

The Footsteps of Paul and Greek Island Cruise

April 21-May 3, 2025, 14 days

Lead by Dr David Evans, Estimated price \$5495*

Monday, April 21: depart USA on the main group flight from BNA . . . or make your own flight arrangements if you prefer.

Tuesday, April 22: arrive in Athens, with panoramic touring on way to lunch on own and then check in at a five-star hotel.

Wednesday, April 23: interesting rural scenery along the way to Delphi, which the ancient Greeks considered the omphalos (navel or center) of the world. Here the Delphic oracle muttered cryptic prophecies as sacred vapors issuing from the underworld cast her into a trance from her seat in the Temple of Apollo, the grand remains of which still stand on a mountaintop overlooking breathtakingly green hills and valleys. The museum at Delphi is a gem, small enough to be enjoyed quickly but every exhibit striking. Overnight in a four-star hotel in the village of Delphi.

Thursday, April 4: travel through dramatic countryside to Meteora and the amazing Byzantine monasteries perched atop gigantic rock pinnacles in one of the world's most fascinating geological formations. Overnight and dinner in the village of Kalambaka.

Friday, April 25: beautiful drive to Vergina to see the staggering richness of the royal tombs of the family of Alexander the Great--as we will experience descending into the actual tombs to see the sculptures, painting, and gold jewelry. Stop for worship in Berea, where after being chased out of Thessaloniki, Paul met men and women of noble character, both Jews and Greeks, who believed the Word (Acts 17:10-14). At Berea study and worship at the *bema* or raised stone from which Paul preached. End the day by checking into a 5-star hotel in Thessaloniki.

Saturday, April 26: after Paul received the vision of preaching to the Europeans, beginning in

Macedonia (northern Greece, Acts 16), he landed in the Neapolis harbor, which is modern day Kavala that we will visit. From Neapolis, Paul went to Philippi (16:12ff), where we will see the traditional site of the baptism of Lydia, first European convert, and the ruins on the city of ancient Philippi, including the site that remembers the cell where Paul and Silas were imprisoned before the Lord miraculously freed them and the family of the Philippian jailer was baptized. Return to Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight.

Sunday, April 27: drive through hills and fertile valleys to Athens, birthplace of Western civilization's culture of democracy and the philosophical tradition of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The grandeur that was Greece is summed up in its architecture, most strikingly the Parthenon atop the Acropolis that dominates nearly every view in the bustling modern city. Experience all the highlights of Athens including the iconic Sytagma (Constitution) Square, right across from the House of Parliament guarded by photogenic tassel-festooned wooden-clogged guards. Stop at the Panathenaico Stadium, where the first modern Olympics were held in 1896. Check in for dinner and overnight at a 5-star hotel.

Monday, April 28: this morning board a Celestyal cruise line ship and sail to the world-famous island of Mykonos. The town is a small architectural miracle, with its gleaming whitewashed buildings and windmills--and one of the most cosmopolitan places in the world. Guided walking tour of the city is included, led by the tour escort who will be with the group throughout the cruise.

Celestyal cruise line is proudly Greek. While not floating palaces like an American cruise ship, Celestyal ships are clean, comfortable, with good food and amenities—great reviews from recent groups. Three meals a day are included, plus

beverages at meals. Nearly every daylight hour is spent at the interesting ports, just meals and sleep on board. For special value, shore excursions are included in Ephesus and Patmos--along with free guided walking tours of Mykonos and Santorini. All tips are included throughout the tour/cruise.

Tuesday, April 29: after the overnight cruise to the Turkish coast, the included shore excursion drives through the colorful town of Kusadasi to reach biblical Ephesus. Paul spent a major part of his missionary journey here (Acts 19) and of course wrote the Letter to the Ephesians (one of the Seven Churches of the Revelation). Your included guided walking tour takes you through one of the most magnificent excavations in the world. See the Odeon (concert hall), the Fountain of Trajan, the heated Baths of Scolastika, the Temple of Hadrian and the Latrines, the Library of Celsus, and The Great Theatre, the largest one in antiquity with a capacity of 24,000 where Paul caused a riot (Acts 19:22ff). Walk along the Arcadian Way, where Mark Anthony and Cleopatra once rode in procession. Before returning to the ship, free time in the shopping city of Kusadasi, specializing in oriental carpets, jewelry, and leather goods. Later, sail for the craggily beautiful isle of Patmos, where St John received The Revelation. The included shore excursion visits the cave where tradition says St John had his vision as well as the imposing Monastery of St John built over it.

Wednesday, April 30: spend the day on the sunny island of Rhodes, where once seafarers were greeted by one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Colossus of Rhodes (a "colossal" harbor statue of the sun god Apollo). The old Walled City of Rhodes is most famous as the medieval fortress-kingdom of the Knights of St John. You could easily spend the full day wandering around in the Old City, filled with shopping and cafes and a magnificent palace of the knights—or you can sign up for an optional drive across the countryside to the Bay of Lindos, where Paul is remembered stopping on his way back to Jerusalem at the end of the Third Missionary Journey (Acts 21:1).

Thursday, May 1: full day on Santorini, the most breathtaking of all the Greek islands—and which may have been ancient Atlantis since half of the island sheared off from a volcano. The exquisite whitewashed villages, including the town of Fira, or Thira, cling to volcanic cliffs, accessible only by cable-car (r/t tickets included). After you reach the cliff peak, a guided-tour of the city by our tour escort or sign up for optional excursions.

Friday, May 2: arrive back in the port of Piraeus, Athens, early in the morning and, after breakfast, disembark and begin your trip to Ancient Corinth, the once glorious city near the Isthmus, where Paul met Aquilla and Priscilla and spent a year and a half working and preaching the Gospel (Acts 18). You visit the Archaeological Museum, the Forum, the Temples and the famous Bema, where Paul stood before Gallio accused by the Jews of Corinth. Back to Athens for tour highlights the Acropolis and Parthenon, the very symbols of the Grandeur that was Greece. The area of Athens most associated with the Apostle Paul is Mars Hill (or Areopagus); when Paul's claims about the resurrection intrigued the city's leaders, he was taken to the top of the Areopagus to argue his belief in the famous sermon about "the unknown God" (Acts 17:19-31). Those who wish will have the opportunity to climb to the top of the famous hill, re-affirming with Paul the Gospel of the Risen Christ. Then a guided visit to the recently-opened and most-impressive Museum of the Acropolis housing the cream of all the Acropolis-area archaeological discoveries. Farewell dinner at an authentic Greek restaurant in the Plaka area and hotel overnight.

Saturday, May 3: fly back to USA, arriving same day with golden memories of the Grandeur that was Greece, Paul's incredible Second Missionary Journey, and the glistening Greek Islands

*Airfare cannot be confirmed till early June, at which point price will be guaranteed. We believe \$5495 will be the final price . . . just cannot guarantee till early June. However, you can reserve your place now with a fully-refundable \$500 per person deposit.