



PILGRIMAGE TO TURKEY & GREECE

# "IN SEARCH OF PAUL"

## AN AEGEAN ODYSSEY

April 11-27, 2023

The Rev. Dr. Don Carlson, and The Rev. Travis Meier, Co-Hosts  
a LEAD Pauline study pilgrimage for rostered leaders and inquiring disciples



In partnership with [Tutku Tours](#)





**ABOVE:** Our 2017 group in the terrace houses at Ephesus.

#### **Tuesday, April 11th**

Fly out of Houston or other Turkish Airlines hub; direct flight to Istanbul. Tutku Tours can arrange departures by other carriers. This often does not effect trip cost.

#### **Wednesday, April 12th**

Arrive in Istanbul, meet our guide for Turkey, Cenk Eronat, and travel to our hotel. Dinner together in the hotel dining room overlooking the “old city” of Istanbul.

#### **Thursday, April 13th**

We start at Istanbul where we glimpse the “imperial church” of the early 4th century under Constantine. We visit the hippodrome, archeological museums, Hagia Sophia, Hagia Irene, and the Topkapi Palace.

#### **Friday, April 14th - Orthodox Good Friday**

We depart early for the Greek border, meet our guide for Greece, Voula Kalapoda, and then travel to Philippi. We visit the traditional river site where Paul met Lydia and see the magnificent baptistry built there. At the river we discuss Paul’s letter to **Philemon** and its patronage subtext. 1st century city life then emerges in the ruins of ancient Philippi. Overnight in Kavala, modern Neapolis; experiencing the Orthodox Epitaphos before turning in.

#### **Saturday, April 15th**

We get another glimpse of the Via Egnatia that Paul walked from Neapolis to Philippi, then on to Thessloniki where we see the Roman forum, the arch and mausoleum of Galerius, and the archeological museum. We stop at the tomb of Phillip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, to appreciate the roots of imperial theology. Overnight at Kalambaka/Meteora; at midnight, the church square will fill with people, candles, and pealing bells as the resurrection is announced.

#### **Sunday, April 16th - Orthodox Easter**

Visit Varlaam Monastery, built 1541, high atop the rocks of Meteora; reflecting upon the medieval theological worldview of its art. After visiting Varlaam Monastery, we have a traditional Easter meal; discussing **Galatians** in the afternoon.

#### **Monday, April 17th**

We stop at a studio where icons are hand painted and can be purchased, then go Delphi to explore the cult of Apollo. After visiting the archeological museum, we overnight in Delphi; taking a look at **Philippians** after dinner.

#### **Tuesday, April 18th**

In Athens, we visit the Areopagus where Paul delivered his sermon about “an unknown God” and then climb the acropolis to see the temples of Athena, Nike, Poseidon, and Augustus. There will then be free time to visit the new archeological museum or to have a leisurely meal “al fresco”.



“In Search of Paul” was the trip of a lifetime for me. No amount of classroom study is like standing on Mars Hill (the Areopagus) and realizing the perspective Paul had as he spoke to the Athenians. I can’t wait until I am able to EXPERIENCE scripture like that again.

The Rev. Tammy Sharp  
Christus Victor Lutheran, League City, TX

The opportunity to travel with LEAD “In Search of Paul” was life changing for me, and experiencing the cities in Greece and Turkey where Paul shared the Jesus movement was captivating. Many empires fell and turned into ruins, but the powerful Jesus movement lives on!

The Rev. Jenny Sung  
Free Range Lutheran, St. Paul, MN



#### **Wednesday, April 19th**

We visit the site of ancient Corinth with its excellent ruins and museum. While on the grounds, seated in view of the Temple of Apollo and the ancient meat market (1 Cor. 8), we discuss **1st Corinthians**. After lunch we head for the port of Athens, say “Goodbye” to Voula Kalapoda, and board our 7:00 PM ferry to Patmos. Good dining aboard and cabins with clean linens and bath. Arrive in Patmos about 3:00 AM, walk a short distance to our hotel, and go back to bed!

#### **Thursday, April 20th**

Still in Greece, we will visit the traditional “Cave of St. John”, reflect upon the imperial context of Revelation, and then visit the Monastery of St. John. Lunch will be by the seaport and then we take a 4-hour boat ride to the Turkish port of Kusadasi – discussing **Romans** on the way. At Kusadasi we meet up again with Cenk Eronat and go to our hotel.

#### **Friday, April 21st**

The ancient city of Ephesus gives the most impressive glimpse of 1st century urban life. The Library of Celsus, Temple of Artemis (one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world) Temple of Hadrian, Temple of Domitian, and the “terrace houses” are but a few of the restorations. After a “1st century lunch” we will visit a local “cottage industry” store to see how Turkish carpets are made; and an opportunity to purchase carpets!

#### **Saturday, April 22nd**

Leaving Kusadasi, we will see the magnificent Temple of Apollo at Didyma, Asian counterpart to Delphi – complete with oracle. Then on to Aphrodisias with the Temple of Aphrodite, the Sebasteion (the best example of Roman imperial theology), monumental gateway, stadium, and museum—where “the god fearers” are mentioned. Overnight at a relaxing thermal spa hotel at Pamukkale.

#### **Sunday, April 23rd**

At Hierapolis we see the tomb of Philip the Apostle and the thermal springs, then journey to Laodicea with its many newly excavated and restored ruins; including a magnificent 4th century church. After a brief stop at Sardis and its restored gymnasium and synagogue, we will arrive at Izmir (ancient Smyrna) and have dinner on the waterfront.

#### **Monday, April 24th**

We head for the acropolis of Pergamum with its great theater and temples to Athena, Zeus, and Trajan; then visit the Asclepion, a center of healing where the great physician Galen practiced. Overnight at the picturesque seaport of Assos and look at **1st Thessalonians**.

#### **Tuesday, April 25th**

After climbing the acropolis of Assos – Turkish coffee on the climb – that has a temple to Athena dating from 530 BCE, we head north to Alexander -Troas (Acts 20). Then on to Troy; founded 3000-2600 BCE. We overnight in Canakkale,

### Wednesday, April 26th

We cross the Dardanelles by car ferry and drive through the area where the Battle of Gallipoli was fought in WWI. Arriving back in Istanbul, we visit the Spice Market before going to the hotel to enjoy our farewell dinner.

### Thursday, April 27th

After a leisurely morning and breakfast, we leave for the airport for our flights; chasing the sun back to our home destinations. Welcome home!

**NOTE:** There may be unforeseen adjustments to the itinerary.



My ministry is forever changed by this pilgrimage that vividly captures the revolutionary and radical nature of Paul and his Gospel in the 1st century. I will never read Paul's letters in the same way again.

The Rev. Jennifer Michael  
St. Timothy Lutheran, Hendersonville, TN

I knew Paul and Empire in my head, but to travel the roads he walked brought a new depth and nuance to my understanding. Now I can more competently and confidently connect our tradition of church and culture in my preaching, teaching, and advocacy.

The Rev. Ashley Dellagiacoma  
St. Stephen's Episcopal, Houston, TX



When preaching on Acts, my congregation enjoys seeing pictures of places we visited; the river outside Philippi where Paul met Lydia; the Areopagus where Paul told the identity of the unknown god. It brings a new awareness and depth to biblical understanding.

The Rev. Denise Fossen  
First English Lutheran, Ortonville MN

This trip greatly expanded my knowledge of Paul's journeys. I have been able to practice new ways of reading Paul and talking about him and the whole bible. This trip was not just a gift to me, but also a gift to the way I will be a leader in the church.

The Rev. Tim Wrenn  
Prince of Peace Lutheran, Dublin, OH



**BELOW:** Some members of our 2016 trip view the Erastus inscription (Acts 19) at Corinth. The Acro-Corinth is seen in the background.



To see, touch, read, and feel the archeological findings in each site we visited, introduced to the Paul I never knew. It was a transforming experience to understand the first century and begin to grasp what that means for teaching and preaching Pauline letters in the twenty first century.

The Rev. Solomon Hailu  
Sharp Hospice Care, San Diego, CA

Getting a 1st Century view of the church and Paul's ministry will have an impact on *my* ministry. In sharing these insights with my church, I hope that the Pauline vision of justice and community will inspire my congregation to reach out to the "God Fearers" in our neighborhood.

The Rev. Pete Lopez  
St John Lutheran Church, Angleton, TX.



**Cost: \$4,390**

per person, double occupancy room  
(For single occupancy room, add \$990)

#### This includes:

- Roundtrip airfare between any Turkish airline hub in the United States and Istanbul
- 9 nights at 3-4 star hotels in Turkey
- 5 nights at 3 star hotels in Greece
- 1 night on overnight ferry from Athens to Patmos
- Daily breakfast and 15 dinners
- Transportation by private bus with A/C
- English-speaking, Bible-oriented, professional tour guides throughout the pilgrimage
- All entry fees to sites and museums
- All tips for hotels and restaurant staff
- All tips to tour guides and drivers
- All service charges and local taxes

#### It does not include:

- Turkish Visa fee (\$50 per US citizen, obtained electronically before departure from USA)
- Lunches and beverages
- Personal discretionary expenses, shopping



In searching for Paul I found a connection to the early church through the food, people I met and those I broke bread with, and the stones that made the scriptures as relevant today as they were at the time they were written. It was an amazing spiritual journey for me.

Deaconess Colleen Teeuwe  
Prince of Peace Lutheran, Gillette, WY

This trip was the capstone to previous visits to the Holy Land and Rome. Our readings and the journey gave me a new perspective on how "radical" Paul was for his time. This perspective is bringing new life to my ministry. I highly recommend this trip!

The Rev. Nancy Andrews  
Intentional Interim Minister, ELCA  
Baton Rouge, LA







### How to Register:

Go to <https://waytolead.org/in-search-of-paul-registration/>. Fill out the entire registration form; red asterisks are required. You will need your passport information.\* Once you click "next" at the bottom of the screen, you will be taken to a new page to double check that the information you entered is correct. If it is, click "confirm & proceed with payment".

If paying with credit card or Pay-Pal at this point. You will receive an e-mail upon completing the process. A 2.9% service fee is added for credit card use. If paying by check, send to; LEAD, P.O. Box 541, Bellaire, TX 77402-0541. **Checks must be mailed to LEAD two weeks prior to the due date to allow time for processing.**

### Payment Due Dates:

Deposit: \$400 per person by **October 2, 2022**

Balance: \$3,990 per person by **January 31, 2023**; plus \$990 single room occupancy, if applicable.

(\*Turkey, like most nations, requires that your passport's expiration date not be within 6 months of our departure date from Turkey, April 27, 2023. Check your passport and renew if needed. If you are renewing or securing a passport, enter Xs in those boxes when you register. You can provide LEAD with updated information when you receive your new passport.)

### Cancellation Penalty: 90-60 days prior to departure: No Penalty

59-45 days prior to departure: 10%

44-30 days prior to departure: 25%

29-15 days prior to departure: 75%

14 days & after: No refund

**Air Cancellation Policy is subject to airline standard rules.**

**Travel Insurance may be purchased by the traveler from a third party: Travel Guard, Travelex, or another.**



I saw just how radical Paul's proclamation was in the 1st century, and still is. I feel blessed to have experienced the context in which Paul endured. I will be unpacking Paul for years to come. What a gift!

The Rev. Christopher Naig  
Trinity Lutheran, Chesterfield, MO



To explore the places where Paul visited and the places to which he wrote letters was absolutely amazing. I now appreciate the context of the Roman Empire on Paul's writings.

The Rev. Tonya Eza  
Christ Our Emmanuel Lutheran, Chatham, NY

**BELOW:** 2018 participants at Meteora, Greece, after visiting Varlaam Monastery, seen in the background



The "Search for Paul" was transformative for me. Understanding the Imperial Cult and his context, I now find Paul far more accessible. The experience changed me as a pastor, scholar, and catechist.

The Rev. Brad Fuerst  
Lutheran Campus Ministry, Austin, TX



Learning about the cultures and the class structures within Paul's communities was helpful for me in understanding his 1st century ministry and how it is relevant today. The trip exceeded my expectations and I built lasting friendships.

Susan Keene  
Member at Messiah Lutheran, Houston, TX



### On the cover:

The inaugural 2014 group at Ephesus in front of the [Library of Celsus](#) and the adjacent [Gate of Mazeus and Mithridates](#). Cover background is a floor mosaic from the remains of the Octagon Basilica at Philippi, c. 400 CE.

In partnership with  
**Tutku Tours**

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## SEARCHING FOR PAUL

Contemporary Biblical scholars often describe four “Pauls”:

- The Paul of the autograph letters: Philemon, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans.
- The “Paul” of Ephesians, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians.
- The “Paul” of the pastorals: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus.
- The “traditional Paul” of Acts.

Lutherans and other churches of the Reformation may also have a “fifth Paul” - the “Paul” of the 16th century.

What was *Paul’s* understanding of justice, righteousness, salvation, faith, law, and gospel as he wrote to diverse urban people living in a society dominated by patronage and Roman Imperial Theology? What does his 1st century gospel mean in a 21st century context? These are some of the questions we will explore together.

Participants will commit to advance reading so there will be common ground for discussion.

- Read the *essential* books on the reading list, and other articles that will be shared electronically.
- Participate in three pre-trip online orientation and discussion Zoom meetings.

Come along and search out the life and faith of the early church.

*“If we use ‘Christian’ of this first generation, we pull them out of their context, domesticating them for ours. In their own eyes, they were history’s last generation. It is only in history’s eyes that they would become the first generation of the church.”*

Paula Fredrickson, “When Christians Were Jews”



“In Search of Paul” was a wonderful experience that enabled me to see with my own eyes the places where Paul traveled and the context of the communities he created. I came away from this trip with a much greater understanding of his letters and would highly recommend this learning opportunity to anyone.

The Rev. Rudy Flores  
Messiah Lutheran, Aurora, KS

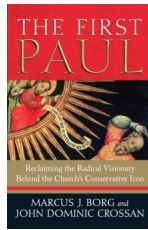
The trip equipped me to counter people who use Paul to silence women in the church — and his letters have become alive to me. The readings and discussions with other participants before the trip helped me understand the context in which Paul wrote.



The Rev. Mytch Pierre-Noel Dorvilier  
ELCA YAGM Coordinator, Darka, Senegal

### PLEASE NOTE

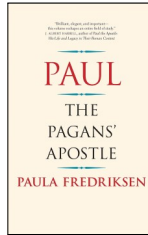
- 1) While many sites are seen, this is not primarily a “sight-seeing tour”. It is a 1st century emersion in which participants, through reflection and conversation, grow in their understanding of Paul and the context of the early “church”. Proactive involvement is assumed.
- 2) The archaeological sites visited often have uneven footing, ramps, stairs, changes in elevation, and are certainly not ADA compliant. Some days may require 5000—10,000 footsteps. Many people of diverse ages have participated, but please inquire if you have mobility concerns.
3. We travel over 1500 scenic miles by bus, ferry, and water taxi.



### ESSENTIAL READING

[The First Paul](#) (Kindle available)

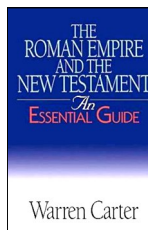
The book explores the widely accepted view that the later “letters of Paul” were created by the early church to dilute his message and make him more traditional to fit Roman norms in regards to slavery, patriarchy, and patronage. In truth, Paul was an apostle whose vision of life “in Christ” is faithful to the message of Jesus.



### ESSENTIAL READING

[Paul—The Pagans’ Apostle](#) (Kindle available)

Only by situating Paul within his charged social context of gods and humans, pagans and Jews, cities, synagogues, and competing Christ-following assemblies can we begin to understand his mission and message. The book offers a dramatically new perspective on one of history’s seminal figures.



### ESSENTIAL READING

[The Roman Empire and the New Testament](#) (Kindle available)

Understanding the New Testament texts is enhanced by appreciating the political, economic, societal, cultural, and religious aspects of Roman rule. This book will help us to appreciate how structures and practices in the Roman world illumine New Testament message.

### RESOURCES FOR DIGGING DEEPER

- [The Authentic Letters of Paul](#) (Kindle available)
- [In the Shadow of Empire](#) (Kindle available)
- [Christian Origins](#) (Kindle available)
- [In Search of Paul](#) (Kindle available)
- [Son of God in the Roman World](#) (unavailable in Kindle)
- [Speaking Christian](#) (Kindle available)
- [Ten Caesars](#) (Kindle available)
- [The Real Paul](#) (Kindle available)
- [When Christians Were Jews](#) (Kindle available)
- [The Roman Empire and the New Testament](#) (Kindle available)



### Friends in Christ,

This picture was taken during our first trip in 2014. We had just finished the Greece portion of our “search for Paul” and were leaving the port of Skala on Patmos, heading for Kusadasi in Turkey. A week of new sites, insights, and fellowship still lay ahead of us.

It has been a privilege to continue to co-host these trips, getting to know many wonderful fellow travelers. We continue to be blessed with our guides, Voula and Cenk, who know what we are “up to” and plan accordingly.

Responses from participants of the previous eight trips have enabled us to continually refine the program. And, in western Turkey and eastern Greece, our people have always felt very welcome and secure.

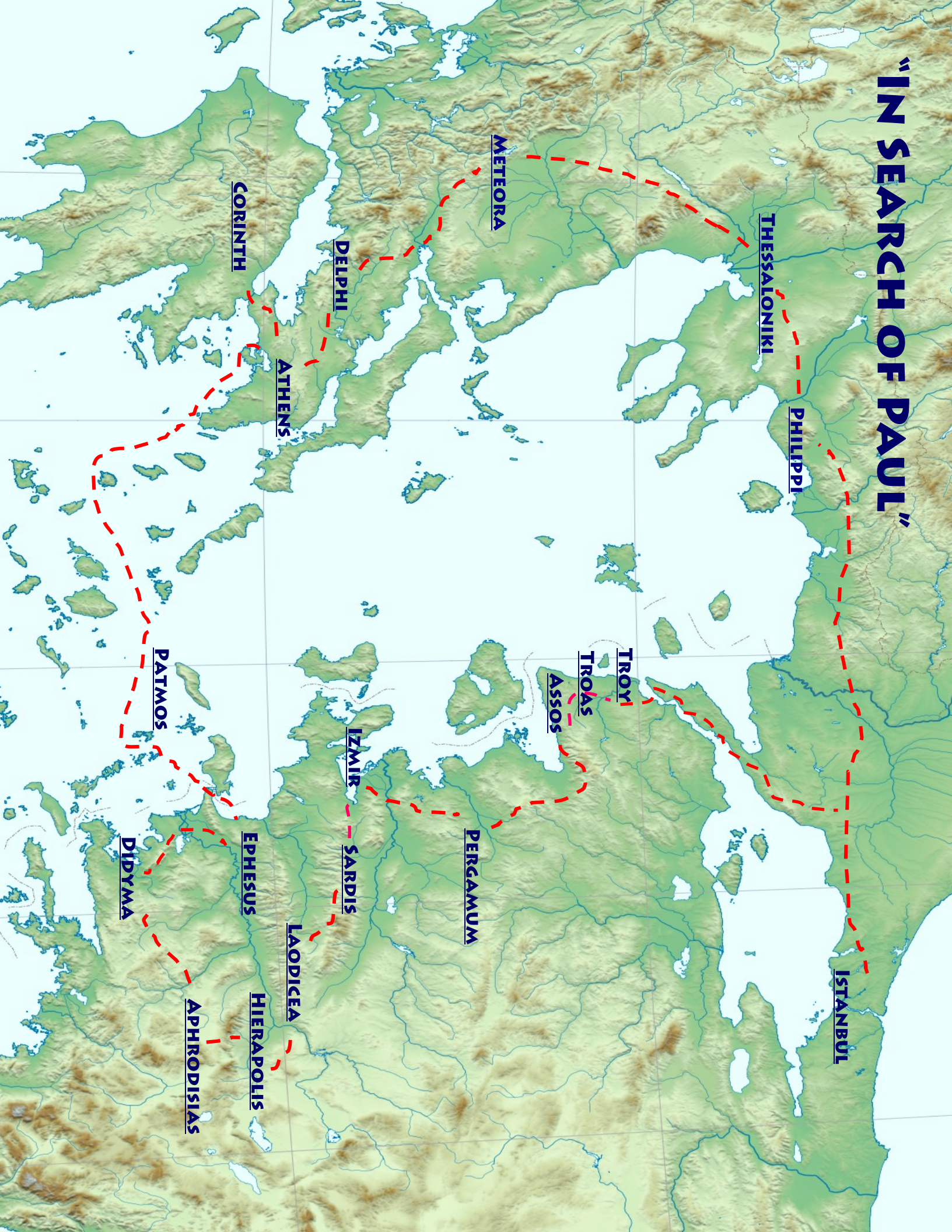
I hope that you will consider being a part of this educational and spiritual journey. If you have questions, please email me at [donmcarlson@gmail.com](mailto:donmcarlson@gmail.com).

Grace and peace,

Pastor Don Carlson



# "IN SEARCH OF PAUL"



**METEORA**

**THESSALONIKI**

**PHILIPPI**

**ISTANBUL**

**TROY**

**TROAS**

**ASSOS**

**PERGAMUM**

**IZMIR**

**SARDIS**

**LAODICEA**

**EPHESUS**

**HIERAPOLIS**

**APHRODISIAS**

**DIDYMA**

**PATMOS**

**ATHENS**

**DELPHI**

**CORINTH**