



PURSUE: Women Pursuing Christ Through His Word
Fall 2025-2026
Acts Lesson 18 Lecture Notes
February 10, 2026

Hellenism and the Gospel

I. Influence of Hellenism at the time of Paul

Hellenism-the spread of cultural and religious practices of ancient Greece following the rule of Alexander the Great. Hellenistic ideas were greatly influenced by the philosophers Socrates (469-399 BC), Plato (427-347 BC), and Aristotle (384-322 BC). Alexander was personally tutored by Aristotle.

_____ believed that good character was necessary for human flourishing. Known for formulating the Socratic method of _____ and teaching, he believed that a life without examining _____ is meaningless, and only true knowledge leads to virtue and a happy, meaningful life. Socrates was Plato's teacher.

_____ believed reason was the highest aspect of the human soul and should _____ all human activity. He followed the teachings of Socrates dealing with _____ and ethical questions, but added further study that included _____ and ontological (the nature of being) discussions.

Aristotle believed that _____ and making virtuous decisions was necessary for happiness, but must be _____ between extremes. Example: courage can be recklessness or _____.

I. Review of Paul's preaching methods

- 1. _____ -to carry on a discussion; show your premise can withstand examination.*
- 2. _____ -to open thoroughly; to expound to cause understanding.*
- 3. giving _____ - to place beside; to present truth in an orderly fashion.*
- 4. _____ -to answer for oneself with intelligent reasoning.*
- 5. _____ - Acts 19:8; 2 Corinthians 5:11- to induce one by words to believe.*

II. Philosophical ideas of Paul's time Acts 17:18 Paul moves into the Greek world

Philosophy definition-a discipline that identifies humanity by the pursuit of _____, truth, and knowledge. Considers the questions regarding the nature of the _____ world and _____, the use of limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral _____. Cambridge dictionary. Greek definition: Col. 2:8- philosophias-the _____ or pursuit of wisdom.

1. _____-chief end of man is the avoidance of _____. Epicureanism was founded by Epicurus in Athens during the 4th century BC. Epicureans believed that _____ was the highest good, and sought to maximize their pleasure while _____ pain. They emphasized moderation in all things and advocated living _____ and avoiding distractions such as fame and _____. They didn't deny the existence of gods, but believed they were completely happy beings that didn't get _____ in the affairs of men. When a person dies, they believed his body and soul _____. Similar to _____ doctrine taught today in the Seventh Day Adventist church and Jehovah's Witnesses.
2. _____-desired self-mastery to reach a point in life where they were _____ to pain or pleasure. They also emphasized the importance of living a life of _____ and self-discipline, and taught that _____ could be overcome through wisdom and strength of character.
3. _____ - Skepticism was founded by Pyrrho of Elis in the 3rd century BC. Skeptics believed that human knowledge was inherently _____ and that it was impossible to _____ anything for certain. They sought to suspend _____ on all matters and to live their lives without making any assumptions about _____.

III. Hellenism _____ with Christianity

1. _____ - Greek culture was established on _____ which was directly opposite of Judaism. Greeks relied on rational thought opposed to religious _____.
2. Cultural _____ - Greeks believed no one culture is special, superior, _____, or even _____. This suggested that _____ was no different from any other belief system.
3. _____ - Greeks exalted and delighted in the _____ physique. They made _____ of their gods which had human characteristics which opposed the Jewish commandment to make no _____ of God.
4. _____ -moral values, including wisdom and justice are formulated by _____ definition of _____, whereas all good in Judaism is defined by _____.

Human purpose is not merely self-improvement or intellectual ascent; it is to glorify God and reflect His nature (1 Cor.10:31). Although Scripture affirms the importance of the mind (Romans 12:2), it insists that humanity's primary purpose is ultimately relational and worshipful - centered on knowing God, loving Him, and loving others.