

The Society for Biblical Studies  
 Paul's World & Mission  
 10 Day Pilgrimage in Greece: 13-22 April 2026  
 5 Day Elective: Paul's Journeys in Asia and the Churches of the Apocalypse—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum (Aegean Coast of Turkey)

### Course Outline

#### Objectives:

- To provide an overview of the geographical, social and cultural setting of Paul's ministry.
- To identify key ingredients in Paul's missionary strategies.
- To become acquainted with the key issues in Pauline studies.
- To become acquainted with contemporary mission issues.
- To become acquainted with the concept of contextualization in missionary theory.
  - To understand the meaning of mission in the context of modern Greece.
- To study Paul's letters with an interest in learning the ingredients of community building for today's churches: harmony in spite of differences, unity with diversity, managing diversity.

#### Suggested reading:

1. Balch, David L. and John E. Stambaugh. *The New Testament in its Social Environment*. Philadelphia: the Westminster Press, 1986.
2. Cline, Eric H., *Biblical Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
3. Fredriksen, Paula. *Paul: The Pagan's Apostle*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.
4. Gill, David W.J., Trebilco, Paul R., Walton, Steve, eds. *The Urban World and the First Christians*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2017.
5. Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.
6. Miano, Peter J. *The Word of God and the World of the Bible: an Introduction to the Cultural Backgrounds of the New Testament*. London: Melisende, 2001.
7. Murphy-O'Connor. *Paul the Letter Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995.
8. Sanders, E.P. *Paul*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

#### Daily Itinerary:

Day 1: Depart USA  
 13.4, M

- Day 2:  
14.4, T Arrive Thessaloniki, touring as time permits  
Old City walls, Citadel, St. Demetrius Church, Arch of Galerius (Acts 17: 4, 12), transfer to hotel for dinner (included), introductions and group building  
overnight in Thessaloniki
- Day 3:  
15.4, W Theme: Classical Backgrounds to Paul's World  
Field trip: Pella (birthplace of Alexander the Great), Vergina, Royal Macedonian tombs. Dinner is included.  
overnight in Thessaloniki
- Day 4:  
16.4, Th Theme: Introduction to Hellenism  
AM forum: From Alexander to Jesus and Paul  
Field trip: Thessaloniki, Via Ignatia, Philippi (Acts 16), Kavala/Neapolis (Acts 16: 9-33). Dinner is included.  
overnight in Thessaloniki
- Day 5:  
17.4, F Theme: Classical Athens  
AM forum: The Perils of Pauline Studies  
Fieldtrip: transfer to airport, flight to Athens, driving tour of Athens, Acropolis, Parthenon, Erectheum, Mars Hill/Areopagus, (Acts 17). Dinner on your own.  
overnight in Athens
- Day 6:  
18.4, Sa Theme: Classical I Hellenistic Athens  
Field trip: The Athenian agora: the Stoa of Attalos, Hephaestion, The Roman agora: Tower of the Winds, Library of Hadrian, Plaka, Acropolis Museum, Dinner on your own.  
overnight in Athens
- Day 7:  
19.4, Su Theme: Free day  
Dinner on your own.  
overnight in Athens
- Day 8:  
20.4, M Theme: Paul in Corinth  
Field trip: Corinthian Canal, Corinth excavations (Acts 18), museum, view Acro-Corinth, Mycenae. Dinner on your own.  
overnight in Peloponessus
- Day 9:  
21.4, Tu Theme: Religious Cults in Paul's World  
Field trip: Paleo Epidauros, Theatre, Asklepion, Propylaia, Museum, Nafplio, optional: Palamidi Castle. Dinner on your own.  
overnight in Peloponessus

Day 10            Transfer to Venezelos Airport, return to USA, or continue on the elective  
22.4, W           to the Aegean Coast of Turkey

**5 Day Elective: Paul's Journeys in Asia & the Churches of the Apocalypse**

Day 10            Theme: East Meets West  
22.4, W           Field trip: Transfer to airport, flight to Izmir  
Overnight Ayvalik Dinner included.

Day 11            Theme: John and the Book of Revelation  
23.4, Th           Field trip: Bergama/Pergamum (Rev. 2:12), acropolis, Temple of Trajan  
(Rev 2:13-17), Altar of Zeus, theatre, Asclepeion  
Overnight in Kusadasi, Dinner on your own.

Day 12            Theme: Anatolian Adventure  
24.4, F           Field trip: full day excursion to the heart of the Anatolian Plain, explore  
the exquisite archaeological ruins of Aphrodisias  
Overnight in Kusadasi, Dinner on your own.

Day 13            Theme: Hidden in Plain Sight  
25.4, Sa           Field trip: Field trip: the Artemision, Selcuk Museum, St. John's Basilica,  
Pollio Aqueduct, the Issa Bey Mosque  
Overnight in Kusadasi, Dinner on your own.

Day 14            Theme: Empire, Paul and the Early Churches  
26.4, Su           Field trip: Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7), visit the State Agora, the Great Theatre  
(Acts 19), Library of Celsus, the agora, Arcadia Street, Curetes Street,  
State Agora, optional visit to the slope houses (additional cost)  
Overnight in Kusadasi, Dinner on your own.

Day 14.5          Transfer to airport, return to USA  
27.4, M

- Lectures: (the following topics can be addressed in morning and evening fora. Topics may be covered in more than one session)
- "From Alexander to Paul: The Influence of Hellenism on Paul's Writings"
  - "The Search for the Historical Paul": What do we know about Paul and how do we know it?
  - "The Social Setting of Paul's Churches": Textual and extra textual clues of the social dynamics in Paul's churches.
  - "The Cult of Asclepius and its Influence on Christianity"
  - "Models of Modern Mission"
  - "Ingredients of Effective Mission"