

NEW YORK, NY, October 03, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- For travelers looking to escape the crowded department stores and commercialism of the holiday seasons, Crossroads Tours International provides two packages in Turkey that reflect the true "spirit of the holidays." These packages are among the wide selection of escorted, special interest tours and cruise packages offered by the tour operator.

"Seven Churches of the Revelation Plus Istanbul" It often comes as a surprise to many travelers that the country of Turkey features prominently in Christian culture, and many of the cities and towns referenced in the New Testament are actually based in Turkey, although their names may have changed over time. Consisting of visions and predictions of future dramatic events, the last book of the New Testament Book of Revelation refers to the "Seven Churches" where John the Apostle must preach. Crossroad Tours' 7-day/6-night tour offers Christmas celebrants a profound spiritual experience that includes a visit to these churches, as well as a visit to Istanbul during one of its most festive times of year.

Crossroad Tours' "Seven Churches of the Revelation Plus Istanbul" package visits the sites of all seven churches: Ephesus, Laodicea, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Sardis, Pergamon, and Izmir (Smyrna). The itinerary also includes a visit to the shrine of the Virgin Mary, where it is said that St. John brought Mary in the fulfillment of his pledge to Jesus to protect her, and from where she entered heaven.

Before the start of the spiritual journey to the "Seven Churches," there are two full days in Istanbul, featuring comprehensive sightseeing and a half-day cruise on the Bosphorus, the strait that divides the city between Europe and Asia. There is also ample time for exploring the city independently.

The Christmas departure date from Istanbul for the "Seven Churches of the Revelation Plus Istanbul" package is Saturday, December 21st. The tour price per person, double occupancy is \$949, excluding roundtrip airfare from the U.S.

"Christmas in Turkey" An ideal family vacation, this 9-day/8-night package begins in Istanbul, where there are visits to such famous attractions as the Topkapi Palace, the Blue Mosque, and the Grand Bazaar, the world's largest covered bazaar with more than 4,000 tiny shops. Also included is a half-day Bosphorus cruise, offering unique views of the marble palaces, centuries-old Ottoman style villas, and luxurious modern residences that are the backdrop of the city's European and Asian shorelines.

From Istanbul, the tour proceeds to the ancient Roman city of Ephesus, whose marble streets are home to the Celsus Library, considered one of the most beautiful structures among the ruins. The site also includes the Temple of Hadrian, Trajan Fountain, and the "Great Theater" where St. Paul the Apostle preached. There is also a visit to the nearby shrine of Virgin Mary, the home believed to be where Mary spent the last years of her life.

Moving inland, the tour continues to Pamukkale, famed for its healing thermal/mineral baths and snow-white calcium terraces known as the "petrified waterfalls," and to Konya, the spiritual home of the "Whirling Dervishes." The last two days are spent in the other-worldly landscape of Cappadocia, where early Christians lived in hiding in caves and tunnels carved out of the porous rocks, and where the abandoned Great Basilica, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, sits perched upon a cliff.

Departing from Istanbul on December 21st, the "Christmas in Turkey" tour is priced at \$1,290 per person, double occupancy, excluding round trip air fare from the U.S. and two domestic flights. Children 6 to 12 years of age receive a 50% discount on the land package.

What the Tour Prices Include: The prices of the "Seven Churches of the Revelation Plus Istanbul" and "Christmas in Turkey" tours include: airport transfers upon arrival and departure; accommodations at 4-Star hotels; meals as specified in the respective itineraries; transportation by non-smoking mini or midi buses; services of an experienced, English-speaking escort/guide; entrance fees to all of the sites, museums, and other attractions visited while on tour; plus hotel taxes and service charges.

Customized Packages and FIT's Like all Crossroads Tours' land and cruise packages, both the "Seven Churches of the Revelation Plus Istanbul" and "Christmas in Turkey" tours can be modified to meet special departure and/or other requirements. Crossroads Tours will also be happy to assist agents in planning tailored-made FIT packages. Contact the company by calling toll-free 800-958-3635, or e-mailing sales@crossroadstoursintl.com

Crossroads Tours International is a licensed and recognized travel service provider in Turkey. It is a member of The Association of Turkish Travel Agents (TURSAB) and the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), and operates under the control of the Tourism and Culture Ministry of Turkey.