


ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION

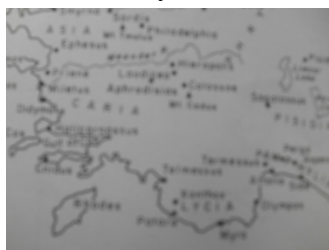
MEMOIRS OF TURKEY 1999

Danger, challenge and joie de vivre

This is a genuine ABC production  authored by *Bob Coffey* and may not be reproduced or transmitted in any manner for financial profit

Why Turkey?

Turkey is the land of the seven churches of the Apocalypse. Ephesus in Asia Minor was the second city of Christianity in the first century. Cilicia was the native province of Paul. Goreme is at the centre of the area where the Cappadocian Fathers exercised their ministry circa 370AD. Further east than we may travel to Lake Van near where



Noah built the ark and there on Ararat he landed. In the vicinity of Derbe & Lystra the early church was very strong. Beyond all this I had watched Canal Hayat(TV) open to bring the gospel to modern Turks and knew of the Bible School at Selcuk-indeed a believer from Leicester was for a time leader of a small fellowship close to Ephesus. The church physically is in ruins but the witness to our Lord Jesus Christ is courageously maintained. I

wanted to get off the beaten tract, to be a travelling witness and as it turned out quite special contacts were made and Christian literature including quite a few copies of the Injil were distributed. So why **not** Turkey?

A trip fraught with a dozen dangers and as many delights



On Monday April 26 we departed Manchester at 9am on FCL254 to arrive in Izmir (old Smyrna) by 2.45pm picking up a fine Renault 12 and after a cursory look at the fenced ruins of the ancient city we joined the dual carriageway taking us seaward on a beautiful approach road sheltered by pines and palms with views out to sea all along the way.

Danger No.1 was encountered whilst navigating through centre town from the ancient city ruins. The streets were

wide but think about it-observing few rules and using horns and hollering drivers of horse and cart transport were vying for road space with trams, lorries, bicycles pedestrians cars and motorbikes. In a day before the sat-nav was popular we decided to go where the road rises to get out of town because the road signs meant not a thing to us. Athens is bad but Izmir is unspeakably bad for the nerves.

Safely on the 565 North East to Akhisar-57 miles (Thyatira) and on to Bergama-51miles (Pergamum) switching North East. Along the way we encountered *Danger* No.2-the spring showers were very heavy-we could scarce see out the windscreen and two heavy lorries were spraying us with wet red soil from their wheels. We needed to make time-and when the rain slaked we were able to get free of the lorries passing both on what of course is the wrong side for us-but the road was fairly straight and the Renault was responsive so we made good progress.

Thyatira-city of numerous trade guilds

Our journey took us over 50miles to **Thyatira**. Our Lord reminds us through this



church that He “**searches the minds and hearts**” (Rev.2.23). It was late afternoon. The remains of Corinthian column bases and semicircular arches with their keystones lie in a line of 5 bases among the pine trees with lots of tossed marble. The city worshipped the emperor who was supposed to be Apollo incarnate. Seleucus settled many Jews to boost business because the city could not

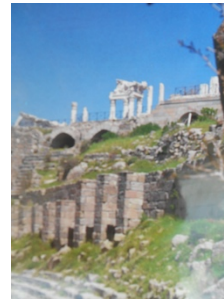
survive as a military depot. There were at least 10 thriving trade guilds and Lydia was a member of the “dyers’ guild’. **A woman called Jezebel by the Lord drew the city into licentious living-more specious than its idolatry.(Rev.2.20).** There was also a woman called Lydia –a native of the city who was servile to guilds but gloriously redeemed, ransomed and baptized by Paul at Philippi.

Bergama(Pergamum)& the movement of Satan’s seat

As evening drew on we drove 51 miles further to
Again a fine modern city lies outside the ruins.



the Theatre four
marbles stand
fine sculptured work.
mighty city where
the Spartans met after
Athens. Alexander
BC. It was
general Lysimachus
much booty on Pergamum’s impressive marble buildings.



Pergamum.

High above
majestic
supporting
It was a
circa 400BC
defeating
took it in 323
Alexander’s
who spent

Its claim to fame is parchment and the defeat of the Gauls in 230BC –mercenary immigrants invited by the king of Bithynia in 279BC. South west of the city is the Aesculapium where patients lay on animal skins underground to be healed by the gods of the underworld. **The altar of Zeus-Satan’s throne once stood in the city (Rev.2.14)**-as reconstructed it is to be found in Berlin today. Pursuing our way we arrived with our friends at Cannakule to be greeted with a pleasant meal and share a long informative conversation. Then to bed and up with the lark for breakfast -too soon parting for the long trip to central Turkey.

Troas & the Macedonian vision

The weather had improved –the morning air was a *delight* when we visited



Alexandrian Troy from where the story of the Trojan Horse originates –telling of the Greek ploy that ended the Trojan wars. The archaeological setting abounds in Greek-style ruins from several centuries BC, and the little stalls along the walkway to the centre abounded with trinkets. We bought a small Trojan horse key-ring and a larger figurine – both of which have sadly succumbed to our four changes of location in the 21st century. The accompanying photo shots

are of the Gate of Troas and an accompanying stone pile in the same area. The city of Troas was a gateway to Europe for the apostle Paul was granted a vision (Acts16.10) which enabled him to resume abundant usefulness after feeling he was baulked(Acts 16.6) in his efforts to move north with the gospel by none other than the Holy Spirit of God. The something “Big”-as tribes and history moved There are no more worlds to conquer” said the Great as he entered India and was on the Afghanistan and China. Conversely the west was Gauls were on the move-the Legions were Britain. The Germanic tribes were overwhelming day in the future America would be born and the Europe would share the sub continent of South between them. God makes no mistakes-the soul of slave-our God was marching on and Paul had to “keep in step with the Spirit”. The gateway was a real *delight* to see as we remembered the grace of God to our western lands.



to Bithynia-
Lord saw
swiftly west.
Alexander
borders of
young. The
entering
Rome. One
nations of
America
time is His

Canakkale and the Turkish New Testament

We had arranged to overnight at Barbados Mah, Aziziye, Cab183/2-and it was surprisingly easy to find since Ian could see the guards on the Staits goose-stepping as the Turkish military do- at intervals during the day and we just followed the coastal sector to arrive in time.

After 140 miles of travel it was a *delight* to stay with Ian Mitchell, a college lecturer and his wife- Suzanne Mitchell at **Canakkale** overnight. We parked in their gated drive and spent a very useful evening being briefed on the “does and don’ts” visitors to Turkey should observe. We were sad that because some students suggested Ian was



complimentary toward Kurdish students he was recently relieved of his university teaching role. He gave us a stash of Injils he could no longer use and these we were able to use with discretion. One Injil had notes and a fine reference system. Ian said “Only give this to a ‘thinking man’: I will return to the prophetic significance of this instruction in the Good Lord’s sovereign will later in the story.

Pammukale’s where “snow” is “calcium”

We woke to a beautiful day, watching with binoculars the guards who were checking on east-west shipping and after breakfast set off on the initial 120 miles to Balikesir. Distances to date have flown in the face of this 100 miles afternoon journey until we could target high above Denizli was a joy in the motored with windows open and our arms got We were not prepared for the first distance view Pammukale-which seemed to have a snow Yes, there had been a heavy snow-fall probably March on the high ground and on steep terrain the day before we had crept gingerly along where packed snow rendered reddish brown by passing transport was a very real *danger*. In fact that day we spotted a bear lying dead on that dangerous stretch. But as we drew closer to our destination we realized that the pure glistening whiteness wasn’t snow at all-it was glaciated calcified water from the irradiated springs below Hierapolis. The wonder is that from this rock shelf hot water and ice-cold water rise. From this twin source of water flows for 6 miles to Laodicea and beyond-warming up the cold in the hot sun while the boiling hot water cools as it flows on its separate journey. This phenomenon is known also in Iceland. The resulting water in Laodicea is always sickeningly tepid (cf Rev3.16).



Leisure but view our Renault. We sun-burned. of covering. in February

The Caravanaserai and some swimming

Mevlut and Mesgure(1/2 left below) still run this Pension. Twenty years ago it was like a home from home in a far-away land-a sheer joie de vivre. The open-air rooftop facility where we rendezvoused after an outing was one *delight* mixed with serious chats about resurrection and forgiveness. The swim-pool was proportioned to the filling time allotted to each property using hot water running down by the pension and an evening



‘dip’was a *delight*.

We took *the bus to Hierapolis* just above the famous hot springs. Four famous people lived there in New Testament times. Philip the evangelist was martyred there. Papias



the disciple of John wrote his “sayings of Jesus” there, Epictetus, a young slave like Onesimus and a stoic grew up in Hierapolis, and wrote in his “Discourses” ‘the perfect missionary is one whose bed is the ground, whose only covering the earth and sky and a shabby cloak, and who must love those who misuse him in the service of God’.

Epaphras was visiting and preaching against self-mortification and angel worship according to Paul in Colossians in the formative years of Epictetus. Everett Blake refers in his volume on sites to the “recent find” of Philip’s martyrrium. His grave certainly is marked and I was pleased to find it in the ancient cemetery.

We walked back to the pension. This was a refreshing experience. Just sitting on the calcified rock with one’s feet in the beautiful warm water. There were several little



pools with water spilling over several levels. What a *delight*.

It was hard to drag ourselves away – we did get some pictures but there is no need for aide-memoire after the unique sight had stenciled itself on one’s memory. The incline from Hierapolis to Pammukale is steep. The road leads through public grassland with lovely fauna and flora. Everywhere there were tortoises-huge ones lumbering about and tiny ones much like giant spiders moving at top

tortoise speed for cover and medium sized ones sauntering around. There were so many of them-50 or more spotted. It was so novel that it was a *delight* and one wanted to pick them up. They had established this sizeable colony 550 miles from Ararat where Noah sent them forth 4300 years ago.

In those days in our bedroom we wakened in the night-thinking it was raining cats and dogs. We discovered in the morning that a small cataract of cold water ran to the rear of the pension. It was no real annoyance-just a feature we shall never forget illustrating Revelation 3.16 perfectly.

A final *delight* was the Tourism Hotel swimming pool where for a few dollars one could swim among the marble pillars in the pool fed from the hot springs. A local told me the water was irradiated-and I can believe it-and within a year the outfit was closed on the alibi of hygiene.

This pleasant pool combined *delight* and A further adventure we undertook was a afternoon tea to Karahyat(3km distant) side of the hill from us. There coloured stalagmites formed over a 10 metre shelf



great roll of carpet. The colours had been naturally created by chemicals in the water. It was a *delight* to look at as one sipped tea and enjoyed ice-cream.

danger.

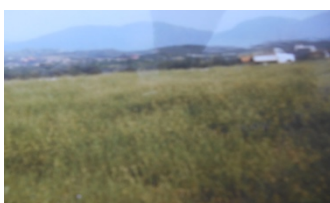
short visit for on the other cotton-like of rock-like a

Laodicea’s bee-keepers

It’s just 6 miles downstream to Laodicea from Hierapolis-under 5 from Pension

Karavanaserai.

wanted to see last church Revelation1-3. that Colossae Hierapolis and



We naturally the site of the mentioned in Remember and further afield

Lystra and Derbe were well established by 90AD and there said to be 500 in western Asia Minor and beyond the “land of 1000 churches” on the Lystra-Derbe axis-that’s why the menorah set of seven is symbolic of the ages ahead and representative of the problems of their era.

As to the ruins of Laodicea-today more reconstruction has been effected. The impression during our 1999 visit was of scattered pillars and stones-with few vertical structures-save the theatres and Odeon. There are, interestingly, water conduits to be seen. The salient memory is of grassland with knee-high standing grass and a handful of bee-keepers making a living as the busy bee harvested honey from the flowers among the grass. Boys played near stone and masonry stack. Damage from the earthquake of 60AD was put right without outside help by the proudly independent citizens. Galen describes how in the medical school built in the days of Strabo(64BC-24AD) spikenard was used for the ears and cylinders of collyrium powder from Phrygian stone cupped over and shaken into the eye to improve vision-being used much like our eyewash. Pliny dismissed the remedies as money-spinners. Laodicea’s wide grasslands were home to a stock of black woollen sheep. The water-supply, the wealth and the whacky medicine were each a cue for the Lord’s better remedies-clothing of righteousness, vision and obedience. Come to think about it today’s honey would do more for health than all the quackery of the medical school.

Colossae and the quake



The city was named after ‘colissinus’ a purple dyed wool. Like many earlier explorers we found Colossae with difficulty-but We drove to Honaz Dagi Millipark to be told by a hiker that we were on the north side of a mountain range and so we veered southward to Honaz and came to a part of the ancient ruins near the junction of the “three

streams” –the key to the ruins proposed by Sir Charles Wilson in 1895.

In Colossians 2.18 we learn the people sought some “vision of their own” and were into angelology-which infected the church insofar as they consented man was so bad that only by intermediate angelic ministry could God engage with man. The church digressed to misguided humility, asceticism and mystery cultus. The story of Onesimus his slave is of historical novel and it stands at the head of moves for the slaves as an inspiration.

Colossae was overwhelmed by earthquake
Paul’s imprisonment in Rome was 3-5 year
Onesimus returned amid devastation his help
been of very real value to Philemon.



Philemon
character
liberation of

in 60AD.
later. When
would have

Yalvac and the blonde singer

The next journey was 100miles east driving between the Karkaus Dagi

range and Lake Egirdir to ancient Psidian Antioch(modernYalvac). On the way we passed what looked like the seven gnomes-men with shovels on their shoulders going



as a band of brothers to tackle some task together. We arrived at this mountainous Antioch early which was a blessing for several reasons. First, we got to see the few ruined buildings that remained and to photograph the goat hair tent lying in the valley below (erected for the celebratory gathering of the Apostle Paul's visit). Second we were able to engage a little Christian family-one of very

few-a father mother and son-in conversation. Third, because the American delegation had either slept in or got delayed Turkish television approached me asking "Are you a visitor?-Would you be willing to share your impressions on camera?"-Mustafa-an elder from the Presbyterian Church in Istanbul (one of the organizers) had set this up in an alteration to the program.

Eventually the Americans arrived-the papal nuncio was there-the Orthodox patriarch too and a luscious blonde American singer to boot.



The march began from where we parked at the top all along the Roman road-impressive stone blocks covering 2 or 3 kilometers. After introductions the dignitaries took part-Turkish tourist minister welcoming, Papal nuncio reading greetings, the Patriarch intoning a prayer, the Presbyterian reading a passage from Acts 13 and making observations

and the Iconcon Anglican priest "saying a few words" followed by the star act-the American lady singing "He is Lord" twice over- she had some voice-a sheer *delight* and the auspicious gathering gradually broke up.

Egirdir and the Tornado

We skirted the east shore of the lake in a 40-mile journey to our next bed and breakfast to which we were introduced by our last hosts. The ramshackle premises sat on or should I say over Lake Egirdir. We entered by an iron fire-escape stairway.

Once in we seemed to be in a sort of coast-guard crow's nest overhanging the lake. It



was of most novel construction and on whatever infrastructure our "upper room" hung over the lake below. We unpacked and ordered fish and chips. We waited and waited and during the interval a storm was evidently brewing. The short stocky ladies who hosted us the house appeared below us literally jumping to catch the clothes on the line which were sailing horizontally on the considerable wind that

had got up.

The sun was blotted out-the sky was dark as dusk-the wind was shaking the structure that housed us and rolling along the shoreline was the only tornado or "twister" we ever encountered. It was travelling fast along a shoreline of many miles-within minutes it was upon us. The whole structure shook like a tree swaying backwards and forwards-the window where we had been watching shattered in a second and the wind blew things

and we chips-which unpalatable. We had a little from Yalvac



about inside. As soon as it began it ended thanked God we were there to await our came within about an hour-cold and quite

walk afterward and saw a skeleton group going through town in celebratory mood.

The St. Paul march and evening celebration in Egirdir takes place as a tourist attraction at intervals of 4/5 years and it had been our joy to be in Turkey to join the auspicious occasion. As to our experience in the tornado-it was most unwelcome-potentially the greatest *danger* we encountered save one.

The Silk Road

Morning was welcome. Breakfast occasioned no correspondence with Scotland-we didn't write home about it. We set out on a mammoth trip of 525 miles east to Goreme and faraway Cappadocia. The weather was good and temperatures high even early in the day. Our journey took us round the lake and via Beysehir north of Konya (Iconium & modern centre of the dervishes)-then for a 120 mile straight stretch when you could see for 10miles or more ahead to Aksaray and on to



Nevsehir.

We passed huge cultivated areas of olive plantations and vineyards-miles long. We saw Turkish boys in a troupe of maybe 10-15 riding their horses at speed leaving a dust cloud behind. Other than meeting the occasional lorry we travelled alone on a well surface road-part of the old "silk road". The ennui was serious. The *danger* of dehydration was so very real we just had to stop. Soon we spotted a Turkish coffee shop by our trail and pulled in. When we went indoors I realized my mistake-it was an all male venue. We withdrew with apologies and by good fortune found just along on the further side of the road a pleasant café. There we found just what we needed-



refreshments and something to eat. From there on it was like Elijah's experience-we went in the strength of those supplies another one hundred miles. Better is the end of a matter than the beginning thereof. As we got into Cappadocia the landscape became most intriguing. It looked *for all the world* like moonscape; in fact it was so tantalizing that we stopped and took pictures-a sheer *delight*

as it glowed in the evening sun. There just off the road were natural sandstone stacks standing 30-40 feet high, which must have stood since the flood and most fantastical of all-they had doors and windows carved in them. There were others-and others- and soon as we turned a corner we saw an entire plain dotted with them-they had to be the by-product of the receding waters of Noah's flood on this 2000foot level of Turkey's tableland. If you wonder where the families of Noah lived I guess this would be one answer. The troglodytes or cave-dwellers, some like St Basil seeking refuge here from persecution in the early Christian era, lived there. The ancient Hittites who first produced iron had their homes in these parts. It was toward evening but how we were looking forward to getting to our B&B,

Goreme

Another surprise awaited us. Our B&B was on the main street of Goreme-it was a rock-cave hotel; it had not the sandcastle architecture of nature we saw was cool and beds were and the food were so tired love to have



en route. It stark-but the comfortable pleasant. We we would dropped into

bed-but out in the street women were operating hand spindles and carpets were being made and displayed. The work was very skilled and the women most industrious. The scene was most colourful. As we moved further along to the edge of the town we came upon a long series of trestle tables bearing very novel souvenirs-miniatures of the sandstone houses-jewellery-perfumes little handmade items- scarves of silk and much carved opal. It was all so practical and so lovely and a real “draw” and *delight*. We bought a few striking and unique mementoes went home and turned in for the night.

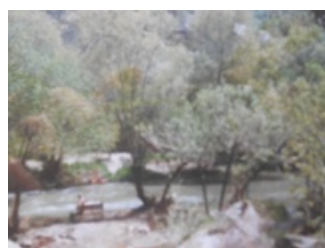
The church of ancient Cappadocia and its icons



In the morning after breakfast we were keen to explore further. I omitted to tell you that the sewerage system was by open channel along the public highway. Its high smell was worst in the heat of the day and one could live with it at night. So a walk in the street with the women weaving and the potters at work was very interesting but you had to factor in the odor for sure-somewhat limiting the time you spent at the street attractions. The church-museum with its wall paintings of bible stories was very well preserved-as in most of the towns of this area. Glorious reds purples and golds combine with russet hues to present the stories of Jesus and the disciples in utter beauty. The Christians of the 3rd-5th centuries clearly had well developed artistic skills and in their high refuges left a beautiful testimony to true faith in Christ as Lord.

Ilhara national park and mosquito valley

Before we left the rarified tourist highlands of eastern central Turkey we thought it would be relaxing to visit the well advertised park. It was indeed a treat to find further glorious cave paintings in a good state of preservation but one had to run the gauntlet



of the omnipresent mosquito. Our stay was truncated because guidebooks advise extreme care on account of malaria. This was another *danger* we had to be wary of. When one is thirsty to come up with a public fountain along the route would seem like an oasis in the desert. But even open water fountains claiming to be blessed by Mohammed were not to be trusted overmuch. We drank far too little although we did have hot drinks wherever possible. It was not until we arrived at Kas in the mosquito capital of Turkey that I succumbed to a bite and felt quite sick and dizzy for a time. Our trek in reverse was no shorter-although after 200 plus miles we diverted due south of Konya along a road to Hatunshray (Biblical Lystra). The road was narrow and no western tourist goes this way-the road that leads to the old country of first century revival and growth-the “land of 100 churches”. The first encounter we had was with a line of tractors (Ferguson tractors) returning in convoy from working the fruitful lands of the Lystra plain (cf. Acts 14.17). We were glad to have the road to ourselves when the last tractor passed. Soon we came into an open plain with the Tauros mountain range to our south and the ancient locale of Derbe to the east but first we arrived at modern Lystra. The people resembled the Chinese-residue genetically of Ghengis Khan’s ancient conquest.



We stopped for a short time and looked at the neat gardens with vegetables and some flowers growing. The houses were about the size of the typical British flat-roofed garage-very small indeed. When we drove through the centre of town with a very few shops and men standing about as in Irish towns generations ago-there was the policeman with his bicycle. The locals were as surprised to see our white

Renault as we were to step back two generations in this old-style Turkish village far from the maddening crowds of the tourist towns in the south east and western seaboard of Turkey.

The farmer's warning and his artesian wells

We were intrigued as we passed over the bridge that spanned the dry river bed as to why the very region Paul hailed as blessed "with rain from heaven and crops in their seasons" Acts 14.17? Then we noticed those long poles like telegraph poles pivoting on a strong bulwark supports, each with a strong rope or chain reaching into a bore hole. The local farmers were using the artesian supplies of water.

One of the farmers proved of very real help to us. We were able to communicate well enough to tell him we were proceeding up the mountain road and over to Antalya. He motioned vigorously and conveyed the message "No, no, no!" We had little or no idea why at that moment in time. He even went so far as to offer us to stay with him. We had a schedule and the loss of that evening's travel would have meant we could not stay at Kas nor visit Olu Deniz. We do thank the Lord for this man-he pointed to a danger up there-which we would understand soon enough. For now we thanked him but declined his hospitality. We gave him one of our Injils(Gospels) which he graciously accepted. Before long the tarmac road gave way to what seemed like a fairway of a golf course. Still on we went-till we topped the hill-it was pleasant travelling on the grass which was smooth and very short.

The robbers and the chase of my life

We rounded a bend at the top of the grass area of track and hit a rather rough road suddenly. We caught sight of a car revving from a small holding away to our left-it was tearing down the lane that led to the house-and by the Lord's mercy we put two and two together. The men in the car were coming for us. Their object was to reach the road before we got there and block our way. Had they succeeded in that I imagine you might not be reading this episode.

The Renault could be relied on-we had proved that in almost 1500 miles of driving. I put my foot to the board and it roared past the end of the lane with our quarry driving like crazy behind us. I would not say their car couldn't catch us for it took all the skills I had learned over 30 years to draw yard by yard further from the pursuing vehicle. I didn't know the road and took quite a few calculated risks but after about 4 miles I had thrown him off-we continued at a reduced speed of 70-75 mph for another few miles -the car and maybe our lives depended on sheer nerve and speed and the never failing grace of God who delivered us from so great a *danger*.

The road improved and within half an hour we arrived at a lovely log cabin-the first sign of inhabitation we had seen. We were ready for a cup of tea and a breather. But the night was young-and little did we know another frightening experience was awaiting us.

A Tunnel, a policeman and scrap metal in the sea

The journey from the log cabin was very pleasant –the road was now excellent and it ran alongside a mountain river running in spate. We were descending through hundreds of feet and after twenty minutes driving suddenly we came upon a bridge. As we entered it was very dark-the road became so bumpy it could not have deteriorated so badly on its own-it must have been dug up to impede vehicles. Then we spotted a man with a light. He looked like a policeman. He shone his torch and I turned on my full lights and passed him as quickly as I could. Who he was or why he was there alone I never could tell. We headed for the light at the end of the tunnel and emerged shaken with a mixture of shock and relief to see the light and be back on a better surface. But our relief was short-lived. We were on a road with a very steep grade-maybe 1 in 3. I could see the sea approaching us and jammed on the brakes – driving somewhat gingerly toward what seemed the open sea and a high cliff. As we reached within twenty feet of the cliff there was a 90degree bend to the right. Mina from the passenger side of the car could see over the cliff. She drew in her breathe with an exclamation that stirred me to extra care. She saw cars and lorries on the rocks below –they had been there some time. Maybe they had simply gone over the edge and were never heard tell of again or just maybe people we had escaped discarded the cars they captured in the sea. This was a conundrum we couldn't solve and after this it didn't matter-but from this perhaps the most frightening danger of all from which we escaped not by speed but by slow and stealthy manouevre. We proceeded toward Antalya as the sun went down out to sea. We were travelling in the dark and the challenge of crossing a dual carriageway and two railways in a zig-zag fashion took some time to accomplish. Unhappily it left us begging entrance to our hotel after the hour of 11pm and we were unsuccessful!

Antalya: kindness and alarm

The doorman at our hotel had the answer to our plight. We had no tent and would have been down to sleeping in the Renault save for his suggestion-no doubt made before. "Try the lady two door down-she has a spare room!" We did just that, and the lady was willing to play host-giving us a comfortable bed. In fact she seemed to be a



single mum and had a little child. They cleared a room and used another one. She put herself to no little trouble and gave us the room with the TV. We caught up with the Turkish election news-a hitherto little known lady politician was speaking ecstatically about some political event. We gathered a party representing the

"Brotherhood" had come to power and was getting ready

to change the historic western lean of Turkey and as we later discovered to unbridle government from the military leadership. We were unfamiliar with the politics of Turkey up until now and now we were confused –we turned it all off, chatted for a while and went to sleep. We awoke early in anticipation of a short "holiday by the sea" after the gruelling "Tour de Turkey" that was behind us. There are two Turkeys-the tourists paradise by the sea-which runs from Istanbul by Troy to Ismir and south to Cesme, Olu Deniz, Kas, Antalya and Alanya. Here there is sand and sea and every tourist joy from sightseeing to water-skiing to sunbathing with umbrellas beach cafes and trendy shops. Then there is highland Turkey on the plateau that is contained by the Tauros and other high hills. The plateau ranges from 1000ft to 1500ft ASL. Hitherto we had lived the high life and gone where coaches seldom venture. Now the music was lively-westernized, instead of busy agrarian folk holiday makers lolled around lazily and the scenery was predominantly seascape rather than landscape.

Turkey has glorious beaches along its western and south-western coast and with ancient Ephesus as a hub this area is a huge draw-Bodrum and Cesme and Olu Deniz are favourite centres with the package holiday industry.

Mount Olympus

When you are not looking for a treat and one materializes it is a delight. We saw the sign for “Mount Olympus” and for a moment thought that the Turks had stolen the peak from Greece for on our way to Thessalonica from Athens the Mountain was inland of the highway. Putting aside the duplication we parked and began the trudge up the igneous rocks inhaling the quite overpowering essence of sulphur as we went. We gained height until we could see the sea far below. Mina found the going tough as the lungs had to perform with poor oxygen-but we determined to continue-further along there was a reward-unbeknown to us. Soon we emerged from the passage through some low growing stunted bushes to a large area of flat rock with little flames popping up here and there some few meters ahead. There was a boy with a Turkish teapot-a majestic piece with a long spout and an array of cups. He was providing tea at a small charge for those who climbed the mountain. We enjoyed the experience and the little photo-call before descending. It seemed more like Mount Sinai without the thunder-all those flames nearer the summit conveyed an impression of the delicacy of life-what if the bushes caught fired or a big blaze erupted? Our only consolation was the “Tea-boy” whose daily trade granted some peace of mind to others on this strange venture and our little Injil would have brought *peace with God* a step closer in his life too.



Kas –homeland of the mosquito



The town was most pleasant and we were sitting in the town centre when a hotelier approached us asking “Are you looking for accommodation? You can come to my place. We had a few places earmarked but who could refuse the invitation. The hotel of our new-found friend had recently opened and was a treat of a place but the treatment was with a “buzz” and as we entered this south west and its towns of Finake, Demra and Kas we got the treatment we feared-good solid mosquito bites and this time I fared worst feeling decidedly groggy. Back home I got tested for malaria but the test proved negative. The feeling passed off as the day wore on and so we felt braced for a better day in good old Olu Deniz.

Fetiye-where we met that “thinking man”

The faithful old Renault had done sterling service. It needed filling with petrol now we had returned to the coastal facilities. I recall watching the petrol gauge needle drop and saw the unfamiliar sign “Mavi petrol Ltd”, so I thought this is different-lets buy here. It turned out the franchise boss was a very kind and engaging man. We were by now ashamed of our “white” Renault because it was grey and white with brown wheels but Hadie Yilmaz came to the rescue. He motioned us to his nicely furnished office and introduced my wife to his, and instructed his youthful attendant to clean and fuel the car (the wash was a free service). He had good command of English. He appeared to be well-informed, a noble and stately sort of man in whom one could be very confident. I immediately queried who the lady was on TV last evening and he

responded “Bad news-very bad news”. This man foresaw a shift to the right in Turkish politics and a movement away from the pro western position devised by Attaturk. His franchise was American funded and he was distinctly pro-western. Hadie’s wife poured coffee and we chatted for some time. The car was presently looking like it ought, and we had enough fuel to take us to Izmir. Hadie accompanied me to the car for I said I had a little gift for him. I told him I had a special copy of the Injil with a commentary in the later pages. He said “O thank you-I have always wanted one of these” and-wait for it-he used these very words **“You have given it to a thinking man”** “I shall read this-thank you very much!” We bade them “good-bye” but this was the event we remember with greatest *delight* from our entire trip. Our missionary friend on the first night of our stay had said **“Keep this for a thinking person”** It was the last Injil we had-Philadelphia, Pammukale, Laodicea, Yalvac, Lystra and Antalya-our hostesses and contacts had cleaned us out of these life-giving gospels in Turkish-but no Injil found such a ready and enthusiastic response as this one. I have periodically prayed for this man that God would shed the glorious light of Christ upon his noble life and fill his kind heart with the peace of God and joy of faith.

Olu Deniz-two for the price of one

We had Scots friends who treated themselves to the Turkish bathe in Olu Deniz. Their historic *haverings at hame* meant that when the resort came up on the road signs it



was a must to visit and a hard place to leave. Mind, it was a hard place to get at. The access road delved steeply off the highway-another of those Turkish 1in3 inclines. The Renault’s brakes which had not been so much in use as its accelerator were now heavily relied upon. We parked and dined from one of the lovely beach motorized cafes. The sun shone and the sand was hot. Hang gliders overhead, sun-soaked beaches all

about us and the glistening sea packed with swimmers and water-skiers made up a familiar holiday scene.

Olu Deniz has two beaches. Both are pleasant and they sit either side of a small elongated sandbank with Palms and flowering bushes in between. When you tire of one beach or you desire more shade or more sunshine it is on tap here where you get “two for the price of one”. We had about 70 miles to travel to our hotel in Bodrum so too soon that afternoon of Day 9 to a very pleasant gated hotel on the outskirts of Bodrum. We had trysted to meet our friend Dave & Ellen Brown and take them next day to Ephesus. The Browns were very good soloists and we formed an ad-hoc quartet to sing “How great thou art” at the theatre.

Bodrum and Ephesus



It was good to meet the Browns and rendezvous as planned. The castle and harbour provides a splendid the pleasant town. into town on arrival some time with our



impressive at Bodrum backcloth to We walked and spent friends.

Next day we travelled the 25 miles up the coast to Ephesus and greatly enjoyed visiting the site-an historical *delight* which offers so much I will list it rather than set it out in narrative form.

1. The library of Celsus-built in 100AD by a Roman consul in honour of his father Celsus. A fine 2 story building with 16 impressive Corinthian pillars in its enduring façade. The library reputedly contained 12,000 scrolls.
2. Miletus-the port from which product of Asia Minor was sent to Egypt-here in Acts 20 Paul met the Ephesian elder who made the 7 mile trudge to greet Paul for the last time as he said "I want to finish the course and complete the task the Lord has assigned me." Even in Paul's day the sea had fled to the west as the port silted up.
3. The tumbled down public baths where John raced out on sight of the heretic Cerinthus exclaiming "Let us fly, lest even the bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is within."



4. The house of the prostitute-the old business thrived in the city and the sign was a lady's foot on a paving stone outside the premises.
5. The temple of Diana-a place which doubled as a bank or treasury. The fallen pillars lie beyond railings along the lighted route that leads uphill
6. Uphill and inland to the east beyond a great wooden door is a cemetery where the body of John the apostle lies. I stood in awe and thankful prayer for the servant of the Apocalypse whose words I deeply respect. On that memorable Thursday May 6 equally I was shocked to witness a woman earlier at the tomb performing some pagan ritual before she slipped away.

7. Back in town centre we were able to take a bus up a hillside again at a huge gradient to the convent erected in memory of the Lord's mother Mary who spent time in that refreshing and airy place later in her life through the familial consideration of the apostle John who seems to have been her sister's son.
8. The arena where Paul notionally "fought with beasts" is a little distance away en route to Miletus. Mina and I sped along just to stand on its stones.



After an unforgettable experience we drove away from this ancient Second Centre of first century Christianity and on the way back to Bodrum we stopped at a little transport café.

A sandwich and the Saviour

We all commute in our experience between the past and the present-between dry history and liquid tears and the felicity of smiles that is our present experience; between the great feats of past saints and the poor efforts of our own. Still the Master that opened a great door and effectual to Paul opened a series of small portals to ourselves during this Turkish tour. Let me narrate another little vignette of divine grace.

I ordered a sandwich-a perfectly ordinary request back home-but to this 'Kurdish' family who ran the little outfit this meant something which required lots of time. During that time the lady of the house came out to join us and replenish our drinks. We entered a conversation about the resurrection of Christ because we had passed through Easter. A lorry-man who was passing and had good Turkish and English was interpreting for us. The lady was listening as if for her life. The man had to leave but I continued my explanation using a stick and the sandy soil around the table. I drew the cross and the empty tomb in rather sketchy detail. Still the woman looked and

listened. Her husband joined her and a son also came along but still there was no sandwich. We were making progress in cooking the story for edification and just then one of the family appeared with newly baked pita-bread and greens and tomatoes and other garnish- a *delight*. Now we understood. This family wanted to do the best for us. We were overwhelmed. We dug into our pockets and thanked them profusely. But they would hardly let us go. The lady was in tears and came right to the car and sobbed.

The Browns went back to Bodrum in 2000 but they reported that the son was not there –but their lack of Turkish meant they could not do the follow up they would have wished. Only eternity will reveal if this little lady found peace amid suffering. Sadly I had no Injils left –but the Lord’s arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

Kusadasi and the Jewess

Forty miles along the glorious coastline we came to Kusadasi which looks out seaward towards the Greek island of Samos in the distance. This would be the base for our last two days in the country.



We would stay at Hotel Sezgin run by the brothers Sezgin and Ali Saglam.

From Kusadasi we travelled once more southward to Ephesus and it was on this occasion that we visited John’s grave and the House of Mary by the local coach which plied up and down the steep hill to the convent. The Saglam brothers were kind to us. In the evening Ali introduced us to his partner who to our surprise turned out to be a Jewess-long torn from her roots she was

actually from the ancient diaspora.

Our conversation became animated-I shared some Hebrew with the lady and Ali wondered how I knew Hebrew. I said I was a Christian Imam! He was dumbfounded. He stared me in the eye and said “Sit right in front of me!” which is a way of saying “You are an infidel”.

When his temper cooled and we resumed our sharing time good progress was made on the Trinity and on Jesus and how He came to save our souls. Ali for his part was not so stimulated as his Jewish partner. He proceeded to acquaint his own Imam who sent two books to inform me of the “brotherhood” which was gaining exposure and momentum nationally just at that time. The Imam did me a service because I became well informed about the religious convictions of Turkish Moslems through the titles “The Moslem Brotherhood” and “What every unbeliever needs to know”.

The response of the each partner was diametrical to the other’s. The brothers were good to us. When Ali discovered from us that we had travelled 2000 miles he put it to us that we were “spies”. He was quick to judgment. It was in fact to convey what profession I actually followed that I described myself as equivalent to an Imam in Christianity. Our open door of witness to the Hoteliers was our final opportunity for prolonged testimony in Turkey though we did since develop hospitality toward other Turkish post graduate students –four or five of whom visited our previous home and enjoyed the pictures we shared of their homeland. They asked very pertinent questions also and each received a Gideon NT –asking that our favourite scripture be inscribed on the flyleaf.

Sardis –victory and a soldier’s helmet

We continued our visits to the seven churches with a 50 mile trip to Sardis(Salihli) from where Philadelphia(Alasehir) is but 20 miles southward.

Sardis after Ephesus yielded easily the best preserved ruins. One is impressed by a huge marble temple floor with a fine altar guardian lions, even a number of shops (I photograph of one leaning on it.) The wall of basilica is of beautiful brown and white with alternating lines of brick and sandstone-



grandiose against the spur of Bozdag-Mt Tmolus. King Croesus (570-546BC) was unseated by Cyrus stratagem of sending camel riding soldiers against cavalry-horses flee at the scent of camels! Following that Hyroades watched a defender come down for his helmet he dropped over the walls and Cyrus **victorious** troops from that

observation entered and swept through the great fortress. Aesop wrote his fables in this city in those days. **In Christian times our Lord said (Rev.3.1-2 “put some strength into what is left; you have a name for being live but you are dead”**. He also said the **victorious one will be dressed in white**. A legal *danger* paraded around in the shape of a lady selling genuine coins found around the site (Remember Croesus had a huge mint). To be found with such at customs is visited with a fine and possible imprisonment. Before I knew that danger I had two of the coins. On reading of the danger I left the booty with the Renault at the airport-my conscience clear vis-à-vis declarations.



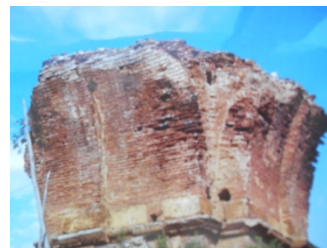
and four have a the 11th cent stone built still imposing



Philadelphia's bright boy

We could truly say that our morning visit to Philadelphia of which we have happy memories. This was another *delight* for a number of reasons. First a lively little dark-haired boy spotted us park the car and undertook unsolicited to be our guide. We were thrilled-he was such a good English

speaker and he said he knew the old ruins away. We were rather hungry and so we to direct us to a place for lunch. We him with an ice-cream treat as we enjoyed and back into the sunshine we went together the old church wall from the first century unforgettable brick pile in the shape of a



not far asked him rewarded the cuisine downhill to with its high crown.

We truly felt that the Lord had laid before us an open door as in Revelation 3.8 and immediately commended to the care of our little friend a lovely copy of the Injil. I was just his age when I asked Jesus to be my Saviour. I should love to meet this little lad in glory.

Cesme and Izmir and home

All good things come to an end. Our trip had been anything but dull and everything but futile. It rates amongst the historic events of our fifties. We bade farewell to Kusadasi and with a small stock of presents from factory and market we drove back to our car hire base at the airport after taking the air and joining the very English afternoon tea-party by the shore at Cesme. There we re-discovered the manner in which we are meant to live as British tourists. We broke the mould and to sum it all up I would have to say we did it “His way” so far as we could in a land where we

found no place of worship reachable in our itinerary. We did worship at Yalvac in the goats-hair tent of course and saw the relics of the amazing first century when Christianity was militant and spreading like fire on the heather in Turkey. We did know of the Bible School at Selcuk but could not locate it even on our second trip to Ephesus. In later years Simon Fitton-Brown of Leicester married a local lady from those parts and for a time led a little fellowship in the area. The church exists in a minimalist sense in Turkey today-the Gospel beams out through Canal Hayat and the St Paul anniversaries continue gain government sponsorship. Besides the church continues a witness in Istanbul and as we know from more recent contacts the Turkish people still need peace with God and the power of the Resurrection.

From tierra del fuego and the utmost parts of sea

From Adam's first creation what a gathering that will be

Jesus said

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every nation

and He added in His last days

This gospel of the kingdom shall be heralded in all

the world for a witness and then shall the end

or purpose be fulfilled.

END OF MEMOIR

Bob Coffey Aramaic Bible Companion.uk