

A Pilgrimage to the **SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION**

**Classical Treasures and Apocalyptic Churches
of Turkey's Aegean Region**

April 27 - May 4, 2026



Led by

**The Revd
Canon James Buxton**
Chaplain in Izmir

organized by

TUTKU

— EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL —





SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION & more

April 27 - May 4, 2026

During this tour we will travel through beautiful Aegean landscapes and visit spectacular ancient cities. Our focus will be the 'Seven Churches' to which St John wrote letters at the beginning of the Book of Revelation. These are not seven church buildings, but seven cities in which there were early Christian communities. Five of these cities (Ephesus, Pergamon, Sardis, Laodicea and Smyrna (Izmir)) have magnificent ruins in evocative locations. We will also visit other sites, such as Hierapolis, a glorious ancient city which stands at the top of the snow-white travertine terraces of Pamukkale (which we will walk upon). Ephesus of course is famous and remains one of the most sensational ancient cities in the entire Mediterranean region. The final day of the trip we will attend the morning service at the Anglican Church of St John the Evangelist, and visit other sites around the city, such as the Agora, the Citadel (Kadifekale) and the beautiful Catholic Church of St Polycarp. The group leader is Canon James Buxton, Anglican Chaplain in Izmir, and we will also be accompanied by an excellent Turkish guide. Late April/early May is a lovely time to travel in the Aegean region. The weather is warm and sunny, and the hillsides and ancient sites are ablaze with spring flowers.

Tour Itinerary:

Apr 27 Mon ARRIVE IZMIR (AIRPORT CODE ADB)

After landing at Izmir International Airport, you may join one of our shuttle transfers to your hotel. Dinner and overnight at your Hotel in Izmir. **(B,D)**

Apr 28 Tue PERGAMUM (Rev 1:11; 2:12-17) and THYATIRA (Rev 1:11; 2:18-29) - IZMIR

This morning, we'll travel north to visit **Pergamum**. It is one of the most impressive archaeological sites in all of Turkey. Its attractions are hard to surpass: a 10,000-seat **theatre** on the side of the **Acropolis** that is the steepest in the ancient world; the magnificently restored **Temple of Trajan**; the remains of a **library** of 200,000 volumes second in size only to that in Alexandria; the base of the **Altar of Zeus**; the **Temple of Dionysus**; and the **medical center of Asclepiion**. This ancient healing center had its own theater, library, underground tunnel and other buildings. John warned the church here that they were living in a place of "Satan's throne" (Rev. 2:12-17). On our way back to Izmir, we'll make a brief stop at the ancient city of **Thyatira**, where, due to the presence of the modern city of Akhisar, few archaeological remains have thus far been uncovered. John warned the church here about its toleration of a woman symbolically called Jezebel who was leading believers astray, causing them "to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols" (Rev. 2:18-29). Return to Izmir. Dinner at Midpoint Restaurant. Overnight. **(B,D)**



Ephesus Theater

Apr 29 Wed EPHESUS (Acts 18:19-21, 24-26; 19:1-20:1; 20:16-17; 1 Cor 15:32; 16:8; Eph 1:1; 1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 1:18; 4:12; Rev 1:11; 2:1-7) This morning we head south to the appealing small town of Selcuk. First, we'll visit the famous **ancient city of Ephesus**. This site had successive Hellenistic and Roman settlements and was an outstanding example of a Roman port city with a sea channel and harbor basin into which the Apostle Paul sailed. He lived and ministered here for 2-3 years after a riot in the **Great Theatre**, which we can still visit today. Excavations have revealed other grand monuments of the Roman Imperial period including marble-paved roads, terrace homes of the elite, Roman Baths, the Celsus Library, and more. Today, Ephesus is also one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Next, we'll visit the **Tomb and Basilica of St. John**, the last-surviving disciple of Jesus who is said to have lived in Ephesus during his final years along with Jesus' mother Mary. After lunch in Selcuk, we drive to Mount Bulbul and visit the **House of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, a beautiful place of pilgrimage where we remember the care for one another that Jesus commended to his mother and to his beloved disciple, John. In the evening we'll celebrate the Eucharist at the newly restored Anglican church of St Mary Magdalene, Bornova, followed by dinner al fresco in the gardens of one of Bornova's great Levantine mansions. Overnight Izmir. **(B,D)**

Apr 30 Thur DAY IN CENTRAL IZMIR

After breakfast we walk from our hotel to the **Kemiralti** (Izmir's grand bazaar) through the Basmane district along the chaotic but picturesque Anafartalar Street. In the Bazaar we visit several of Izmir's beautiful **synagogues and mosques**, and the impressive **Kizilagahanasi** (a restored caravanserai) where we'll relax with a cup of Turkish Coffee. Lunch will be at the **Abacioglu Han** deep inside the Bazaar. We have a relaxed afternoon in which a stroll is recommended (!), which may include Clock Tower Square, a walk along the beautiful Kordon (seafront) with its cafes and galleries, or a visit to the new city museum near St John's Church. Evening meal at Topcu Restaurant. Overnight Izmir. **(B,D)**

May 1 Fri SARDIS (Rev 1:11; 3:1-6), and PHILADELPHIA (Rev 1:11; 3:7-13) - COLOSSAE (Col 1:2) - PAMUKKALE

Depart for **Sardis**, one of the other cities of Revelation. Here, we'll see the remains of the magnificent **temple of Artemis**, the beautifully reconstructed **gymnasium and public baths**, and the largest known **synagogue** outside Palestine. We'll make a brief stop in **Philadelphia**, where much of this ancient city has either been destroyed or lies buried under the modern city. John wrote to the church here (Rev. 3:7-13), commending them for their patience and endurance in spite of persecution. Our final stop is the beautiful unexcavated site of **Colossae**. This is an important site for Christians to visit since Paul sent two letters to this city: one to the church of Colossae and one to the rich Christian slave-owner Philemon, who hosted the Colossian church in his home. A short drive takes us to our hotel in **Pamukkale**, "the Cotton Castle." This area is another UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its breathtaking waterfalls and calcium cliffs. This evening, you'll be able to have dinner and relax at our hotel, and we will be able to take the plunge in some of Pamukkale's famous heated thermal pools. Dinner and Overnight in Pamukkale. **(B, D)**



Hierapolis

May 2 Sat LAODICEA (Col. 2:1, 4:13-16; Rev 1:11; 3:14-22), and HIERAPOLIS (Col. 4:13-15; 4:16) - IZMIR

Today our first stop is the spectacular ancient city of Hierapolis, where we aim to see the recently discovered **Tomb and Martyrium of St. Philip** and the city's **theatre** with one of most impressive reconstructed **Roman skenes**. We'll conclude our visit with a walk along **Pamukkale's dazzling Calcium Cliffs**. After lunch we visit Laodicea, a major city in Roman times that is rapidly being uncovered.

Laodicea had not one but two **theatres** (one of them in the process of reconstruction), a **stadium**, an **aqueduct**, and over **20 churches** dating to Byzantine times that archaeologists have already uncovered. Laodicea is the last of the seven churches to whom John directed the book of Revelation (Rev. 3:14-22). It also had a close relationship with the nearby churches of Colossae and Hierapolis (Col. 4:13-15) and was the recipient of one of Paul's now lost letters (Col. 4:16). Return to hotel in Izmir. Dinner at Sirena Restaurant. Overnight in Izmir. **(B, D)**

May 3 Sun IZMIR

We attend 10.00 AM Eucharist at the Anglican Church of St John the Evangelist in the district of Alsancak. Enjoy refreshments with St John's Congregation, then walk to Kibris Sehitleli street and have lunch at Kircicegi Restaurant. After lunch we travel by coach to the citadel (**Kadifekale**), the place of the martyrdom of St Polycarp for spectacular views over the city. We conclude the day's visits with our final act of worship at the spectacular Roman Catholic **Church of St Polycarp**, where we will reflect on the life and witness of the city's most famous saint, and give thanks for the time of pilgrimage we have shared together. Final Tour Dinner at Adabeyi Restaurant. **(B, D)**

May 4 Mon DEPART FOR ONWARD DESTINATIONS



St Polycarp Church

LAND RATES

GBP 999 Per Person in Double Occupancy
GBP 390 Single Room Supplement

INCLUDING

- Sightseeing as per the itinerary
- 4 nights at **Kordon Cankaya Hotel** or similar
- 1 night at **Doga Thermal Hotel in Pamukkale** or similar
- 2 night at **Kordon Cankaya Hotel in Izmir** or similar
- Daily open buffet breakfasts at the hotels
- 2 dinners at the hotels (first day in Izmir and in Pamukkale)
- 5 dinners at local restaurants in Izmir
 - 1 dinner at Midpoint Restaurant
 - 1 dinner at Bornova al fresco
 - 1 dinner at Topçu Restaurant
 - 1 dinner at Sirena Pub Restaurant
 - 1 dinner at Adabeyi Seafood Restaurant
- Entrance fees to all sightseeing
- Government Licensed, Bible-oriented Tour guide throughout the tour
- Map of Turkey, Tutku Bag, Tutku t-shirt, electric plug, Luggage Tag
- Tips to hotel staff
- Service charges and local taxes

EXCLUDING

- Lunches and drinks
- Tips to tour guide, driver
- Personal Expenses, Travel and Health Insurance, any other item which is not included above
- Flights to and from Izmir

PAYMENT PROCEDURE

DEPOSIT : GBP 50 per person

FULL BALANCE PAYMENT : March 16, 2026

Land Only Cancellation Policy:

Cancellations made 60 days or more before departure: Full refund
 Cancellations made 45-59 days before departure: 75% refund
 Cancellations made 30-44 days before departure: 50% refund
 Cancellations made 15-29 days before departure: 25% refund
 Cancellations made 0-14 days before departure: No refund

In addition to the above cancellation policy, we charge a 5% processing fee for all refunds, no matter the date of cancellation. This fee is necessary to cover the costs associated with processing refunds, including bank fees and administrative expenses. We understand that sometimes travel plans change, and we appreciate your understanding of this policy.

REGISTRATION

you can fill in the secure form at TUTKU website



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OPTION 2



1. Open the Camera app on your device.
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