

**Join Professor Bart D. Ehrman
On a Journey to Explore
PAGANS AND CHRISTIANS
IN THE ROMAN WORLD**

April 14 - 24, 2020



Dear Friends,

When Christianity arrived on the world stage in the first century AD, 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. 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.

During our journey we will visit historic sites along the Amalfi coast and in the ancient city of Rome. From our lovely hotel in Sorrento, overlooking the Gulf of Naples, we will explore the surrounding area, including Pompeii and Herculaneum, both destroyed and preserved in 79 AD by the eruption of Vesuvius; and the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Paestum, founded in the 6th century BC by Greek settlers before falling under Roman control in 273 BC.

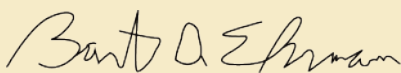
We will continue to Rome where we visit its ancient center including the Colosseum, a stone amphitheater built around 70-72 AD by Emperor Vespasian; the Roman Forum, once the center of ancient Rome; and Capitoline Hill, one of the Seven Hills of Rome. Iconic Christian sites on our itinerary include the beautiful Basilica of St John Lateran (Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano). Built in the 4th century by Constantine, it was the Pope's principal residence, and the most important church in Christendom, until the 14th century when the Pope moved across the city to the Vatican. Also of interest is the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, located near the northern gate of the Aurelian Wall, and the first stop for ancient travelers entering the city. Few are aware that the Pantheon, one of the best-preserved monuments of ancient Rome, was the first Roman pagan temple to be consecrated as a Christian church.

A day trip from Rome takes us to the infrequently visited Ostia Antica, an engrossing archaeological site showcasing the remarkably well-preserved ruins of ancient Rome's sea port; and to the Catacombs of San Callisto, a network of passageways over 12½ miles, with tombs that are the burial place of 16 popes and scores of Christian martyrs.

On our final day in Rome we will tour St. Peter's Basilica and the extensive and impressive museums of the Vatican, with a special early-morning entrance to the Sistine Chapel, adorned with Michelangelo's frescoes.

I hope you can join me on this fascinating journey that explores the emergence of Christianity in the ancient Roman world. We are pleased to facilitate this wonderful travel opportunity through Thalassa Journeys, a company whose principals have been at the forefront of thematic educational travel for five decades.

Kind regards,



Prof. Bart D. Ehrman
James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL
THALASSA JOURNEYS TOLL-FREE 866-633-3611**

Cover: Fresco Painting, Pompeii

EXPERT GUEST LECTURER



Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he has taught since 1988. Professor Ehrman has published extensively in the fields of New Testament and Early Christianity, having written or edited thirty-one books, including six New York Times Bestsellers: *Misquoting Jesus*; *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer our Most Important Question – Why We Suffer*; *Jesus Interrupted*; *Forged: Why the Bible's Authors are Not Who We Think They Are*; *How Jesus Became God*; and *The Triumph of Christianity*.

His Introduction to the New Testament has been the most widely used textbook in colleges and universities for over twenty years. He has recorded eight lecture courses for The Great Courses (The Teaching Company). More than two million copies of his books and courses have been sold, and his books have been translated into twenty-seven languages. Professor Ehrman's work has been featured in the New Yorker, Time, Newsweek, the New York Times, the Washington Post and other print media. He has appeared on NBC's Dateline, CNN, The History Channel, National Geographic, the Discovery Channel, the BBC, Fresh Air, other major NPR shows, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, the Colbert Report, and other top media outlets. A widely sought after lecturer, and winner of numerous university awards and grants, Professor Ehrman is the recipient of the J. W. Pope “Spirit of Inquiry” Teaching Award, the UNC Undergraduate Student Teaching Award, the Phillip and Ruth Hettleman Prize for Artistic and Scholarly Achievement, and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for excellence in teaching.



JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Travel with and learn from Prof. Bart D. Ehrman, one of the world's foremost authorities on early Christianity.

Discover the fabled Amalfi coast and its historic towns and villages.

Marvel at the architectural grandeur of buildings and the beauty of art objects, considered among the finest in Europe.

Walk the same streets as ancient Romans walked in Herculaneum, Pompeii and Rome.

Visit the early churches of Christianity such as the Pantheon and the Basilica of St. John Lateran.

Feast on the food for which Southern Italy and Rome is justly famous.

ITINERARY

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

DEPART THE USA

Fly from the United States to Naples, Italy.

Wednesday, April 15

NAPLES, Italy / SORRENTO

Arrive at Naples airport for our group transfer to the *Grand Hotel Europa Palace* in Sorrento, our home base for the next four nights. This Art Nouveau villa overlooks the Bay of Naples and is surrounded by Mediterranean terraces and gardens, and is just a 5-minute walk from the historic center of Sorrento. This evening join fellow travelers for a welcome dinner.

Meals: D

Thursday, April 16

SORRENTO / AMALFI / RAVELLO

Drive on the coastal road that skirts the famed Amalfi coast, one of the most scenic roads in Italy. Clinging to the side of the hills that drop down to the sea are pastel-colored towns, grand villas, terraced vineyards, and cliffside lemon groves. Stop at the beautiful town of Amalfi, an old-maritime republic that competed with Venice and Genoa for control of the Mediterranean trade routes. Visit the 9th-century cathedral of St. Andrew and its

13th-century cloister, and the Civic Museum. After lunch, continue to Ravello, one of Italy's most attractive hill towns, where we visit the Palazzo Rufolo, dating to the 11th century, and its beautiful gardens.

Meals: B, L

Friday, April 17

SORRENTO / PAESTUM

Enjoy a full day excursion to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Paestum. Originally called Poseidonia, in honor of Poseidon, the Greek god of the Sea. The city was founded in the 6th century BC by Greek settlers before falling under Roman control in 273 BC. Now the home to three of the world's best-preserved ancient Greek temples, the site also includes a fine museum in which are displayed millennia-old frescoes, ceramics, and the iconic *Tomba del Tuffatore* (Tomb of the Diver) fresco.

Meals: B, L

Saturday, April 18

SORRENTO / HERCULANEUM / POMPEII

Spend the day exploring Herculaneum and Pompeii, the Roman towns that were destroyed by the cataclysmic eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD. Situated near the coast and at the foot of



Gate to the medieval village of Ostia Antica



St. Peter's basilica in Vatican, Rome



Catacombs of Saint Gennaro, Naples

Vesuvius, both towns were buried under a dense layer of ash. Systematic excavations begun in the mid-19th century have recovered precious artifacts and revealed the beauty and grandeur of the towns, with their temples, other public spaces and grand villas. Explore both sites and enjoy lunch at a winery at the base of Mount Vesuvius.

Meals: B, L

Sunday, April 19

SORRENTO / NAPLES / ROME

In the morning, visit the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, one of the world's richest collections of Greek and Roman art, including superb mosaics and other artifacts retrieved from the excavations in Pompeii, Herculaneum and elsewhere. The museum occupies the huge building, originally designed in 1582 to house the Royal Riding School. Enjoy a casual pizza lunch in Naples, the quintessential Neapolitan meal, before continuing via high speed train to Rome. On arrival check-in to the elegant *Hotel Kolbe*, located in the heart of the city, only a few steps from the Circus Maximus and the Roman Forum. Enjoy the balance of the day at leisure.

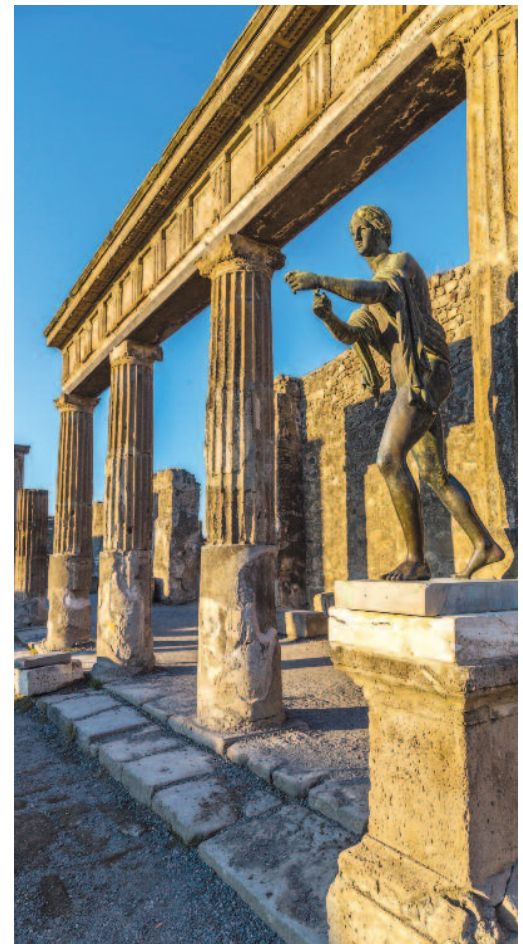
Meals: B, L

Monday, April 20

ROME

A morning tour of Rome's historical center visits the Colosseum, a stone amphitheater, commissioned around 70-72 AD by Emperor Vespasian as a gift to the Roman people. It opened in 80 AD with 100 days of games and continued to be used for four centuries. Just west of the Colosseum is the Roman Forum, once the center of ancient Rome, with temples, courts, markets, and government buildings. One of the most important archaeological sites in Italy, the Forum is the site of ongoing excavations. You may enjoy a great view of the Eternal City from the Capitoline Hill, one of the Seven Hills of Rome, and home to several important temples. In the afternoon we will visit the beautiful Basilica of St John Lateran (Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano). Built in the 4th century by Constantine, it was the Pope's principal residence, and the most important church in Christendom, until the 14th century when the Pope moved across the city to the Vatican.

Continue to the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, located near the northern gate of the



Pompeii

Aurelian Wall, and the first stop for ancient travelers entering the city. An excellent example of Renaissance architecture, the church contains works by Raphael, Bernini, Caravaggio, and others.

Meals: B

Tuesday, April 21

ROME

This morning we will visit the Pantheon, one of the best-preserved monuments of ancient Rome, featuring a rotunda with a massive domed ceiling whose construction reflects the genius of Roman architects. Situated on the site of an earlier structure thought to have been a temple for the Roman gods and a Catholic church since 609, it was the first Roman pagan temple to be consecrated as a Christian church.

Continue to the opulent baroque San Luigi dei Francesi, church to Rome's French community since 1589, where in the Contarelli Chapel are displayed a series of famous paintings by the Baroque master, Caravaggio, known collectively as the *St. Matthew Cycle*.



Colosseum in Rome

We will also visit the 15th-century Palazzo Altemps which features an important collection of Greek and Roman sculpture displayed in rooms beautifully decorated with frescoes on the walls and ceilings. This afternoon is at leisure. Meals: B

Wednesday, April 22

ROME / OSTIA ANTICA / SAN CALLISTO

Enjoy a full-day excursion to Ostia Antica and the Catacombs of San Callisto. Once the harbor city of ancient Rome, Ostia Antica is now a vast archeological site. Unlike Pompeii, the town was not destroyed by a volcanic eruption – it simply fell into decay over the centuries.

Walk down the town's main arterial street, called Decumanus Maximus, and view the many well-preserved houses, shops, baths and temples, which once thrived here.

After lunch, continue to the Catacombs of San Callisto, a network of passageways over 12½ miles (20km) in length, and the burial place of 16 popes and scores of Christian martyrs. Ancient Christians did not agree with the pagan custom of burning the bodies of their dead, so

they created these vast underground cemeteries on the outskirts of Rome.

Meals: B, L

Thursday, April 23

ROME

This morning, we will explore Vatican City, with a special early morning entrance to the Sistine Chapel to view Michelangelo's Genesis ceiling frescoes and his Last Judgement altar fresco. As we walk through the Vatican Museum we will view the pontifical collection of classical sculptures at Pio Clementino; Gallery of the Tapestries; Gallery of the Geographical Maps; and Raphael's Rooms. Also visit St. Peter's Square and St. Peter's Basilica, with the opportunity to view Michelangelo's Pietà. The afternoon is at leisure prior to our farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Meals: B, D

Friday, April 24

ROME / Departure

In the morning there is a group transfer to Rome's Fiumicino Airport for your flight home.

Meals: B



Paestum temple



Creation of Adam by Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel, Rome

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The beautiful colorful garden of Villa Rufolo, Ravello

TRAVEL WITH A SMALL GROUP

When you travel with Thalassa Journeys, you will travel with a small group of like minded travelers. Each of our programs normally consists of 18-22 persons. Traveling with a small group fosters a genuine sense of camaraderie, intimacy and exclusivity. The small size also allows for privileged access to places, less crowding at the sites and restaurants, and more meaningful discussions and interaction with the accompanying expert guest lecturer and local guide.

ABOUT THALASSA JOURNEYS

Thalassa Journeys was established by the principals and managers of Travel Dynamics, the company that 50 years ago pioneered the concept of educational travel for America's educational and cultural institutions. The belief that travel is primarily a learning experience forms the core principle of Thalassa Journeys. We bring an unrivaled depth of experience to make your journey with us meaningful, unique and seamless. We will take you not only to marvelous places, but we will also bridge the past with the present, illuminate the ancient sites we explore – what they were, how they came to be, and why they matter to us – make them come alive, and enrich your mind and inspire your senses. We are steeped in the culture of our destinations and know the secret places often overlooked by the guidebooks. We welcome you to the ever fascinating world of Thalassa Journeys.

RATE

\$4,990 per person, double occupancy.
Single room supplement: \$780

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

- Program of lectures and discussions by Prof. Bart D. Ehrman
- Four nights in Sorrento at the *Grand Hotel Europa Palace*; five nights in Rome at the *Hotel Kolbe*.
- American breakfast each morning at the hotels.
- Four lunches and two dinners including wine and beer, and one casual pizza lunch in Naples, as indicated in the itinerary.
- Designated group airport/hotel/airport transfers in Naples and Rome with handling of luggage.
- Complete program of tours and excursions as described in the itinerary by private motor coach with professional English-speaking guide.
- The services of an experienced Trip Director accompanying the journey throughout.
- All entrance fees to the sites described in the itinerary. All local taxes and service charges.
- Gratuities to porters, drivers and guides.
- Comprehensive pre-departure information and materials.

NOT INCLUDED: Airfare, travel insurance, expenses of a personal nature; any meals and other items not mentioned in the itinerary and the Program Inclusions.

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Suite 406,
Orlando, FL 32835

Reserve by November 15th

and receive as our gift a signed copy of
Bart Ehrman's forthcoming book,

Heaven and Hell: A History of the Afterlife

(publication date March 31, 2020)

Professor Ehrman writes:

“ My forthcoming book deals with an intriguing issue: when, how, and why did Christians come up with the ideas of a literal heaven and a literal hell? Neither can be found in the Old Testament or in the original teachings of Jesus himself. So how did they become the standard Christian beliefs? Did they arise out of Greek and Roman pagan traditions?

Different understandings of death and afterlife in antiquity can be seen nowhere better than in and around Rome itself, which was not only the center of imperial power and Roman state religions, but also the future center of the Christian church. Our tour will not be focused on heaven and hell per se, but on the glories of the Roman and Christian past. Even so, these antiquities will clearly reveal the various perspectives of ancient pagan and Christian traditions, from destroyed pagan Pompeii to the Christian catacombs, from pagan holy sites to the Vatican. ”

Don't miss the opportunity to receive Bart Ehrman's book that addresses fascinating topics relevant to our journey.



Street in Pompeii

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in the City of New York, pursuant to applicable New York law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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