

The Society for Biblical Studies
Alumni Invitational Journey—A Platinum Select Journey
12 Day Biblical Backgrounds in Italy
30 April—11 May 2025
3 Day Elective: Florence and Renaissance Italy, returning 14 May 2025

Syllabus

Objectives:

- To appreciate the cultural heritage of Italy
- To enjoy the beauty of the Italian countryside, seascapes and architectural landmarks and to enjoy its rich cuisine
- To explore Italy's contributions to Western Civilization, especially its splendid Classical, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern art and architecture
- To provide an overview of the geographical, social, historical, archaeological and cultural settings of the New Testament.
- To become acquainted with the key issues in biblical studies and the study of Christian origins

Suggested Reading:

Beard, Mary. *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015.

Cline, Eric H., *Biblical Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Fox, Robin Lane. *Pagans and Christians*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1986.

Miano, Peter J. *The Word of God and the World of the Bible: and Introduction to the Cultural Backgrounds of the New Testament*. London: Melisende, 2001.

Stambaugh, John E. & Balch, David L. *The New Testament in its Social Environment*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986.

Twain, Mark. *The Innocents Abroad*. New York: Signet Classics.

Watkin, David. *The Roman Forum*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Daily Itinerary (subject to change due to local circumstances):

Day 1 Depart USA
30.4, W

Day 2 Theme: Introductions and Orientation
1.5, Th Field trip: arrive Naples, visit historic Naples, touring as time permits, transfer to the hotel, orientation and introductions. Dinner is included. overnight in Naples

- Day 3
2.5, F
Theme: Life & Death in the Shadow of Vesuvius
Field trip: visit the excavations of Herculaneum, Oplontis
Dinner on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel.
Overnight in Naples
- Day 4
3.5, Sa
Theme: City Life & *La Dolce Vita*
Field trip: Pompei and Stabia. Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel.
Overnight in Sorrento
- Day 5
4.5, Su
Theme: The Amalfi Coast & Classical Influences in Italy
Field trip: the Amalfi Coast drive, visit to Paestum. Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel.
Overnight in Sorrento
- Day 6
5.5, M
Theme: Optional Cruise Adventure or Free Day
Field trip: excursions by boat from Sorrento to Capri or Positano (prices to be determined)
Overnight in Sorrento
- Day 7
6.5, Tu
Theme: Paul in Italy?
Field trip: The National Archeological Museum in Naples, transfer to Rome. Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel.
Overnight in Rome
- Day 8
7.5, W
Theme: Renaissance and Baroque Rome
Field trip: walking tour of Rome, including Piazza della Repubblica, Church of St. Mary of the Martyrs and the Angels, Piazza di Spagna (Spanish steps), Fontana di Trevi (Trevi Fountain), Piazza Rotunda, Piazza Navona, and Campo dei Fiori.
Overnight in Rome
- Day 9
8.5, Th
Theme: Underground Rome
Field trip: Ostia (ancient port of Rome), Basilica of San Clemente, (Mithraeum), Baths of Caracalla, Domus Aurea/house of Nero (time permitting). Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel.
Overnight in Rome
- Day 10
9.5, F
Theme: From Sect to Imperial Church
Field trip: Catacombs of San Callisto, Vatican museums and Sistine chapel, Vatican City, St. Peter's Square, St. Peter's Basilica. Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel.
Overnight in Rome

Day 11 Theme: Monumental Architecture in Imperial Rome
10.5, Sa Field trip: The Coliseum, Imperial Forum, the Palatine, view the Circus Maximus, Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel. Dinner is included.
Overnight in Rome

Day 12 Return to the USA or continue on the elective to Florence
11.5, Su

Elective: 3 Days: Renaissance and Baroque Italy—Florence (\$1,411 (alumni); \$1,552 (1st time traveler) based on a group of 10)

Day 12 Theme: Renaissance Italy
11.5, Su Field trip: depart Rome by train and arrive in Florence, walking tour including the central market
Dinner is on your own.
Overnight in Florence

Day 13 Theme: The Renaissance
12.5, M Field trip: the Uffizi Gallery, the Ponte Vecchio, the Duomo, Galleria del Accademia. Dinner is on your own.
Overnight in Florence

Day 14 Theme: The Renaissance
13.5, Tu Field trip: Free day for self directed exploration. Late afternoon train to Rome. Dinner is on your own.
Overnight in Rome

Day 14 return flight to the USA
14.5, W

- The itinerary is subject to change due to local circumstances.
- The order of visits in the itinerary is subject to change.
- Lunch stops will be arranged around midday each day during the program. Lunch is on your own.
- Breakfast is included each day. Dinner is on your own except as indicated in the itinerary. There are numerous restaurants within walking distance of the hotels.