



ALPHACRUCIS STUDENT GROUP TOUR TURKEY & GREECE
20 NOVEMBER – 6 DECEMBER, 2020

Fri, 20 November: Arrive Istanbul – Fly to Izmir

Upon arrival at Istanbul Ataturk Airport connect to Izmir flight departing in the afternoon. Arrival in Izmir and transfer to hotel for dinner and overnight. **(D)**

Sat, 21st November: Sardis - Pamukkale overnight

We depart to one of the most picturesque areas of any of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 3:1-4], **Sardis**, presently Sart. This was the capital of the ancient Lydian kingdom of the 6th century BC, portrayed as a dying church. 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, as well as the last several meters of the royal Persian Road from Susa to Sardis built by Cyrus the Great and the “golden” river Pactolos. After a **lunch break**, we continue our journey 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 visit the Gate of Domitian, the Arcadian Way, the 2nd century AD Theatre, the Nymphaion, the Temple of Apollo, the Plutonium and the Necropolis. Transfer to your hotel for dinner and overnight stay in Pamukkale. **(B,L,D)**

Sun, 22nd November: Laodicea – Aphrodisias - Kusadasi

We will start the day by visiting **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, the remains of basilica and ancient stone water pipes.

Drive towards Ephesus and on the way stop in **Aphrodisias**.

Aphrodisias was primarily known as a center for the arts, specifically sculpture. The Aphrodisias School of Sculpture had a distinctive style and was very well circulated throughout the Greek and Roman world. **Lunch** in a local restaurant before driving to Kusadasi. Dinner and overnight at hotel Marina in Kusadasi. **(B,L,D)**

Mon, 23rd November: Ancient Ephesus – Terrace Houses - Ephesus museum - St. John Basilica - Artemis Temple - Kusadasi

After breakfast drive to Selcuk and visit ancient city of **Ephesus**. 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 including **Terrace Houses** where excavations still 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 and the Theatre. We will continue our visits with **Ephesus Museum**. After the visit we will have **lunch** in a local restaurant. We will then visit the **Basilica of St. John** and **The Temple of Artemis** (Diana) of the Ephesians, another of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was built in this city. At the end of the tour drive back to Kusadasi for dinner and overnight at Marina Hotel. **(B,L,D)**

Tue, 24th November: Sirince Village - Thyatira – Pergamum

After breakfast, first drive up to the pretty old Turkish-Orthodox mountain village **Sirince**, located on the top of a mountain, where anyone will enjoy the impressive wine yards’ and peach trees’. The village has synthesis of Turk-Greek culture, where we visit mosque and Orthodox church. All the narrow streets of the village belong to the women, selling handcrafts of all kinds, olive oil. Another attraction of Sirince is its fruity wine: try its taste in small cafés. **Lunch** in a local restaurant.

Then we continue our visit 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. Drive to Pergamum for dinner and overnight at La Bella Hotel. **(B,L,D)**

Wed, 25th November: Pergamum (Acropolis & Asclepeion) – Canakkale

We visit **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. It inspired the invention of parchment.

Drive to Canakkale and on the way stop for a **lunch**. Dinner and overnight at Buyuk Truva Hotel in Canakkale. **(B,L,D)**

Thu, 26th November: Gallipoli – Troy - Canakkale

After the breakfast we drive to the World War I Battlefield of **Gallipoli**.

We will visit the **Kabatepe War Museum, Anzac Cove, Hell Spit Cemetery, Lone Pine, The Nek, and Chunuk Bair War memorial**.

On the way back to Canakkale down town and hotel, you will have your **lunch** in a restaurant. After lunch you will be taken to the movie star ancient city of **Troy**, see the legendary walls and the replica of the wooden horse. Drive back to your hotel in Canakkale for dinner and overnight at hotel Buyuk Truva. **(B,L,D)**

Fri, 27th November: Border crossing to Greece - Kavala

After early breakfast we depart from hotel and cross by ferry to Eceabat port. From there drive to the Greek/Turkish borders where we arrive at around 10.30.a.m.

After custom formalities, we farewell with the Turkish guide and cross into Greece.

Meet the local guide and board the bus to continue on to **Kavala**, passing by Alexandroupolis. **Lunch** in a local restaurant. Check-in at hotel in Kavala for dinner and overnight **(B,L,D)**

Sat, 28th November: Philippi – Amphipolis – Thessaloniki

In the morning we will visit **Philippi** (Acts 16:12-40; 20:6), the site where the apostle Paul was imprisoned with Syllas. We see the ruins of this prison/crypt, dating from the Roman period, the ancient Roman forum built during the time of Augustus (Acts 16:19) and the basilica with 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.

Lunch in local restaurant in Philippi.

We will then continue on to see 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). We will have time to worship here. We will then continue on to Thessaloniki, the second largest city of Greece after a brief stop on the way to **Amphipolis**, where we see the **Lion** statue, landmark of the town. Late in the afternoon we will check-in at hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight at Hotel. **(B,L,D)**

Sun, 29th November: Thessaloniki – Berea – Kalambaka

In the morning we will enjoy a panoramic bus tour of **Thessaloniki** (Acts 17:1-13). According to the Book of the Acts many Greeks believed and even many «*Greek chief women*» (Acts 17:1-4). Paul wrote two epistles to Thessalonians, both in the canon of the New Testament.

We will start out tour with a visit to the upper part of the Old *City Walls* with the *Great Gate*, which connects the city with the Via Egnatia. (Via Egnatia was the transcontinental east-west road of the Roman Empire built on the 2nd century BC). Here we have excellent views of the

City and the opportunity to take pictures. We then continue our sightseeing tour along the seaside road viewing the White Tower, the statue of Alexander the Great, the triumphal Arch of Galerius and Rotunda were later converted to the Church of St George. We will also see the remains of the Palace complex of Galerius (late 3rd century AD) and the ruins of Roman Forum. Optional visit to *St. Demetrius' Church* before departing to Berea.

On our way to Kalambaka we will stop in **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). (Acts 17:10-11).

After **lunch** stop we will continue our drive to Kalambaka for late afternoon check-in, dinner overnight at hotel. **(B,L,D)**

Mon, 30th November: Meteora - Delphi

This morning we enjoy a spectacular drive up to visit the wonderful place of **Meteora** monasteries. This is a tremendous introduction to the Greek Orthodox Church. The Meteora are colossal symmetrical gray and reddish boulders, as though pushed upwards from the bowels of mother earth by an invisible hand, sustain breathtaking beautiful monasteries perched precariously high above the ground. They were first built in the 14th century by monks seeking isolation and salvation, accessible only by ropes thrown from above. We will climb through steps built since. They are veritable Byzantine museums exhibiting superb icons, old manuscripts and unique mosaics and frescoes.

Lunch in Kalambaka.

After lunch we will drive to Delphi for dinner and overnight at hotel. **(B,L,D)**

Tue, 1st December: Delphi - Athens

Today we will spend our half day visiting the archaeological site and the museum in **Delphi**. Delphi was the center of the Ancient world, the “omphalos” (navel) of the earth - whose prestige extended far beyond the boundaries of the Hellenic world. On the slopes of Mt. Parnassus, in a landscape of unparalleled natural beauty and majesty, lies the archaeological site of Delphi. We visit the *Sanctuary of Apollo*, the *Treasury of the Athenians* and the *Stadium and the Archaeological Museum* containing such masterpieces of ancient Greek sculpture as the bronze *Charioteer* and the famous athlete *Aghias*. After the visit we will enjoy LUNCH in local restaurant. On our way back to Athens, time permitting we will pass by the towns of Arachova and Thebes. Late in the afternoon arrive at hotel in **Athens** for dinner and overnight. **(B, L, D)**

Wed, 2nd December: Athens (Acropolis – Museum - Agora)

After early breakfast we enjoy our full-day sightseeing tour of **Athens**. We 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 now have become time travelers! Then, we go to nearby **Mars' Hill (Areopagus)** to read Acts 17:22 where Paul gave his famous speech to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:18-34) and spoke about the inscription: “to an unknown god”. Our tour continues with the highlights of modern Athens: we pass by the *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*, *Parliament House*, *the Academy*, *the University of Athens*, *the National Library*, *Panathenaic Stadium*, *Temple of Olympian Zeus*, and *Hadrian's Arch*. We continue our sightseeing tour with a visit the **Acropolis Museum** is an archaeological museum focused on the findings of the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens. Artifacts found on the rock and on its feet, date from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece.

After the visit we will have **lunch** in Plaka or Monastiraki area.

We will then visit the **Ancient Agora** which was formerly the commercial hub of ancient Athens and birthplace of politics and philosophy. Here 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 used as museum, displaying statutes, pottery and especially coins.

After the visit return to hotel for dinner and overnight in Athens **(B,L,D)**

Thu, 3rd December: Corinth – Acro-corinth – Nafplion – Tolo

Our morning 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). It was to Corinth, this megalopolis where the apostle Paul came and worked, established a thriving church, subsequently sending two of his epistles now part of the New Testament. Here, we see all of the sites associated with his ministry: the *Agora*, the *Temple of Apollo*, the *Roman Odeon*, the *Bema* and *Gallio's Seat*. 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.

After the visit we will climb up to **Acro-corinth**, actually the acropolis of Corinth which is crowned by a Venetian citadel. It is situated to the southwest of the ancient city and rises to an elevation of 1883 ft. [574 m.]. Today it is surrounded by walls that are about 3 km. long. The current walls were built and rebuilt by the Byzantines, Franks, Venetians, and Ottoman Turks. Writing of days prior to Paul, Strabo said that the Temple of Aphrodite owned one thousand temple-slaves and prostitutes! Thus the reputation of Corinth was well-known. After the tour we will have **lunch** in a local restaurant.

We will then drive onto Nafplion and check-in at hotel in Tolo. Dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Fri, 4th December: Mycenae – Epidaurus – Nafplion

Early in the morning we will drive to **Mycenae** where we will see the remains of the prehistoric citadel fortified with the *Cyclopean Walls*, the *Lionesses' Gate*, the remains of the *Mycenaean Palace* and the *Tomb of King Agamemnon* in which we will actually enter.

After **lunch**, we will continue on to visit **Epidaurus**: the *Sanctuary of Asclepius*, ancient god of healing. Here we'll see the best-preserved ancient theatre in all of Greece, famous for the harmony of its design and the perfection of its remarkable acoustics, easily accommodating 12,000 people. After the visit we will have free time in Nafplion, the picturesque city which was the first capital of modern Greek State back in 1830's. Return to hotel in late afternoon for dinner and overnight in Nafplion. **(B,L,D)**

Sat, 5th December : Isthmia – Cenchreae - Athens

At the southern end of the Corinth Canal is the site of ancient **Isthmia**, once the major local religious centre (devoted to Poseidon, god of the sea and the boy-god Palaimon) and location of the biennial Isthmian Games. We will see only the foundations of Poseidon's temple (7th century BC) and the remains of a starting gate for track events in the adjacent, vanished stadium. In the local museum unique exhibits include panels of painted glass or stone embedded in a resin matrix. They were intended to decorate an Isis temple but were never used owing to an earthquake in 375 AD. The Apostle Paul merely visited the Isthmian Games during his first stay in Corinth (I Cor. 9:24-27).

After **lunch** we will return to Athens. On our way we will see the ruins of early Christian 5th century basilica in **Cenchreae**. In the afternoon we check-in at hotel in Athens for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Sun, 6th December: Athens Departure

After breakfast check-out of rooms and board the bus for the escorted transfer to Athens Airport. **(B)**

The above package includes:

- 16 nights accommodations based on sharing mostly twin/double rooms at 3*/4* hotels in Turkey and Greece.
- Daily Buffet Breakfast and Dinners at hotels.
- 6 lunches in local restaurants in Turkey
- 9 lunches in local restaurants in Greece.
- All sightseeing tours and visits with the services of local professional licensed English speaking tour guides.
- All transportation by private fully air conditioned motor coaches in Turkey and Greece.
- Highway tolls and ferry tickets.
- Discounted entrance fees to the sites as specified in the itinerary
- Border crossing fees.
- One-way Istanbul – Izmir domestic flight.
- Free Wi-Fi on the bus
- Small bottle of water in the bus
- Whisper sets in Turkey and Greece
- Accommodation tax, hotel service charges and VAT.
- Third party personal civil liability insurance
(It covers the liability of the insured person against third parties for damages from accidents (loss of life, personal injury and / or property damage) that may be caused to them by unfair acts or omissions of that person or who is in the service, and related organizing transport of incoming tourists from abroad, from Athens International Airport “Eleftherios Venizelos” to hotels and excursions/tours/guided visits within Greece).

This package excludes;

- All personal expenses
- Drinks and beverages.
- Travel & Medical health insurance
- Valid passport and visa fees
- Any other services not mentioned as being included.

Quoted Hotels

Izmir – Ramada Plaza hotel
Pamukkale – Colossae Thermal
Kusadasi – Neopol hotel
Bergama – La Bella Hotel
Canakkale – Buyuk Truva Hotel or similar
Kavala – Oceanis
Thessaloniki – Capsis
Kalambaka – Famissi Eden
Delphi – Kastalia
Athens – Parthenon
Nafplion – Park