

The Society for Biblical Studies  
11 Day Biblical Backgrounds in Italy  
15—25 April 2027  
5 day elective: Adventure and Archaeology in Sicily, returning 30 April 2027

## 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  
1.11, Sa

Day 2            Theme: Introductions and Orientation  
2.11, Su        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            Theme: Life & Death in the Shadow of Vesuvius

- 3.11, M      Field trip: visit the excavations of Herculaneum, Oplontis  
Dinner on your own in a restaurant close to the hotel.  
Overnight in Naples
- Day 4      Theme: City Life & *La Dolce Vita*  
4.11, Tu      Field trip: Pompei and Stabia. Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close  
to the hotel.  
Overnight in Sorrento
- Day 5      Theme: The Amalfi Coast & Classical Influences in Italy  
5.11. W      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      Theme: Paul in Italy?  
6.11, Th      Field trip: The National Archeological Museum in Naples, 3:40 PM  
transfer to Rome, Trenitalia # 9552. Dinner is included.  
Overnight in Rome
- Day 7      Theme: From Sect to Imperial Church  
7.11, F      Field trip: 9:15 AM Catacombs of San Sebastian, 1:30 PM 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 8      Theme: Underground Rome  
8.11, Sa      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 9      Theme: Monumental Architecture in Imperial Rome  
9.11, Su      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 10      Theme: Renaissance and Baroque Rome  
10.11, M      Field trip: walking tour of Rome, including Piazza della Republica, 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. Dinner is on your own in a restaurant close to the  
hotel.

## Overnight in Rome

Day 11            Return to the USA or continue on the elective to Florence  
11.11, Tu

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Day 11            Theme: Italy's Best Kept Secret?  
11.11, Th        Field trip: flight to Palermo, Walking tour of Palermo: Piazza Pretoria, four corners, Ballaro Market, Monreale/Duomo, afternoon with free time in Palermo  
Dinner is on your own, overnight Palermo.

Day 12            Theme: Graeca Magna  
12.11, F        Field trip: Depart Palermo, visit excavations of Selenunte, continue to Agrigento, visit archaeological excavations (Valley of Temples).  
Dinner is on your own, overnight in San Leone

Day 13            Theme: Late Imperial Roman  
13.11, Sa        Field trip: Excursion to villa Romana del Casale, Drive to Taormina with stops along the way, including a winery in Catania. (possible excursion Mt. Etna?)  
Dinner is on your own, overnight in Taormina

Day 14            Theme: Goethe's Taormina  
14.11, Su        Field trip: free day, self directed touring, many options to consider.  
Dinner is on your own, overnight in Taormina

Day 15            Theme:  
15.11, M        Field trip:  
Dinner is on your own, overnight in Taormina

Day 16            Return to USA  
16.11, Tu

- 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.