the Cradle of Civilizations, the proud Capital of three Empires and the unique city bridging two continents, Europe and Asia. Meeting at the airport, assistance and transfer to the hotel after a panoramic tour along the Bosphorus and in the city. Overnight in Istanbul.

**DAY 2 – ISTANBUL** Full day city sightseeing encompassing Istanbul's Byzantine and Ottoman Heritage. The tour will start with a visit of **Hagia Sophia Museum** (the Byzantine Imperial Basilica of Holy Wisdom built by Emperor Justinian in the 6th century 532-537AD) which is known as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient world, the **Mosque of Sultan Ahmet**, also known as the **Blue Mosque** for its magnificent interior with blue Iznik tiles and its six slender minarets (built by Sultan Ahmet I between 1609-1616), the **Roman Hippodrome** built by the Roman Emperor Septimus Severus in 203 AD, and housing the **Egyptian Obelisk**, which was originally erected in the name of Thutmose III in front of the Amon Ra temple in Karnak in the 15th century BC, and sent over from Egypt to Theodosius I in 390 AD, the **Serpentine Column** brought from Delphi by Emperor Constantine I in 4th century AD, and the **Constantine Column** built originally during 4th or 5th century AD of stones and restored by Emperor Constantine VII during 10th century AD. The tour will continue with a visit of **Topkapi Palace**, the residence of Ottoman Sultans between the 15th and 19th centuries. The Palace is now a museum housing the dazzling Ottoman Imperial Treasury, European and Chinese Porcelain collections which are unique in the world, Imperial costumes, weapons and armory. In the afternoon, the tour will continue with a visit of the **Basilica Cistern** which was built by Emperor Justinian in 542 AD. The cistern, 230 ft. wide and 460 ft. long was built as a water reservoir to the city and has 336 columns most of which are topped with Corinthian capitals. The next visit will be to **Kariye Museum** (Saint Savior in the Chora) is a Byzantine monastery complex dating back to 8th century AD. Only the church of Jesus Christ the Savior remains today and houses marvellous golden Byzantine mosaics and frescoes representing scenes drawn from the cycle of life of Virgin Mary and the Christ. The last visit of the day will be to the **Grand Covered Bazaar**, built by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror between 1455-1461 in an attempt to enrich the economic life in the city. Overnight in Istanbul.

**DAY 3 – ADANA - ISKENDERUN(Alexandretta) & ANTAKYA (Antioch)** Transfer to Istanbul Ataturk Airport for flight by THY to Adana. Upon arrival, drive to Iskenderun, ancient Alexandretta, to visit the hilltop **Crusader Castles** and the site of the biblical city of **Antioch** (Acts of the Apostles 6:6; 19:30; 13:13, 15:1-2; and 22:25). Visit the **Grotto of St. Peter**. The word "Christian" was first used here, and it was from Antioch that Christianity spread around the world. Also visit the **Museum of Roman Mosaics** to enjoy the unusually rich collection of mosaics from nearby ruins. Overnight in Adana.

**DAY 4 – TARSUS – KONYA(Iconium)** **Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul** (Acts 9:11-30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3; 25-27). The New Testament records that St. Paul actively tried to suppress the early Christian movement through persecution until he was converted to Christianity by a visionary encounter with the risen Jesus, while on the road to Damascus. St. Paul visited Konya (Iconium) using its synagogue as his forum. In Konya, Mevlana's Mausoleum will be visited. Overnight in Konya. A private ritualistic evening of the Mevlevi (whirling Dervishes) will be organized.

**DAY 5 – YALVAC (Pisidian Antioch) – ANTALYA (Attalia)** Pisidian Antioch (Yalvac) where, on his first missionary journey, St. Paul preached his first recorded Sermon (Acts 13:16) “Almost the whole city gathered to hear the words of God” (Acts 13:44). Before reaching Antalya, visit the Sagalassos Excavations in Aglasun, near Burdur. In Antalya, a short panoramic tour of the city will be conducted before reaching the hotel. Overnight in Antalya.

**DAY 6 – ANTALYA** Morning visit to Perge, where St. Paul preached on his first missionary journey (Acts. 13:13; 14:25), and Aspendos which houses the best preserved amphitheater of antiquity seating 15,000 people. In the afternoon, visit the Antalya Archaeological Museum which is renowned as the richest museum in the world. A walking tour of Antalya's old port and colourful streets will be followed. Overnight in Antalya.

**DAY 7 – PAMUKKALE (Hierapolis)** Laodicia, where St. Paul preached to the resident Christians expressing his concern (Col. 2:1) and who St. John scolded for being neither hot nor cold (Rev. 3:16). Continue driving to the spectacular natural site of Hierapolis, which was also the home of Papias, an early Christian writer and Philip the Evangelist. Pamukkale, the “Cotton Castle,” with thermal springs of calcium in water and white petrified lime cascades falling from heights of 300 ft., is a noted spa with dazzling white formations. The martyrdom of St. Philip, an octagonal chamber was recently discovered. Overnight in Pamukkale.

**DAY 8 – APHRODISIAS - PRIENE – MILETUS – DIDYMA – KUSADASI** Aphrodisias, the antique city named after the Aphrodite, goddess of love. The ruins of the amphitheater and the museum are impressive. Continue the drive to visit the three great Ionian cities. First visit Priene, the favourite city of Alexander the Great, which commands a magnificent view of the Meander Valley. Continue to the ancient city of Miletus, with its well preserved Lion Harbor and theater, where St. Paul gave his emotional good-bye message to the elders of Ephesus. Continue the drive to Didyma to visit the remarkably well preserved Apollo Temple and learn about the Ancient Oracle of Apollo. Overnight in Kusadasi.

**DAY 9 - EPHESUS** Ephesus Antique City, dedicated to Artemis. Ephesus is the best preserved ancient city of Asia Minor, with its majestic theater, marble road, Temple of Artemis, the Church of Virgin Mary or the Double Church, the library of Celsius, the stadium, the lecture hall of Tyrannus where St. Paul had daily discussions (Acts. 19:9). In the afternoon, visit the Basilica of St. John and his tomb in Selcuk, and end the afternoon touring by a visit to the Ephesus Archaeological Museum. Overnight in Kusadasi.

**DAY 10 -Izmir, Thyatira, and Pergamum** A visit of Izmir ( ancient Smyrna), the third largest city in Turkey and the main port city on the Aegean coast, Bergama (Pergamum), the Asclepion, located to the southwest of the lower city, was a sanctuary dedicated to the god of health, Asclepius. Also visit the Red Church. Visit Thyatira which was one of the cities of St. John wrote to in the Book of Revelation. Return to Izmir airport for the return flight to Istanbul. In Istanbul, transfer to hotel for overnight.

**DAY 11 – RETURN TRIP TO USA** Transfer to Istanbul Ataturk Airport for return transatlantic flight.