

THE WAY OF SAINT PAUL

Η Οδός του Παύλου - *E Odos tou Paulou*

A Walking Pilgrimage Following the Way of Paul in Greece

Friday 2 April – Tuesday 13 April 2027

Led by The Rev. Dr. Mark Vitalis Hoffman

A spiritual pilgrimage

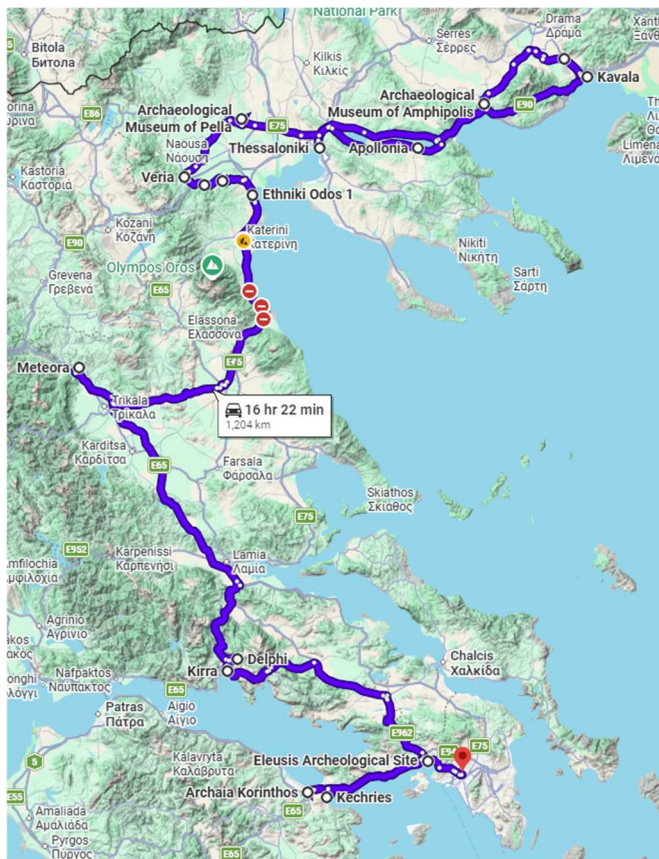
A biblical and historical enrichment opportunity

A cultural and geographical experience

\$4795 with round trip from Dulles - \$3745 land only (based on minimum 15 participants; \$1190 single supplement)

Price includes: Flight ticket (if chosen); meet & assist at airports upon arrivals and departures; 10 nights' accommodation in four/five star hotels based on double occupancy with breakfast and dinner; transfers to/from airports; air-conditioned motor coach; entrance fees to sites as per itinerary; road tolls and taxes, portage of luggage at the hotels; tips for bus driver and hotel staff

OVERVIEW



There are few experiences more enriching to an understanding of the Bible and more formative for spiritual insight than visiting the places where the Christian faith took root in the ancient world. On this tour we will visit some of the most significant places where important events of Biblical, Church, and world history happened. We will take time to dwell on the historical, cultural, and spiritual meaning of these places and events.

We will get a sense of what it was like for Paul to journey through the land. We will begin to experience what a challenge it must have been to become a Christian in a pagan world filled with gods and the symbols of Roman power. We will marvel at the theaters, temples, and other structures of Greco-Roman culture. We will pause in awe of Byzantine churches and monasteries. We will walk where Paul did—following the ancient paths through cities, countrysides, orchards, and fields—in Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessaloniki, Beroea, Corinth, Cenchrea, and Athens. It will be a visually stunning and spiritually uplifting trip.

We will also have fun! As we walk, we will get a taste of the Greek culture. During the evenings we will relax and enjoy the Greek hospitality. We will take time for personal reflection and for worship and discussion together. We will need time for our hearts to catch up with what we hear, see, and feel as we follow along The Way of Saint Paul!

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Your leader, Prof. Mark Vitalis Hoffman, has been developing this tour over the course of 5 years. His research has confirmed or identified likely routes that Paul and other ancient travelers went. (Cf. [Atlas of the Biblical World](#) which Hoffman co-authored.) He has hiked and travelled all the routes to establish places that are safe to go and paths that will evoke the memory of what it might have been like 2000 years ago.

Note that we will not be using an in-country guide so you will miss some of the commentary and insights such a guide could offer. Hoffman will be supplying a guidebook for background information to the places we visit and will be happy to provide as much guidance as you want on the bus or at the sites. In general, though, this trip is geared more for pilgrims and explorers rather than simply tourists.

How is this trip similar to and different from other tours of Greece?

Like many other Bible-oriented trips to Greece, we will visit the key locations mentioned by Paul in his letters and referred to in Acts: Neapolis (Kavala), Philippi, Thessaloniki, Beroea (Veria), Athens, Corinth. But we also stop at less frequented sites like Amphipolis, Apollonia, Lechaion, and Cenchrea (Kechries). Like other tours, we will experience the amazing remains of the Greco-Roman world in the sites already mentioned (plus Delphi), but we will also visit places like Pella, Aigai (Vergina), Kirra, and Eleusis. Many tours visit the fabulous monasteries at Meteora, but on our walks, we will have the opportunity to stop at other monasteries and churches from Byzantine and modern times. What makes this tour unique is that we will be walking significant sections of the paths that Paul travelled and having the time to experience it as a pilgrimage with space for reflection. Hoffman will provide suggested Scripture readings, reflection questions, and photo prompts to enhance the pilgrimage aspect, but you decide how and how much you want to be engaged.

What else should I be aware of?

April is a wonderful time to go hiking in Greece! Temperatures are typically in the 60s. Risk of rain is low. We will miss the huge crowds of tourists that come later, and we get better prices for our hotels.

It is important, though, that you be in good physical condition to walk up to 12 miles in a day over sometimes rugged paths sometimes going up and down hills, and climbing many flights of stairs. As a general guide, you should be able to at least walk a mile in 20 minutes. (We won't necessarily go at that pace, and there will be frequent opportunities for you to pause along the way, but that's a rough guide to fitness.) In general, we try to start at a higher point and walk to a lower point. Do look at the itinerary to get an idea of the hiking we will do, about 60 miles over 9 days of hiking. When we are in the cities, we will usually need to stick together as a group. On the longer walks and some of the sites, however, it's up to you whether you want to go by yourself or with others and at what pace. The paths are usually obvious, but GPS tracks will be provided. You will simply need to be at the walk's endpoint by the designated time.

Because of the nature of the trip and the limited number of participants, you will apply for the tour and need to be approved. (No money is collected until you are approved.) Because the trip was partially supported by a United Lutheran Seminary Christianson Fund grant, preference will be given to those related in some way to ULS until 1 September 2026. (Students / staff / faculty / alumni / donors, and their spouses / partners / friends.) Applications will be open to anyone after 1 September.

ITINERARY (subject to change; approximate distances walked indicate in parentheses)

Friday 2 April (Day 1)

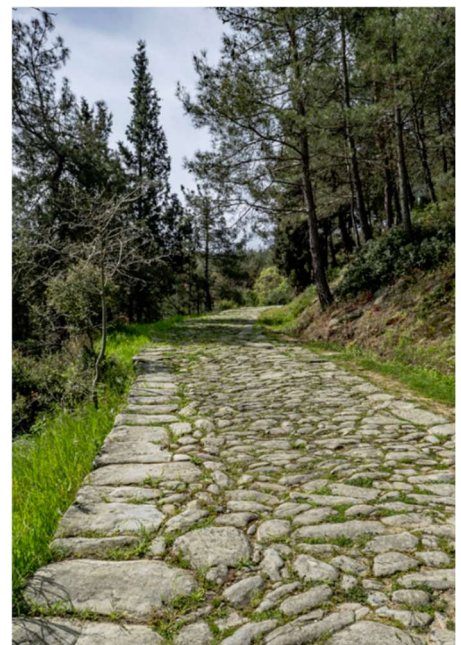
Early afternoon departure from Dulles; overnight on plane

Saturday 3 April (Day 2)

Early morning arrival in Istanbul; transfer for flight to Thessaloniki; morning arrival in **Thessaloniki**. (NOTE: If you arrange your own airline accommodations, you need to be in Thessaloniki by 8:45am in order to join the tour.) The tour begins with a walk in Thessaloniki including traditional sites associated with Paul (the *Spring of St. Paul*; *Vlatadon Monastery* where Paul was said to have preached) as well as the *Roman agora*, the *Byzantine Churches of St. Demetrios and St. Sophia*, the *Arch of Galerius*, the *White Tower*, and more. (Sites are designated as UNESCO heritage sites; Acts 17.1-9; ~3.5 miles) We continue on to **Neapolis** (modern Kavala) following the ancient Via Egnatia, stopping as Paul did at **Apollonia**. (Acts 17.1) Paul was directed to Neapolis by the vision of "the Macedonian man" (Acts 16.6-11) We will take a walking tour of Kavala noting the harbor where Paul landed and the memorial to Paul. (~1.2 miles). Dinner and overnight at [Kavala Esperia Hotel](#) near the harbor.

Sunday 4 April (Day 3)

After breakfast at the hotel, we begin the walk to **Philippi** (a UNESCO heritage site) following the Via Egnatia just as Paul and at places walking on the very stones he did! As we head for the pass, we will stop at St. Silas Monastery as well as pausing for the many fantastic views. Arriving in Philippi, you will have



*Via Egnatia from Neapolis to Philippi
All photos ©MGVHoffman*

time to tour this amazing site (including the traditional prison of Paul and Silas) before we continue on to the Lydia Baptistry site. (Acts 16.11-40) Here we will have the opportunity to reaffirm our own baptisms. (~12 miles) The bus will pick us up and bring us back to the hotel in Kavala for dinner and overnight.



*Philippi:
View of
Roman
forum and
bema
(center)
and
Roman
basilica
(right)
with
Christian
Basilica B
in the
distance*

Monday 5 April (Day 4)

Breakfast at the hotel and drive to **Amphipolis** still following the Via Egnatia. After a visit to the museum there, we will tour the site, entering the northern gate where Paul probably entered and exiting at the southern gate Paul likely would have taken as he continued to Thessaloniki. (~2.1 miles) We will make a brief stop at **Pella**, notable as the birthplace of Alexander the Great and continue on to **Beroea** (modern Veria) where Paul went after being chased out of Thessaloniki. (Acts 17.10-13) Our walking tour begins at the gate where Paul entered the city. We will take some time to peruse the fascinating funerary monument inscriptions at the Archaeological Museum, stop at the striking Old Metropolitan Church, pass the old Jewish synagogue, and continue to the Paul Bema memorial. The tour ends at the Byzantine Museum. (~2 miles) We go to [Hotel Aiges Melathron](#) in Veria for dinner and overnight.

Tuesday 6 April (Day 5)

Acts 17.14 reports that when Paul was chased out of Beroea, friends escorted him to the coast and then on to Athens. Almost certainly this means that Paul headed east from Beroea and passed through **Aigai** (a UNESCO heritage site; modern Vergina) to get to Methoni or Pydna on the Aegean Sea. Aigai is famous as the site of one of the palaces of Philipp II (father of Alexander the Great) and the theater where he was assassinated and Alexander assumed power. At Aigai we will visit the Polycentric Museum with its incredible archaeological displays, then to the 'immersive' experience of the Museum of the Royal Tombs, and then on to the theater and Palace. From Aigai we will then hike the beautiful countryside with its fields, orchards, and forests along Paul's likely path, including a stop at the Church of St. Demetrius. The bus will pick us up at the Church of St Nicholas in Neokastro and return us to our hotel in Veria for dinner and overnight. (~9 miles)



Church of St. Demetrius near Aigai (Vergina)

Wednesday 7 April (Day 6)

This day will be more leisurely as we travel to Kalambaka and Kastraki via **Methoni** on the Aegean coast. Kalambaka and Kastraki are towns at the foot of the Meteora Monasteries, another UNESCO heritage site. On the way we will stop at an icon workshop to learn how icons are written and their significance. You will have time to wander around Kastraki before dinner and overnight at the [Grand Meteora Hotel](#). This is one of the spa resort hotels we will be staying at, so you may wish to take advantage of the luxuries the hotel offers!

Thursday 8 April (Day 7)



St. Stephanos Monastery at Meteora

The bus will pick us up and drive us to a brief stop at **Thermopylae**, site of the battle between the Spartans and Persians in 480BCE. From there we continue on to **Delphi**, the most famous oracle site in the ancient world. After touring the museum and the archaeological site (~2.5 miles), we will go down to the [Europa Beach](#) hotel on the Gulf of Corinth for dinner and overnight.

Friday 9 April (Day 8)

The bus will bring us back up to Delphi where we will begin hiking the ancient path down to **Kirra**. For many ancient travelers to Delphi coming for the oracle or for the Pythian Games, the easiest way to get there was to sail to the harbor at Kirra and then take this pilgrim path (~7 miles) up to the site. The walk features stunning views and passage through ancient ruins and a veritable sea of Amphissa olive trees. (Did Paul ever walk here? Perhaps. If he returned to Beroea on his second or third visit to Corinth, he could have gone directly south to Kirra and then taken a ship to Lechaion. In any case, Paul certainly would have known about Delphi.)

Following lunch, we continue on to **Corinth**, a place Paul visited three times and spent several years. (Acts 18.1-17) We will start at Corinth's Lechaion Harbor and walk part way, at least passing by the Asklepios and the Spring of Aphrodite, to the main archaeological site. For dinner and overnight, we will be at the [Alkyon Resort](#) on the Gulf of Corinth, another fine spa resort hotel with many amenities.



View from Delphi to Kirra and Gulf of Corinth – We walk from here, across the spur extending into the valley and to the Gulf of Corinth in the distance. The valley is a 'sea' of olive trees.

Today we visit the Byzantine **Meteora** Monasteries! Unlike other tours, however, we will start at the Grand Meteora Monastery and then walk to the other ones and end up back down in Kalambaka. The path itself between the monasteries isn't overly strenuous (~ 3 miles with amazing views along the way). The challenge is all the steps up to each monastery. We will visit two or three monasteries, one of which will be Holy Trinity (of [James Bond fame](#)) which offers the best space for reflection time.

Saturday 10 April (Day 9)



Corinth: Lechaion Road leading to forum and bema; Acrocorinth in distance

At the end of his first time in Corinth, Acts 18.18 reports that Paul went to Corinth's other harbor, **Cenchrea**, on the Aegean Sea in order to sail back to Jerusalem. We will trace Paul's steps as we walk through the countryside from Corinth to Cenchrea. (~7.5 miles) Passing by **Isthmia**—one of the four sites of the ancient Panhellenic games with Olympia, Delphi, and Nemea—we return by bus to Corinth for an exploration of the **Acrocorinth**. (~1.9 miles) The Temple of Aphrodite is at the top of the site, but it is more impressive for the fortifications that date back to the classical period. We return to the Alkyon Resort for dinner and overnight.

Sunday 11 April (Day 10)

Leaving for Athens, we cross the Corinth Canal and stop at **Eleusis**, site of the Eleusinian Mysteries. The sanctuary was the destination of the annual procession along the Sacred Way from Athens by initiates (*mystai*) into the cult. Based on the myth of Demeter and Persephone, it was the most prestigious mystery religion in antiquity and provided an ecstatic experience of life after death. (~1 mile to tour the site) On to **Athens**! As part of our visit to the Parthenon, we will walk the Peripatos around the Acropolis before stopping at the **Areopagus**, site of Paul's famous speech recorded in Acts 17.16-34. Passing by the Roman Forum and Hadrian's Library, we will visit the agora and then follow the Panathenaic Way (used by the *mystai* heading to Eleusis) to Kerameikos and the start of the Sacred Way. (~5 miles) Dinner and overnight at the [Stanley Hotel](#) with its rooftop bar and heated swimming pool and a 360 degree view of Athens. Stunning!

Monday 12 April (Day 11)

You will have a free day in Athens! There is so much to see and do, and it's all up to you. If you're the museum sort, Hoffman recommends the National Archaeological Museum, the Byzantine and Christian Museum, or the Acropolis Museum. (Entrance fees not included in tour price.) If you're up for more hiking, consider going up the Philopappos Hill with excellent views and a stop at the Pnyx where the ancient Athenian *ekklesia* met to deliberate. Or maybe you just want to wander and get lost for a bit browsing, shopping, and eating in Plaka and Monastiraki. Or maybe go watch the impressive changing of the guard at the Monument to the Unknown Soldier near Syntagma Square. Or there is the Olympic Stadium or ... The only problem will be choosing what you most want to do! Return to the Stanley Hotel for overnight.



Agora in foreground with Acropolis and Areopagus at distant right

Tuesday 13 April (Day 12)

We have an early morning departure from the hotel to get to the Athens airport for the flight to Istanbul. There is an almost 4 hour layover in Istanbul (lots to see in this huge airport!) before taking an afternoon flight to Dulles. With the time change, we arrive at Dulles on Tuesday evening, returning with memories and insights to last a lifetime!

DEPOSITS AND PAYMENTS: A deposit of \$500.00 per person is required to make a reservation. An additional payment of \$1000.00.00 per person is due by October 02, 2026. The final payment is due no less than 90 days prior to the departure date of the tour (January 02, 2027). Payment can be made by personal check or money order. Credit card payments will be accepted but will incur a 4% Surcharge at the time of booking. Reservations received after January 02, 2027 may incur additional charges due to supplier contract terms.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS: If a passenger cancels his/her tour membership there will be a cancellation fee of \$250.00 per person to cover administrative and communication costs up until 121 days before departure. For cancellations 120-91 days before departure the cancellation fee will be \$500.00 per person. 90-61 days before departure the cancellation fee will be 50% of the Cost per person. There will be no refund for cancellations within 60 days of departure, no-shows, or partially completed tours. All cancellation requests must be addressed to Goodshepherd Travel in writing. Trip cancellation insurance is recommended.

FARE INCLUSIVE: Roundtrip air transportation from Washington, DC (IAD) International as indicated on the registration form. 10 nights hotel accommodations, based on two people sharing a double or twin-bedded room in Four/Five star hotels by (local standards). All meals as outlined in the brochure consisting of full Local breakfasts (B) at the hotel and dinner. Sightseeing as outlined in the itinerary by private motor coaches, utilizing the Entrance fees for attractions if applicable. All transfers between airports and hotels by private motor coach. Service charges and taxes normally levied by hotels and restaurants. All U.S. & Foreign Country departure taxes are included in the price of the tour. Tips to guides, motor coach drivers, hotel porters, and restaurant staff (i.e., maitre d', table waiter, etc.) are included. The brochure price is per person in US dollars.

TOUR ITINERARY SUBJECT TO CHANGE: Goodshepherd Travel constantly strives to adhere to the specifics shown in the itinerary; however, circumstances may necessitate changes. Such circumstances may require changes without advance notice during the tour. Goodshepherd Travel reserves the right to change the itinerary if unforeseen circumstances beyond our control force a change. Goodshepherd Travel is not responsible for any changes caused by unforeseen circumstances.

TOUR CANCELLATION: Goodshepherd Travel reserves the right to cancel or withdraw the tour at any time. In the event of a cancellation deemed necessary by Goodshepherd Travel, the sole and exclusive responsibility of Goodshepherd Travel is to refund all monies recovered.

NOT INCLUDED: Passport costs, visa fees (if any), and health documentation costs (when required); food and beverages (including coffee and tea) not usually included with the table d'hote meals; optional sightseeing tours and excursions; accident and baggage insurance; transporting and handling excess luggage; tips to persons rendering special personal services; items of a purely personal nature such as laundry, telephone, and cable expenses, room service orders, etc.; transportation between the home city and the international departure city.

AIR ROUTINGS: The brochure price includes IATA jet economy class transportation from the international departure city applicable on all IATA and ARC carriers, based on the 6/45 day Apex fare to the Europe. Goodshepherd Travel. Reserves the right to choose the air carrier, routing, and departure time for each passenger. Airfares used are based on contracted group fares and are highly restrictive. Payments for and restrictions on airline tickets are governed by the applicable fare. Cancellation fees levied by the airlines are applicable if you cancel or change your air ticket for any reason after purchase of air ticket. Ticketing must be completed 45 days prior to departure. Group fares do not permit deviations; passengers who wish to deviate may arrange their own airfare. An airline credit of \$1050.00 will be given to those passengers who arrange their own airfare. Passengers planning to arrange their own air transportation must notify Goodshepherd Travel. in writing on or before January 02, 2027. Seat numbers will be assigned by the airline at check-in; specific seat requests cannot be guaranteed. Passengers are responsible for providing frequent flyer information upon check-in.

HOTELS: Tour prices are per person, based on two people sharing a room in Deluxe hotels. Single rooms are subject to availability and at an additional cost of \$1190.00 (tour participants without a roommate will have to pay single room surcharge).

BAGGAGE: You may check no more than one (1) piece of luggage whose overall dimensions does not exceed 62 inches (length + width + height) and whose weight does not exceed fifty (50) pounds in total. Checking a second bag will cost up to

\$100.00. Each passenger may also bring one (1) piece of carry-on luggage. Tips to hotel porters are included for one normal sized piece of luggage, excluding carry-on bags which must remain in your possession at all times. These regulations may change without notice so please read the monthly correspondence you will receive from Goodshepherd Travel for the most current information. Garment bags cannot be carried. Under no circumstances may dangerous articles such as firearms, explosives, oxygen, or combustible substances be contained in any baggage. Medications, valuables, passports, and a change of clothing should be packed in your carry-on bag.

DISABILITIES: Due to the difficult terrain at sites we visit, persons requiring oxygen or oxygen therapy will not be permitted on the tour. For reasons of passenger safety and well-being, persons with impaired mobility, vision, or mental capacity will not be permitted on the tour. Goodshepherd Travel reserves the right to refuse passage to someone who is in such physical or mental condition as to be unfit for travel or who may require care and attention beyond that which the tour guide and tour host can provide. The tour requires a substantial amount of walking and the sites are not accessible by wheelchair.

INSURANCE: Acting only as agents for suppliers, Goodshepherd Travel is not responsible for damage, loss, or theft of luggage and/or personal belongings, or for personal injury, accident, illness and/or death as a result of any occurrences or conditions beyond its control, including, but not limited to, defects in vehicles, breakdown in equipment, strikes, terrorist attacks, hostage situations, kidnappings, hijackings, protests, riots, public demonstrations, or theft. For your protection, it is important that you have adequate travel insurance to cover these possibilities. Additional information and application forms for all types of coverage will be supplied to you prior to departure.

PASSPORT: A valid passport is required and must be obtained in person by each tour member. Complete instructions and application forms for passports can be obtained by contacting your local courthouse or post office.

PRICE CHANGES: Tour conditions and air fares are subject to Governmental, IATA, ARC, and airline regulation requirements in effect at the date of and during the tour. All rates are quoted in US dollars and are based on tariffs and costs in effect in May 2027, and are subject to change without notice. Taxes and fuel surcharges of \$687.00 are included in your tour cost and are subject to change without notice. Goodshepherd Travel reserves the right to pass along additional fuel surcharges or additional taxes imposed by the airline.

DISCLAIMER: Goodshepherd Travel acts as a tour operator and only a tour operator. The suppliers providing transportation, sightseeing arrangements and hotel accommodations for the tour program are independent contractors and are not agents or employees of Goodshepherd Travel. All coupons, receipts and tickets are issued subject to the terms and conditions specified by the suppliers. By utilizing the services of the suppliers, you agree that Goodshepherd Travel shall not be liable for any accident, loss, injury, death, or damage of any kind to you or to those traveling with you. This includes, but is not limited to, conditions beyond its control, defects in vehicles, breakdown in equipment, strikes, terrorist attacks, hostage situations, kidnappings, hijackings, protests, riots, public demonstrations, theft, delay or cancellation of or changes in itinerary or schedules. At the time of printing a TRAVEL WARNING as issued by the United States Department of State was in effect for parts of Europe. Remember also that all travel documents as well as compliance with customs regulations are your responsibility. The terms under which you agree to take these tours cannot be changed or amended except in writing, signed by an authorized officer of Goodshepherd Travel. Airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time you are not on board the aircraft. The passenger contract in use by the airline, when issued, constitutes the sole agreement between it and you. By virtue of my signature on the registration form below I acknowledge and assume all risks associated with this trip and I agree that Goodshepherd Travel assumes no liability of any kind and I hereby expressly waive any and all possible claims against Goodshepherd Travel., or Professors Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman /United Luther Seminary

ACCEPTANCE: Registration for trip and payment of deposit constitutes your acceptance of the "Fine Print."

Trip date:
April 02 - 13, 2027

Package Price: \$4795.00
Single supplement is \$1190.00 (Private Room)

Package price includes the following:

- Flight ticket IAD/ATH/IAD
- Meet & Assist at Airports upon arrivals and departures.
- 10 nights' accommodation in four/five-star hotels based on double occupancy with breakfast and dinner.
- Air-conditioned motor coach throughout for all tours and transfers
- Transfers from and to airports
- Entrance fees as per itinerary
- Road tolls and all applicable taxes
- Tour guide system (Wisper devise)
- Portage of luggage at the hotels
- Tips for Guides, Drivers .

Package price does not include the following:

- Lunches
- Visa Fees
- All Personal Expenses.
- Travel Insurance.
- Beverages at hotels, restaurants and elsewhere.
- Portage of luggage at Airports.
- Anything that's not mentioned in included.
- **Travel Insurance (not included but required for travel)**

AIRLINE PREFERENCE

- Airline Ticket From **IAD \$4795**
 - Airline Ticket From _____
 - Land only (\$3745)**
- Please select one!*

United Luther Seminary
Professor: Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman

Turkey and Greece
 (April 02 - 13, 2027)

Group Reference Number: **GR040227**



PERSONAL INFORMATION (Please complete one application per person)

Full Name (as printed on your passport):			
First Name:	Middle Name:	Last Name:	
Name (as you wish it to appear on your name badge):		Date of birth:	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Mailing Address:	Street:	Mobile phone:	Home phone:
City:	State:	Zip code:	Work phone:
Email address:			

PASSPORT INFORMATION

Country of citizenship:	Passport number:
Passport date of issue:	Passport date of expiration:
Frequent flyer number:	Known traveler number:

ROOM ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION

Please check one: Double/Triple occupancy Single occupancy (**Private Room**) \$1190.00 additional

All prices are in US Dollars based on per person in a double/Triple room, Passengers rooming alone is subject to single supplement

If choosing double occupancy, please indicate the name of your roommate if known at the time of booking:

If choosing single occupancy, would you be willing to share a room with another person? Yes No

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please list the name, relationship, and phone number for a family member/close friend who is NOT traveling with you:

I agree to the terms and conditions as stated in this tour contract:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please enclose a copy of current passport and a deposit of **\$500.00 per person** made payable to

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