

Greco-Roman Religions & Philosophies



*The New Testament World - Week 3
Adult Education*

Greco-Roman Religions

Temple – in Greek and Roman was the home of the deity, not a place of worship. Greeks worship with their heads uncovered, Romans were always covered (seeing omens).

- Dominant tone in the NT is Greco-Roman influence
- Greek gods & Roman gods – became the same with different names
- Acts 19 – Diana of the Ephesians
- Each city/region had a patron god and cult

Two categories of Hellenistic religion:

(Each had old religion that developed)

- State religion
 - Official (polis)
 - Polytheistic
 - Had patron god, temples, feasts, priests
 - Statues of the deity were found throughout the city
 - Existed for the good of the state, not the individual
 - Everyone was eligible to perform ritual (not professional priest)
 - No systematic theology (geographic theology)
 - The Here and Now – not the afterlife (legal systems)
 - Mythology focused on the intervention of the gods (Acts 14:11-18)
- Mystery religion
 - Personal
 - Belonged by choice, not birth
 - Requires initiation
 - Tendency toward monotheism (or supreme god)
 - No geographical area, race or tribe
 - Available to those who swear to keep the mysteries a secret
 - Included communication with the god(dess)
 - Deals with the afterlife for the faithful, connected to the underworld
 - Judaism and Christianity are a mixture of both
 - Combined civil and religious (ethical) law

Local Mysteries -

- Early mysteries were rites to assure fertility, safety, or the like.
- Panamara
 - Southwest Asia Minor
 - Promised only terrestrial benefits.
- Mother of Gods
- Cabirir at Samothrace
 - Non-Hellenistic
 - Numbers varied
 - General protective; mostly of seamen.

Eleusinian Mysteries -

- Transition from local to universal mysteries.
- Had to come to Eleusis to get initiation; was open for all who could come there.
- Behind each mystery was a cult myth, for example “Homeric Hymn to Demeter” for Eleusis.
- The myth is connected to the agriculture.
- Initiations
 - Lesser Mysteries
 - February/March
 - Preparation for the Greater Mysteries.
 - Greater Mysteries
 - September
 - Epopeteia
 - Highest grade of initiation
 - One year after the Greater Mysteries.
- Essential part of the ceremony was making something appear.

Dionysiac Mysteries -

- Greek origin
- Other name Bacchus
- Practiced by private associations but under the control of the state.
- Myth
 - Dionysus was the son of Zeus and Semele, a mortal.
- Faced opposition in the beginning but flourished at the end.
- Shown as
 - An old bearded man
 - As youthful
 - As a child
- Dionysiac worship had wider aspects than the mystery initiation.
- Elements of initiation differed probably.

National Deities

Egyptian Deities –

- Osiris – god of vegetation and underworld
 - Brother (Set) lured him into a gold box and threw it in the Nile. Isis found it in Phoenicia. The body was broken into 14 pieces and she looked and found all pieces except the genitals which she had made out of gold.
 - Fall Feast – search for Osiris, for vegetation
 - Spring Feast – open of sailing season because he sailed off in his golden box.
 - Vegetations god
 - God of the underworld
 - Was replaced by Sarapis
- Isis – sister and wife of Osiris, connected to Demeter and Aphrodite
 - Became chief mother god
 - Most often portrayed with a nursing child

- Every morning and evening, the priests sprinkled holy Nile water and dressed the statue.
- Mother of Horus
- Mother goddess
- Sarapus – replaced Osiris, combination of Apus and Osirus
 - Has similar appearance as Zeus
 - Delivers from danger and heals the sick
 - Healing later given to Asclepius
- Lots of processions – women were honored, musicians, etc
- Initiates wore white and carried a sistra (pitcher?) and could enter the temple (non-observants couldn't)
 - Initiates were desiring to be priests
 - When the cult was Hellenized they added secret ceremonies
 - Chastity was required
 - Purification washing
 - 10 day abstinence from meat and wine
 - Rites all night until dawn
- Women dressed as Egyptian deities
- Egyptian temples were gathering places for the people
- First eastern deities to become important in the hellenistic world.
- Egyptian deities were completely Hellenized to their external but remained their foreign appeal in the ceremonies.
- Were suppressed by Rome because Egypt was the main rival.
- Two great annual festivals
 - Osiris – October/November
 - Isis – early march

Phoenician deities: Astarte and Adonis

- Astarte - Fertility goddess
- Adonis – youth god; son of Astarte

Syrian deities: Atargatis and Others

- Each city of Syria had its Baal (Lord or Master)
- Most successful one – Jupiter of Doliche
- best known – Atargatis of Hierapolis
 - goddess of love
 - goddess of war
 - goddess of fertility

Phrygian Deities: Cybele and Attis

- Cybele – Mother of gods
- Attis – youthful lover of Cybele; vegetation god
- First cult to be received officially into Rome.
- Young priests castrated themselves; higher priests were not castrated.
- No sacred marriage

A Persian Deity: Mithras

- Only Persian god that became important in the Roman empire.
- Difference between Persian and Hellenistic-Roman Mithras.
- Hellenistic-Roman Mithras has its roots in the astral religion.
- Most popular between soldiers and administrative officials along the frontier and in harbours.
- Only men admitted to the mysteries.
- Cult symbol=Mithras slaying a bull.
- 7 different grades of initiation.
 - Raven – protection of Mercury
 - Bride – protection of Venus
 - Soldier – Patronage of Mars
 - Lion – connected with Jupiter
 - Persian – protection of the moon
 - Heliodromus – protection of Sol
 - Father – protection of Saturn

Greek Religions –

Cybele

- Identified with the earth,
- Goddess of death and
- Queen of heaven
- 2nd century BCE, problems with Hannibal
- Goddesses used to help in politics
- 204BCE king of Pergumum gave statue to Rome
 - Priests had to be castrated so they imported priests
- Zeus tried to rape her while she was asleep in the form of a rock
 - She was pregnant and gave birth to a hermaphrodite who was tied to a tree by his genitals, so he castrated himself and a tree grew.
- March 15 started a 2 week festival of the legend
 - Galli (initiates) flogged themselves, castrated themselves and offered their genitals. If they survived they could become priests.
 - 2nd c CE – taurobolium was added, entered into a deep pit. Bulls were brought above the pit and stabbed so that blood would rain down onto initiates' faces and they would drink it.
 - Inscriptions of sacrifices made to the Emperor, and sacrifices made for individuals
 - Longest running mystery religion, banished in 390CE

Mythras

- Came from Persia
- 67 BCE Pompey brought pirates who brought Mythras
- Name means champion of good
- One god – unknown and unapproachable.
 - Children were the earth, sky and sea
 - Dwelt between heaven and earth

- Born from a rock – at his birth shepherds came to adore him, but there was conflict between him and the sun. They fought and then became friend. Subdued bull and killed. The bull killing released life for the benefit of humans and the earth.
- Cult symbol depicts the story
- Image of bull being slain
- Mythras was called “unconquered son”
- Birthday was celebrated on December 25.
- Temples were always near water and a cave
- Cult was only for men
- Strong moral demands and virtues
- “Strength and courage” became popular with Roman soldiers
- Met need of contact with god and cleansing from sin, water purification
 - Sacramental meal of bread, honey and wine – seen as partaking of Mythras’ body
- Promise of help against supernatural powers
- Widespread religion but accepted by few
- 7 stage initiation
 - Each were a sacrament, test of courage, water purification
 - In the final stage, they took the title “father”

Rome State Religion –

- A legal relationship.
- Everything had a god, each has its shrine
- Did not incorporate any ethics or morals
- Religio – scruple or awe in the presence of the divine
- Practical but had no creed
- Augustus began revival
 - First Pontifus (priest) Maximus (leader)
 - The priesthood comes under civil law (priest & king)
 - From Augustus until Constantine, every emperor was Pontifus Maximus
- Failed because it didn’t meet the needs of the people
- Julius Caesar, given title ‘Divus Julius’ after his death
 - Every person had a ‘genius’ (procreative force in a person), but one ruled the family
 - Later, genius was connected with Greek ‘daimon’ or guardian spirit
 - Household is the unit of society (Greek is individual), father is the head of the family
 - Offerings were made to the genius who is outside the person but intrinsically connected
- Deification of Augustus founded the emperor cult
- Everyone took the title until Constantine (after they were dead)
- Caligula ordered his statue to be erected in the J’lem temple
- Domition called himself Lord and God
- Built temples to them (Banias)
- Emperor cult strongest in Asia Minor

Apatheosis – ceremony when Emperor to show his change from humanity to deity.

- Wax image was made, to look like he was sick not dead
- Declaration that he died
- Wax image was carried through town to wooden tower
- Image was burned on the top of tower and an eagle released

Occult –

World full of superstitions

Divination was very popular

Consulted oracles

Magic amulets, charms, formulas, etc

Astrology was important, horoscope, zodiac, etc.

Gnosticism, Hermetic Literature, Chaldean Oracles -

- gnosis=knowledge
- Gnostic writings
 - Gospel of Thomas
 - 112-118 sayings attributed to Jesus
 - Gospel of truth
 - Meditation on the truth of redemption
 - Gospel of Phillip
 - Sayings or discourse gospel
 - Apocryphon of John
 - Epistle to Reginus
 - Emphasizes resurrection of the soul
 - Apocryphon of James
 - Postresurrection revelation of Jesus.
 - Hypostasies of the Archons
 - Tripartite Tractate
 - Most ambitious and comprehensive theological undertaking.
 - Eugnostos the blessed + The Sophia of Jesus Christ
- Not known if Gnosticism was a Christian heresy or was a non-Christian movement from the beginning.
- Many teachers that applied many variations in the teaching.
- Gnostic problems
 - The problem of evil
 - Sense of alienation from the works
 - Desire of special knowledge of the secrets of the universe.
 - Dualism
 - Cosmology
 - Anthropology
 - Radically realized eschatology
 - Ethical implications
- The Corpus Hermeticum + Asclepius + Kore Kosmou = Hermetic literature.
- Greek authors that wanted the Egyptian reputation on wisdom.
- Pagan branch of Gnosticism.

- Chaldean Oracles; verses based on divine revelations.

Later developments: Monotheism and Sun worship -

Beginning of Monotheism goes back to philosophers.

Monotheism remained only a tendency in the Roman Empire.

Sun worship was the result of a fusion between Stoic philosophy and astrology.

Remained a religion of the educated and ruling class.

Greco-Roman Philosophies

Philosophy arises because the state religion isn't meeting the needs of the people.

By Hellenistic period has its own ethical system

Ethics – knowing right and wrong

Morals – acting upon knowledge of right and wrong

Each philosophical school had its own teachings

After Alexander – philosophy turns individual

Additions that came with philosophers:

- Community of believers that centered around a teacher
- Holy men, martyrs, saints
- Spoke against polytheism
- Didn't believe in traditional mythology
- Emphasis on the rational

Ethics –

- Teach people how to live
- Moral instruction on right and wrong
- Often related to nature
- Reinforced teaching through example (Paul's writings)
 - Paranesis – ethical/moral teaching (1 Thessalonians)

Moral teaching became popular in all segments of society.

In Greco-Roman age, tendency towards homogeneity

Society saw the philosophers as a unit, inside was more diverse

Philosophers were distinguished by their robes

Common themes of the Philosophers:

- Marriage and sexual conduct - for procreation only
- Consolation
- Covetousness
- Anger
- Virtue
- Friendship
- Civil concord (government)
- Welfare of the state and freedom

Other teachings –

- Assumption that virtue is teachable
- Strive to make a person self-sufficient in regard to external circumstances
- Ways to obtaining goal different on the philosopher
- Virtuous life is connected to nature
- Turn from luxury to freedom and contemplation

Gnosticism –

- Develops out of the dualism of Platonism (from the East)
- System that provides salvation through knowledge of secret doctrines and passwords
- Dualism
 - Body is evil (asceticism)
 - Only the spirit is real (libertinism)
 - Physical resurrection is abhorrent
 - Gnostic Christian do not believe in the physical body of Jesus
- Salvation is attained by renouncing the physical world and embracing the spirit world
- The highest good is
- There is a Supreme Being (too good to create this world)
- Series of emanations, the last one created the world
- Colossians 2:18-21 hints at Gnosticism

Philosophy was a way of life. For many in the Hellenistic and Roman periods the religion for many, especially the educated was philosophy. It really offered its own moral and spiritual direction and provided a criticism or reinterpretation of traditional religion. There were various schools of philosophy which formed communities of believers around a master and his teachings. The master was revered by his students. They had inter-denomination rivalries and conversion stories. They even had their holy men and martyrs. These schools provided practical guidance and a worldview for life that religion does for people today. Poets and Philosophers provided a conscience for the age.

Some of the things philosophy provided or contributed to:

- Provided a conscience for the age
- Answered questions
- Brought a kind of conversion and cleansing of the soul (although it was a redemption worked by one's own strength)
- Contributed to the impulse toward monotheism even though the god of Hellenistic – Roman philosophy was impersonal
- Emphasis placed on the proper attitudes in sacrifice, worthy conception of the gods, rational worship and upright conduct

The principal concern of the leading Hellenistic philosophies was Ethics. The aim was to teach the people how to live. The moral instruction was very specific about what is right and wrong and one's duties in various social relationships.

Three modes of moral exhortation were used by the philosophers:

- Protrepsis – to adopt a particular viewpoint (an invitation to follow the philosophical life)
- Paraeneis – to follow a given course of action or to abstain from a contrary behavior
- Diatribe – Moved people to action. The diatribe set up a brief but lively dialogue

Popular Philosophy

The activities of the philosophers in the various social settings contributed to a popularization of philosophical ideas, particularly moral teachings, at various levels of society. Despite the bitter polemic of the philosophical schools against one another, the Hellenistic-Roman age showed an increasing tendency toward a philosophical *koine*, not just among educated laymen but even among more professional philosophers.

Philosophy, at least from the 1st century, appeared to society as a unity with the purpose of helping humanity. Different schools shared common elements and concerns. Certain themes recur among the philosophical moralists with enough frequency to show what were matters of interest—marriage and sexual conduct, consolation, covetousness, and anger—and what the ideals were—virtue, friendship, civil concord and responsibility for the welfare of the state, and freedom. Despite their sharp differences, the major Hellenistic philosophical schools had much in common.

The purpose of philosophy was to teach people how to live. This entailed the assumption that virtue is teachable. Virtue is related to knowledge, and reason is the means of attaining it. Self-sufficiency, freedom, and happiness were goals, but the schools differed in the specific ways of attaining them. The virtuous life meant a detachment (in varying degrees) from the affairs and concerns of this life—self-sufficiency with regard to all external circumstances. It was common to emphasize freedom from passion through renunciation. The virtuous life, furthermore, was a life lived according to nature, although the definition of nature varied considerable from one school to another. This kind of life brought an inner freedom and happiness.

Philosophy and Individualism

The emphasis on individualism was rooted in Socrates' belief that one's soul must be cultivated through his/her own initiative. Hellenistic philosophers searched for their place in the cosmos and how they could fulfill their personal desires. Traditional community life was no longer the way to live.

Philosophy in Its Social Setting

The philosophers taught in every setting of life from the local market place to the gymnasia to formal schools. The Epicureans had their own communities to themselves. Some philosophers were hired by the empire while others took donations. Not all philosophical schools were official (like the Epicureans) but rather they were "schools of thought".

Sophists and Socrates

- First martyr, drank hemlock (Plato emerged)
- Founder of the Sophists
- The student knows all, but the information must be drawn out
- The Sophists movement began around the 5th c BCE in Athens. They believed that one's speech and conduct were extremely important in public life. If one did not speak well they were ill prepared for life. They tutored privately on using persuasive language and how to reason well so that things will turn to your advantage. They challenged their students to ask questions about everyday things, traditions, even the existence of the gods. This movement of conscience intellectualism set the pace for Socrates and Plato.
- Socrates (469-399 BCE) was the hero of philosophers to whom the philosophical schools of the Hellenistic age traced their origin. His popularity is shown by the large number of representations that survive. He emphasized individualism, partly because he thought that man was the problem in the world and focusing on that would help fix the problem, but he also questioned conscience and personal religion. He sought truth and he himself felt the need for some security in this world of unknowns; he disliked the relativism the sophists taught. He believed that if one was doing something wrong, it's because his thinking was unclear and he lacked the correct information to help him otherwise. When urged to do something wrong it was the *daimon* in him that worked against his urge. His philosophy was not a system but rather a discipline.

Plato and the Academy to the 1st Century

- Material world is a shadow of the ideas
- Allegory of the cave – all of humanity is in a cave with a fire outside. When someone passes by, shadows are seen. Some people escape and they see everything. Some choose to go back in and adjust to the dark. Others stay out of the cave and learn the truth, but they know they have to go back and teach those in darkness. The ones on the inside mock those who have entered.
- Highest goal – the separation of soul and body
- Soul is immortal, divided into three parts:
 - Intellectual or rational
 - Vibrant or spirited
 - The desirous or appetitive
- No direct relationship between Platonism and the NT
- Dualism is reflected (shadow) seen in Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism (Hebrews, tabernacle)
- *Life of Plato (429-347 BCE)* was the greatest of Socrates' pupils and had had a major influence on Western intellectual history. After Socrates' death, he felt compelled to carry on his teacher's passion in life. Teaching was his life. The place where he taught was called the Academy.
- *The Dialogues* dialogue was the manner in which he felt was the best way to get down to the truth of any matter and then put it into writing. He would ask questions about ideas, but took this to the next level of putting into words a description of what

it was. Then he began to sift through these ideas and find that the world was pure and made up of ideas and we only see the copy of those ideas in the world. Finally he landed on the criticism of the theory of ideas and how things were related. His two works, *Laws* and *Timaeus*, have greater importance for the study of Christianity for they show life, public and private, and religion as well as the Hellenistic world view.

- *Plato's Thoughts* Plato believed that ideas were outside of space and time- they were real and this world was an imitation of these ideas. The principle of perfection (which is not found in this world) is the idea of the Good (a form not a god). The myth of the cave- humans live in a cave which they do not realize and in order to know yourself (more than the shadow of yourself) you have to get out of the cave. He believed that humans had a body and a soul. Only the soul comprehends ideas. The soul is immortal. The soul since it is immortal allows itself to recall things that it knew before entering the body- knowledge is instinctive and can only be drawn out by teachers. The soul has three parts: intellectual, vibrant, and desirous. Each part had an ethic: wisdom, courage and self-control. When the soul is balanced one leads a virtuous life of justice, self-control, courage, and wisdom (4 virtues emphasized most in Hellenistic philosophy).
- *Plato's influence* through his ideas on immortal soul, idea of cosmic religion and a just society Plato influenced Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
- *The Old Academy (407 BCE)* the torch was passed on from Plato to his nephew Speusippus to keep the Academy alive. His nephew further worked on definitions and mathematics. Xenocrates carried on from Speusippus and spent more time on structuring the nature of the gods and demons, leading him to think about practical morality. Polemon concentrated on ethics. Crates was the last of the Old Academy.
- *The Skeptical Academy Arcesilaus (316-241 BCE)* became head of the Academy in 268. To keep up with the new Stoics, he adapted the attitude of questioning. Carneades kept this skeptic attitude. He was Socrates in skill and method of arguing (asking annoying questions to make the other feel awkward). He found there were three degrees of probability in this world: the merely probable, the probable and not contradicted, and the probable not contradicted and examined.
- *The Eclectic Academy Philo of Larissa (160-80 BCE)*, became head of the Academy in 110) broke away from the skepticism of previous generations and focused on ethics. Antiochus of Ascalon brought about a shift from skepticism, sometimes called the "Fifth Academy". He claimed that Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics said about the same things, so one should select their common points. He said:
 - True successors of Plato were the Stoics & not the skeptical Academy
 - Stoics accepted certainty, although basing it on the senses
 - Aristotle was essentially a Platonist, although he modified the ethics
 - Academy moved toward the Stoa at a time when the Stoa was becoming Platonic
 - Contributed to the rise of Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism

Aristotle and the Peripatetics

- *Life of Aristotle (384-322 BCE)*
Born at Stagirus in Chalcidice

Father was a doctor
Aristotle had an interest in biology
Came to the Academy at age 17
At Plato's death Aristotle withdrew from Athens
Tutored the young Alexander
His successor, Theophrastus founded a school at a complex of buildings that included a peripatos (a colonnaded walkway), the school was named Peripatetic.

▪ *Aristotle's thought*

Aristotle had an interest in this world and in individual things

He divided things in 2 ways:

- 1) As substance
- 2) As Motion

World as Substance – when one looks at things in a moment, as they are in themselves, he sees that everything in nature is a particular substance.

World as Motion – Change is a fact that all observe. He studied change itself. Change has a pattern that we can understand.

World as Potentiality – change may be considered as the development or transition from potentiality to actuality.

God – Aristotle late in his life allowed for a multiplicity of unmoved movers, but his surviving work does not explain how they would have been related to the prime mover. His view of "God" was unlike the biblical conception. The eternal mind was the logical culmination of the hierarchy of substances and the ultimate explanation of motion and change. Not a person exercising providence or revealing his will. It affected the universe only through the desire for its unattainable perfection that it inspired, but was not in any sense the creator of the universe.

Souls – He spoke of powers of the soul rather than parts. He found 3 kinds of souls:

- 1) Nutritive or vegetative souls – simply possess the principle of life: nutrition, repair, and reproduction
- 2) Sensitive or animal souls – the middle level possesses sensation: senses, impulses, instincts. Sensitive faculty is the source of desire and motion, which separates animal life from plant life
- 3) Thinking or rational souls. The highest level of life possesses reason or intellect, in addition to all the faculties of the lower souls. This level is found in human beings alone.

Soul & Body – are seen related to form and matter, with the soul as the organizing principle of the body. They can be distinguished only in thought, not in fact. He allowed that a part of the intellect might survive death, but his followers developed this in reference to the universal soul shared by individuals, and not as allowing an individual immortality.

Theory of Knowledge – He reversed Plato's epistemology. Knowledge depends on sense experience. Sensations provide the beginning or basis of knowledge, but not its end. The mind has no form or structure of its own to impose on the things perceived.

- Ethics – humans are distinguished from other life by rational faculties and the supreme good for them is a rational life. Theoretical reason is the capacity to think, understand, and contemplate and practical reason is reason applied to conduct and persons have both. Happiness includes both intellectual and moral virtues. The fulfillment of theoretical reason is knowledge, learning the truth; the fulfillment of practical reason is moral virtue. This analysis influenced Hellenistic philosophical thought and through it Christian categories for many centuries. Aristotle’s successors classified philosophers as theoretical or practical.
- *Aristotle’s influence*
 - Alexander the Great (his pupil) ushered in such changes in the world that succeeding philosophies turned their attention to practical morality, and the ordered metaphysical worlds of Plato and Aristotle receded into the background. Aristotle’s great influence on Christian thought was only to come centuries later.
 - *Theophrastus (370-285 BCE)*
 - Pupil of Aristotle who remained true to him. He studied plants and two books survive on the subject. Three other works:
 - On piety – opposed animal sacrifice and argued that the gods were more pleased with right thinking. This was welcomed by Neoplatonists and Christian apologists as a weapon against idolatry.
 - The Characters – “Superstitiousness” – descriptive sketches of funny or evil characteristics. Character in Greek meant the stamp used in minting coins, so the characters of Theophrastus are those with a distinctive stamp.
 - Opinions of the Philosophers – only fragments found. Shaped the way later generations viewed the preceding philosophers.
 - *Strato*
 - He succeeded Theophrastus as head of the Peripatetic school from 287 to his death in 269.
 - He gave up the idea of metaphysics, working mainly on mechanics.
 - Nature became a blind force, no longer controlled by a divine nous outside itself
 - Neither the Academics nor the Peripatetics maintained their founders’ emphases in the Hellenistic period, and both gave way in importance to new schools.
 - *Latter history and General character*

Strabo gives the story that Aristotle’s library was willed by his successor Theophrastus to Neleus, who, not having the headship of the school, returned to his home in Asia Minor. His family hid the manuscript of Aristotle in order to keep the Attalids from confiscating them. In the 1st century BC the manuscripts were sold and taken to Rome. They were edited by Andronicus of Rhodes, who laid the basis for future study of Aristotle and the tradition of scholarly commentaries on Aristotle that has continued to the present. This story is questioned by modern scholars because of evidence that Aristotle’s thought was known in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC (although this may have come from works now lost). After Strato

the Peripatetics in Athens by the mid 3rd century became concerned with ethics and rhetoric. The scientists went to Alexandria, the greatest center of scientific knowledge in the Hellenistic world. The school of Aristotle became known as a research institution. The followers lost sight of Aristotle's conviction of a goal (telos) toward which each of the sciences moved. Their efforts became knowledge for its own sake –encyclopedianism. Anyone interested in the natural world for its own sake tended to be called a Peripatetic. The Peripatetics were the source of facts for nearly everyone.

- *Aspects of the Peripatetic legacy*
 - Soul – was important to philosophers and religious teachers. His followers maintained an alternative to Plato's view of the soul that was continued in Neoplatonism.
 - Worldview – their interest in the natural world, but with religious overtones may be seen in the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise *On the Cosmos*. The world is seen as the expression of the cosmic deity. God is not the immanent deity of the Stoics nor simply the unmoved mover of Aristotle; "it is more noble, more becoming, for him to reside in the highest place, while his power, penetrating the whole of the cosmos," maintains its order.
 - History of Philosophy – the Peripatetic interest in the lives of philosophers, the history of philosophical schools, and the classification of thought on particular problems flowed into the work of Diogenes Laertius, a major source for the history of Greek philosophy.

Skepticism – (the Greek word "dogma" meant opinion or view, and was the position to which one came after examining something. To examine without necessarily coming to a decision was "skeptesthai").

- Dogma means opinion or view
- Very, very negative
- Situational ethics
- Judgment is relative
- Nothing is more probable than anything else
- Indifference and apathy
- Didn't attack the existence of god but the certainty of knowing god

Pyrrho (c. 360-c. 270 BCE)

- Searched for the purpose of life. He could not find it, so he gave up and "suspended judgment." When he did he found that he had reached the goal he sought. Everyone was looking for peace of mind, and Pyrrho found it in a skeptical suspension of judgment.
- He was characterized by gentleness and by a remarkable indifference (or apathy) because there was nothing to get excited about in life. He arrived at this kind of life because he did not have strong opinions about anything.
- His followers imitated his life rather than his teachings since he did not form a school

Aenesidemus

- 50 BC he revived Pyrrhonism apart from the Academy. He reduced the arguments against knowledge to 10 tropes.
- 2 principal arguments used by the Skeptics were:
 - (1 “nothing is more this than the other”
 - (2 “all is equal”

The result of such reasoning was to make no judgment.

Instead of attacking god’s existence, the skeptics attacked the possibility of knowing God’s existence.

They were very Socratic in this and concluded that there were insuperable obstacles to any conception of God advanced up to that time.

Sextus Empiricus (c. 200 CE)

- A late flowering of true Skepticism occurred with Sextus Empiricus (a Greek with a Latin name) “Empiricus” identifies him as a physician of the Empiric school of medicine. Modern knowledge of Skepticism is due to his interest in it, for he compiled what was known about the skeptics and their arguments.

Influence of Skepticism

- Never became an effective school, for it was always negative.
- Not influential on a continuing basis, and the last flowering came at a time when the world was turning to religion.
- The Skeptics turned out to be the most conservative people in the ancient world. This conservatism in practical life left Skepticism with no message and thus led to its downfall.
- Christians preserved the material of Skepticism and Sextus Empiricus and used it against all the ancient dogmas because of the fully developed arsenal of arguments against all the other ancient philosophical schools.

Cynicism

Beginnings of Cynicism

- Diogenes of Sinope (400-325BCE) – dog
- Grew out of Socratic teaching
- Void of decision making
- Supreme virtue is to not have any wants
- Rejected all pursuits of comfort and prestige
- To do what is natural (act like an animal) – anarchy
- Deliberately acted against the laws of society
- Apathy
- Beggars, renounced possessions
- Give philosophers a bad name
- Practicing self-affliction
- Strongly affected Christian monasticism
- Anti-establishment

Diogenes of Sinope (c. 400-c. 325 BC) credited with founding the Cynic way of life. He was influenced in his outlook by Antisthenes, a devoted follower of Socrates, who taught in a gymnasium in Athens known as Cynosarges (“Park of the Agile Dog”) and himself apparently known as the “dog” (Greek *kyon*, “dog,” which gave the name Cynic to the movement), but Diogenes became the one primarily known by that epithet. The name “Diogenes the Dog” was given him because of his shamelessness (*anaideia*) in public (cf. the behavior of dogs). Whatever is natural, he felt, is not indecent even in public. Diogenes advocated a life of self-sufficiency in which needs were kept to a minimum. He gave away everything in order to attain independence. To live according to nature meant to live simply. He did not found a school, but others imitated his life-style. The Cynics represented a way of life more than a doctrine or a school of thought.

Crates (c. 365-c. 285 BC) was the most faithful disciple of Diogenes. He led a wandering life preaching voluntary poverty and an independent life-style. Regarded for his peace making efforts and for consoling those in distress.

Bion (c. 325- c. 255 BC) and Menippus (1st half of 3rd century BC) are credited with developing the diatribe style, but the evidence is lacking and the earliest extensive material that permits study is found in the fragments of Teles, a mid-3rd century BC follower of Bion. Teles represented a milder form of Cynicism, better known from Dio.

Zeno, the founder of Stoicism was a disciple of Crates and whereas Stoicism developed in the direction of upholding the norms of society, the Cynics shocked the Greeks by abandoning manners and saying and doing whatever they wanted when they wanted.

Not being a formal school, Cynicism itself was open to whoever chose to appropriate the name and so became more moderate in some of the popular preachers of Roman times.

Cynic Characteristics

- They carried to an extreme the Sophists’ contrast between custom and nature.
- Tried to dispel the illusions they saw in human attitudes and conduct and to attain “clarity of mind.”
- Sought to free themselves from luxuries and so inure themselves to hardship by ascetic practices.
- They deliberately acted against the conventions of society using violent and abusive language, wearing filthy garments, performing acts of nature (defecation, sex) in public, and feigning madness. This was in order to excite censure.
- The Cynics alone among the Greeks did not view life as lived in society as a life of ruling and being ruled.

- By rejecting pleasure and seeking dishonor the Cynics sought to attain hardness, apathy, and freedom. They claimed that this action benefited the public; it shamed the people more than it shamed the Cynic.
- They believed that the life of virtue could be attained by one's moral effort, and so they rejected the claims of fate over an individual's life.
- They were impatient of stoic dogma and were sharply and consistently critical of the traditional religion.
- They believed in the divine and some were monotheists.
- The Cynic sage could be thought of as attaining the divine life.
- Cynics differed from Stoics in their rejection of dogma and of popular religion and in their insistence that the ideal of the wise man was attainable.
- Cynics were bold and frank in their speech, which they took to mean the freedom to speak the truth.
- They contributed much to popular philosophy and popularized certain key themes of the moralists.
- They provided the background to the development of stoicism and influenced the discourses of Dio of Prusa and the satires of Lucian of Samosata, two authors who reflect Cynic concerns and tell us much about Cynics.
- Cynics were one of the important strands leading to the Christian monk (renouncing possessions, wearing a philosopher's cloak, and practicing self-affliction).

Dio of Prusa (40 to after 112 CE)

- The orations of Dio, later called Chrysostom ("Golden-mouth") preserved and give the fullest collection of speeches by a Greek popular philosopher.
- A much better educated and more moderate one than the typical Cynic
- The Cynic way of life attracted deadbeats and imposters who loved the notoriety and alms.
- He and Lucian had much to say distinguishing the "true" Cynic from the other types.
- He was a native of Prusa in Bithynia and practiced rhetoric in Rome until he fell under Domitian's wrath and was banished.
- He traveled around the eastern Mediterranean, preaching the moral philosophy that was the common property of all the schools.
- His theology was Stoic. He did not represent the traditional attitude of most Cynics and did not identify himself with any school, but he adopted many of the Cynic themes and insisted on the philosopher's right of free speech and his role as critic.
- Dio addressed a wide range of topics reflecting the life of his times – such as, the philosophical justification of images in paganism as part of a treatment of ideas of deity and the place of art in religion.
- The main thrust of Dio's messages was sought to improve people through his speeches and heal their sickness of soul.
- He imparted a warmth of religious feeling to his teaching.

Lucian of Samosata (c. 120 to after 180 CE)

- Not a philosopher or an adherent of a particular philosophical school himself, but his satires on religious and philosophical topics repeat certain common themes. His dialogues were indebted in form and occasionally in content to Menippus's satires.
- Philosophers were a major target of Lucian's satire, and he spares none of the schools.
- He could be devastating in his mockery of pseudo-philosophers, especially Cynics.

Stoicism –

Two principal philosophical schools of the Hellenistic Age where the Stoics and Epicureans (cf. Acts 17:18). Both interested in ethics but developed comprehensive explanations of reality that were influential beyond their own circles of adherents.

- Zeno of Cyprus (355-263)
- Probably from a Semitic background (Phoenician)
- Ethics guided by logic founded in physics (natural world)
- Conformity to reason is the highest good
- Strict ethics and morals in accordance with nature and controlled by virtue (Romans 1) (Natural Order)
- Ascetic teaching – indifference to all things external
- Fatalists – no free will, no true existence of evil
- The god is eternal. Each person adds to the divine whole. When a person dies, you go back to the divine whole.
- Pain, pleasure, poverty, wealth, health, sickness don't matter because the world is not real or important
- Basic elements (all things, including man, were created from)
 - Air
 - Fire
 - Water
- Self-respect, not love, was the driving force
- Pantheistic logos (creator)
- Eminent, not personal, god
- The earth has no beginning or end
- Marcus Aurelius was the last Stoic

Early Stoa

Founded by Zeno of Citium (Cyprus) (335-263 BC). Perhaps a Phoenician by race, who came to Athens about 313 BC.

Early outlook influenced by Cynicism.

Stoicism was ambiguous about its Cynic origins.

Some were embarrassed by Cynics and denied that Zeno studied under the Cynics.

But other Stoics did not forget their Cynic origin.

Zeno began teaching in the *Stoa Poikile* (the Painted Porch, which served as a public hall) in Athens.

He started the scientific study of Greek grammar and vocabulary.

He developed a complete philosophical system of 3 branches

- 1) Logic and theory of knowledge
 - 2) Physics and theology
 - 3) Ethics
- His main concern was securing humanity from fear and disturbance.
 - The goal of life is virtue; everything else is indifferent. Since no one can deprive the wise person of virtue, that person is always in possession of the only true good and is therefore happy.
 - Zeno was succeeded as head of the Stoic school by Cleanthes (331-232 BC). He was from Assos and the only true Greek among the early leaders of the school. He looked at Zeno's description of the world as altogether material in a much more religious way. He developed the comparison of the universe to a human being. As the human body has a leading part, a greater concentration of soul, in the chest (where the voice comes from), so there is a leading part of the universe in the realm of the fixed stars. This greater concentration of spirit could be worshiped, as Cleanthes did in his "Hymn to Zeus," which had enough influence on antiquity that it has been preserved. The hymn emphasized "God's universal law," providence, and the individual's need to praise the universal law. The Stoa at this time came under heavy attack from the Academy. Cleanthes was a good man, but he could not handle the logical problems. Zeno had said of him that he was a slow learner but when he got something it stuck with him.
 - Chrysippus of Soli (Cilicia) (c. 280-207 BC) succeeded to the headship of the Stoa in 232, and saw a rebirth of Stoicism.
 - He was interested in psychology and logic.
 - His efforts to show that Homer and Hesiod were really Stoics gave an impetus to allegorizing.
 - Chrysippus became the Stoic par excellence to the ancient world.
 - Zeno and Cleanthes were absorbed into him and their ideas given a new foundation.
 - Through him Stoicism assumed a more academic and technical character.
 - He had the reputation in antiquity of being the best logician and having the worst style among the philosophers.
 - Aratus of Soli (c. 315-240 BC) – although not the head of the Stoic school, Aratus deserved special mention because he was quoted in the NT. He was a pupil of Zeno in Zeno's old age. Aratus was a poet. While at Pella, Aratus put into verse a textbook of astronomy, *Phaenomena*. Simple astronomy took the place of our calendars for everyone in that time outside of urban and court life. Everyone read Homer and Aratus. When the Romans translated something from Greek into Latin, Aratus was one of the first (Varro, Cicero, and Germanicus translated his work).
 - Aratus gave a Stoic coloring to his poem, and so he was important in the spread of Stoic ideas.
 - When Paul (Acts 17:28) wanted to quote something religious from the Greek poets, the opening lines of Aratus' *Phaenomena* came to mind. The statement "We are also his offspring" is similar to a statement in Cleanthes' "Hymn to Zeus,"

but Cleanthes uses the second person in direct address to Zeus whereas Aratus's statement is 3rd person, as is Paul's quotation.

Stoic Physics

- Difficulty in distinguishing the views of the first Stoics.
- *Materialism* – nothing is immaterial according to the Stoic view. God, the world, and even words are material. Each thing that one describes has three things that really exist: the word, the idea, and the physical object (e.g., the word horse, the idea of a horse, and the animal called “horse”). Even emotions are material things because they have a physical manifestation (e.g. shame causes a person to blush).
- *Pantheism* – 2 basic kinds of matter: the grosser matter and the finer matter called breath or spirit (pneuma) that is diffused throughout reality. This special form of matter holds everything together and is given various names: logos (reason), breath (pneuma), providence (pronoia), Zeus, or fire (the element considered most akin to reason). Stoicism was pantheistic in that it found the divine reality in everything. Zeus is everywhere, as the Greeks had said.
- *Soul and Providence* – the human being consists of these 2 kinds of matter: the heavier matter of the physical body and the lighter matter of the soul. The soul stretched through the body has 8 parts: the 45 senses, voice, generative power, and the “leading part”, the mind, which is concentrated in the heart. Later stoics, because of advances in medicine, placed it in the head. The universe is like a giant living body with its own leading part (Posidonius later placed it in the sun). Since the universe is rational, it does take thought for humanity. Everything is directed toward a good goal, and even evil exists for a good purpose.
- *Allegory* – the Stoics sought to find their physical theories in the ancient mythology and in so doing promoted the allegorical method of interpretation. Mythology was seen as a crude expression of truth, presented on the level of the people of the time. The gods did not actually do the things attributed to them, which were descriptions of natural events. The allegorical method of interpreting sacred literature was adopted by the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria who harmonized the Mosaic religion with philosophy. From Philo the method passed to such Alexandrian Christian scholars as Clement of Alexandria and Origen.
- *Conflagration and Regeneration* – Stoicism went back to Heraclitus (c. 500 BC) for its view of the world. He thought that the world was essentially fire in various forms. Fire turned into air, air into water, water to earth, and back again. This constant change is balanced by an interchange. He called this principle of balance, stability, or order logos. Logos became another word in the Stoic system for god, since it maintains order. This is unlike the Christian conception found in John 1. From Heraclitus Zeno got the principle of “creative fire” –once all was fire and all will become fire again. The world goes through a period of stability, followed by the conflagration (*ekpyrosis*; cf. the language of 2 Pet. 3:10-12). The cycle will then be repeated (the regeneration –*palingenesia*; cf. Matt. 19:28; Titus 3:5). The world being perfect, if it is done over again it must be done the same way. There was no idea in Stoicism that the soul survives the

conflagration. Cleanthes said the soul lives until the next conflagration, but Chrysippus said only the souls of the wise do so. Later Stoics allowed a kind of limited immortality in that the soul is part of the World Soul and will reappear in the new world, but a personal immortality does not seem to have been a real possibility.

Stoic Logic and Epistemology

- If reality is rational, it must be possible to represent it rationally.
- A fundamental principle of Greek thought was that the universe is orderly.
- Problems in understanding it are logical problems and can be solved if one works on them. Stoics gave a lot of attention to logic.
- Stoic epistemology took as its criterion of truth a “perception that lays hold” (*kataleptic phantasia*)—something that must be believed because it is so compelling. It is not clear whether the mind lays hold of something or the object lays hold of the mind. It is the object lays hold of the mind he view is very near to that of Epicurus, but the Stoics would ever have admitted this.
- There was no place in the Stoic system for the desirous part of the soul or spirit, as in Plato. An emotion was either a superabundant wish (a reaching out of the mind) or an exaggerated impulse (something coming in from the outside and moving the mind more than it should).

Stoic ethics

- *Virtue* – the goal or end of life is being happy and this consists in living in accord with virtue, which is living in accord with nature. The common formulation of this conception was “to live according to nature.” Nature is the perfect environment into which all are born. All people should live in accord with the logos that runs throughout the world. Thus to live in accord with nature means to live reasonably.
- Since virtue is a matter of making the right judgments, it comes down to make right judgments. A person is either wise or foolish, completely virtuous or non virtuous.
- If a person makes the wrong choice, it is evident that he does not have proper training. One wrong judgment is as bad as any other.
- Stoic ethics were in theory quite intellectual
- Once one has the power to make right decisions, the power is never lost.
- By the 2nd generation it was decided that such was only in the past. Not even Socrates survived this attack.
- Thus, being the wise person, a reality to the first Stoics and a goal they strived to attain, became ideal. But admitting that no one truly wise ever actually existed proved to be very damaging. The Stoics initially made a division between the wise and the foolish, then presented the wise person as an ideal, and finally admitted that everyone was quite bad. The other schools made fun of the Stoic wise man.
- *Indifferent Things* – another category in early Stoic thought. Zeno spoke of what is indifferent, which for him was a very large category that included everything except virtue or vice. He divided the indifferent things into 2 groups:

- 1) Things preferred (e.g., family, house, health). Must have something to do with life.
 - 2) Things not preferred
- In between are those things that make no difference at all in life (e.g., whether the number of one's hairs is even or odd). Stoics became concerned with preserving society, because it was to be preferred uncivilized conditions, although it was not part of virtue. Later Stoics figured out a whole series of actions that were fitting or suitable in relation to the "preferred" conditions. As perfect actions became impossible, interest shifted to what was practicable. It increasingly showed an interest in what it considered secondary.
- *Determinism* – if everything is leading toward the best, as the Stoic theory of providence affirmed, then everything is determined in advance. The Stoic cyclical theory also pointed to the same conclusion. After the next conflagration, Socrates will gather the youth about him and teach as in the preceding cycle. *And students will be taking the same courses and reading this same textbook – a thought that should deter any potential converts to Stoicism!) Stoicism believed in "free will." How can that be possible within a deterministic system? Freedom has to do with the internal disposition. The Stoics used the illustration of a river with eddies in its current. A person is being carried along the river to perfection. The eddy is the free will when it resists, but like the stream one eventually will be carried away. The wise will submit to the providence of the logos. Since one is going to be swept along regardless, it is better to do so voluntarily. The fundamental problem is how persons can resist at all if everything is determined. This is especially acute for Stoics, since for them the divinity is within. How can one resist what one is a part of?

Middle Stoa

- Panaetius (c. 185-109 BC). Chrysippus was succeeded in the headship of the Stoa by Zeno of Tarsus, Diogenes of Seleucia, and Antipater of Tarsus. Panaetius studied under the latter two before himself succeeding to the headship in 129 BC. He was from a noble family in Rhodes, but by the time he was grown Rhodes had fallen to a second-rate power and was a protectorate of Rome. He turned to philosophy instead of a political career. After studying in Athens he went to Rome about 144 BC., where he became a part of the circle that gathered around Scipio and included the Greek historian of Rome, Polybius. Panaetius was one of the first Greeks to appreciate the new role and power of Rome, and was fortunate to be in the circle of Romans who for the first time were interested in Greek culture. Since he came from a leading family of what had been a great power and was an ally of Rome, it was easy for him to have access to leading Romans. He returned to Athens to head and rejuvenate the Stoic school for the last twenty years of his life.
 - He adapted Stoicism to the Romans, making it suitable for a people ruling the world. He gave up the idea of a world conflagration and accepted the eternity of the world (since providence makes for the good, there is no destruction). He returned to a more Platonic understanding of the body and soul which make up a human being.

- He did not believe as Chrysippus in that the mind is not a single part but 2 parts; the drives and the logos. The emotional life is separate from the intellectual life; thus, the virtuous person is the one whose drives are controlled by the logos. Panaetius turned attention in ethics to the practical things of life. The correct act is any act that reflects the control of the logos.
- With Panaetius the natural law became the standard of reference. He said that there are 4 great natural drives: toward community (political), toward knowledge (intellectual), toward ambition (perfection for oneself), and toward beauty (aesthetic). All four drives are to be directed by the logos.
- This was a return to a more Greek concept than had characterized the Stoa and brought back into its philosophy some sense of the beauty of the world.
- He developed the idea that the best constitution is a mixed kind, combining elements of oligarchy, democracy, and monarchy. Polybius set forth this view in his history of Rome as an explanation of its greatness.
- He suggested that there were 3 kinds of gods:
 - 1) those of the philosophers (the natural gods), which are true
 - 2) those of the poets (the mythical gods), which are false
 - 3) those of the state (the political gods), which are somewhat in the middle for they tie the others together and are to be worshiped for their value to society.
- Varro developed this idea in the first century BC in a work Augustine selected as the best philosophical defense of paganism for refutation in his *City of God*.
- Posidonius (c. 135-c. 50 BC). Decorum is the word for Panaetius; enthusiasm is the word for Posidonius. Posidonius may be compared with Aristotle in his achievements in both science and philosophy. Nothing of his writings survived. Some modern scholars have seen it as considerable. He was born in Apamea in Syria and studied under Panaetius at Athens. After travels in the western Mediterranean he went to Rhodes and started a school there. He was never head of the Stoic school in Athens and was regarded as somewhat of a renegade by them. Strabo said he was always Aristotelianizing, which meant that he had an interest in scientific observation of the natural world and in causation. His views:
 - 1) Whereas the earlier Stoics had spoken of a “fashioning [or creative] fire,” Posidonius spoke of a “life-giving force.”
 - 2) There is a sympathetic relationship between all parts of the world. Posidonius discovered the effect of the moon on the tides in one of the great methodical studies of antiquity. Seeing the effect of the sun and moon on the world, Posidonius developed the theory of sympathy a mutual affecting of the parts of the world. From this theory of sympathy he elaborated a theory of unity in which there are 3 kinds:
 - The kind an army has –separate individuals functioning in harmony
 - The kind a building has –each part connected (joined) to the other
 - The kind a living being has –what affects one part affects all
 - 3) The cosmos is an ordered world with graduated levels of being. Each level or grade of being has its own “power.” He spoke of powers of the

soul (as Aristotle), not parts of the soul. Each part of the universe is interconnected with the rest through gradations. Posidonius wrote a work on beings intermediate between human and divine –demons and heroes. Not a mystic himself, his worldview inspired mysticism in others. He carried further a “Platonizing Stoicism.” Posidonius wrote on so much that he gave his age almost an encyclopedia of knowledge.

Later Stoa: Roman Stoicism

- Roman representatives of Stoicism in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD show an exclusively ethical and practical concern. They illustrate many of the themes that are part of the common philosophical outlook of the time. They also represent the broad range of Stoicism’s appeal—from the slave Epictetus to the emperor Marcus Aurelius.
- *Arius Didymus* a philosopher in Alexandria who accompanied Augustus into the city in 30 BC. He compiled epitomes of Stoic and Peripatetic ethics that are extensively preserved in Stobaeus. He said that the Stoics define virtue as “a disposition of the soul in harmony with itself concerning one’s whole life”.
- *Seneca (c. AD 1-16)*. Lucius annaeus Seneca born near the beginning of the Christian era at Cordoba, Spain. He was from an equestrian family and his brother Gallio was the proconsul of Achaea mentioned in Acts 18:12. He was the tutor of the young Nero. When Nero became emperor in 54, Seneca joined with the praetorian prefect Burrus to give good guidance to the government for 8 years. On Burrus’ death in 62, Nero came under the influence of evil counselors and Seneca retired from public life. An offer to relinquish his great wealth to Nero failed to save his life, and he was forced to commit suicide in 65 for alleged participation in a conspiracy against the emperor. Seneca’s principal philosophical writings are the 10 ethical treatises preserved under the name “Dialogues.” Similar in content, and most popular through the ages, is the collection of 124 *Moral Epistles*, which are not real letters. His ascetic advice and realistic assessment of human nature appear irreconcilable. He exposes the deepest and darkest secrets from the bondage of desire.
- *Cornutus (c. AD 20)* – was a freedman of Seneca or of one of his relatives. He taught philosophy in Rome about AD 50 but was exiled in the mid-60s. His literary work included critical studies of logic, rhetoric, and poetry. His principal philosophical work was “Summary of the Traditions concerning Greek Theology,” in which he gives an allegorical explanation of the myths along the lines of Chrysippus’s natural theology. He found a truth behind the myths. His etymological interpretation of the deities was based on the premise that the knowledge of the meaning of a name revealed the real nature of the person or object. He explained that he was writing in order to teach the young to worship in piety and not in superstition. He believed that the soul was annihilated at death.
- *Musonius Rufus (AD 30-101)*. Because of his association with philosophical criticism of the emperors, Musonius Rufus was twice banished from Rome. It is not known of him writing books only his apothegms and discourses have been preserved by others. He considered the practical exercise of virtue the most important part of philosophical education. Several features of his moral teaching

are of interest to students of early Christianity: he is the clearest of any ancient writer on the equality of man and woman; he believed marriage to be a complete partnership, with sexual intercourse to be confined to the marriage relationship and then only for the purpose of procreation; furthermore, parents should bring up all their children; in addition, he advocated vegetarianism and opposed luxury so as to harden the body. He was directly appropriated by the Christian moralist, Clement of Alexandria.

- *Epictetus* (c. AD 55-C. 135). Son of a slave woman, Epictetus was born at Hierapolis in Phrygia. Perhaps through sale he came to Rome where he grew up in the household of Epaphroditus, one of Nero's powerful freedmen who was secretary to the emperor. He was crippled and showed an interest in philosophy, so his master allowed him to attend the lectures of Musonius Rufus and then granted him his freedom. He began teaching philosophy on the street corners and in the marketplace. Banished from Rome with other philosophers in 89. He went to Nicopolis, Greece, and conducted his own school. Students came from Rome and Athens to attend his lectures. He tried to reach the masses with his message. He taught that the universe is the product of Divine Providence, which continues to be manifest in the world's order and unity. He saw the philosopher as an ambassador of the Divine with a mission to teach people how to live, as a physician of souls, a witness for God, a scout. He emphasized indifference to all things that are not within one's own self and will as the way to inner freedom. In one of his quotes it presents a close focus on the difference between Christianity and Stoicism. Stoicism said, "Feel toward yourself as you feel toward others"; Christianity said, "Feel toward others as you would feel toward yourself."
- *Marcus Aurelius* (AD 121-180). Stoicism ascended the throne in the person of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. The last great written expression of the Stoic view of life was his *Meditations* (lit. "To Himself"). These meditations are in no particular order and seem to have been transcribed from the emperor's personal notebooks as he put down thoughts for his private guidance. They represent the Stoicism that had been recast by Posidonius according to Plato's psychological dualism and transmitted to Marcus Aurelius in the writings of Epictetus. These aphorisms and reflections are often obscure, but they reflect the sober conservatism of a great-soul and somewhat ascetic man who was wrestling with great responsibilities. There is a mood of melancholy about the work, but the intensity of religious and moral feeling has made the *Meditations* a book much read through the ages. During his reign was a difficult time for Christians, and he could not understand their readiness for martyrdom, although his own Stoic belief allowed for suicide. But the stoic took his life as a rational decision, not (as the emperor saw it) in rash abandonment of life.
- *The End of Stoicism* – Marcus Aurelius was the last of the great Stoics. Stoicism came to an end, as it has been expressed, "because everyone became a Stoic": not that everyone gave adherence to the Stoic creed, but in the sense that everything Stoicism had to say became common property. What was of value in Stoicism was absorbed into the Neoplatonic synthesis.

Stoicism and Christianity

- Christianity borrowed from Stoicism in terms of some of the names such as: Spirit, conscience, Logos, virtue, self-sufficiency, freedom of speech, reasonable service, etc.
- Biblical injunctions concerning the units of society (Eph. 5:21-6:9; Col. 3:18-4:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-3:7; etc.) in both form (the reference to stations in society) and content (e.g., “it is fitting”) show Stoic influence.
- Even general atmosphere: humankind’s persistent evil, the need for self-examination, humanity’s kinship with the divine, denial of the world’s values, and emphasis on inner freedom from external circumstances.
- The Stoic natural theology, transmitted via Hellenistic Judaism (cf. Wisdom of Solomon 13-14), influenced Romans 1-2 and Acts 17. Paul was familiar with philosophical, especially Stoic, idioms and assumptions and used these to express his own arguments.
- Stoicism did not have a fully personal God; it knew only an immanent god. The God of the Bible is the creator of the world, never equated with it as in Stoic pantheism.
- In Christianity the universe has a beginning, purpose, and end; in Stoicism none of these. The only incarnation in Stoicism is that each one of us has part of the logos within.
- Stoicism’s consciousness of sin did not reach the depths of Jewish and Christian thought. Conscience has little significance unless there is a Person to whom it must answer. Stoicism shared the limitations of all philosophies in comparison to religion: knowledge of universal ethical precepts, as such, is seldom sufficient to call out and organize a corresponding conduct. This only follows when a special religious motive or ground of obligation is united with the knowledge of the universal principle. The basis of Stoicism’s ethics was intellectual and remained a philosophy for the few. Christianity, on the other hand, appealed to the masses. It did so by relating all classes of people to a personal Savior with moral power. Stoicism had no personal immortality. When one died, his divine part went back into the whole. Stoicism was a creed of despair and acquiescence; it looked down on the Christian virtues that depend upon the affirmation “God is love.” Stoicism’s apathy basically denied the emotional side of human experience. Christianity by contrast brought joy and hope into the world.
- Even where the teaching on social ethics was similar, the motivation was fundamentally different. Christians, ideally, act benevolently not merely in fulfillment of the obligation of a common kinship in the universe or even in God, but because they have learned self-sacrifice and active love from God in Christ. Self-respect, not love was Stoicism’s driving force. For Stoicism, as for all Greek philosophy before Neoplatonism, the goal of humanity is self liberation, and this goal is attainable. It did not know the redemptive love of a merciful God.

Epicureanism -

- *Epicurus and His School* – he had more loyal followers than any other Hellenistic philosopher and created close-knit communities with similarities to Christian communities.

- Opposite of Gnosticism in that it is about the tangible world
- Point: absence of pain (moderate hedonism)
- Not abstract, simple, non-philosophical
- Promoted pleasures of the mind, friendship and contentment
- Removes all thought of sin, judgment or accountability
- Did not promote sensuality
- The world is made of atoms (material) and space (the void)
- The gods are made of refined atoms but do not involve themselves in human affairs
- Address in Acts 17
 - He was born in 341 BC at the Athenian colony of Samos. In 307/306 he settled in Athens, where he bought a house with a garden that gave to his school its name, “the philosophy of the Garden.” He died in 270 BC.
 - He gathered disciples of more intense loyalty than any other philosopher in antiquity.
 - He was the most controversial figure in ancient philosophy, with bitter enemies as well as devoted followers.
 - His disciples formed a close knit group, living on Epicurus’s property a life of austere contentment withdraw from the world. This seclusion and avoidance of public activities contributed to their unpopularity
 - He admitted women (including courtesans) and slaves to his community, and this along with his professed hedonism probably was the source of some of the stories that circulated about his school.
 - He did not teach an “eat, drink and be merry” philosophy (The Cyrenaic school founded by Aristippus advocated this sensual view of pleasure)
 - Epicurus’s philosophy promoted the placid pleasures of the mind, friendship, and contentment. For him there was no reason to eat, drink, and be merry today if you are going to have a headache from it tomorrow. Poor health imposed on Epicurus himself a frugal life.
 - He was a father figure to his followers
 - He formed communities of his followers and wrote letters of instruction to them.
 - They celebrated his birthday and gave him honors as to a god.
 - No later figure of importance and influence arose in his school.
 - There was a conservative tendency in preserving Epicurus’s teachings
 - Epicurus wrote about 300 rolls, but little of this survives.
- *Lucretius (94-55 BCE)*
 - The most important and influential exposition of the Epicurean system has come from the Latin poet Lucretius. He expounds the physical theory of Epicurus with a view to abolishing superstitious fears of interference by the gods in the world and of punishment in an afterlife. Lucretius was the ideal convert—having found “the truth,” he wanted others to find it. The poem provides a good outline of Epicurean philosophy.
- *Epicurean Physics*
 - Epicurus depended on the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus for his physical theory. The whole of nature consists of matter and space (“the void”). Matter is divisible, but not infinitely, for then we would have nothing. We finally reach the atom (which in Greek means the “indivisible”). Atoms are

the invisible “building blocks” out of which the world is made. They are neither created nor destroyed. Atoms together with space constitute the whole of the universe, which is unbounded and infinite. Epicurus was a materialist. The physical world comes from atoms that operate according to law. Therefore, nature has no purpose. There is no creation—the world is eternal, for atoms are indestructible though they may be changed. For Epicurus this physical theory was the fall of religion. Epicurus did believe in the gods, who are made of refined material atoms. But they never interfere in nature or the affairs of humans. Their existence is something of a paradox, for they have no pragmatic function and do not explain anything in Epicurus’s system. He insisted there is no providence. The gods have bodies, but they never dissolve and so are immortal. They live in the interstellar spaces outside the world and have no contact with it. They are supremely happy and serene, for they are not bothered by humans. No place for prayer or answer to prayer in his system. Epicurus had a theology without a religion. He did counsel his followers to participate in sacrifices and other acts of homage. The gods as supremely perfect beings deserve worship and honor. People receive the benefit of aesthetic pleasure from contemplating their perfect existence. Because they are not involved with humans, we have no responsibilities to them and should not expect anything from them. Epicureans were called “atheists” by the ancients. It was used because the Epicureans did not believe in providence and because many did not follow through with participation in the public cults.

- Epicurus’s goal was to achieve peace of mind and tranquility for all. He wanted to get across the idea that the world is a garden, not a jungle.
- Epicurus wanted to save humanity from the darkness of religion. Oracles, divination, magic, etc., are humbug. He saw religion as a source of fear; therefore the banishing of the gods brought peace and the possibility of a good life.
- *Epicurean Epistemology*
 - He divided philosophy into physics and ethics.
 - For Epicurus sense perception is the basis of all reason.
- *Epicurean Ethics*
 - Epicurus’s physics and canonics existed for the sake of his ethics. The goal of life was formulated in various ways: Tranquility, happiness, or especially as pleasure. But pleasure as Epicurus defined it was not self-indulgence. We must discount the modern content of “Epicurean” if we would understand him.
 - His hedonism was an extension of his empiricism. Immediate feelings of pain and pleasure.
 - It is human nature to seek pleasure and avoid pain, since all pleasure is good and all pain is bad. One seeks the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of pain.
 - He judged pleasure and pain only by each person’s experience. He measured both by intensity, duration, and purity.
 - He divided pleasures into the kinetic (active) and the static (pertaining to a state or condition, passive).

- The lowest pleasures are those of the body.
- *Estimate and Comparisons*
 - Summary of the philosophy: Nothing to fear in God; nothing to feel in Death; Good [pleasure] can be attained; evil [pain] can be endured
 - The establishment of a community of men and women where all were equal, had a common way of life, were isolated from the world, and were held together by reverence for a master was an ideal that had a great influence.
 - Christians and Epicureans were sometimes lumped together by pagan observers because of their common rejection of traditional religion (“atheists”) and the separation of their communities from ordinary life (1 Thess. 4:9-12 employs words used by Epicureans to describe a life of quietness withdrawn from public affairs).
 - Epicureans and Stoics were the chief rivals for the allegiance of educated people in the Hellenistic age (cf. Acts 17:18) both had a primary emphasis on ethics and made philosophy a way of life that could be its own religion with converting power.
 - Epicureanism drew its physical theory from the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus, so Stoicism was indebted for part of its physical theory to the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus. Both Epicureans and stoics sought to liberate humans from fate, to make them self-sufficient and indifferent to externals. Their major concerns –undisturbedness (ataraxia) in Epicureanism and passionlessness (apatheia) in Stoicism—were similar, but Stoicism was more stolid.
 - Epicureanism advocated a quiet and peaceful life, the life of “the Garden”; it took no interest in public affairs. Stoicism, as indicated by its name, “the Porch,” was set in the middle of public life and affairs. Stoicism developed in the direction of upholding the structures of society and the traditional religion. Its more active creed appealed to more persons, especially among the Romans, and exerted more influence. Stoics sometimes became Epicureans, but Epicureans never became Stoics. There was a strong cohesion and religious power about the Epicurean way of life.

Eclecticism -

Characteristics

- To pick and choose is the meaning of the name. It refers to the tendency to select elements from different philosophical schools and integrate them into one’s own system of thought or to put them together in new combinations.
- Eclecticism is the opposite of Skepticism
- It posits that at bottom all philosophy is in agreement.
- The eclectic tendency of later Hellenistic philosophy is illustrated in the work of Cicero below. Although his philosophical affiliation was with the Academy, he drew much from other schools, especially the Stoics.

Cicero (106-43 BCE)

- He was born in Arpinum, and struggled to gain acceptance by the Roman nobility.
- Learned the Greek technique of speech.

- Educated in Rome from Phaedrus (an Epicurean), Diodotus (a Stoic), and Philo of Larissa (under whose tutelage he became an Academic).
- In Athens on a foreign tour he attended the lectures of Antiochus of Ascalon (an Academic) and Zeno of Sidon (an Epicurean), and in Rhodes he became intimate with Posidonius (a Stoic).
- He had an eclectic approach and it has been said that his intellect was with the Academy, his conscience with the Stoa, and his information with the Peripatetics. He brought together oratory and philosophy, and he disseminated a theory of natural law.
- Caesar's rise to power forced him into retirement, and in his free time he gathered philosophical material.
- The death of his daughter in 45 BC made philosophy an existential concern. He sought a home or refuge in philosophy, which at that time provided the consolation supplied by religion in our times.
- Up until Cicero's time philosophy at Rome had been a hobby. He made it popular and so had a great influence on intellectual life.
- His philosophical works adapted the Latin language for abstract thought. This made possible a theology in Latin, and without this preliminary phase it is difficult to imagine development of a Latin Christian theology. In that regard his writings are comparable in importance to the Septuagint (which translated Hebrew ideas into Greek). He is a prime source for Greek thought and the status of philosophy at the close of the Republic.

Neopythagoreanism -

Pythagoras

- 6th century BC (the historical Pythagoras) remains a shadowy figure.
- He is associated with 4 ideas of importance for the history of philosophy and religion:
 - 1) Pythagoras had the brilliant idea that number is related to the structure of the universe. This idea came from his discovery of the numerical ratios of the principal intervals in the musical scale. The idea that the universe obeys mathematical laws has been of profound importance, apart from the more dubious speculation about number symbolism encouraged by this idea.
 - 2) Pythagoras taught the theory of metempsychosis, or transmigration (the passing of a soul at a body's death into another body). He shared with the Orphics the idea of a cycle of existence. Pythagoras apparently was an important source for Plato's distinction between soul and body.
 - 3) Pythagoras formed a close group of disciples with the cohesion of a religious group, whose patron deity was Apollo. Pythagoras created a brotherhood (the first thing approaching a "church") and gave his followers a distinctive way of life.
 - 4) He established an ascetic discipline. A member of his group had to live by rules. Purifications were to improve the soul. The Pythagoreans became complete vegetarians.

5) They remained a group apart and their ideas were somewhat exotic in classical Greece.

The early Pythagoreans are thought to have almost completely disappeared in the 5th century BC., but a date of 350-300 BC is argued for the Golden verses, a gnomic poem of basic moral, religious, and philosophical doctrines that appears to have been an introduction to the teachings of a Pythagorean group. Such Pythagorean lit produced a revival of Pythagorean ideas and sodalities in the first century BC., which in turn contributed to Neoplatonism.

The Pythagorean Revival

- Nigidius Figulus (d. 45 BC), friend of Cicero and supporter of Pompey, was led by his scholarly and mystical interests to a revival of Pythagorean ideas.
- An underground basilica near the Porta Maggiore in Rome, built in the 1st century AD has been identified by some as a Neopythagorean cult hall.
- The Neopythagoreans continued Pythagoras's interest in numbers and asceticism and his understanding of philosophy as religious.
- They were also interested in the stars and intermediary demons between the transcendent God and humankind, contributing to the concept of a "chain of beings."
- They seem to be the principal philosophical source for the view that the material world is bad, an idea that colored Gnostic thinking and was influential in the general pessimism about the world that began to spread in the second century AD.
- They speculated on the occult meaning of numbers, they were vegetarians, had their own passwords and signs of recognition, and were often linked with occult and magical practices.
- The rule of life—not philosophical speculation—was its chief attraction.
- Their life-style became the ideal representation of the holy, wise man—Christian lives of saints who were not martyrs (e.g., Athanasius, *Life of Antony*) follow the pattern of Pythagoras. We know the ideal best from Philostratus's portrayal of Apollonius of Tyana

Apollonius of Tyana and Philostratus

- He was the most significant Neopythagorean for NT studies. His life spanned the 1st century AD., and he died in the principate of Nerva.
- His biographer was Philostratus.
- Apollonius of Tyana was an ascetic wandering teacher and reformer who visited many of the prominent cities of the Roman world and traveled as far as India. He was known as a wise man and wonder-worker.
- He was persecuted under Nero, like many other philosophers, but other charges of magical practices were also involved.
- His reported miraculous powers and his life-style have made him the principal 1st century representative of the "divine man" concept—both of the sage and wonder-worker types—which has come to prominence in Gospel studies as the background for the portrayal of Jesus.

- Rival traditions about Apollonius were circulated in the ancient world, but the only full account to be observed is the *Life of Apollonius* by Flavius Philostratus (c. AD. 170-249). Behind Philostratus are 2 older views of Apollonius—as a magician and charlatan or a wonder-worker and theosophy. A principal thrust of Philostratus’s work is to defend Apollonius from charges of magic and to attribute his miracles to supernatural power (cf. the charge that Jesus was a magician)
- Apollonius rejected marriage for himself. He condemned animal sacrifice, substituting prayer and meditation.
- His closeness to the gods supposedly gave him a knowledge of the past and the future.
- He renounced monetary advantage and recommended to others a kind of communism.
- Despite his professed adherence to Pythagoras, there are Stoic, Cynic, and Platonic elements in Apollonius.
- Some features of his life parallel with Jesus such as his miraculous birth; the gathering of a circle of disciples.

Numenius

- The last and best philosopher of the Pythagorean revival
- From Apamea (late 2nd century AD)
- Termed a “Pythagorizing Platonist”
- Exerted influence on Plotinus and had contacts with Jews and Christians
- He anticipated Plotinus’s absolutely transcendent One as the first principle of reality, with Mind and world soul providing potential contact with the human soul.
- Difficulty in classifying Numenius (as a Neopythagorean or Middle Platonist) testifies to the flowing together of different philosophical currents in the 2nd century AD., which prepared for the new synthesis known as Neoplatonism.

Middle Platonism

- Platonism from the 1st century BC to the 2nd century AD is called Middle Platonism
- Began in Alexandria about 50 BC
- The development had been prepared for in the move from skepticism to eclecticism by Antiochus of Ascalon.
- At this time, when the Academy was moving toward Stoicism, the Stoa was becoming more Platonic (Posidonius).
- The 1st century BC saw a revival in the study of Plato and Aristotle, who returned to a position of predominance.
- The idea of the soul as distinguished from the body reappeared and became the basis of patristic and medieval philosophy
- Thinkers included, Plutarch, Apuleius, Albinus, Alcinous, Maximus of Tyre
- Middle Platonism provided the intellectual background for the work of the Christian apologists of the 2nd century—Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Clement of Alexandria.
- Even in the NT, Platonism has been seen reflected in the Epistle to the Hebrews

- Middle Platonism was Platonism influenced by Stoic ethics, Aristotelian logic, and Neopythagorean metaphysics, religion, and number symbolism.
- The Middle Platonists started with the idea that it might be possible to reconcile Plato's and Aristotle's views about the universe and divine things. For instance, Alcinous identified Aristotle's Supreme Mind (the Unmoved Mover) with Plato's Good (which became the first principle of the world of forms). The Platonic ideas or forms became the thoughts within the divine mind. Philo of Alexandria is the first extant author explicitly to give this formulation: the ideas are the thoughts in the reason of the Supreme God of Judaism.
- The Middle Platonists exalted the absolute transcendence of the Supreme Mind (God).
- The universe is animated by a World Soul
- Direct knowledge of the transcendent Mind is impossible, but a "negative theology" gives an indirect knowledge of God.
- Some influenced by Neopythagoreans, gave a negative judgment on matter as evil, others, closer to Plato, saw evil as the result of the embodiment of ideas.
- Another emphasis of the Middle Platonists was the immortality of the soul.
- They derived from Plato their doctrine that the goal of life as happiness consists in "likeness to God, so far as is possible".
- 3 figures affiliated in varying degrees with various forms of the Platonic tradition:
 - 1) Cicero – at the end of the 1st century BC
 - 2) Philo of Alexandria – at the beginning of the 1st century AD.
 - 3) Plutarch – at the end of the 1st century AD.

They reflect the eclectic tendencies of the time and the capacity of Platonism to absorb many other elements and be the integrating framework for new syntheses, a capacity that enabled it to be the leading force in the last stages of paganism and the major philosophical influence in the formulation of patristic theology. They bracket the 1st century.

Plutarch (c. 50 – after 120 CE)

- The most extensive corpus of writings by an author included among the Middle Platonists comes from Plutarch.
- Citizen of Chaeronea in central Greece
- Came from a prominent family and had contacts with some of the leading men of his time.
- Spent time in Athens, Egypt, and Italy.
- The last 30 years of his life he was a priest at Delphi; he combined piety and respect for the old ways with a moderate rationalism.
- He is an extremely important person for the study of Christian backgrounds because of his proximity in time to the NT writings.
- Some of his writings include: major dialogues on the Delphic Oracle, a major treatise on religious speculation, treatises on technical philosophy, antiaquarian works, and the nine books of Table Talk.
- He was devoted to public duties and advocated a partnership of Greek culture and Roman statesmanship.
- Had tendencies to monotheism with practical moral interests.

- Has maintained popularity with Christian readers.
- His crown of philosophy is to form true and worthy conceptions of God and to give him pious worship.
- His description of God sounds like that of the Christian apologists, but he supported the traditional religion and sought to resolve its contradictions.
- He plotted a middle way between atheism and superstition with “reverent rationalism”.
- He reconciled the spiritualized view of the unity of God with the popular polytheism by seeing the traditional gods as subordinates and by interpreting mythology as a poetic expression of truth for a more primitive age.
- His works *On the Decline of Oracles*, *The Oracles at Delphi*, and *On the Demon of Socrates* are major sources for the doctrine of demons.
- Philanthropy is his favorite virtue.
- He maintained a quiet optimism that good is stronger than evil.
- He has many points of contact with the NT
- He was a source or an illustration of the political, social, cultural, religious, and philosophical thought of the early Roman Empire.

Plotinus and Neoplatonism –

Hellenistic philosophical developments found their climax in Neoplatonism. The eclecticism of philosophy in the early empire was brought into an ordered system by Plotinus, the creator of Neoplatonism. It was the last form of spiritual Greek religion, although some of its representatives combined it with magic and theurgy. It provided the focus for the last intellectual challenge to Christianity in the paganism of the 4th century. As a metaphysical system it had enormous influence on Christian thought. Origen was educated in the same thought-world from which Neoplatonism came. This philosophy was the background of the work of the Cappadocians in the 4th century and through them influenced Greek Orthodox theology. It was decisive in the intellectual development of Augustine and through him had a great impact on the Medieval Latin development.

Life of Plotinus

- Born in Egypt and studied in Alexandria under Ammonius Saccas
- Traveled to the east, and at 40 years old settled in Rome.
- He wrote essays based on the philosophical discussions he had with a number of pupils that gathered around him.
- Plotinus has been a major source of western mysticism.
- One of his students Porphyry says that Plotinus experienced union with the divine on 4 occasions.

Plotinus's System

- Called the greatest thinker between Aristotle and Spinoza
- His system consisted of Platonism with Aristotelian, Stoic, and Neopythagorean elements.
- The dualistic outlook of the period is expressed within a framework of ultimate unity.

- The highest principle is wholly transcendent.
- It is the One, an immaterial and impersonal force that is the ground of all existence and source of all values.
- The One is neither subject nor object, neither self nor the world. The One is what is left by transcending all duality.
- Plotinus goes beyond Plato by positing a transcendence that encompasses not only all being but also nonbeing.
- Creation is impossible in Plotinus's thinking, for it implies that God is involved in this universe.
- Neoplatonism speaks of emanations that provide the connection between the One and matter.
- The doctrine of emanations made Neoplatonism something of a dynamic pantheism, although not a pantheism in the ordinary sense.
- Evil is not an ontological reality. Nothing is evil in its nature. Evil is nonbeing, the term or limit of being.
- The longing of the soul to return to the source of all being is a desire for union. For Plotinus, this unity is salvation. The return to the One is not achieved easily. It requires asceticism—restraining from actions and desires and purifying the self from the influences of the finite world.
- Plotinus thinks in a circular way. As the One through emanations has produced manifoldness, the manifold returns to the One. Nothing gets lost in this circular movement of devolution and return. There is no person survival in the Christian sense.

Later Neoplatonists

- Very successful because it brought to fruition and systematized the conceptions of the time and united theology and philosophy. The later Neoplatonists made it scholasticism and took superstition and theurgy into its doctrine.
- Porphyry (AD 232-c. 305) born in Tyre, studied under Longinus in Athens and became a devoted disciple of Plotinus in Rome. He preserved Plotinus' work and a wide range of other writings. He wrote 15 books entitled *Against the Christians*, which were burned in 448.
- Iamblichus (c. AD 250- c. 325) studied under Porphyry and wrote a *Life of Porphyry*. His *On the Mysteries* is a fundamental work for late antique religion. Had his own school in Syria and introduced theosophical tendencies into Plotinus's system. He was attracted by theurgy, the practice of inducing the presence of divine powers by magic. Theurgy makes it possible for humans to enter into relations with the gods. The soul according to Iamblichus had a double life—part united with the body and part separated from it.
- Julian (332-363), emperor 360-363, attempted to reestablish paganism and so earned from Christians the designation "Julian the Apostate." Even though he tried to revive the old Greek religion, he was the champion of a late form of paganism interpreted in Neoplatonic terms, especially in the form given by Iamblichus. He was conservative about religious ceremonies and myths, his

- view blended the gods in syncretism. He worshiped the sun as the supreme deity. A spiritual man, he was aristocratic in outlook and superstitious as well as philosophical.
- Proclus (AD 410-485) was head of the Academy in Athens. He was the last great systematizer of the Greek philosophical inheritance, but his system is in reality mystic.
 - The school was closed by the emperor Justinian in AD 529. By that time this was not so much an act of religious persecution as a decent burial.