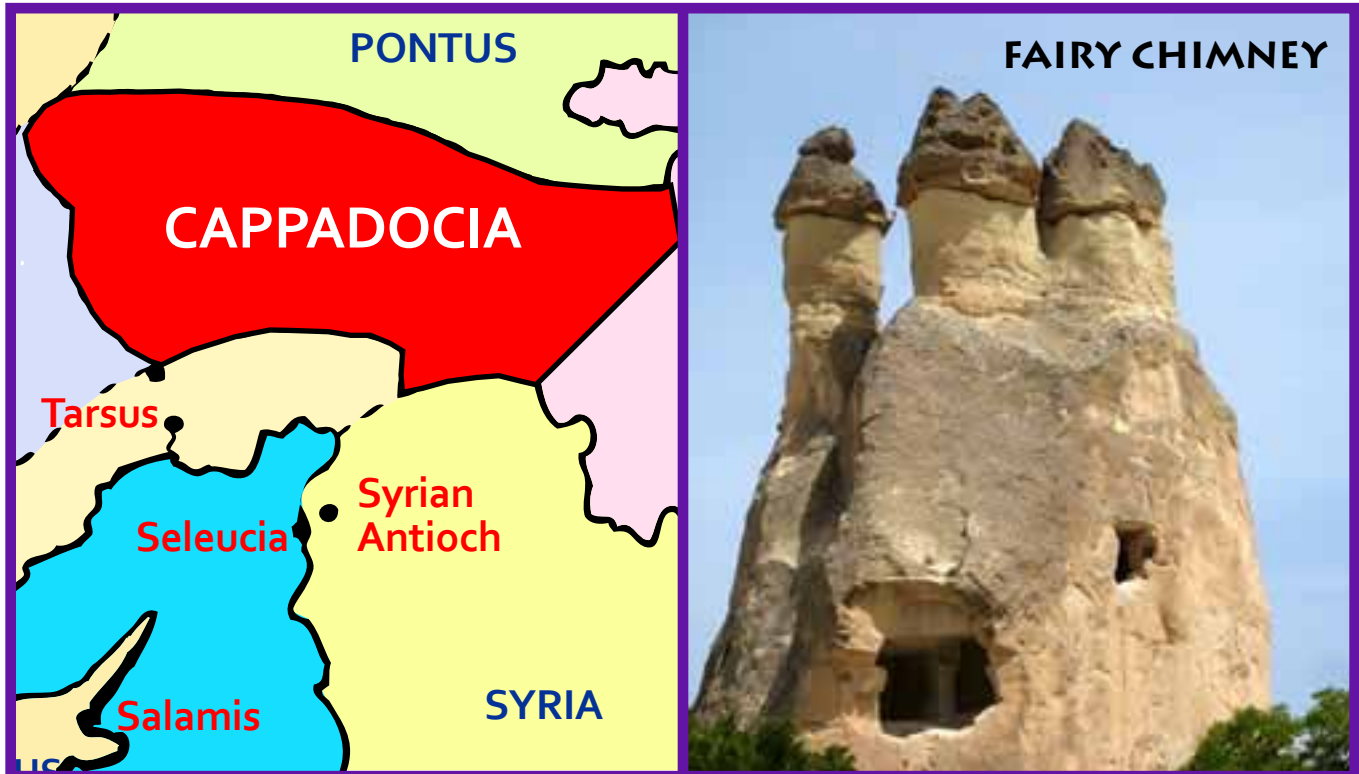
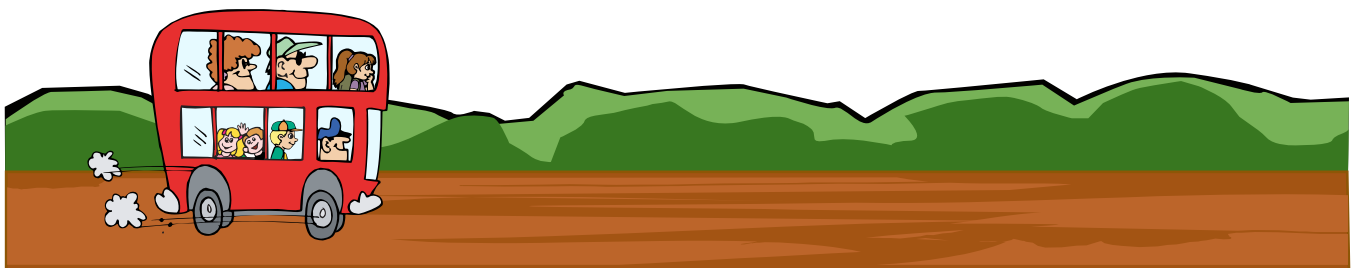


# Tour of the Holy Lands - Cappadocia



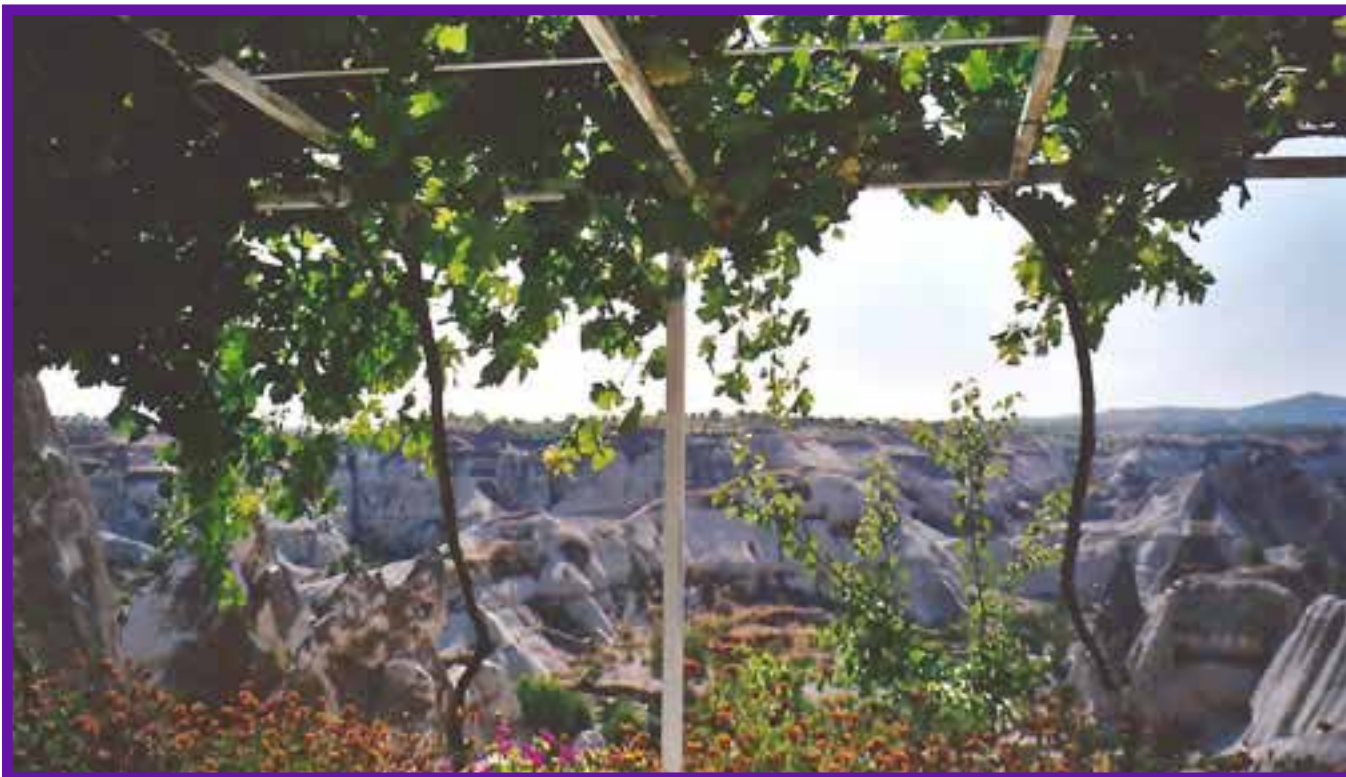
Time to climb on the bus again. We're going to drive north to one of the most fascinating sights you will ever see in your life. It's in the region called Cappadocia (Kap'a-do' sha). Sticking up in the air are strange formations shaped like upside-down ice cream cones called "fairy chimneys." They look magical, don't they? People would carve out the inside and live there with their families. In other chimneys, they raised pigeons. The government of the land finally made them move into regular houses for safety reasons. But, wait a minute! Look over there! There's someone who still lives in a fairy chimney!



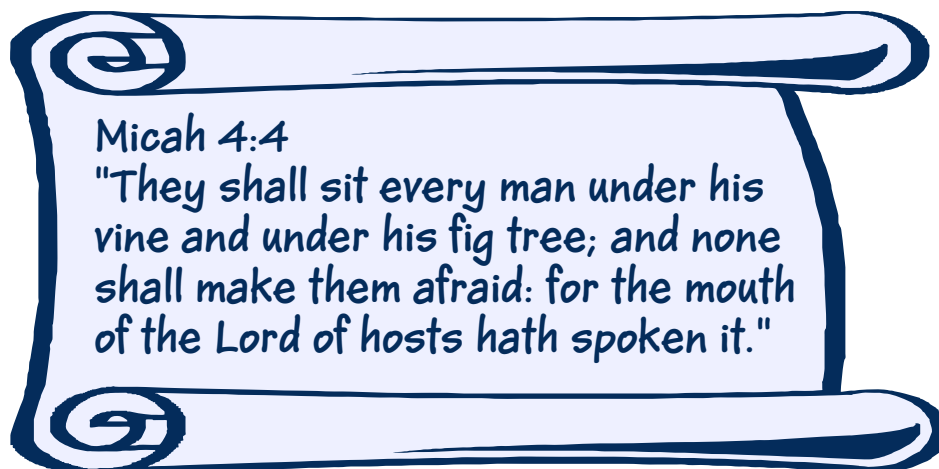


Maybe he or she would let us see the house. Let's go knock on the door. Hello! It's a sweet grandmother all by herself. Her children have grown up and moved out of the chimney. She's inviting us all to come in. Let's remove our shoes first. Don't these carpets feel soft on our toes? Look how they carved out benches on the walls and covered them with Turkish carpets. She says that the little carved-out shelves on the walls are where pigeons used to sit. Let's thank her for letting us visit with her. In Turkish, we'll say, "Teh'shek-ur-eh'deh-rem."





The lady has decorated her front patio with a grape arbor. She and her family can sit out here, reach up for a handful of grapes, and enjoy the view from the fairy chimney. There's a Bible verse in the book of Micah that describes a peaceful life like this. Does anyone have a Bible handy? Read Micah 4:4: "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."



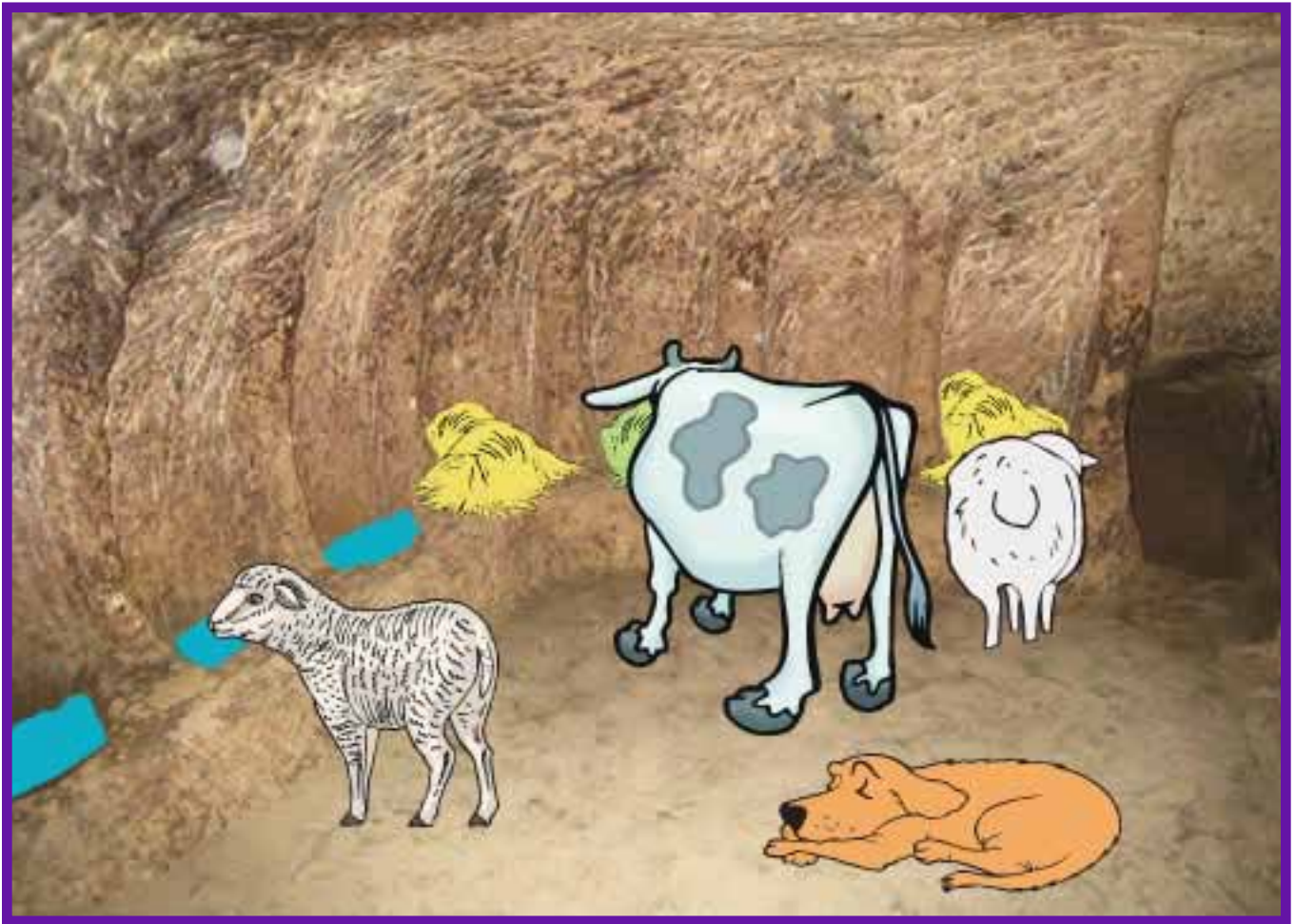


We remember that Christians were persecuted in many places. In fact, persecution happened here in Cappadocia. Romans were the persecutors. The Christians learned a clever way to escape them: They went underground. How? When they planted their gardens, under the soil they discovered the same hard material that resulted in the fairy chimneys. They began carving it out. Pretty soon they could climb down into a room and hide. But they didn't stop at one room. They carved steps going further down underground and made another room, and another room, and another room. Soon there were enough rooms for the whole town - bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, rooms for grain, and rooms for animals. They even carved out a church.





Let's climb down into one of these cities. We can see how difficult it must have been for the diggers. They had to bring up large piles of dirt and put them somewhere, all the while keeping the main entrance secret. They had to get fresh air all the way down to the bottom. They had to store fresh water and fresh food for people and animals. And notice how cool it is underground. They had to keep extra clothes down here to keep warm.



Here is a room for animals. Look at the troughs they carved out for animal food and water. We have a question: How did they get their animals down the stairs? Nobody knows.



There are electric lights down here today. But in Bible times, they lit the walls and halls with torches. Find the torch holders. What happened if a Roman found his way into a secret city? The Christians would blow out all the wall torches, and then the intruder would get lost in the pitch-black darkness.

Look closely and you can see wall paintings in this carved-out church. See this round stone? It is actually a door. When it was rolled closed (pushed to the right), it could only be opened from the inside. That way the Christians were safe from persecutors.

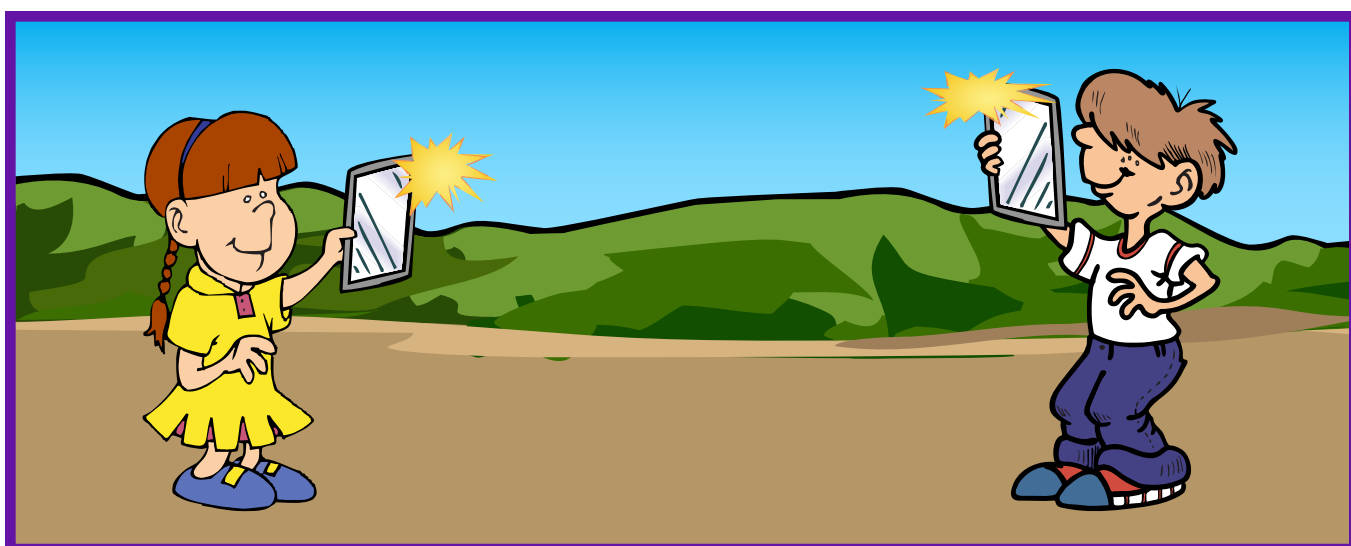






Guess how they warned each other when the enemy was coming? They flashed mirrors between cities. Neighbors of the Christians would join them underground to escape the Romans. After working and praying with them, these neighbors became Christians, too.

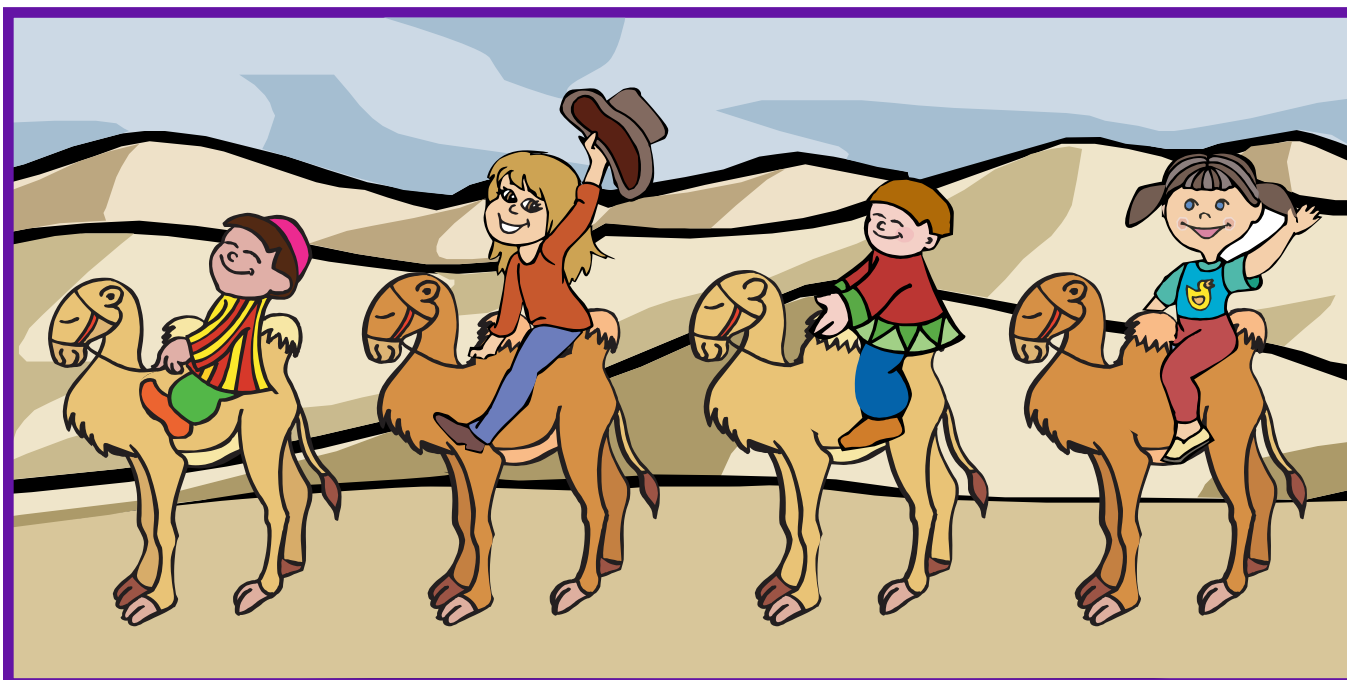
The idea of hiding underground was such a good one that other Christian towns began to dig underground cities, too. So far, archeologists have found 37 cities in Cappadocia.







This looks like fun. Before we leave, let's take turns riding these Cappadocian camels.





Look how our bus driver has been taking care of us, even while we were gone. Not only has he washed the bus and given us clean windows for our picture-taking, but he has brought out his touch-up paint for the little scratches that have happened along the way. We all agree that he's a good driver, too. Let's all give him a "hip-hip-hooray!"

