

TURKEY & GREECE

New Testament Biblical Study Trip



June 16-29, 2016

After the resurrection Jesus told his disciples, "...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). By the end of the second century AD, Asia Minor (now Turkey) had become the most active area for the growth of Christianity out of all the regions visited by the apostles. Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia wrote a letter to the emperor Trajan complaining that the pagan temples had been forsaken due to the growth of Christianity. This region was the focus of much of the ministry of both the apostle Paul and the apostle John. It is also possibly the place of the apostle Philip's death at Hierapolis (now Pammukale). Three of Paul's missionary journeys were conducted in Turkey (Acts 13-21). At the end of the first century, when all the other apostles had been martyred, John centered his ministry at Ephesus. Several of the letters written by Paul were written to churches within cities in Asia Minor – Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, etc. Our journey through Turkey will take us to visit the areas and sites of the churches planted by Paul and John.

Paul healed a crippled man in the Lycus Valley and was considered to be the god Zeus by the people living in Lystra (Acts 14:8-13). Paul and Barnabas were almost killed after preaching the gospel in this area. In the same vicinity, is located the ruins of the city of Colossae, to which Paul wrote a letter combating the heresy combining elements of Judaism and Greek philosophy.

The apostle John wrote to the seven churches in Turkey from the Island of Patmos. These churches are listed in Revelation 2-3 and we will visit these impressive archaeological sites including Pergamum and Laodicea. The current ruins of Ephesus are some of the most well-preserved of the entire ancient world. Paul founded the church at Ephesus, and his son in the faith Timothy served as its first pastor. Four decades later, John (most likely with Mary the mother of Jesus) worked at this city. This famous pagan center would become a major center of Christian activity.

At Pergamum an altar was found dedicated to Zeus, likely called the "seat of Satan" in Revelation 2:13, and some in this church followed the heresy of the Nicolaitans (Revelation 2:15). The recently developed site of Laodicea has become one of the most important archaeological sites in Turkey. This ancient church was known for being rich materially but poor spiritually. Laodicea is located near Colossae with its refreshing cool waters and famous healing hot springs of Hierapolis (Pammukale). Both of these waters flowed together into Laodicea providing lukewarm water to the people living there. Like the city of Laodicea, the early believers there were not refreshing nor healing. Join us for this life-changing journey of following in the apostle's footsteps, becoming more intimately acquainted with the Early Church and the New Testament.

