

Seven Churches of Revelation, TURKEY Tour – Detailed Trip Description

October 21 – 30, 2010

Participants: 25 Cyclists, 25 Non-Cyclists

Thursday, October 21: *Izmir Arrival and Opening Activities*

All tour participants should arrive into Izmir (ADB) by early afternoon. Crowne Plaza Izmir will manage airport pick up (free service).

Dinner together as a group at Crowne Plaza Izmir (www.cpizmir.com) followed by introductions, discussion of tour, cultural briefing on the seven churches and surrounding sites and group devotional / prayer time.

Cyclists will be encouraged to prepare their bicycles either before dinner or after the group activity.

Friday, October 22: *Tour of Izmir (Smyrna) and Bergama (Pergamum)*

All participants will eat breakfast together at the Crowne Plaza Izmir at 7:00 A.M.

Cyclists: Cyclists will depart at 8:00 A.M. on a leisurely 40 kilometer ride along Izmir's Birinci Kordon, the waterfront road that contains a bicycle path. We will likely make a stop in Izmir at the St. Polycarp Church as well as one more site of interest near the bike path. Tour vehicles will be waiting for cyclists at the end of the ride to load the bikes at 11:30 A.M. and drive all participants from that point approximately 110 kilometers north to Bergama, where we will have lunch followed by the afternoon tour activities.

Non-Cyclists: Non-cyclists will take a morning tour of Izmir departing at 8:00 A.M. to include Alexander the Great's 4th Century B.C. castle, the ancient Agora (the best preserved Roman market), the Archaeological Museum, the St. Polycarp Church and various drive by city sites. They will meet up with the cyclists at the end of their ride at noon for the drive together to Bergama.

After lunch in Bergama, both cyclists and non-cyclists will have a guided tour of the Asclepion, the Red Basilica, and the Acropolis.

We will take time just after a group dinner for prayer and discussion. We will be staying at the Berksoy Hotel: <http://www.berksoyhotel.com/indexeng.htm>. or the Asude Hotel: <http://www.asudehotel.com/english/>.

Saturday, October 23: *Tour of Akhisar (Thyatira) and Sardes (Sardis)*

Cyclists will eat breakfast together at 7:30 A.M. at the hotel in Bergama, and non-cyclists at 8:30 A.M.

Cyclists: The route will cover about 150 kilometers total, but is almost entirely flat. Cyclists will depart Bergama at 8:00 A.M. and will need to be in Akhisar (Just over halfway) by noon for lunch at a fast food pizza restaurant right in front of the Thyatira ruins. They can choose to join a tour of the ruins there if they like. They will then continue on cycling to finish at a Turkish spa right near the entrance to the ruins at Sardes near the Turkish town of Salihli.

Non-cyclists: Time will be granted after a later breakfast to do some quick shopping in the bazaar at Bergama before departing on the 80 kilometer drive to Thyatira, where the non-cyclists should meet up with the cyclists for lunch and a quick tour of the ruins. After lunch non-cyclists will be driven to Sardis for a chance to settle in at the 5-star Lydia Sardes Hotel:

<http://www.lidyatermalotel.com/en/Default.aspx> and a tour of the ruins.

Evening is free.

Sunday, October 24: *Tour of Alasehir (Philadelphia) and thermal springs of Pamukkale*

All cyclists will eat breakfast together at 7:30 A.M and will depart immediately thereafter riding as a group for the first 35 kilometers until they reach Philadelphia where they will have a group devotional. Non-cyclists will breakfast at 9:00 A.M. and depart afterwards. They will have a group devotional at Philadelphia as well.

Cyclists: The route will cover approximately 145 kilometers over a largely flat route, with a moderately difficult climb up to 650 meters at the 70 kilometer mark, and then a shorter climb of about 200 meters altitude difference up to the hotel at the end of the route. We will stop to meet up with the group for a short tour of Alasehir (Philadelphia) at about the 35 kilometer mark, and pick up snacks for a pack lunch to carry on the bike. Riders will then continue on to the 5-star Hotel Richmond spa at Pamukkale:

(<http://www.richmondhotels.com.tr/eng/pamukkaethermal.asp>)

Non-Cyclists: Will depart about two hours after the cyclists and will stop in Alasehir (Philadelphia) for a devotional. They will then continue on and take a tour of the town of Pamukkale, and its thermal springs for a lunch stop at a café, some shopping, and afternoon check-in and relaxation in the luxurious thermal waters at the Richmond Hotel in Pamukkale.

Evening discussion and prayer time just after dinner for all participants.

Monday, October 25: *Non-cycling day based out of the Hotel Richmond at Pamukkale with an option of either going on a day tour to Hieropolis and Laodikya from 9:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or relaxing at the spa.*

Cyclists and non-cyclists alike will be able to choose how they wish to spend this day. An optional tour will be provided to Hierapolis and Laodikya (Laodicea). All will have a choice to relax at the spa as they wish.

Evening discussion and prayer time just after dinner for all participants.

Tuesday, October 26: *Tour of Afrodiasia before arriving in Selcuk for non-cyclists. Long cycling day for cyclists.*

Cyclists will eat breakfast early (6:30 A.M.) for an early departure, for this long, almost completely flat 180 kilometer route. Non-cyclists will take a tour of Afrodiasia (a two hour drive from Pamukkale) before continuing on to the Selcuk/Kusadasi area.

Cyclists: This will be the longest day, so cyclists need to get an early start and maintain a steady pace in order to finish the route. They will need to stop for lunch on their own along the route. The route is not difficult (almost flat), but is very long. Cyclists who choose not to complete the entire route this day can be picked up en route. Cyclists who plan to cycle the entire route should plan to arrive at the hotel in Selcuk by suppertime.

Non-Cyclists: After the morning departure, non-cyclists will eat lunch at Afrodiasia prior to the long drive to Selcuk where everyone will be based for three nights at either the Richmond Hotel: <http://www.lux-hotels.com/turkey/richmond/ephesus/index.php> , the Korumar Hotel: <http://www.korumar.com.tr/english.htm>, or the Pine Bay Holiday Resort: <http://www.pinebay.com/>.

No evening meeting or discussion.

Wednesday, October 27: *No cycling day – full day tour of Ephesus, the Basilica of St. John, the Temple of Artemis, and the Ephesus Museum.* Ephesus is the best preserved and most spectacular of all the seven churches sites. World-renowned expert, Dr. Mark Wilson will join us for the tour of Ephesus and the day tour the following day, and possibly into Izmir as well to close out the seven churches tour with a bang! You can read more about Dr. Mark Wilson at the following website: <http://sevenchurches.org/mark/>. The site contains ample links to additional reading materials, including books, maps, charts, and commentaries that can help you prepare for the tour.

Thursday, October 28: *Second free day for all to tour spectacular sites in the area with Dr. Mark Wilson.*

After breakfast, we will set out to visit the ancient sites of Priene, Miletus and Didyma.

Priene, a well-preserved site, is famous for the geometric layout of the city set high on a hill overlooking the countryside.

Miletus, birthplace of many philosophers, is spread over a wide area boasting a well-preserved amphitheatre and the Faustina Bath.

Didyma, boasts the Temple of Apollo which dominates this small village with its massive columns reaching to the sky. The amazing intricacy of the architecture is something to marvel at in this most sacred of places.

We will debrief back at the hotel in the evening prior to our last day of riding into Izmir the following morning.

Friday, October 29: *Kusadasi to Izmir with afternoon shopping time in Izmir and evening farewell dinner and meeting in Izmir. Cyclists will need to breakfast early, with non-cyclists breakfasting a bit later.*

Cyclists: This is a beautiful 110 kilometer ride that follows the sea for more than the first half of the ride. There are some seaside hills in the first half but the second half flattens out for a nice easy finish at the Crowne Plaza Izmir hotel (our final night accommodation is at the same place the tour started), and a late light lunch at or near the hotel.

Non-cyclists: Departure from Selcuk after a later breakfast, followed by a beautiful drive along the coast for much of the way to Izmir. Non-cyclists will be able to catch up to the cyclists as they will be along the same route, and should arrive at the Crowne Plaza Izmir before the cyclists in time to cheer on the cyclists as they arrive at their destination in time for a late lunch.

Afternoon for both cyclists and non-cyclists can be spent in Izmir shopping at the bazaar or in one of the trendy malls.

We will hold an evening dinner for all at a nice restaurant in Izmir along with an entertainment surprise, followed by a special final meeting of the group.

Saturday, October 30: *A.M. departure for all from Izmir. Crowne Plaza Hotel will provide transportation to the airport for all.*