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In the Footsteps of Paul:
A Biblical Journey Through Turkey and Greece

Resources Compiled by Trip Scholar Madelon Maupin (C'73)



Ancient Greek Ceramic Vase

Books

- ***The Iliad*, by Homer –** While this may seem a stretch, little else captures the spirit of ancient Greece more than this tale, written in the 8th century BC. For those who prefer Audible, there is a marvelous version narrated by Dan Stevens (Matthew Crawley of Downton Abbey fame). Homer is to Greece what Shakespeare is to England. The story centers on a clash of gods, warriors, and kings, but the war began when Paris, a Trojan prince, stole Helen, the wife of the Greek king Menelaus, from Sparta. (For those who prefer film, see "Troy" below.)

- ***The Odyssey*, by Homer –** Translation by Emily Wilson. This is the version Christopher Nolan used for his 2026 film, The Odyssey. It is extremely readable and the introduction alone is worth its price. Also available on Audible.

- ***Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter*, 2004 –** Part of the Hinges of History series by Thomas Cahill. If you read only one book about the ancient Greeks, make it Cahill's. He is an incredible historian who can distill enormous amounts of history into clear, cogent storytelling. (He is also the author of "How the Irish Saved Civilization," "Desire of the Everlasting Hills" about the impact of Jesus, and "Gift of the Jews." All are outstanding explanations of the roots of Western Civilization.) Also, on Audible.

- ***Paul's Letters,* New Testament –** Seven authenticated letters include: I Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, I and II Corinthians, Philemon, and Romans (written between 50-57 AD). Please read a contemporary version to get a fresh sense of their content (such as the New Revised Standard Version, Common English Bible, or New Living Translation). If you want more background, I did a 12-part webinar series for BibleRoads in 2022 that you can access here, with slides, artwork, handouts, pre-work questions, and more to understand their theological messages, geography, and political and social controversies. Use coupon TURKEY2023 (note: no spaces) to get a discount.

- ***The Book of Revelation,* New Testament –** This is John of Patmos' apocalyptic warning about the dangers posed by the Roman Empire's values opposing Christianity and the need for Christians to stay awake to what would derail the Gospel's message. The early chapters contain messages to the seven churches, all located in Western Turkey, five of which we will visit. (The two we are not visiting are being replaced by other Biblical sites, as they don't have as many remains to see.) If you want more information on the Book of Revelation, I have both a 2-part CD program (or MP3 download) called "Revelation: Handbook for Spiritual Warfare" as well as a streaming video program ("Revelation: Unpacking Heavenly Symbols") complete with maps and artwork you might enjoy.

- ***Murder on the Orient Express,* A Hercule Poirot Mystery, by Agatha Christie –** The Audible version is narrated by Dan Stevens as well. You may know that the author's 2nd husband, Max Mallowan, was an archaeologist whom she met after taking her own trip on The Orient Express. They lived in Petra for a time, and she was well-acquainted with this part of the world. We will see the train station near the Grand Bazaar, the last stop of the Orient Express, which originated in London, began its trek across Europe in 1883, and ended in 2009. And it's fun to have a little light reading on this list!

- ***Birds Without Wings,* by Louis de Bernieres –** This 2004 novel, by the author of Captain Corelli's Mandolin, stands as perhaps the great epic of end-of-empire Turkey. The setting is a provincial Mediterranean town at the beginning of the 20th century, where diverse communities – Turkish, Greek, and Armenian – co-exist as they have for centuries. But the wars that rage across the wider country – with graphic evocations of life in the trenches during the 1915 Gallipoli Campaign – signal the end of the Ottoman Empire and momentous change. De Bernieres' richly rendered cast – goatherd and peasant girl, imam and agha – fall in love and go to war as the author delivers a brilliantly clear-eyed history lesson on the end of Ottoman cosmopolitanism, not least the tragic population exchanges that in 1923 called time on Christianity in Anatolia.

- ***Istanbul: A Tale of Three Cities,* Bettany Hughes –** This historian has captured the remarkable history of a city with three names, from Constantinople to Byzantium to Istanbul. Written for laypeople rather than historians, it's an accessible way to learn how this city has been at the

epicenter of so many major events in both Western and Eastern civilizations. It also has an Audible version beautifully narrated by this English historian.

- ***Innocents Abroad,* Mark Twain –** Describes visiting ancient Smyrna (today's Izmir) in Turkey.

Movies

- ***The Odyssey*, 2026 –** Christopher Nolan. This filmmaker undertook what no one else has tried and it comes off brilliantly. Starring Matt Damon, the viewer lives through the many chapters of his journey to his beloved Penelope, i.e. the Cyclops, the Sirens, etc. The scenes with the Trojan Horse alone are worth the price of admission! No AI. Remarkable production. You can watch the trailer here. Link to the trailer.

- ***Troy*, 2004 –** This is a Hollywood version of Homer's Iliad: The epic tale of the Trojan War. Homer's work remains one of the foundational works of Western literature and if you would read it rather than watch this film version, even better. While the film is R rated with nudity, etc., it does give a sense of ancient Greece.

- ***Murder on the Orient Express,* A Hercule Poirot Mystery, by Agatha Christie**

- ***The Water Diviner*, 2014 –** While not a biblical film, *The Water Diviner* offers a compelling look at World War I and the Battle of Gallipoli, a devastating military campaign that left a lasting mark on Australian history. Russell Crowe stars as an Australian father who travels to Turkey in search of his three missing sons. Crowe also directed the film, bringing to life this significant chapter in Australia's history. The Gallipoli campaign profoundly shaped Australia's national identity and its relationship with British military leadership, influencing the country's approach to military service in World War II.

- ***My Big Fat Greek Wedding* and *Life Among the Ruins* –** both are comedies about modern Greece and light fun. It will at least give you a great sense of the ruins as background!

- ***Gallipoli*, 1981 –** Directed by Peter Weir and starring Mel Gibson, the film centers around an Australian army sent during World War I to Gallipoli, in the southern part of East Thrace. The film depicts a somewhat fictionalized version of the battle of Nek that took place there when Australians were badly defeated by the Ottoman Empire. It's a difficult anti-war film but it tells an important part of Turkey's history with the West. (They never served under British command again after Gallipoli.)

- ***The Two Faces of January*, 2014 –** is a suspense drama with Viggo Mortensen and Kirsten Dunst, filmed in both Greece and Turkey. (Again, not a huge value other than the scenery, but hey – we have to have a little fun in our preparation!). 😊

- ***High Season*, 1987 –** Romantic Comedy set on Rhodes, where we're going. About nine characters whose lives are intertwined. Dated, with Jacqueline Bisset, but you can't discount the sheer beauty of Rhodes! Fun to watch before going to Greece.

- ***Zorba the Greek*, 1964 –** Definitely a dated film but based on the novel by the prominent Greek writer, Nikos Kazantzakis which takes place on Crete in 1914. If you're a reader, treat yourself to the book as Zorba is one of fiction's more memorable characters. The film was directed by Elia Kazan and stars Anthony Quinn as the ultimate Greek who becomes a cook, foreman and guide who totally lives in the present.

- ***In the Footsteps of Paul*, David Souchet –** (and other Christian Films he has made). Documentary filmed in 2012, through Amazon Prime.

- ***Paul, Apostle of Christ*, Jim Caviezel and James Faulkner –** 2018. Very good film about Paul's last year in Roman prison. Caviezel plays Luke who is with him. On Netflix.

- ***Triangle at Rhodes*, by Agatha Christie –** a Hercule Poirot Short Story (also on Audible). Also part of a British TV drama starring David Suchet as Hercule Poirot. Aired in UK 1989. The filming was actually done on Rhodes so it will give you a good look at it.

- ***Guns of Navarone* –** shot in the island of Rhodes, Greece. Terrific cast – 1961 film.