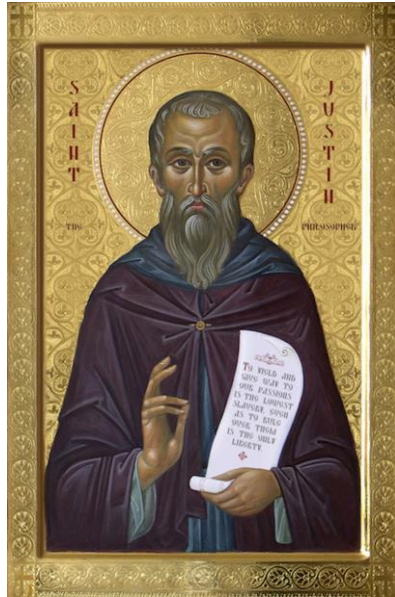
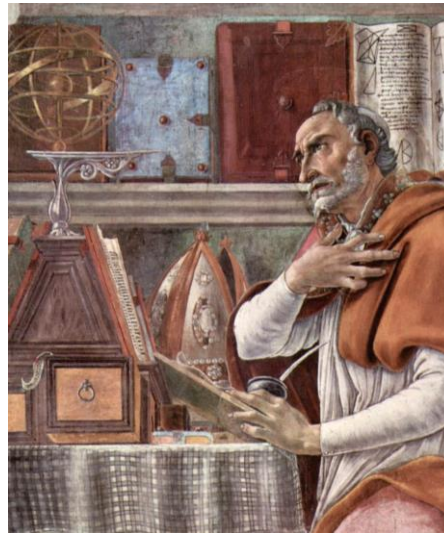


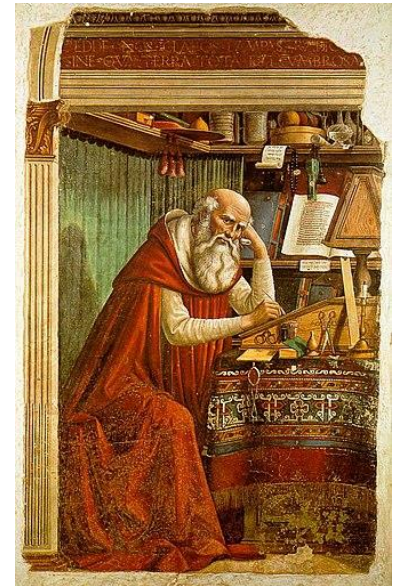
Plato, Aristotle



Justin Martyr



Augustine of Hippo

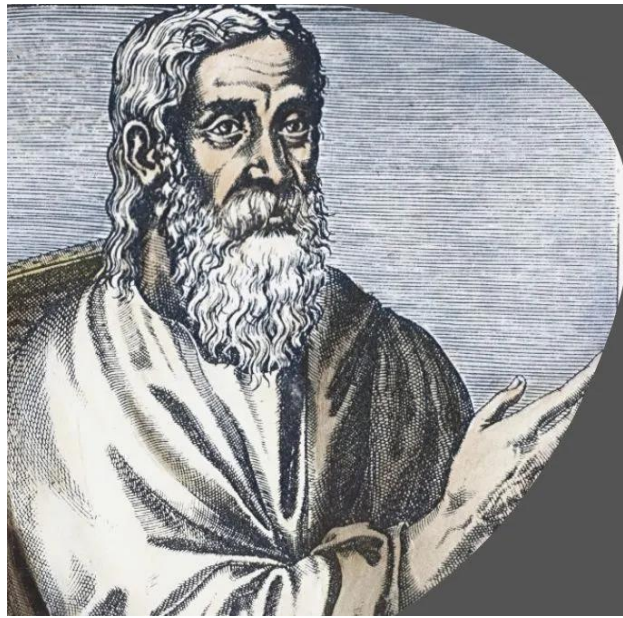


Origen

The Influence of Greek Philosophy on the Early Church

How the Church Fathers Synthesized Greek Thought with Christian Apologetics

Greek culture and context



CLEMENT OF
ALEXANDRIA

c. 150 – c. 215 AD

Apologist of the
Roman Empire

In Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*, he argues that Greek philosophy is a gift from God, a "preparation paving the way for him who is perfect in Christ," aiming to reconcile faith and knowledge, with faith ultimately taking precedence



Greece: Archaic Period 800 – 490 BC

- Bible: Divided kingdom, exile, prophets
- Urbanization and the rise of the city-states
 - Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Macedon
 - Tyranny, then democracy (Athens)
- Literature: Greek alphabet developed
 - Homer (Iliad, Odyssey)
- Olympic games
- Art (sculptures, vase painting)
- Massive population increase, colonization





Greece:
Classical
Period
490 - 334 BC

- Bible: end of OT
- Prominence of Athens
- Philosophy:
 - Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
- Math and Science:
 - Euclid, Pythagoras, Archimedes, Hippocrates, Ptolemy
- Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great



Greece:
Hellenistic
Period
334 – 31 BC

- Bible: Intertestamental period
- Spread of Greek culture, language, and ideas
 - Dominant culture of NT and early church
- The rise of Rome

Greek Philosophy

- Christianity emerged in a world deeply influenced by Hellenistic thought
- Communicating the gospel to all people
- Gain intellectual credibility
- Tension between faith and reason



Greek Philosophical Foundations

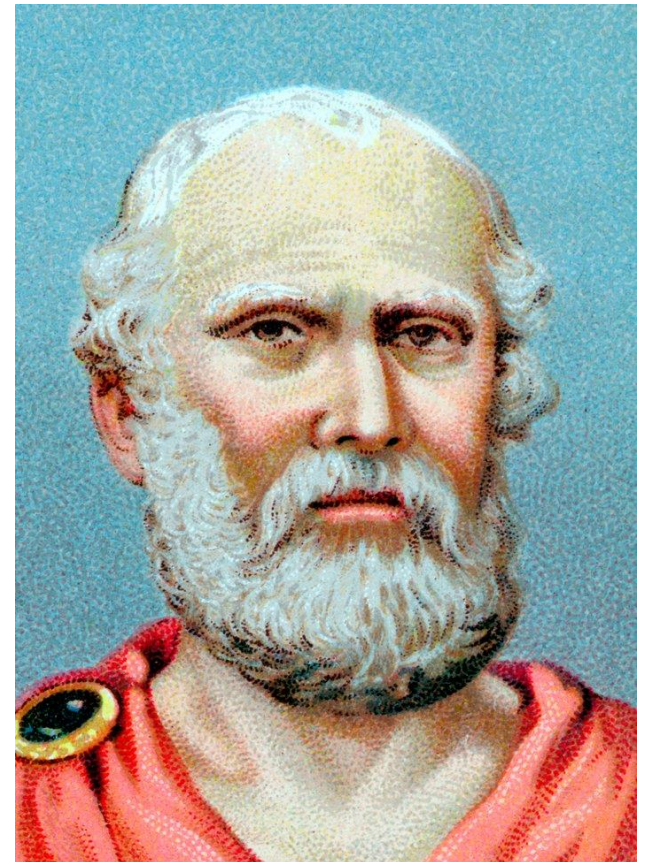
- Key traditions: Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism.
- Shift away from natural philosophy of existing things and toward ethics and ways of living life.
- The Logos as a rational principle governing the universe.



Plato

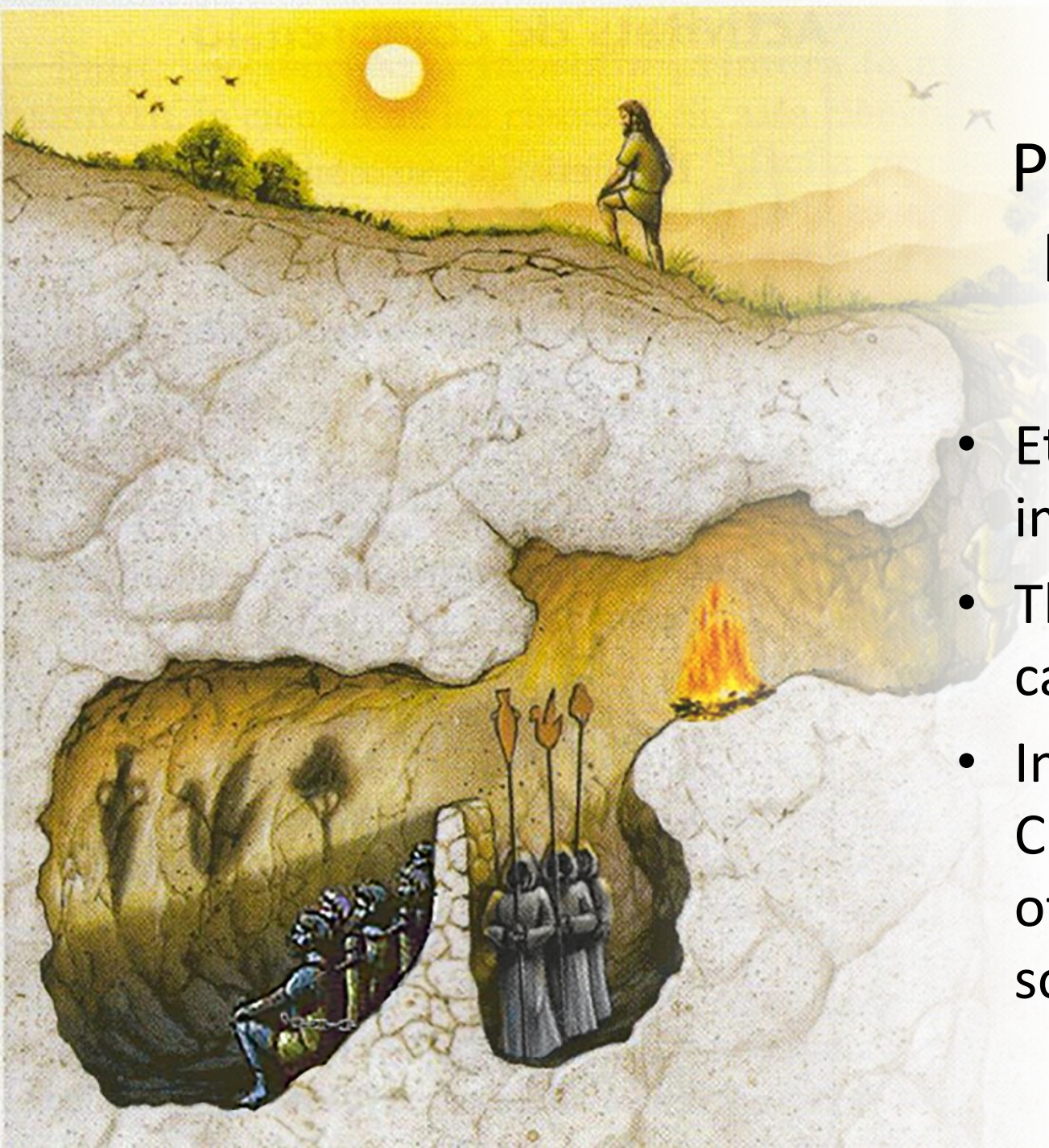
(424-347 BC)

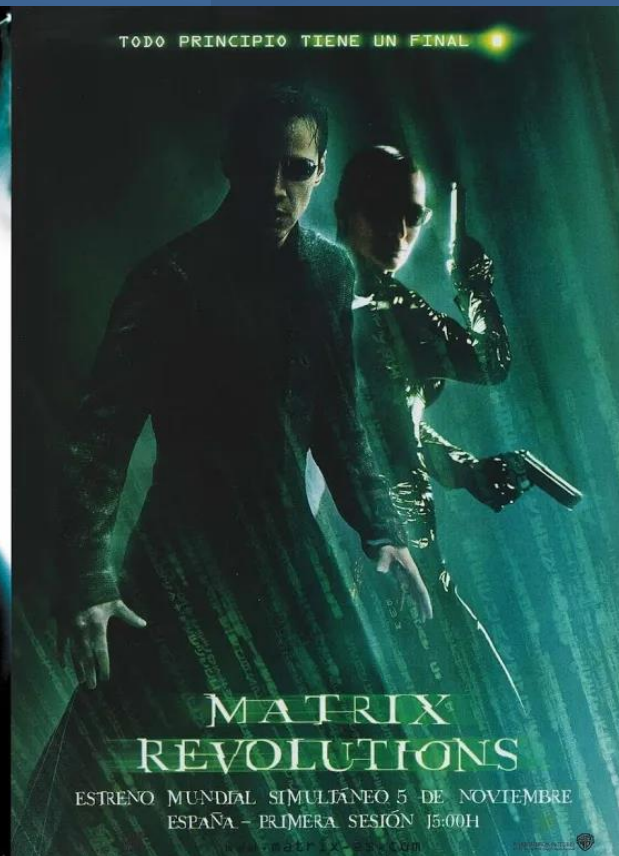
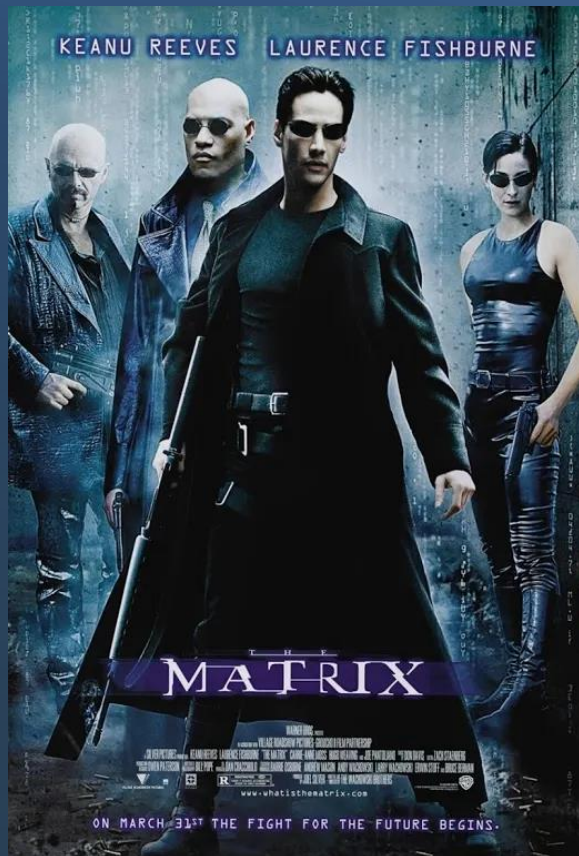
- Disciple of Socrates
- The Academy in Athens
- Ultimate truth
- The world we now inhabit is a shadow of a higher, more perfect, and unchanging reality—the world of the “Forms.”
- The function of philosophy is to free the soul from the prison of the body so that it can contemplate the Forms more directly.



Platonism's Influence

- Eternal forms and immaterial reality.
- The allegory of the cave.
- Influence on Christian concepts of heaven and the soul.





1999 – 2003, \$1.8 billion revenue

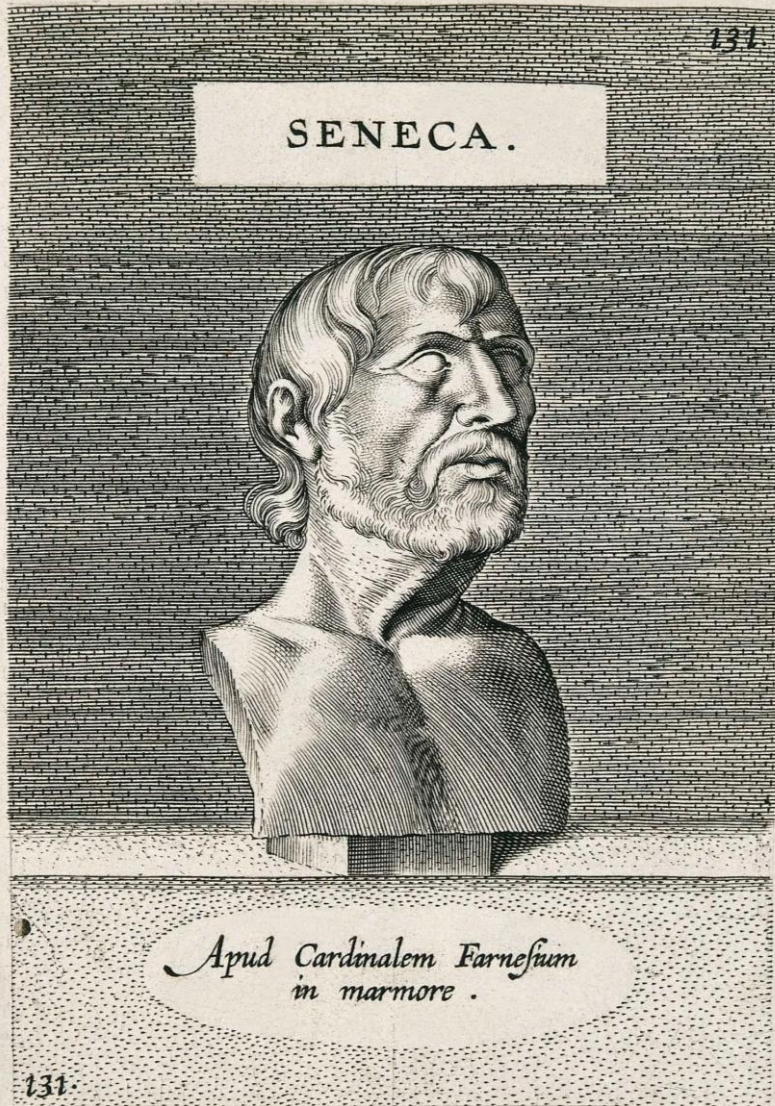


Aristotle's Influence

- Disciple of Plato, tutor to Alexander the Great.
- Empirical approach and logical reasoning.
- Knowledge is gained from the senses.
- Later influence on medieval Christian thought (Scholasticism).

Stoicism's Influence

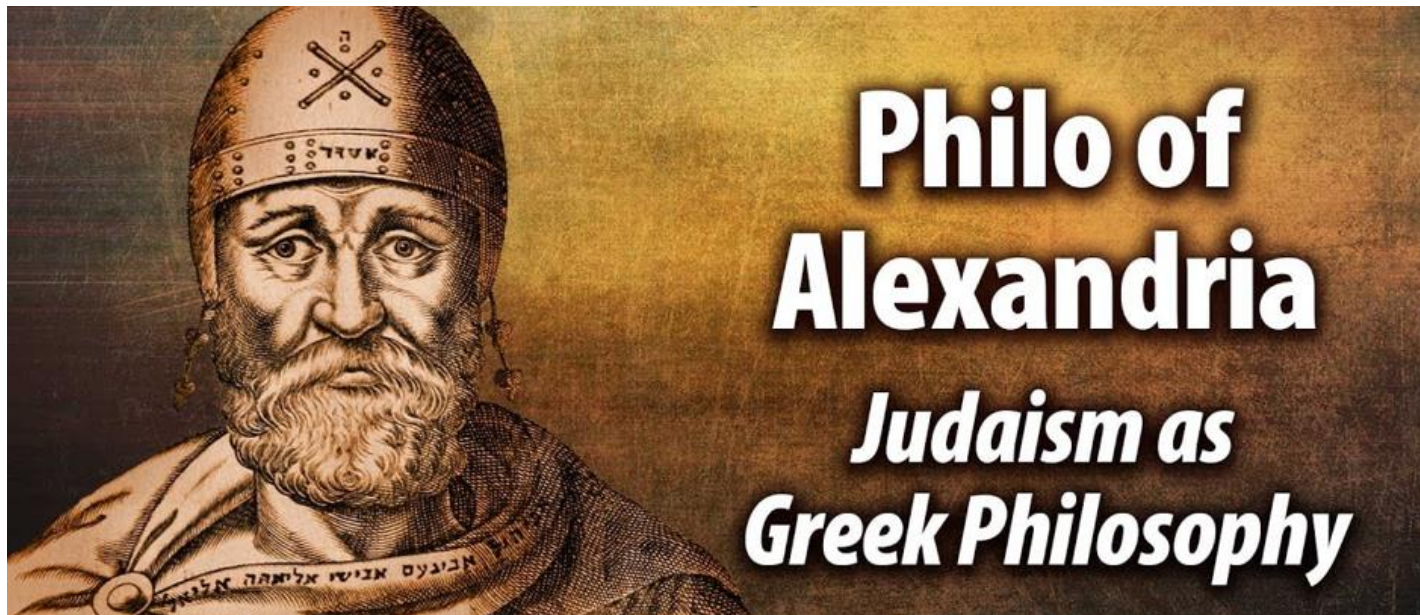
- A rational, ordered universe governed by divine reason (Logos).
- Reason, virtue, divine providence, and enduring suffering with dignity.
- Influence on Christian ethics and suffering.



4BC – 65AD

Philo of Alexandria and Hellenistic Judaism

- Philo's synthesis of Greek philosophy with the Hebrew Scriptures.
- The Logos as an intermediary between God and creation.



John: Logos

1 In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

14 The Logos became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

λόγος

logos / word

Paul: Stoic perspective

¹⁰ I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength. – Phil 4:11-13

Epicureans

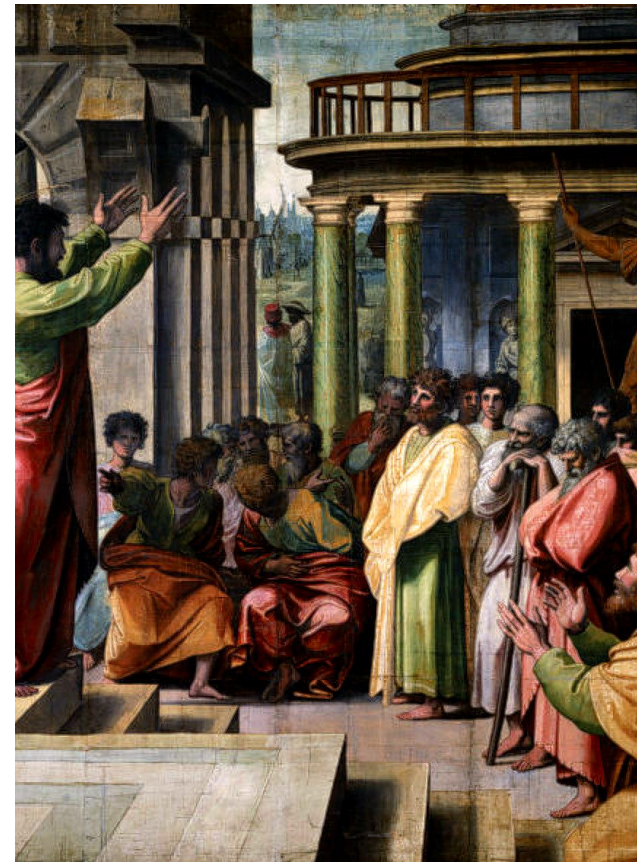
Epicurus
(341-270BC)

- Centered around morality
 - Value compassion, forgiveness, generosity, hospitality, and love
- Seek absence of mental distress and physical pain
 - Often results in hedonism



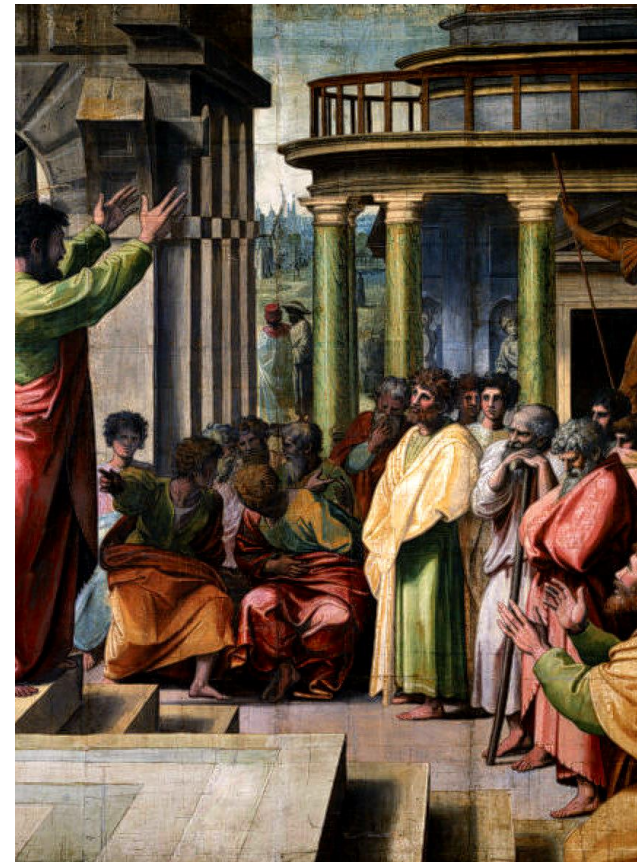
Paul in Athens

¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbler trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.”



Paul in Athens

They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” ²¹ (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)



Paul's warning

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”

²⁰ Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

- 1 Cor. 1:18-25

Paul's warning

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

- Colossians 2:8

Territory of the Five Patriarchs in 381 AD



Christian Apologetics and Greek Thought

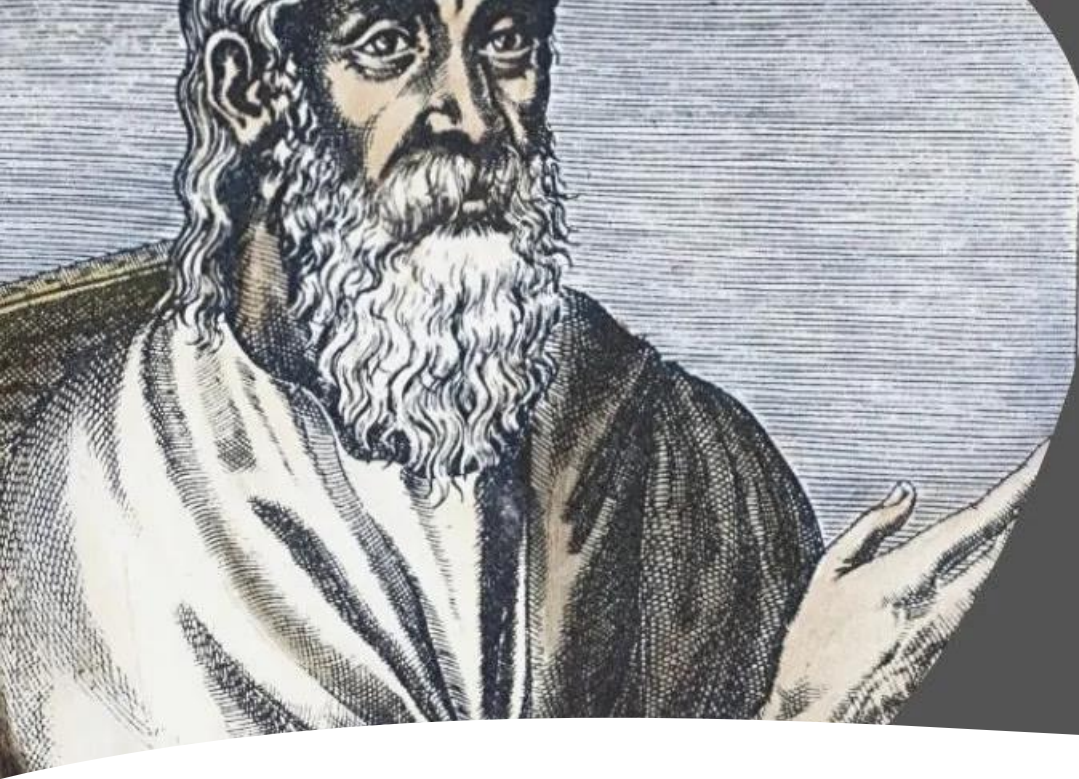
- Philosophy helped defend Christianity.





Justin Martyr and the Logos

- Greek thinkers had partial knowledge of God.
- The Logos spermatikos (seed of the Logos) in all human thought and reasoning.
- Christianity as the fulfillment of Greek philosophy.



CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

c. 150 – c. 215 AD

Apologist of the
Roman Empire

Clement of
Alexandria

- Saw Greek philosophy as preparatory for Christianity.
- Used Platonic ideas to explain nature of God and Christian ethics.

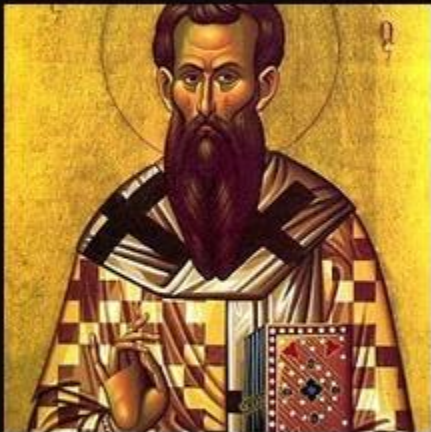
Origen's Allegorical Interpretation



- Synthesis of faith and reason
- Merged Greek thought of allegory with biblical exegesis.
 - Searching for deeper symbolic meanings
- Condemned as a heretic

Tertullian's Critique

- "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"
- Warning against over-reliance on philosophy.

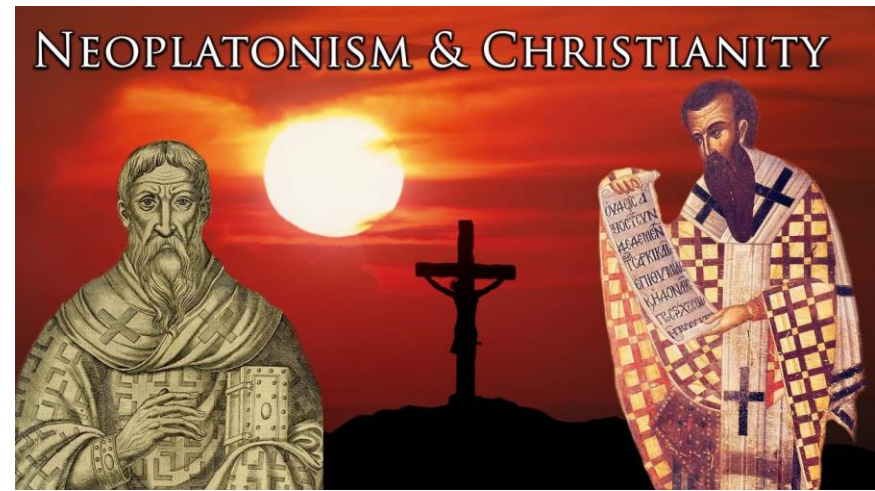


What has Athens to do with
Jerusalem.

~ Tertullian

Augustine of Hippo

AD 354-430



- Synthesized Neoplatonism and Christian theology.
 - Hierarchy of reality: God is the ultimate source of all being and goodness
 - Material world is lesser reflection
 - True knowledge comes from purifying the mind and turning toward eternal truths
- 'Faith seeking understanding.'

Greek Philosophy and Church Doctrine



- Role in defining theological concepts
 - Trinity
 - Plato: the One, mind, spirit: 3 divine substances
 - Christology, Omnipotent, etc.
 - Nicene Creed uses terms from Greek metaphysics to describe Christ's divine nature
- Influence on early councils.

Christian Classics

St. Thomas Aquinas

Summa Theologica



1225 - 1274

Volume IV

Medieval Scholasticism and Aristotle

- Thomas Aquinas and the use of reason in theology.
- Aristotelian logic shaping Christian doctrine.
- Scholasticism: Theological inquiry that balanced faith and reason

Modern Implications

- Philosophy's role in theology today.
- Faith and reason in contemporary Christian thought.

