



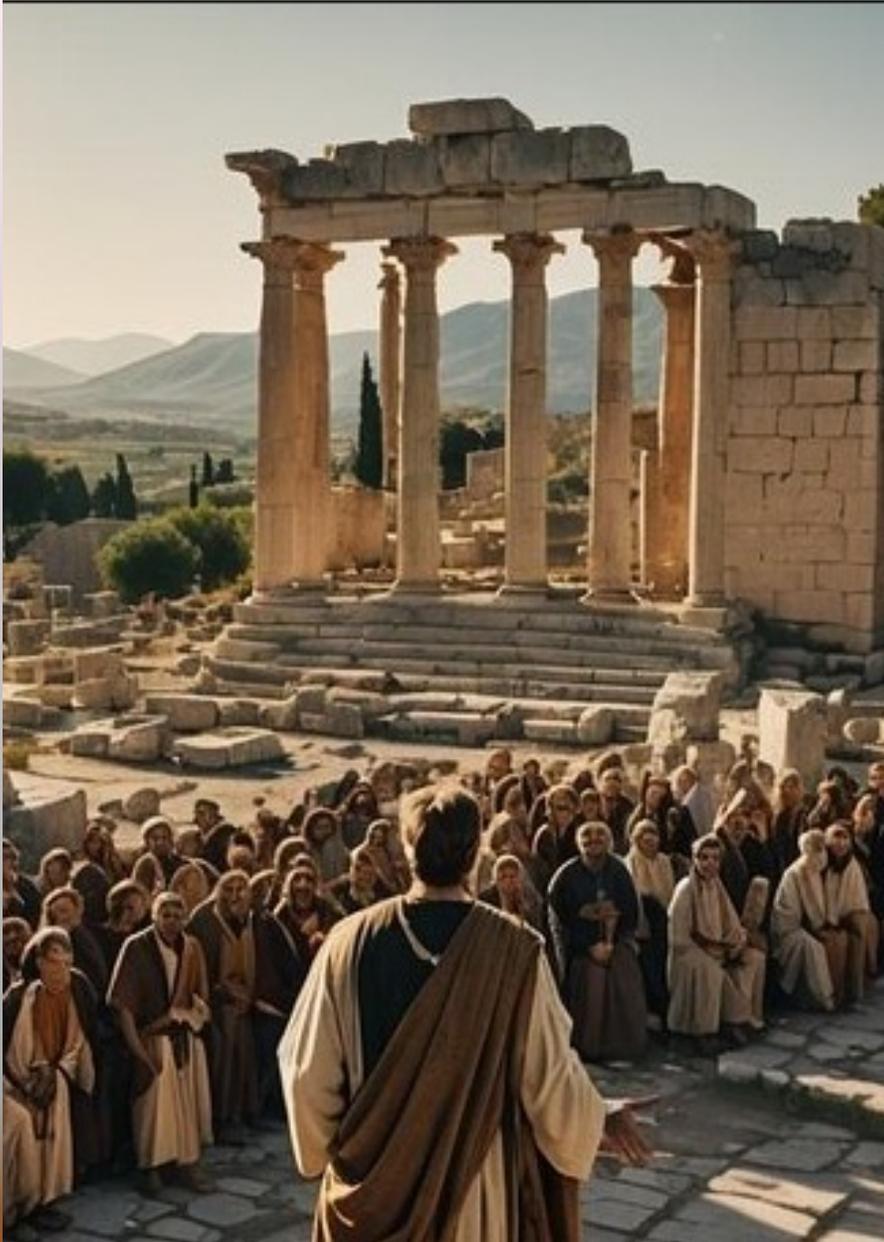


# ENGAGING A CULTURE FOR GOD ACTS 17 PAUL IN ATHENS

L'AMABLE BIBLE CHAPEL

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<http://lamablebiblechapel.com>



***Last week:*** the Gift of Choice

***This week:*** the example of Paul

## **Backdrop: Acts 17:1-4:**

When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. <sup>2</sup> As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. <sup>4</sup> Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. ***Now...on to Athens...***



# 1. AWARENESS

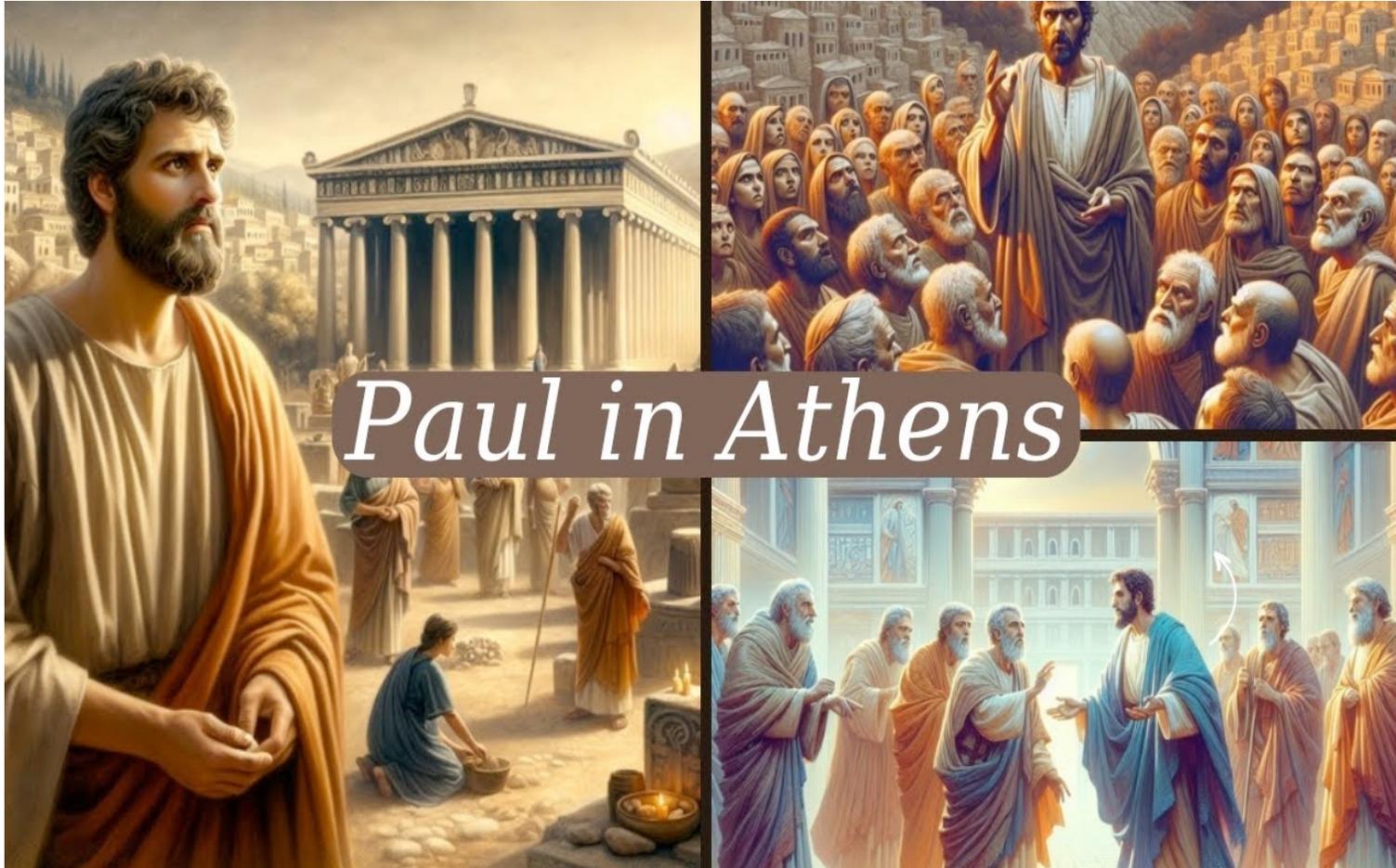
Text: Acts 17:13-34

...when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

<sup>14</sup> The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. <sup>15</sup> Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

## **In Athens**

<sup>16</sup> While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.



*Paul in Athens*

<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.



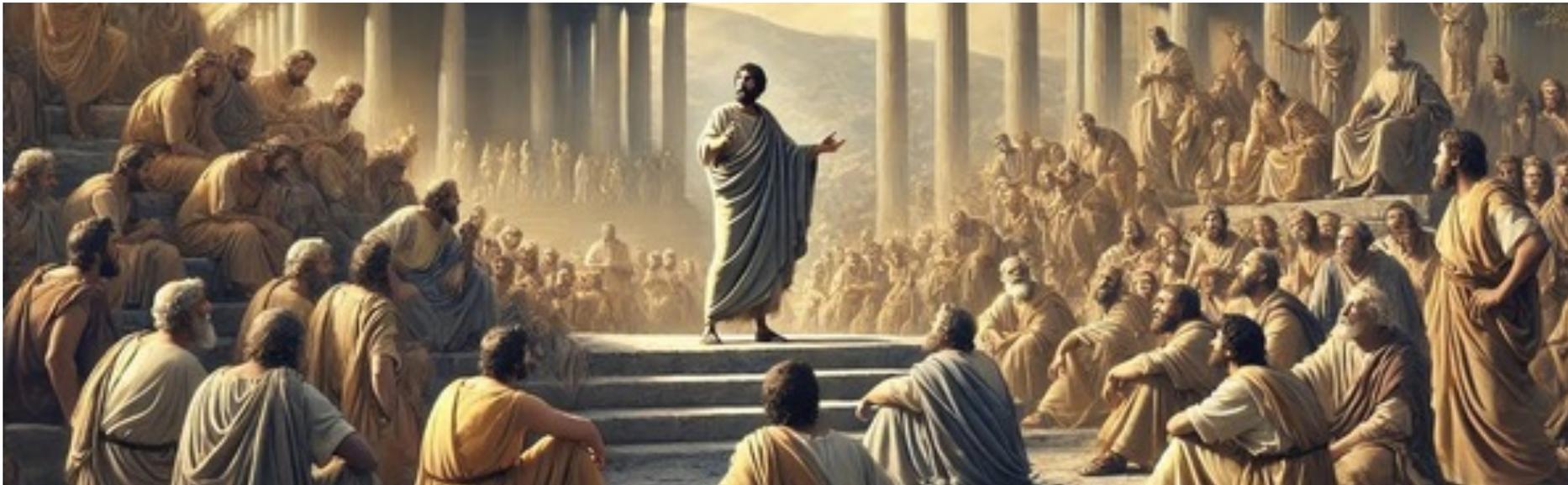
<sup>19</sup> Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? <sup>20</sup> You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” <sup>21</sup> (All the Athenians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



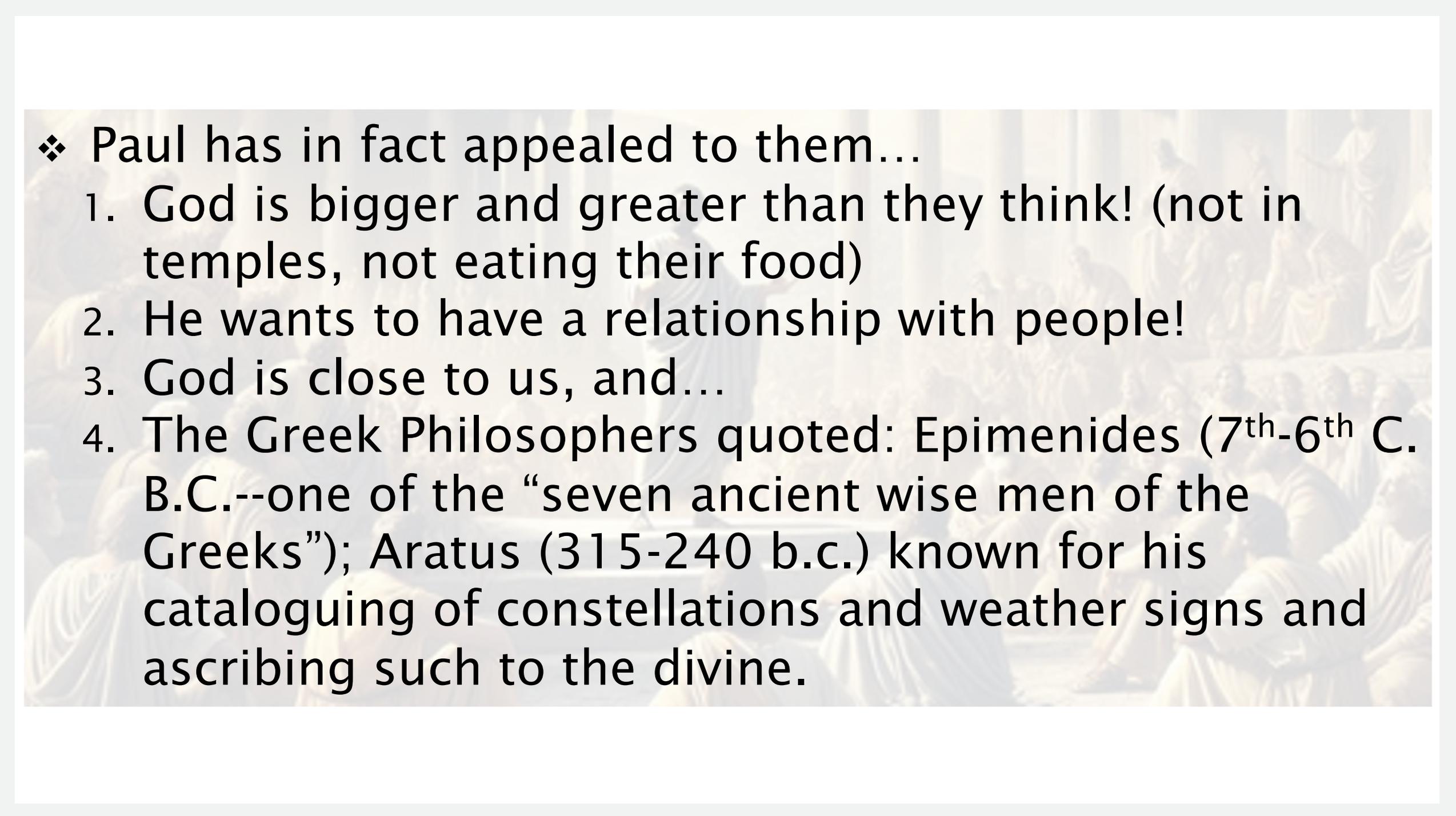


## **2. AFFIRMATION**

<sup>22</sup> Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.



<sup>24</sup> “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. <sup>25</sup> And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. <sup>26</sup> From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. <sup>27</sup> God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. <sup>28</sup> ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

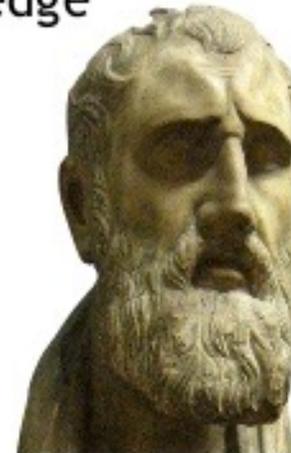
- 
- ❖ Paul has in fact appealed to them...
    1. God is bigger and greater than they think! (not in temples, not eating their food)
    2. He wants to have a relationship with people!
    3. God is close to us, and...
    4. The Greek Philosophers quoted: Epimenides (7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> C. B.C.--one of the “seven ancient wise men of the Greeks”); Aratus (315-240 b.c.) known for his cataloguing of constellations and weather signs and ascribing such to the divine.

Paul is  
reaching  
out to both  
groups,  
...a call to  
holiness  
and  
experience

## NEW PHILOSOPHY

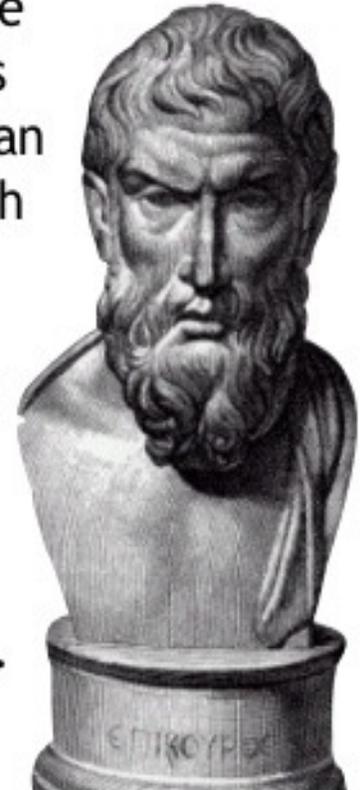
### STOICISM

- Founded by Zeno
- Stoic philosophers believe that humans should not **pursue** desires like power and wealth, because these are dangerous.
- The ultimate good is seeking knowledge and showing no emotion towards pleasure or pain.



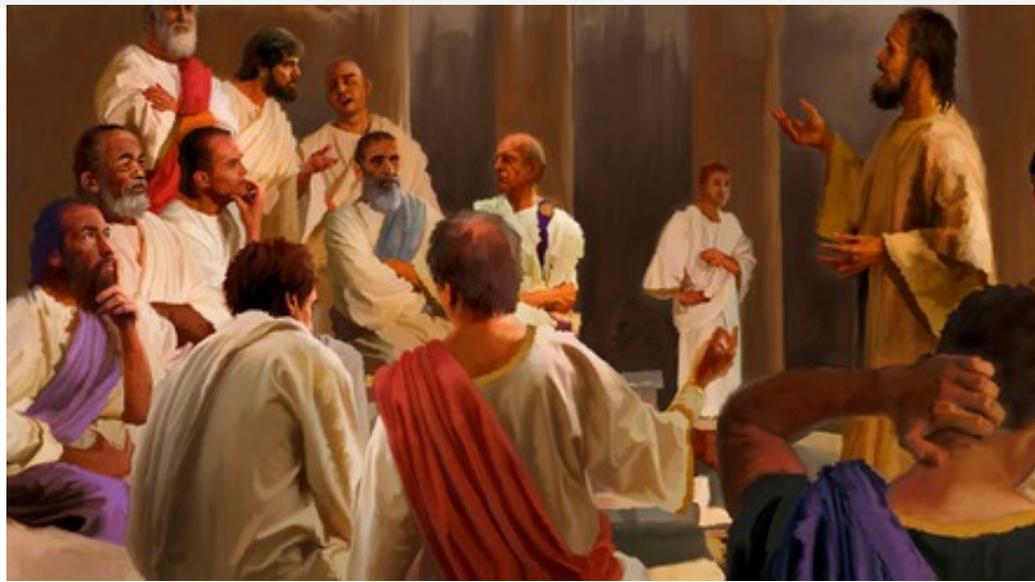
### EPICUREANISM

- Founded by Epicurus
- Epicurean philosophers believe that the only real things are those we can experience with our 5 senses.
- The ultimate good is seeking pleasure and achieving harmony of body and mind.





## **3. ADMONISHMENT**



<sup>29</sup> “Therefore, since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. <sup>30</sup> In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. <sup>31</sup> For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”



## 4. ASPIRATION

<sup>32</sup> When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” <sup>33</sup> At that, Paul left the Council. <sup>34</sup> Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.





- ✓ Awareness
- ✓ Affirmation
- ✓ Admonishment
- ✓ Aspiration

What comes next?

# 5. APPLICATION





## ✓ Awareness

What does our  
culture value?

✓ **Affirmation**



# DOWNTOWN BANCROFT, ONTARIO



✓ Admonishment

✓ **Aspiration**





## CONCLUSION

- ✓ Awareness
- ✓ Affirmation
- ✓ Admonishment
- ✓ Aspiration

An example and  
pattern for us today...



**Some samples of  
temples in China  
today...**

**Buddhist Pagodas  
in Dali (about 700  
years old)**



A constant stream of people leaving offerings



Buddhism  
continues to be  
a major  
religion in  
China



The Buddhist temple near Dali



This Christian mission in China (run by Koreans) used art as a vehicle to spread the Gospel



The art center would invite schools to learn art—and they would see Christian images throughout!



A Christian “Three Self” Church in our home city of Qingdao. People who attend have to be registered with the government



The “goddess of the sea” in Qingdao. Such huge statues to various deities were very common in Chinese cities



The memorial to missionary Eric Liddell, featured in “Chariots of Fire”, who died in a Japanese prison camp Feb. 21, 1945 – in Weixian, Shandong province



People cover manhole covers with pink paper for weddings, to prevent “evil spirits” from emerging



“Thousand Buddha Mountain” in Jinan was covered with all kinds of statues, big and small



The birthplace  
of Confucius,  
not far from  
our city of  
Qingdao



The map of the top of Mt. Tai - the most holy mountain in China. Here, we walked on "Heavenly Street".



People greeting  
the sunrise at the  
top of Mt. Tai.  
About 200  
people got up  
about 3:30 a.m.  
to get ready for  
the scene



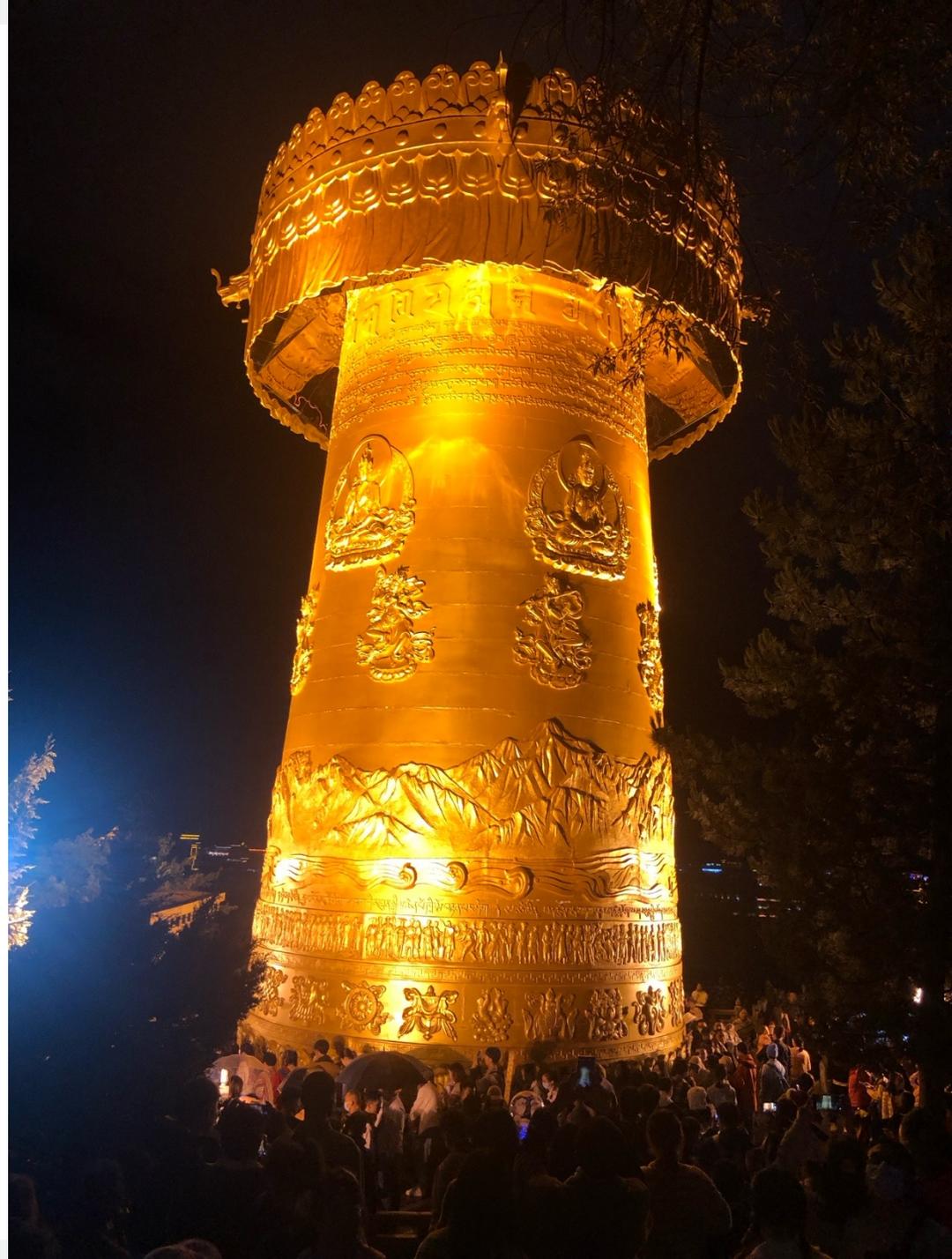
72 Emperors  
have climbed the  
6,500 steps to  
the Jade Emperor  
peak on Mt. Tai  
(elevation 5,069  
ft.)



It was common at certain phases of the moon to see people on street corners burning fake money to ancestors, and offering fruit



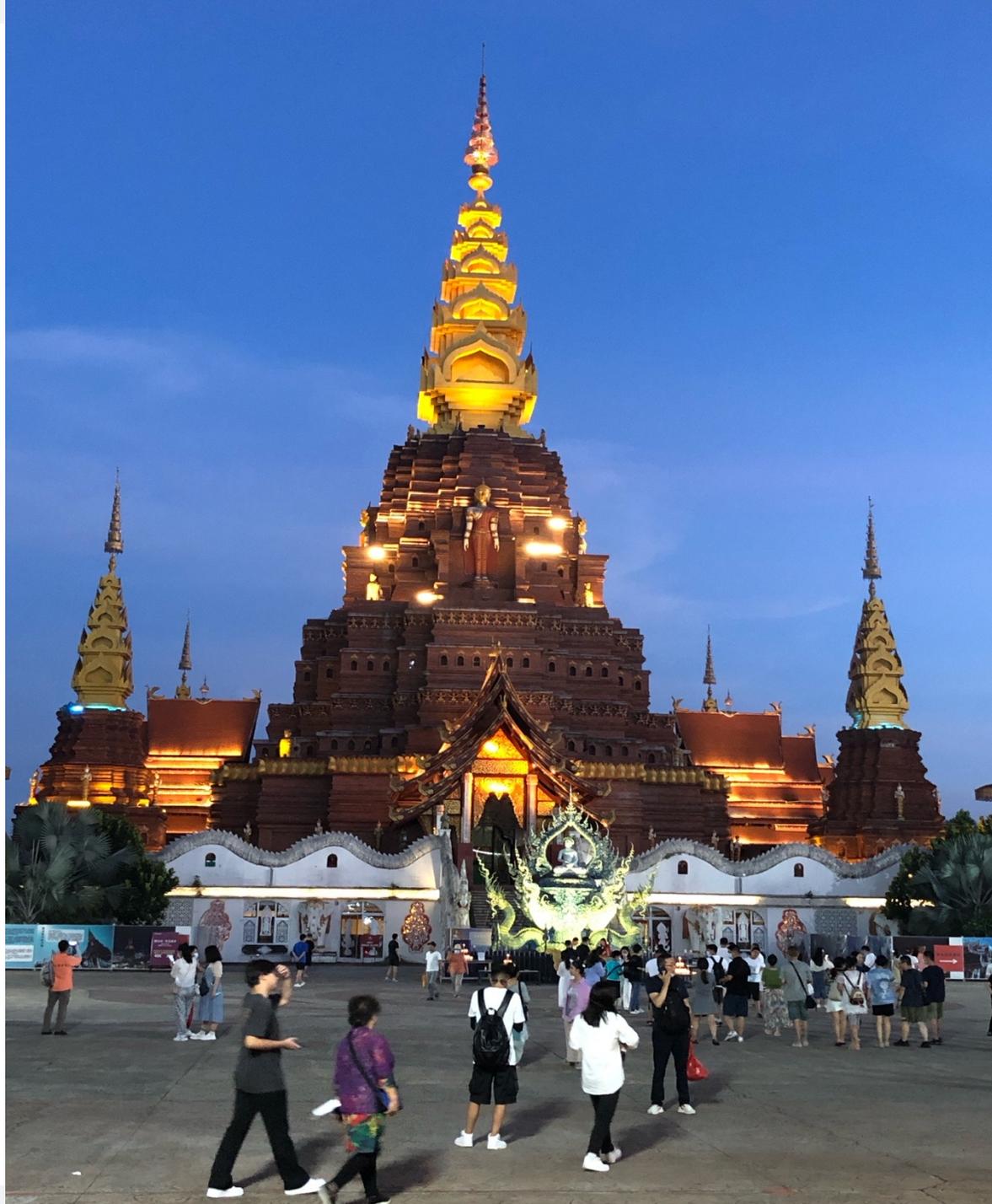
The “goddess of the mountains” in central Qingdao, not far from our apartment



A prayer wheel  
in Shangri-La,  
southern China



Near the Thai border  
Buddhism had distinctive features – this is in Xi Shuang Banna



This is also in  
Xi Shuang  
Banna, the very  
south of China



Buddhist monks in the south of China, at a temple near Bala Gezong, Yunnan Province. We saw monks throughout China



This is a  
Christian  
church in  
Qingdao,  
where we lived,  
sponsored and  
built by Korean  
Christians



A Daoist  
temple, also in  
Qingdao,  
where we lived.



Where I taught  
in Qingdao  
University,  
Confucius was  
honoured  
considerably,  
as it was his  
home province



One of the chapels Carol was leading in the International School in Korea



Back home at  
L'Amable Bible  
Chapel,  
worshipping  
Jesus!

Template from Slidesgo

Graphics from Slidesgo and  
Yahoo Images, as well as ours

Scriptures from NIV

Design and content: Ivan Franck  
- no written AI content

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