ENCOUNTER ON MARS HILL

The book of Acts records a remarkable encounter of Paul with the intelligentsia of Greece. He went to the Areopagus to share the gospel, and “around him gathered poets, artists, and philosophers—the scholars and sages of Athens.” (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 236.) Paul spoke to them of the Creator of heaven and earth, the brotherhood of all humanity, the futility of idolatry, the need to find the Unknown God, and the judgment to come (Acts 17:22–31). All listened attentively until Paul spoke of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. At that point some mocked, and others said, “‘We will hear you again on this matter’” (Acts 17:32, NKJV). Paul’s reasoning was not fruitless, because “some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them” (Acts 17:34).

Why did many of the luminaries of Athens mock Paul? The answer is that the apostle believed in the resurrection of the body, while the philosophers believed in the immortality of the soul. The Greek philosophers who mocked could not understand how anyone in his right mind would want to have a material body after death. While Paul’s worldview spoke of a longing for the redemption of the body from the relentless ravages of time and matter in a sinful world, the philosophers on Mars Hill longed for their immortal souls to escape the relentless cycle of time and space. Is it just possible that the Christian world has embraced the theology of Socrates and not of Jesus?

Read This Week's Passage:
Genesis 1
Read Genesis 1 from the translation of your choice. Write out Genesis 1:26–31. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.
Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/ phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/ phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Genesis 1. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

Where in society do you see the teaching today that the body is evil?

How do you react when you meditate on Christ’s incarnation into a human body?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead13-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

How does your faith determine your reaction to death?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead13-4
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What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Romans 8:19–24
Luke 24:36–43
Philippians 3:20, 21
John 1:14
John 2:19–21
1 Corinthians 15:42–49

What other parables come to mind in connection with Genesis 1?

Review your memorized verse from Genesis 1.
How does the biblical belief in the soul, body, and self impact your definition, motivation, and lifestyle of health?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?

Meditate on Genesis 1 again and look for where Jesus is.

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dead13-6
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this entire lesson’s study, what has resonated with you the most?

How can this now be applied in your life?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/dead13-7
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Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How has Greek philosophy influenced Christianity?

What evidences do we find in the creation story of Genesis 1 that time and matter are good?

How did sin affect the entirety of creation, including time and matter?

What doctrine of the Bible was the bone of contention between Paul and the philosophers of Mars Hill? Why? (See Acts 17:18, 32.)

How did the incarnation of Jesus reveal that the material body and time are not evil in themselves?

How is spiritualism playing an important role today in gathering the world for the final battle against God and His people?

How can the desires of sinful flesh be overcome in this life?

What serious theological implications flow from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul?

Socrates or Jesus?