



Biblical Türkiye: the Cities of Early Christianity

October 9-25, 2026

Join the Virginia Theological Seminary as we walk in the footsteps of apostles, where ancient prophets once journeyed, and witness the rise of early Christianity.

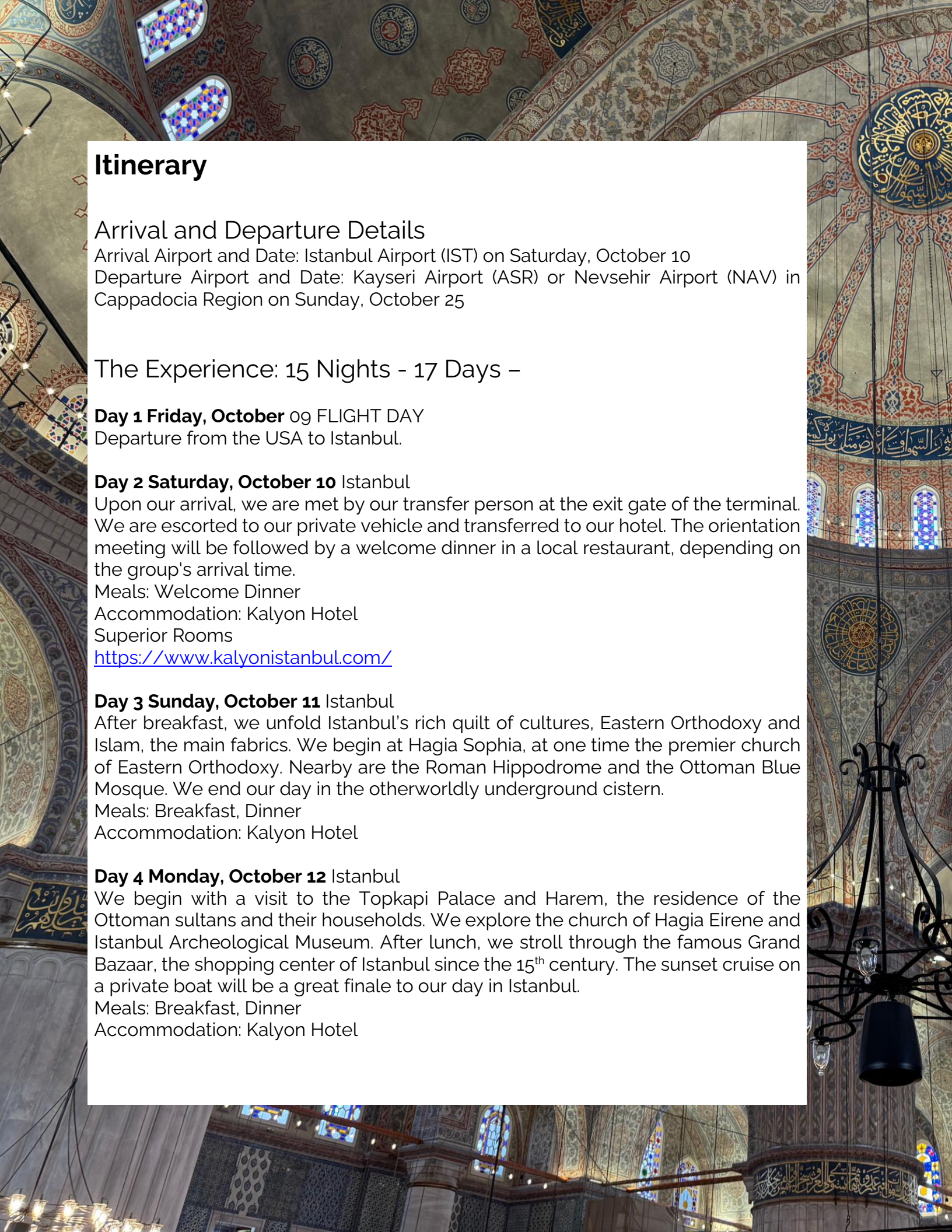
What We Offer:

- VIP treatment in comfort of luxury travel itinerary
- Renowned Turkish hospitality
- Spiritual leadership from The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, PhD and The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, PhD.



For more information:

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Itinerary

Arrival and Departure Details

Arrival Airport and Date: Istanbul Airport (IST) on Saturday, October 10

Departure Airport and Date: Kayseri Airport (ASR) or Nevsehir Airport (NAV) in Cappadocia Region on Sunday, October 25

The Experience: 15 Nights - 17 Days -

Day 1 Friday, October 09 FLIGHT DAY

Departure from the USA to Istanbul.

Day 2 Saturday, October 10 Istanbul

Upon our arrival, we are met by our transfer person at the exit gate of the terminal. We are escorted to our private vehicle and transferred to our hotel. The orientation meeting will be followed by a welcome dinner in a local restaurant, depending on the group's arrival time.

Meals: Welcome Dinner

Accommodation: Kalyon Hotel

Superior Rooms

<https://www.kalyonistanbul.com/>

Day 3 Sunday, October 11 Istanbul

After breakfast, we unfold Istanbul's rich quilt of cultures, Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam, the main fabrics. We begin at Hagia Sophia, at one time the premier church of Eastern Orthodoxy. Nearby are the Roman Hippodrome and the Ottoman Blue Mosque. We end our day in the otherworldly underground cistern.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Kalyon Hotel

Day 4 Monday, October 12 Istanbul

We begin with a visit to the Topkapi Palace and Harem, the residence of the Ottoman sultans and their households. We explore the church of Hagia Eirene and Istanbul Archeological Museum. After lunch, we stroll through the famous Grand Bazaar, the shopping center of Istanbul since the 15th century. The sunset cruise on a private boat will be a great finale to our day in Istanbul.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Kalyon Hotel

Day 5 Tuesday, October 13 Nicaea - Bursa

After breakfast and check out, we drive along the ancient city walls to the charming church of Holy Savior in Chora (Kariye Mosque). We visit and admire its superb frescoes from the 13th century after the Latin occupation of the city. We drive to Iznik via the old bridge over the Bosphorus and the new bridge over the Sea of Marmara, with a lunch break on the way. Set around the serene lake, the city of Iznik, ancient Nicaea, was the site of the First and Seventh Councils of Nicaea. Nicene Creed originated in the city in 325 when Constantine the Great summoned more than 300 bishops to his summer palace. We drive to Bursa and enjoy the thermal facilities of the hotel in the afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Celik Palas Thermal Hotel Bursa, <https://www.hotelcelikpalas.com/en> or Movenpick Thermal Hotel Bursa, <https://movenpick.accor.com/en/europe/turkey/bursa/hotel-thermal-spa-bursa.html>

Day 6 Wednesday, October 14 Canakkale

After breakfast and check-out, we explore Bursa, the first capital city of the Ottoman Empire. We visit Ulu Mosque, Silk Bazaar, and the ancient inns for shopping in the morning. After lunch in Bursa, we drive to the site of legendary Troy. We visit the new museum and site overlooking Dardanelles and rejoice the Iliad and its heroes in the afternoon. We enjoy free time and dinner on our own in the charming town of Canakkale.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Double Tree Hilton Canakkale

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/ckzcddi-doubletree-canakkale/>

**Day 7 Thursday, October 15** Ayvalik

After breakfast and check-out, we drive to Ezine town and visit the ancient granite quarries supplying the gigantic columns to the ancient monuments. We explore the Biblical sites of Alexandria Troas ([Acts 16:8-11](#), [20:5-12](#); [2 Cor. 2:12-13](#); [2 Tim. 4-13](#)) and Assos ([Acts 20:13-14](#)). Drive to our resort hotel along the bay in the afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: D-Resort Hotel Ayvalik, <https://www.dresortayvalik.com/>

Day 8 Friday, October 16 Ayvalik

After a leisurely breakfast, enjoy your free day at leisure. Optional visit to Cunda Island in the afternoon. Celebrate the Holy Eucharist before the dinner.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: D-Resort Hotel Ayvalik

Day 9 Saturday, October 17 Izmir

After breakfast and check-out, we drive to Bergama. We explore the acropolis of Pergamum ([Rev. 2:12-17](#)) and the altar of Zeus described as "the throne of Satan" in the Book of

Revelation. We tour the Asclepion, the ancient healing sanctuary of Asclepius and Apollo. We drive to Sardis [Rev. 3:1-6](#)) with a lunch in a local tavern on the way. Sardis is the second UNESCO site of the day for the biggest and best-preserved diaspora synagogue and Roman Gymnasium. Our final destination is Izmir, ancient Smyrna ([Rev. 2:8-12](#)). Founded by Alexander the Great, the ancient Smyrna and its agora is another UNESCO site with its distinctive and impressive features.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Movenpick Hotel Izmir,

<https://movenpick.accor.com/en/europe/turkey/izmir/hotel-izmir.html>

Day 10 Sunday, October 18 Ephesus - Pamukkale



After breakfast and check-out, we drive to the town of Selcuk. Our focus today is Ephesus ([Letter to the Ephesians](#), [1 and 2 Corinthians](#), [Revelation 1:11](#), [2:1-7](#); [Acts 18:19-28](#), [19:1-41](#)), the most impressive archeological site in Turkey. Paul spent almost three years in Ephesus between ca 52 and 55. Our excursion visits the great theater, the site of the scene of the riot ([Acts 19](#)). We explore the Temple of Artemis (Roman Diana), one of the Seven Wonders of the World, Selcuk Museum, and the Basilica of John. We celebrate the Holy Eucharist in the house of Virgin Mary in the afternoon. We drive to Pamukkale in the late afternoon. Dinner will be served in the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Colossae Thermal Hotel, www.colossaehotel.com

Day 11 Monday, October 19 Antalya

After breakfast and check out, we explore the Biblical sites of Lycus valley ([Letter to the Colossians](#) and [Letter to Philemon](#)), Hierapolis ([Col. 4:13](#)), and Pamukkale, famous for its wonderful white travertine cliffs and mineral baths. We continue to Laodicea, one of the seven churches in the Revelation of John ([Rev. 3:14-22](#); [Col. 2:1](#), [4:13-16](#)). We drive to Antalya in the afternoon. The city of Antalya sits on sheer cliffs above the blue Mediterranean with a green plateau stretching behind the city to magnificent pine forests.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Ramada Plaza Hotel,

<https://ramadaplazaantalya.com/En/Index>

Day 12 Tuesday, October 20 Antalya

Today we visit Perge, a reconstructed Hellenistic city, with a marvelous city plan, including baths, temples, an agora, and a theater; a site of Paul's preaching ([Acts 13:13-14](#), [14:25](#)). After lunch enjoy strolling through the streets of the old harbor of Antalya, ancient Attalia, in the afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Ramada Plaza Hotel



Day 13 Wednesday, October 21 Konya

After breakfast and check out, we cross the Taurus Mountain range by following the route of Paul's first journey up to Pisidian Antioch ([Acts 13:14-52, 16:2; 2 Tim. 3:11](#)), the present-day town of Yalvac. Pisidian Antioch was a Roman Colony with an imperial cult center dedicated to Augustus. This is an important city in Paul's first journey, where he gave his first recorded sermon in Acts. We continue to Eflatun Pinari, a water sanctuary from the Hittites dating back to the 13th Century BC, on the way to Konya. This city was known as Iconium in antiquity in the vicinity of Lystra and Derbe, which were visited by Paul in his first missionary journey ([Acts 13:51, 14:1-6, 19; 2 Tim. 3:11](#)). We enjoy our dinner in a local restaurant specializing in regional Konya cuisine.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Novotel Konya, <https://all.accor.com/hotel/g329/index.en.shtml>

Day 14 Thursday, October 22 Cappadocia

After breakfast and check out, we visit the Mevlana Museum, the burial site of Rumi, famous Sufi poet and founder of the Whirling dervishes, and the local food and vegetable market afterwards. We tour one of the oldest Seljuk Mosques, dating back to the 12th century, before departing from Konya. Following the track of the ancient travelers, including the early Christian Missionaries from Antioch and Jerusalem, and the route once used also by caravans on the Silk Road, we visit a 13th-century caravanserai on the way to Cappadocia. At the end of the day, we explore the labyrinths of Kaymakli Underground City before checking into our cave hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Seraphim Cave Hotel,
<https://www.seraphimcavehotel.com/>

**Day 15 Friday, October 23** Cappadocia

Optional Balloon Ride before breakfast.

Today, we enjoy touring through perhaps the most surreal landscape on earth, the Cappadocia Region ([Acts 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:1](#)). Thousands of years of erosion of the earth have formed the so-called Fairy Chimneys. The first Christians came to settle in the natural grottoes where they created rock-carved churches and underground cities, and painted the churches with important narratives from the Bible in luminous colors. We tour the less-visited sites of the region, including the charming village of Mustafa Pasa and the Keslik Monastery. We take pleasure in having our lunch prepared by the villagers in Ayvali Village as we get accustomed to rural life in Turkey. We enjoy a lecture about the traditional rug weaving in the afternoon and an optional hike in one of the valleys of the region.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner. Accommodation: Seraphim Cave Hotel

Day 16 Saturday, October 24 Cappadocia

We explore the Goreme Monastery, Zelve Valley, Uchisar and Cavusin Villages where the Cappadocian fathers formulated their Trinitarian theology. We tour the pottery-making town of Avanos by the Red River in the afternoon. Optional hike in the Love Valley in the late afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Farewell Dinner. Accommodation: Seraphim Cave Hotel

Day 17 Sunday, October 25 DEPARTURE

After breakfast, we transfer to Kayseri or Nevsehir Airports in Cappadocia and fly back home via Istanbul.

Meals: Breakfast

What is included?

- ✓ Hotel accommodations as indicated in the itinerary or similar
- ✓ Meals with bottled water as indicated in the itinerary: Breakfast (all breakfasts), Lunch (11 lunches), and Dinner (12 dinners)
- ✓ Professional, English-speaking local guide
- ✓ Air-conditioned vehicle with a professional tour bus driver
- ✓ Unlimited bottled water on board the coach during the entire program
- ✓ Hotel tips and restaurant tips in the included meals
- ✓ Arrival and departure flight transfers
- ✓ Complete program of the tours as described in the itinerary. All entrance fees, admissions, and parking fees
- ✓ Baggage handling
- ✓ Detailed map of Turkey
- ✓ VAT and Accommodation Taxes

What is excluded?

- International airfares, airport taxes, and fuel surcharges
- Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages during the meals
- Gratitude for the guides and drivers
- Visa (if required)
- Personal expenses such as minibar, telephone, laundry, etc.
- Travel and health insurance

