

The Steps Of St. Paul

Day 1 Departure From London, Arrive In Thessaloniki (2 Nights)

Enjoy your scheduled flight to Greece. The cradle of Western Civilization, Greece is a land where the glories of antiquity blend with a vibrant modern culture to form a fascinating mixture of the old and the new.

You will be met at the airport by your tour manager/guide and transferred to your hotel. You will then enjoy taking what the Greeks call a *Volta* (stroll) along the seaside promenade, particularly at sunset or under a full moon, which is one of the great pleasures of being in Thessaloniki. Start at **Aristotelous Square**, perhaps with a coffee, a drink, or sweets at one of its many cafes, and walk east past the White Tower and toward the bright lights of the city's amusement park at the other end of the promenade, about 3 kilometers (2 miles) distant. Along Leoforos Nikis, which borders the promenade in the city center, are a number of cafes. In Roman times Thessaloniki was visited by Saint Paul, who preached the new religion, and who later addressed his two well-known epistles (the oldest written documents of Christian literature) to the Christians of Thessaloniki.

Day 2 Day Trip To Kavala And Philippi

Today we take a day trip to easterly foothills of Mount Symvoló; Kavala is the second-largest city of Macedonia and the second port for northern Greece. A picturesque citadel looks down from a rocky promontory to the east, and an elegant Turkish aqueduct leaps over modern buildings into the old quarter on the bluff. Known in ancient times as Neapolis, the town was for two centuries or more a staging post on the Via Egnatia and the first European port of call for merchants and travelers from the Middle East. It was here that Saint Paul landed en route to Philippi on his initial mission to Europe. In later years, the port and citadel were occupied in turn by the Byzantines, Normans, Franks, Venetians, Ottomans and (during both world wars) Bulgarians. Kavála is also one of the main departure points for Thásos and, to a lesser extent, Samothráki.

From Kavala we journey to Philippi. A landmark in the history of Philippi was the year A.D. 49 or 50, when Apostle Paul visited the city and established there the first Christian Church of Europe. This made Philippi a metropolis of Christianity. During the Byzantine period (A.D. 963-969) the walls of the city were reconstructed and at the same time the towers and the wall of the acropolis were built.

Day 3 Thessaloniki - Vergina - Kalambaka (1 Night)

Our morning commences as we visit the **Archaeological Museum** to view the Vergina Treasure and later take a **Walking Tour** of the Ramparts including the White Tower, also known as the Bloody Tower and the Chain Tower. In Vergina, we will explore the **Royal Tombs**. The Tumulus date from 4C B.C. and the façade is adorned with magnificent hunting scenes. The collection from within the tombs will be seen later in the museum at Thessalonika. While we are here we also see the Macedonian Tomb. We will continue on to our hotel in the Kalambaka area for the evening.

Day 4 Kalambaka - Meteora - Delphi (2 Nights)

This morning we will make an early start and journey into northern Greece to visit Meteora, which means “suspended rocks.” We will begin with a visit to **Megalo Meteoro**, the first and highest monastery founded in the region. We will also visit **Varlaam** and its magnificent church, **Katholikon**, featuring beautiful frescoes and **Rousanou**, the most spectacularly located of all the monasteries. We continue to Delphi on the slope of Mt. Parnassus, which towers 2,457 meters over the Gulf of Corinth.

Day 5 Delphi

The land on the southern slope forms a deep cavity, a natural stone amphitheater facing the sea and harboring at its base the **Sanctuary of Apollo**, for many centuries antiquity's largest center of pilgrimage. **The Sacred Way** winds up the hill to the Temple flanked on either side by treasuries and monuments of many states commemorating great events. The large Doric **Temple of Apollo** dominates the entire landscape. Here, too, was the home of the Oracle Pythia who, seated on a tripod above a deep crevasse, would deliver her prophecies as god's truth and advice. After exploring the sacred site we visit the treasures housed in the **Archaeological Museum**.

Day 6 Delphi – Corinth - Athens (2 Nights)

This morning we will drive to Corinth, one of the oldest towns in Greece, where St. Paul worked and lived after leaving Athens. It was here that Paul preached every Sabbath day and successfully converted Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and many Corinthians soon thereafter. The apostles would stay in Corinth for one and a half years preaching and teaching the gospel. Corinth was one of the largest and most prosperous cities in ancient Greece and was later the site of an important Roman colony. Its ruins are spread out at the foot of the huge rock fortress of **Acrocorinth**. We will continue to Athens where St. Paul gave his famous sermon of "Unknown God."

Day 7 Athens – Acropolis & Olympic Stadiums

The **Acropolis** has dominated Athens for over 2,000 years, and there are traces of habitation indicating that it was occupied as early as the Neolithic age. A citadel was built on the rock in Mycenaean times, and the first of a series of temples that honored Athena, the city's divine patroness, was erected during the same era. After the Acropolis was sacked by the Persians in 480 BC, the Athenian leader Pericles rebuilt the site according to a plan of unsurpassed beauty and grandeur. The **Propylea** is the monumental entrance to the complex and its rows of columns still line the way. Nearby is the famous **Temple of Athena Nike**. The **Parthenon** crowns the Acropolis and is a temple that celebrates perfect order and harmony in its columns and the friezes that decorate it. The **Erectheion** is dedicated to Poseidon and Athena and the goddess's own olive tree, her gift to the people of Athens, stands at the west of the temple. Below the Acropolis stands the ancient **Agora**, the commercial and public center of ancient Athens. During the day, we will also make a visit to the **Acropolis Museum**, which contains a superb collection of sculptures from the area. This evening we will enjoy the atmosphere of the **Plaka District**, where the narrow, winding streets are lined with interesting shops and tavernas.

Day 8 Departure From Athens, Return To London

Your guide accompanies you to the airport for your return flight home.