

Türkiye & Greece 2027
TRIP OF A LIFETIME | MAY 19 – JUNE 3, 2027
Visit the Seven Churches of Revelation and walk in the footsteps of the apostles.
Led by Dr. Abson Joseph

ITINERARY:

MAY 19 · DEPARTURE | Mishawaka / Detroit → Istanbul
Meet on Bethel University's campus in Mishawaka for travel to Detroit or meet the group at Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW). Depart for Istanbul.

MAY 20 · DAY 1 | Arrive in Istanbul
Welcome to Türkiye. Arrive at Istanbul Airport, meet the tour representative and transfer privately to the hotel. Overnight in Istanbul.

MAY 21 · DAY 2 | Istanbul: Historic Landmark Tour
After breakfast and pickup from the hotel, our journey begins in **Istanbul**, the only city in the world situated on two continents. Byzantium, Constantinople, Istanbul — its three names span more than 2,600 years, nearly 1,600 of them as the capital of two of the greatest empires the world has known: Byzantine and Ottoman.

We visit the **Hagia Sophia**, **Blue Mosque** and **Hippodrome**, where chariot races and Byzantine riots took place. Visit the **Spice Bazaar (Egyptian Bazaar)**. The air here is filled with the enticing aromas of cinnamon, caraway, saffron, mint, thyme and every other conceivable herb and spice.

Overnight in Istanbul.

MAY 22 · DAY 3 | Istanbul → Troy → Troas → Pergamum
Early morning drive to **Troy** for a visit before continuing to **Troas**. After visiting Troas, drive to **Pergamum** for dinner and overnight.

MAY 23 · DAY 4 | Pergamum → Thyatira → Izmir
After breakfast, we drive to **Pergamum**, now 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 theater in the world and the **Asklepion**, a famous medical center of classical times. We see the site associated with the **Altar of Zeus**, 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 long a rival of the equally famous Library of Alexandria in Egypt. Its collection was estimated at more than 200,000 volumes. It inspired the invention of parchment.

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 the hotel for overnight in Izmir.

MAY 24 · DAY 5 | Izmir → Sardis → Philadelphia → Pamukkale
Today we depart early in the morning for **Sardis**, presently called Sart, one of the most picturesque areas of any of the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1:11; 3:1–4). This was the capital of the ancient Lydian kingdom of the sixth century B.C. and was portrayed as a dying church.

We visit the great **Temple of Artemis**, the restored **Gymnasium** and the reconstructed **Synagogue**. We also see the last several meters of the royal **Persian Road** from Susa to Sardis, built by Cyrus the Great, and the "golden" **Pactolus River**.

Then we continue our journey to **Philadelphia**, now called Alaşehir, another of the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1:11; 3:7), and the only church not censured. There we see the remains of a Byzantine basilica built of brick, with part of a high arch and some 11th-century frescoes.

After the tour, drive to Pamukkale for overnight.

MAY 25 · DAY 6 | Colossae → Laodicea → Hierapolis → Pamukkale → Kusadasi
Today we depart early in the morning to visit **Colossae** before continuing to **Laodicea**. The city was established in the third century B.C. by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus II and was named after his wife, Laodice. Built on the Lycus tributary of the Meander River, it was called Laodicea on the Lycus to distinguish it from other similarly named cities. **Laodicea** is the last of the Seven Churches of Revelation. As a crossroads of two important roads, this city had an important commercial and logistical position.

Then we visit the ancient city of **Hierapolis** and **Pamukkale**, including the **Theater**, **Temple of Apollo** and magnificent **Necropolis**, or graveyard.

The travertine terraces at Pamukkale are among the most spectacular natural wonders we have ever seen. Mineral springs flow over a vast white cliffside, about 200 meters above the plain. Calcite-laden waters have dripped down over a series of terraced levels, creating a fairyland of solidified cascades and shell-shaped basins. The formations resemble snow or balls of cotton, which gave the scenery the Turkish name Pamukkale, meaning "cotton castle." The water in the basins also changes color depending on how the light enters.

After the tour, drive to Kusadasi for overnight.

MAY 26 · DAY 7 | Ephesus → Izmir → Thessaloniki
Drive to **Ephesus** to visit the ancient city, including the **Basilica of St. John**. 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, where excavations continue in this once-great and important city, founded in the 10th century B.C. Walk through history along marble streets lined with wonderful public buildings, including the **Baths of Scholastica**, **Library of Celsus**, **Temple of Hadrian** and **Theater**.

The **Temple of Diana of the Ephesians**, another of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, was built in this city.

After lunch, drive to Izmir Airport for our flight to **Thessaloniki**, the second-largest city in Greece. Upon arrival, meet our guide and transfer to the hotel.

MAY 27 · DAY 8 | Amphipolis → Philippi → Kavala (Neapolis)
Depart for **Philippi**, passing by the **Lion of Amphipolis** for a short photo stop.
We visit **Philippi**, the site where Paul established a strong church. To this congregation, he sent his letter (Acts 16:9–33). We see the river where Lydia is said to have been baptized, the ruins of a prison where the Apostle Paul and Silas were held, the **Agora**, fifth- and sixth-century **Basilicas** and the **Theater**.
After the visit, we continue to **Kavala**, the ancient port of **Neapolis** (Acts 16:11), where we enjoy a panoramic tour before returning to Thessaloniki.

MAY 28 · DAY 9 | Thessaloniki → Berea → Vergina → Kalambaka
This morning, we drive to the upper part of the old city walls, which offer excellent views of **Thessaloniki**.
After our sightseeing drive, we make our way to **Berea** (Acts 17:10–15), where Paul arrived and, according to his custom, went to the synagogue. There he discovered that these Jews were "more noble" than those he had encountered in Thessaloniki (Acts 17:10–11).

Continue to **Vergina**, the first capital of Macedonia, where we visit the tomb of **Philip II**, the father of Alexander the Great. The tour also includes a visit to the **Museum**, which houses the priceless artifacts found here.

In the late evening, we arrive in the beautiful town of **Kalambaka**.

MAY 29 · DAY 10 | Meteora Monasteries → Delphi
Colossal, symmetrical gray and reddish boulders, as though pushed upward from the depths of the earth by an invisible hand, support breathtakingly beautiful monasteries perched high above the ground.
Monks seeking isolation and salvation first built these monasteries in the 14th century, when they were accessible only by ropes lowered from above. We will climb the steps built since then and visit two of the magnificent **Meteora Monasteries**.

In the afternoon, drive to the beautiful seaside town of **Itea** and enjoy the evening at your leisure before continuing to **Delphi**.

MAY 30 · DAY 11 | Delphi → Nafplio
Delphi, the center of the ancient world, was known as the *omphalos*, or "navel of the earth." Its prestige extended far beyond the boundaries of the Hellenistic world.

On the slopes of **Mount Parnassus**, in a landscape of unparalleled natural beauty and majesty, lies the archaeological site of Delphi. We visit the **Sanctuary of Apollo**, **Treasury of the Athenians** and **Archaeological Museum**, which contains masterpieces of ancient Greek sculpture, including the bronze **Charioteer** and the famous athlete **Aghias**.

At Delphi, archaeologists found a stone that was probably once attached to the outer wall of the Temple of Apollo. Inscribed on it is a copy of a letter from the Roman Emperor Claudius to the city of Delphi, naming Gallio as a friend of Claudius and proconsul of Achaia. Historians date the inscription to A.D. 52, which corresponds closely to the time of the Apostle Paul's stay in A.D. 51.

Drive to the beautiful town of **Nafplio**, the first capital of modern Greece.

MAY 31 · DAY 12 | Mycenae → Epidaurus → Nafplio
We drive to **Mycenae** to visit 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**, which we will enter.

After lunch, we continue through Argos to **Nafplio**, the first capital of modern Greece, where we stop to take pictures. From here, we visit **Epidaurus** and the **Sanctuary of Asclepius**, the ancient god of healing. Epidaurus has the best-preserved ancient theater in all of Greece, famous for the harmony of its design and the perfection of its remarkable acoustics. The theater easily accommodates 12,000 people.

Return to the hotel in Nafplio.

JUNE 1 · DAY 13 | Ancient Corinth
Drive to the **Corinth Archaeological Site** (Acts 18:1–18), where the Apostle Paul lived and worked, establishing a thriving church to which he subsequently sent two epistles that are now part of the New Testament.

Here, we see the sites associated with his ministry: the **Agora**, **Temple of Apollo**, **Roman Odeon**, **Bema** and **Gallio's Seat**.

After driving along the Saronic Gulf, we enjoy a quick photo stop at the historic **Corinth Canal**.

JUNE 2 · DAY 14 | Athens: Acropolis, Parthenon and Mars' Hill
Meet our guide in the hotel lobby and begin our tour with the marble-capped **Acropolis**, the sacred rock of Athens, which served as the city's citadel and sanctuary in antiquity.

We visit the famous **Parthenon** and **Erechtheion**. Continue 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**, **Academy**, **University of Athens**, **National Library**, **Panathenaic Stadium**, **Temple of Olympian Zeus** and **Hadrian's Arch**.

JUNE 3 · DAY 15 | Departure from Athens
After witnessing a unique visual and historical experience of Old and New Testament sites in Greece, our biblical journey comes to an end.

Transfer to **Athens International Airport** for our departure flight.

