

STUDY SESSION 2

BCA GROUP TOUR NOV 2025

Athens: The Cradle of Western Civilization



PAUL'S SERMON ON MARS HILL

Acts 17:16-34



HISTORY OF ATHENS IN PAUL'S TIME

A Major Intellectual and Cultural Center

Athens was a major intellectual and cultural center.

Home to philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

A strong influence of Greek mythology and polytheism.

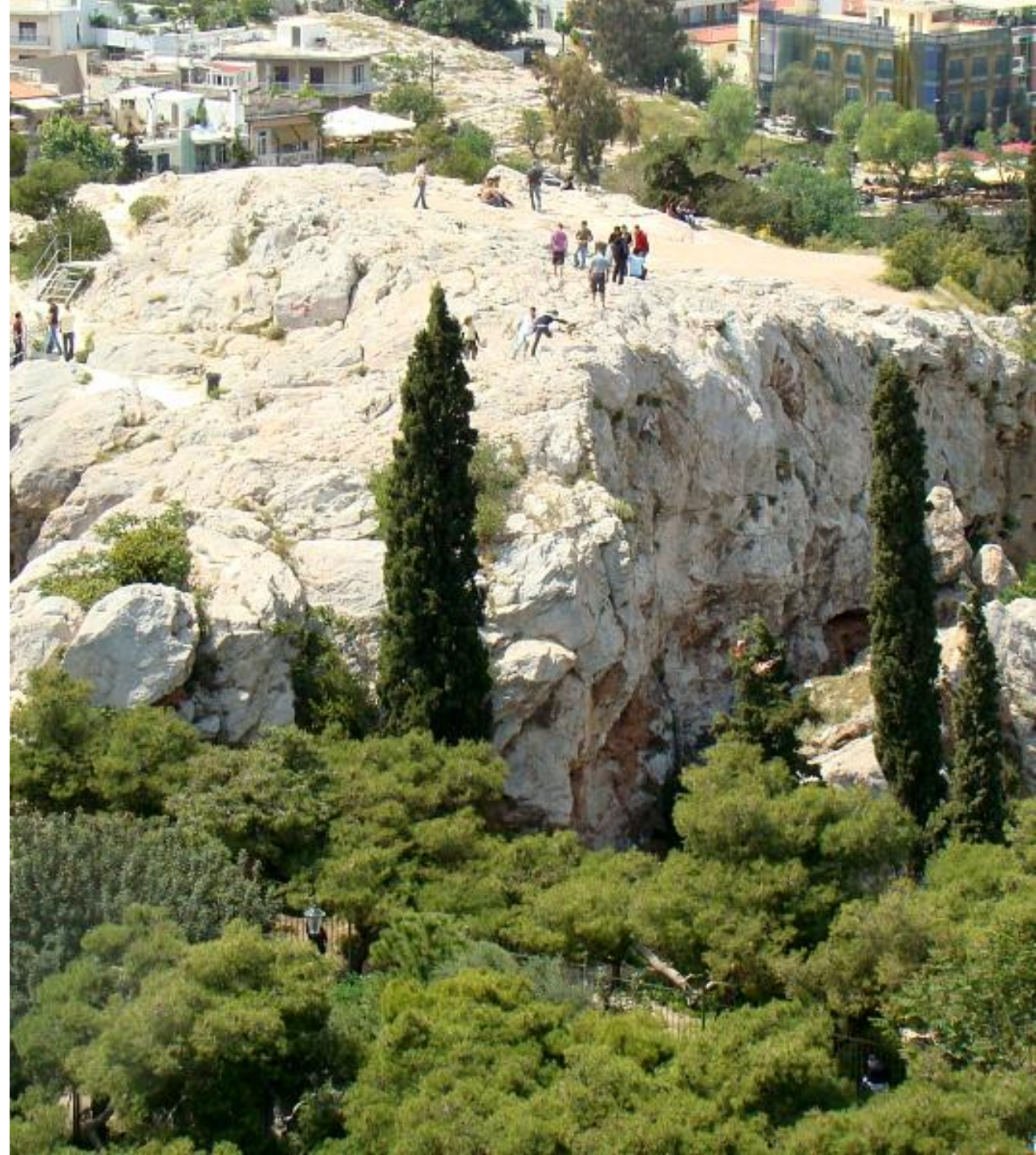
Known for its temples, art, and academic institutions.



THE ACROPOLIS AND MARS HILL

Cultural and Religious Centers

- The Acropolis was the heart of Greek religious worship.
- Mars Hill (Areopagus) was a gathering place to discuss law, philosophy, and religion.
- The Areopagus Council was an influential governing body.



PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ATHENS

His Reaction to Idolatry

Acts 17:16 – “Paul was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.”

Paul debated daily in the marketplace with philosophers, common people, and Jewish leaders.

Epicureans (pleasure-focused) and Stoics (self-discipline-focused) were curious but skeptical.



PAUL'S ADDRESS ON MARS HILL

Acts 17:22-31

Paul's speech references an altar "To an Unknown God."

He proclaims one true Creator God who does not live in man-made temples.

Paul connects Greek philosophy to biblical truth.

He calls for repentance and speaks of Jesus' resurrection.



KEY LESSONS FROM PAUL'S APPROACH

Observation > Connection > Proclamation

- **Adapting the Message:** Paul used Greek culture to introduce the Gospel.
- **Common Ground:** He connected with their religious curiosity.
- **Clarity & Boldness:** He clearly proclaimed Jesus and the resurrection.



HOW DID THEY RESPOND?

MIXED REACTIONS

- Some mocked him, dismissing the resurrection.
- Others were curious and wanted to hear more.
- A few believed and followed him (notably Dionysius and Damaris).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did Paul adapt his message for a Greek audience?
- What lessons can we learn from his approach to sharing the Gospel today?
- How can we use cultural touchpoints in evangelism?
- Do you think Athens' reaction is similar to how people respond today?



REFLECTION & APPLICATION



PAUL'S METHODS

Paul sought to understand the culture, find common ground, and to clearly proclaim Christ as a model for evangelism today.



KEY TAKEAWAYS


Speak truth boldly, but engage culture with wisdom and respect.

Challenge: How can we share Christ in culturally relevant ways today?

Q & A TIME

<https://bcachurch.com/walking-in-the-footsteps-of-the-apostle-paul/>

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STUDY RESOURCES

Bandy, A. S. (2021). *An illustrated guide to the Apostle Paul: His life, ministry, and missionary journeys*. Baker Books.

Fant, C. E., & Reddish, M. G. (2003). *A guide to biblical sites in Greece and Turkey*. Oxford University Press.

Rose Publishing. (2021). *The life of the Apostle Paul: 200 key facts at a glance*. Rose Publishing.

Swindoll, C. R. (2009). *Great lives: Paul: A man of grace and grit*. Thomas Nelson.

The Holy Bible. (2013). *New International Version (NIV)*. Zondervan.