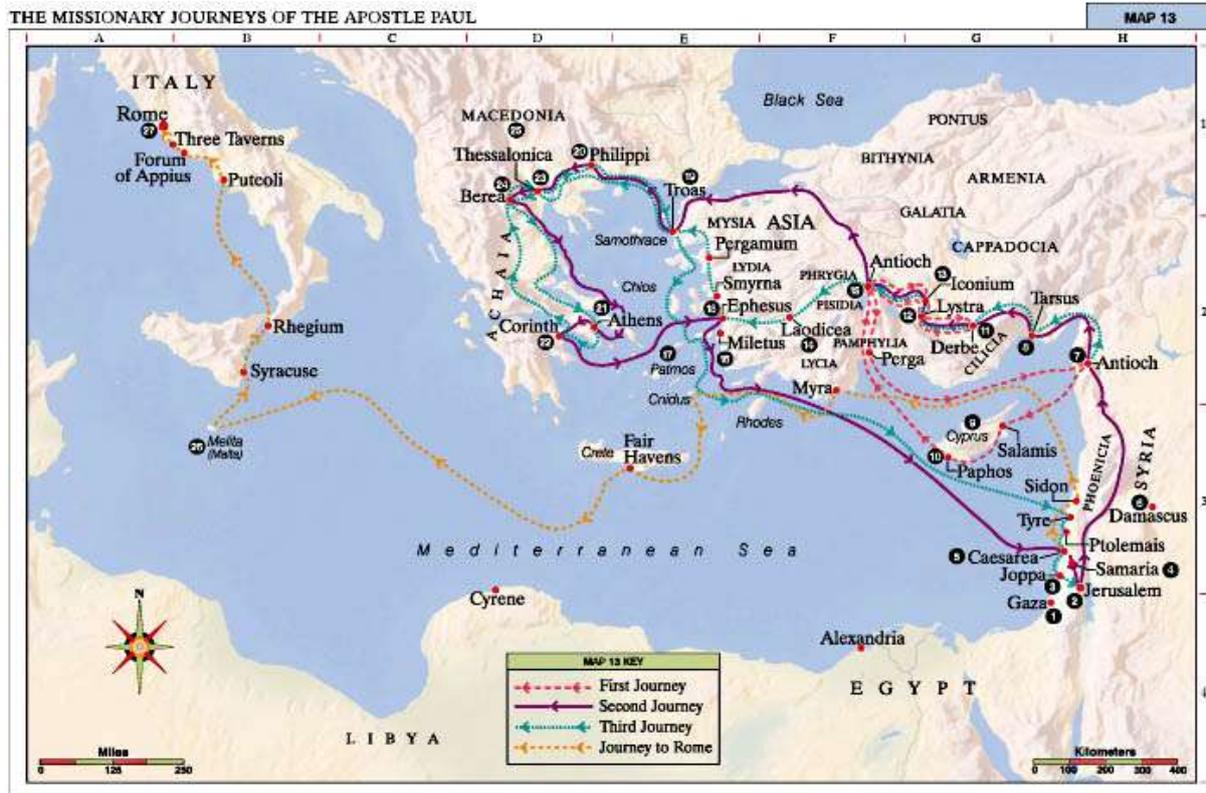


## TOUR REPORT Part 1 – TURKEY 2010 - Jill

I had not realized how important Turkey was as a Biblical land. Turkey is really the cradle of Christianity. In Acts 2:9 Jews from Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia (minor), Phrygia and Pamphilia were in Jerusalem for **Pentecost**. All of these are in Turkey.



1. **Paul was born in Tarsus** in south eastern Turkey. In Acts, **Paul's first missionary journey** was exclusively in Turkey. His **2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journeys** passed through Turkey. **I Corinthians** written about AD 55 (Eph 6:8, 9, 19) was written by Paul **FROM Ephesus** on his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. He wrote the books of **Ephesians, Galatians** and **Colossians TO the churches in Turkey**. **Philemon** was a resident of Colossae.

2. **Timothy** continued to lead the church in **Ephesus** after Paul left and was residing there when Paul wrote his letters to him.

3. **John** lived in **Ephesus** and wrote his **gospel and letters** from there and probably wrote **Revelation** either from nearby Patmos or Ephesus after his release. The 7 churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are all in Western Turkey. John died in Ephesus.

4. **Peter's letters** were written to the churches in Turkey – I Pet 1:1

5. **Constantinople** – now called Istanbul became the centre of eastern **Orthodox Christianity for 1,000 years** - from the 4<sup>th</sup> century until 1453 (the end of the Byzantine period), when, when Islam overcame it.

6. Turkey will also be a key player in the end time war against Israel. Of the countries listed in Ezekiel 38 and 39, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer and Togamah are in Turkey.

In Istanbul, we were able to sing some songs in this church which is today a museum but has basically been taken over by Islam and looks more like a mosque. The Lion of Judah was with us (pictured). At night, some were praying on the hotel roof and as they prayed the clouds parted to an open heaven. One cloud came across in the shape of a lion sitting down with its paws below a ½ moon and its head above. As the clouds moved, the moon was devoured by the lion's mouth!



We were very blessed to have an on fire believer in Jesus as our guide (pictured) who was from a secular Jewish background, educated as a muslim but became very depressed with the hopelessness of Islam, but Jesus appeared to him and told him “You are My son. Come to Me.”

In Nicea we were able to pray on the shores of the lake sitting on what were possibly the remains of Constantine's palace. Our task here was to repent for our church forefathers deciding in 325AD to cut the church off from its Jewish roots. As we prayed, our guide said he saw angels swirling around us!



## **THE 7 CHURCHES OF REVELATION**

At all 7 churches we did prophetic acts and completed these in Jerusalem and Beersheva.



## EPHESUS

Ephesus was the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city of the Roman empire after Rome and Alexandria, with around 250,000 people in the first century (C1 AD). Paul visited **Ephesus** on his return trip from Greece on his second missionary trip (about 51AD) and returned in 54AD when he **stayed for about 2 years**. Paul confronted the **occult** in this city (Eph 19:11-20) and had a confrontation with the chief goddess of Ephesus – **Artemis** (pictured below). She was the **Queen of Heaven (Acts 19:23-20:1)**. Her temple in Ephesus was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. It was his most successful ministry for within 50 years later hardly anyone worshipped Artemis/Diana and Ephesus became the centre of Christianity for the next 200 years. Have you noticed how Paul talks about spiritual warfare in his letter to the Ephesians?? However, the queen of Heaven seemed to latch onto the church here because in 421AD the Third Ecumenical Council, decided that Mary should be called ‘theotokos’ or birth giver of God. Thus began the **worship of Mary**. She was revered in Ephesus because it was believed that she lived here with John after he moved to Ephesus, although there is no evidence for this. John died in Ephesus around 96AD or slightly later. In the letters of John (I Jn 4:1-6) he talks about testing the spirits and in Revelation, he commends the church for doing this and for their perseverance, but says they have forsaken their first love. **Rev 2: 1-7**. We had a wonderful time of worship in the theatre where Paul was brought after the riot.

### Revelation 2: 1-7 Ephesus

<sup>1</sup> “To the angel<sup>[a]</sup> of the church in Ephesus write:

*These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. <sup>2</sup> I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. <sup>3</sup> You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.*

<sup>4</sup> Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. <sup>5</sup> Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. <sup>6</sup> But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.



## SMYRNA

Smyrna (pictured) is today Izmir, **Turkey's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city**. It had a large Jewish community and still has a Jewish community today of which our guide was one. The city of Smyrna had died under the Persians and been brought back to life by Alexander. It had buildings near the top of the mountain that resembled a crown around the peak. **Rev 2: 8-11**. Polycarp, a student of John's, became bishop in 115 until his martyrdom in about 155AD.

### Revelation 2: 8-11 Smyrna

<sup>8</sup> "To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

*These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. <sup>9</sup> I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. <sup>10</sup> Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.*

<sup>11</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.



Today it is the only one of the 7 churches to have a living Christian presence. On our last day in Turkey we were able to visit the pastor of this church (pictured) which is in revival. They are getting 15-20 new people walk into their church each week, had baptised 18 new believers in September and so far in October they had had 15 new converts come to Christ. The total for the year was 700 new people had visited their church!!!! Many are young people who are now bringing their families to faith. They are crying out for more workers to pastor the lambs. Anyone feel the call??

## PERGAMUM

From 283-133BC Pergamum was one of the chief cultural centres of the Hellenistic world. It was a very wealthy city, which traded in olive oil and copper, and had one of the largest libraries with 200,000 books. They invented parchment here, because Alexandria refused to give them more papyrus. At the foot of the mountain, the **Asklepium** (Roman god of healing) was one of the most important medical centres in the Roman world. The snake used as a symbol for medicine to this day comes from the symbol of Asklepius (pictured).

In the C1 AD, it had **temples to Zeus Soter, Dionysus, Athena** and was the principle centre for emperor worship in Asia. At the **temple of Emperor Augustus** and the goddess Roma, everyone was required to pay homage. The temple to Zeus, was taken apart stone by stone and relocated to the Pergamum museum in East Berlin (pictured), giving Hitler a satanic power base for his evil plans.



Probably all of these temples together constituted Satan's throne. **Rev 2:12-17**. Antipas was the bishop of Pergamum who was martyred by being roasted in a brass bull. Jesus is seen as having a two edged sword, which was normally the property of the pro-consul. It represented

having the power of life or death upon the decision of his judgement. A white stone with his name written on it was given to a criminal who had served his sentence and was now free.

### **Revelation 2:12-17 Pergamum**

<sup>12</sup> *“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:*

*These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. <sup>13</sup> I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.*

<sup>14</sup> *Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. <sup>16</sup> Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*

<sup>17</sup> *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.*

### **THYATIRA**

Thyatira was situated on the **main road to Pergamum** from the east, which also passed through Laodicea and Philadelphia. Unlike all the other 7 cities, which were on high ground, Thyatira has no natural fortress, but was a military base. Thyatira was the **home of several guilds** eg tanners, potters, bakers, linen weavers, wool workers, coppersmiths, bronze smiths and bakers. The **chief god** of Thyatira was **Apollo**, who was said to be the son of Zeus, that is, the son of god.

**Lydia was the first Thyatiran to accept Christianity, though she lived in Philippi (Acts 16:14-15).** The purple dye was made from the large snails found in the area.

The spirit of Jezabel was rife in Thyatira, enticing people into immorality. Gnosticism was another problem in many of the churches at the time and Paul wrote the book of Colossians to counter this heresy. Gnosticism separated the spirit and matter, saying that matter was evil. This led to two extremes – monasticism where people hid from the world, so not to be contaminated by it, or on the hand, licentiousness, where it did not matter what one did in the realm of matter as it was only the spirit that was good. Gnosticism placed was probably “Satan’s deep secrets”, as it involved climbing steps to attain knowledge similar to freemasonry or witchcraft. **Rev 2: 18-29.** Jesus is contrasted to Apollo as the real son of God. Venus was the morning star which represented life in contrast to Ishtar who represented death. Note the imagery used that would be so familiar to a bronze smith and a potter.

### **Revelation 2: 18-29 Thyatira**

<sup>18</sup> *“To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:*

*These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.<sup>19</sup> I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.*

*<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.<sup>21</sup> I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.<sup>22</sup> So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.<sup>23</sup> I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.*

*<sup>24</sup> Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you,<sup>25</sup> except to hold on to what you have until I come.'*

*<sup>26</sup> To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—<sup>27</sup> that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'<sup>[b]</sup>—just as I have received authority from my Father.<sup>28</sup> I will also give that one the morning star.<sup>29</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*



## **SARDIS**

Gold was found in the river, so Sardis became a wealthy city. It became the capital of the kingdom of Lydia but when Cyrus came to power, he made Sardis the western capital of the Persian empire. By the end of the C1 AD it already had its best days behind it. It has a huge synagogue dating from 320-40BC that could hold 1,000 people (pictured left). The city had a Temple to Artemis (pictured), and an acropolis. The church likewise appeared alive but was dead. **Rev 3:1-6**. It needed a wake-up call. Sound familiar?

### **Revelation 3:1-6 Sardis**

<sup>1</sup> *“To the angel<sup>[c]</sup> of the church in Sardis write:*

*These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits<sup>[d]</sup> of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.<sup>2</sup> Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.<sup>3</sup> Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But*

*if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.*

*<sup>4</sup> Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. <sup>5</sup> The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. <sup>6</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*



## **PHILADELPHIA**

Philadelphia was founded to create a city which would be an Asian centre for the Greek culture and language. It has good soils and was famous for its wines, which led to Bacchus/Dionysus being one of its chief gods. It was one of the last strongholds of the Byzantine empire indicating the strength of the church there. Jesus had no criticism of this church, but it was the saddest place we went to. The town has been taken over by a political party that is not fond of visitors so we could not enter the town but had to pray from outside (pictured). Ironically, Philadelphia means brotherly love. Our guide felt the town was under a curse. My research showed that when Tamerlane came through in 1402, he massacred the Christian population throughout the land, but in Philadelphia he is said to have built a wall with the corpses (or bones) of the prisoners. Dell plans to bring a team to break this curse. Philadelphia is in an earthquake zone, but Jesus says he will make the believers pillars in the temple of God, giving stability. Names of donors to the city were written on the pillars of the city pillars, but when there was no more room, the earlier ones were erased to accommodate the new. God will write the names of the victorious believers on the pillars of the temple.

**Rev 3:7-13**

### **Revelation 3:7-13 Philadelphia**

*<sup>7</sup> “To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:*

*These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. <sup>8</sup> I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. <sup>9</sup> I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars—I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you. <sup>10</sup> Since you*

*have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.*

*<sup>11</sup> I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. <sup>12</sup> The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. <sup>13</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*



## **LAODICEA**

It was a fortress city on the great eastern highway through the Lycos Valley, an important trade route. The area had excellent black wool from the sheep in its fertile valley. Still today the area produces some of the world's finest woolen garments. Under the Romans it was made a free city and by C1 BC it had become one of the largest cities in Asia Minor, and had a flourishing colony of Jews whose freedom of worship was guaranteed by the city leaders. The water from the springs was said to assist the healing of many diseases one of which was eye problems. A famous school of medicine grew in connection with this temple around the teachings of Herophilus (330-250 BC). They began the use of 'compound mixtures'.

The church was begun by Epaphras from Colossae and met in the house of Nympha (Col 4:15). The letter of Colossians was meant to be read in the church of Laodicea and also the believers in Hierapolis (Col 4:12-16). All three towns are in a triangle within about 20 km of one another.

Laodicea is named after by Antiochus II (261-246BC) after his wife Laodice, but the word means laos (people), dike (victory, judge or rule). When the people rule or judge, we have democracy. Western culture, which stems from Greek culture, which by its nature is prone to compromise.

Hierapolis, about 10 km way and visible from Laodicea and has hot (36 degrees Celsius) mineral springs which contain a high concentration of calcium hydro carbonate which on contact with oxygen forms white travertines, which look like snow. The modern name of Hierapolis is Pammakule meaning "cotton castle". It is a world heritage site today. Other hot springs are red containing much iron. The area also has cold springs. In ancient Laodicea, the public baths had a hot pool, a luke warm pool and a cold pool. Hot water is good for cooking and bathing. Cold is good to drink on a hot day. But luke warm does not make for

good tea! Laodicea had material riches but was spiritually poor. The church in the West seems to be suffering from the same condition. **Rev 3:14-22**

### **Revelation 3:14-22 Laodicea**

<sup>14</sup> *“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:*

*These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation.* <sup>15</sup> *I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!*

<sup>16</sup> *So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.* <sup>17</sup> *You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.* <sup>18</sup> *I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.*

<sup>19</sup> *Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.* <sup>20</sup> *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

<sup>21</sup> *To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne.* <sup>22</sup> *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*



Cross plus menorah – Laodicea



Pammakule – cotton castle

Jill Curry

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