

As I announced a few weeks ago, I will be going on a tour to Rome and other sites to the south, including Pompeii, Heraculum, Bay of Naples, Amalfi Coast on April 14-24, 2020 (six months from now!). If you haven't been to these places before, this would be a great opportunity! And even if you have been before this would still be a great opportunity! It is a very impressive itinerary. Every informed and interesting person on the planet really should see these sites before shuffling off their mortal coil.

The tour is being sponsored by Thalassa journeys, which does a fantastic job in every way: thoughtful itineraries, great accommodations, unusually helpful tour guides.

I will be giving lectures on the tour, focusing on the relations of pagans and Christians in the early centuries of the Christian movement, as Christianity moved from being a hated and persecuted little sect to becoming the dominant religion of the empire, eventually the most powerful social, cultural, and, of course, religious movement in the history of Western civilization. (That's the subject of my last book [The Triumph of Christianity](#)). We will also see a number of things related to my new book, to be released by then, on the afterlife ([Heaven and Hell: A History of the Afterlife](#)) — from the sad but startlingly real remains of people fleeing the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in Pompeii to art in the Christian catacombs.

But even more, we will soak up the monuments to the glories of world-empire Rome itself — the Colosseum, the Pantheon, destroyed Heracleum — and the early monuments to the burgeoning and then overwhelmingly dominant Christian church that was to replace — the Vatican, the Sistine Chapel, the Basilica of Saint John Lateran — and on and on.

Here is the short blurb I wrote for the brochure about the focus of my lectures for the trip.

When Christianity arrived on the world stage in the first century CE, Rome and the Empire it founded were predominantly “pagan” - filled with a large number of polytheistic religions worshipping the Greek and Roman Gods. On this tour we will examine how the Christian faith first came to the Italian peninsula, and especially Rome, the city destined to be the epicenter of Christianity for centuries to come. In particular we will explore the clash of religions and cultures: between the pagan cults of Rome and the Christian church that was to become the official religion of the empire for centuries to come.

So, are you interested in coming? It will be a small group, and I will spend the entire time not only giving lectures but hanging out with everyone, talking, answering questions, and asking a few of my own! Here is a new version of the brochure.

https://www.thalassajourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Pagans_Christians.pdf

Let em know if you have any questions; a personal email is fine: behrman@email.unc.edu



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