

Classical Greece

sophists, moral relativism

Plato (430–348 BC)

Forms (or Ideas)

moral virtues are absolute, not relative!

immortal soul (reason) vs. body (irrational desires)

Aristotle (384–322 BC)

logic, observation

sense experience, objects are real; Forms don't exist

virtue = balance & moderation

Hellenistic Greece

Greek & Persian culture

Persian dualism (Zoroastrianism)

Ahura Mazda (good, creation, truth)

Ahriman (evil, destruction, deception)

Hellenistic philosophies

materialism vs. metaphysics: only the visible world exists!

Epicureanism (Epicurus, 341–271 BC)

absentee gods

pursue pleasure; avoid pain

Stoicism (Zeno of Citium, 333–262 BC)

fate rules everything

virtue = self-control

First-Century Rome

mystery religions

Eleusinian mysteries

Demeter & Persephone

reward in afterlife

Sol Invictus (the “Unconquered Sun”)

Natalis Invicti (“Birthday of the Unconquered”), 25 December

Discussion: How influential do you think these ideas were on the development of Christian doctrine and practice?