

APOLOGETICS

IN ONE LESSON

↑
almost

Ai1L.net

Lesson 4

A-Paul-agetics

Key Takeaways (review)

1

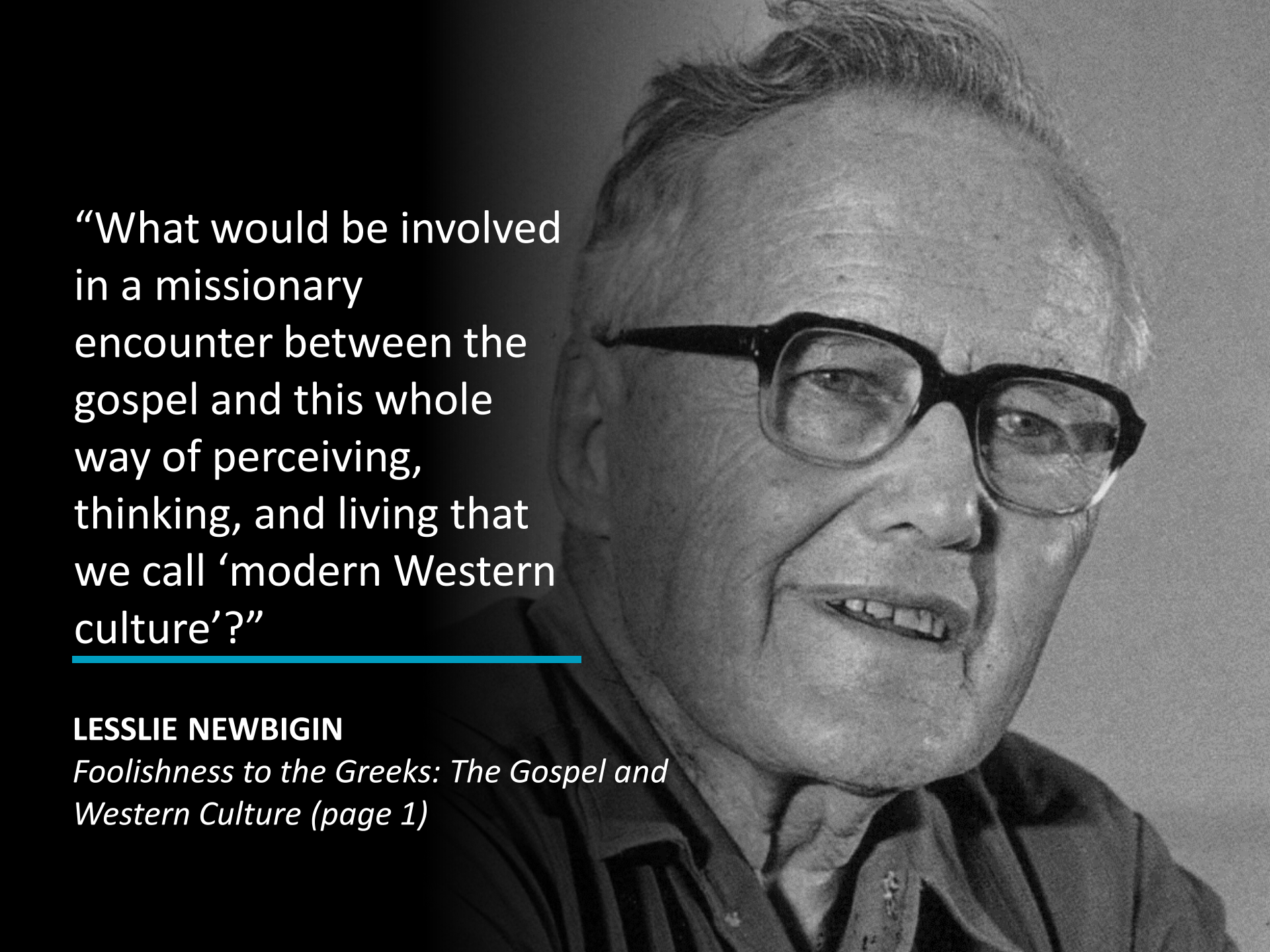
1 Peter 3:15 (“the Apologist’s verse”) emphasizes **character over case-making**

2

Representing God’s character matters as much as representing the facts

3

A good ambassador uses an **artful method** in addition to good facts

A black and white portrait of an older man with glasses, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark shirt. The background is a plain, light color.

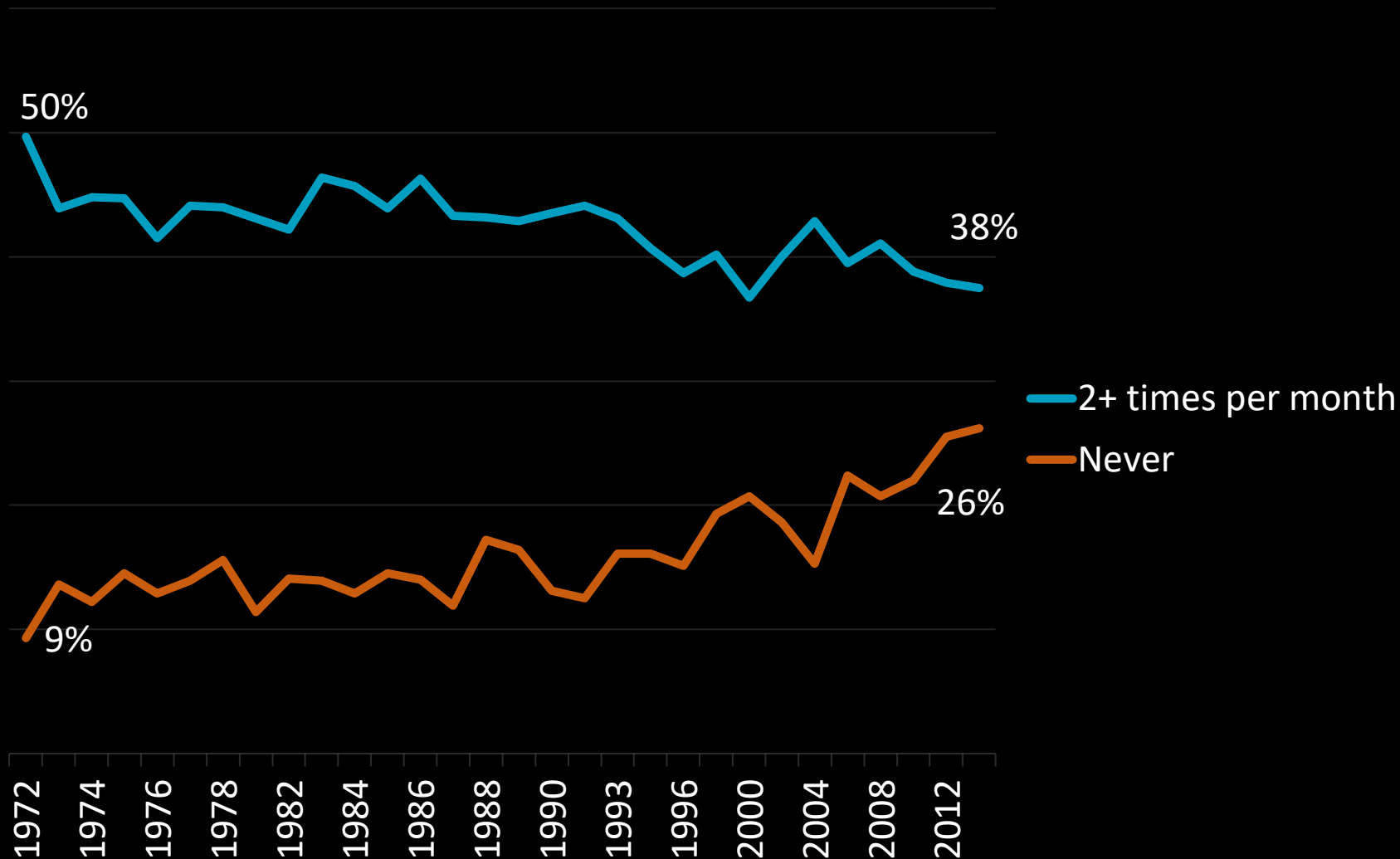
“What would be involved
in a missionary
encounter between the
gospel and this whole
way of perceiving,
thinking, and living that
we call ‘modern Western
culture’?”

LESSLIE NEWBIGIN

*Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and
Western Culture (page 1)*

Church Attendance

1972-2014 (General Social Surveys)



IDEA IN BRIEF

What?

Recognize and use ideas within the culture to spread the Gospel

Why?

So that we can begin to find aspects of our culture that we can use to spread the Gospel

How?

By considering how Paul used cultural ideas to promote the Gospel

1

In what ways did Paul act in a gracious to the Athenians?

“used to describe people of low class
who speak as though they have
intelligence”

JENNIFER MARIE CREAMER

*God as Creator in Acts 17:24: An Historical-
Exegetical Study, page 30*

“He was a **rag-bag collector** of scraps of learning.”

BRUCE WINTER

Introducing the Athenians to God: Paul's failed apologetic in Acts 17?

Themelios volume 31, issue 1, page 39

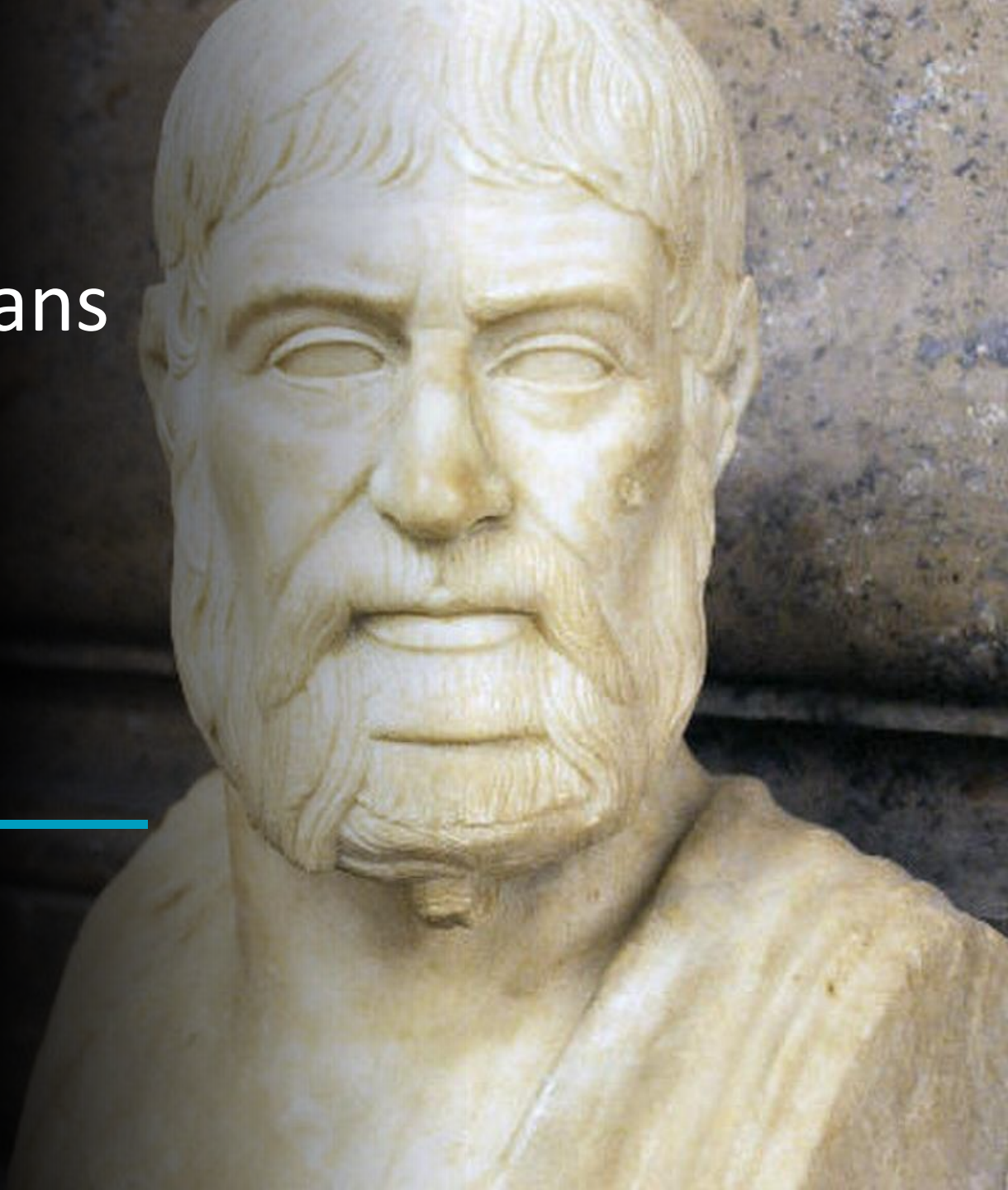
2

Describe Paul's argument he makes in 17:24-27. Why this is significant?

“...the Athenians
are far more
devoted to
religion than
other men”

PAUSANIAS

Description of Greece



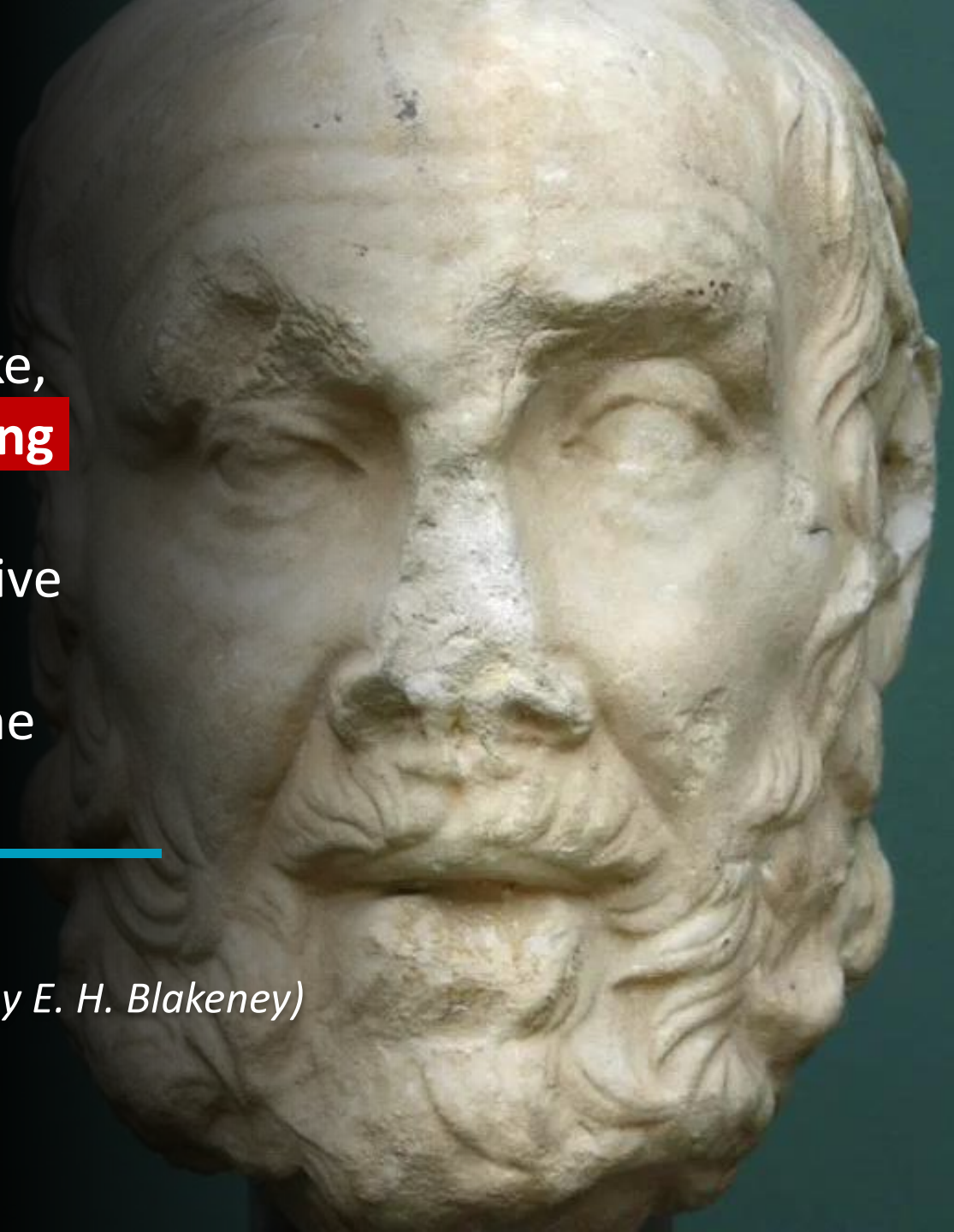
“If the Council were so persuaded, then the god or goddess would be admitted to the Parthenon. A dedicated **temple** **would be built** to the divinity, an annual **feast day endowed** and **included in the Athenians’ religious calendar.**”

BRUCE WINTER

Introducing the Athenians to God: Paul’s failed apologetic in Acts 17?

Themelios volume 31, issue 1, page 41

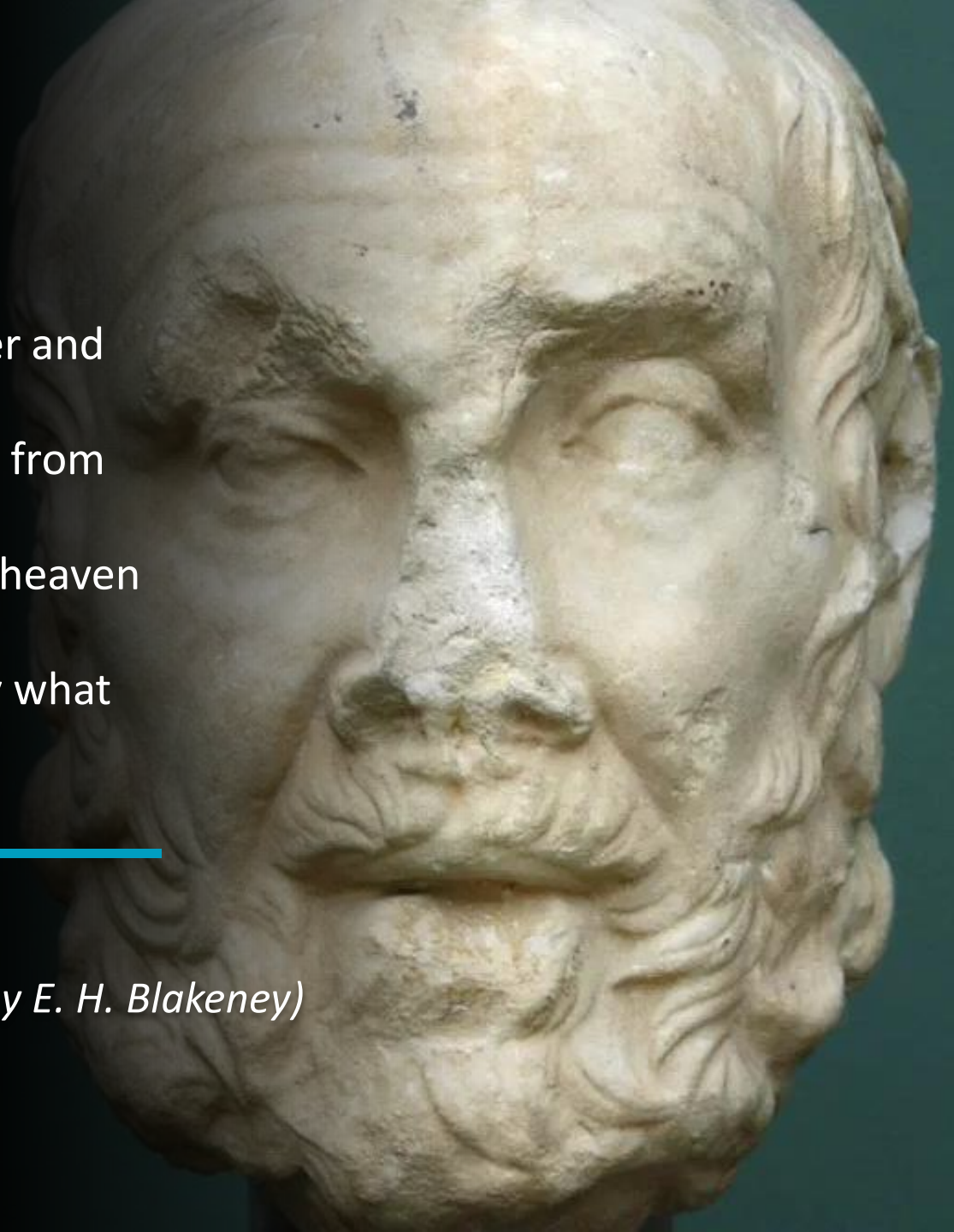
Athenians | Paul

A marble bust of Cleanthes of Assos, a Stoic philosopher. The sculpture shows a man with a full, curly beard and hair, and a serene expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

“Thee it is meet that
mortals should invoke,
For **we Thine offspring
are**, and sole of all
Created things that live
and move on earth
Receive from thee the
image of the One.”

CLEANTHES OF ASSOS

Hymn to Zeus (translated by E. H. Blakeney)



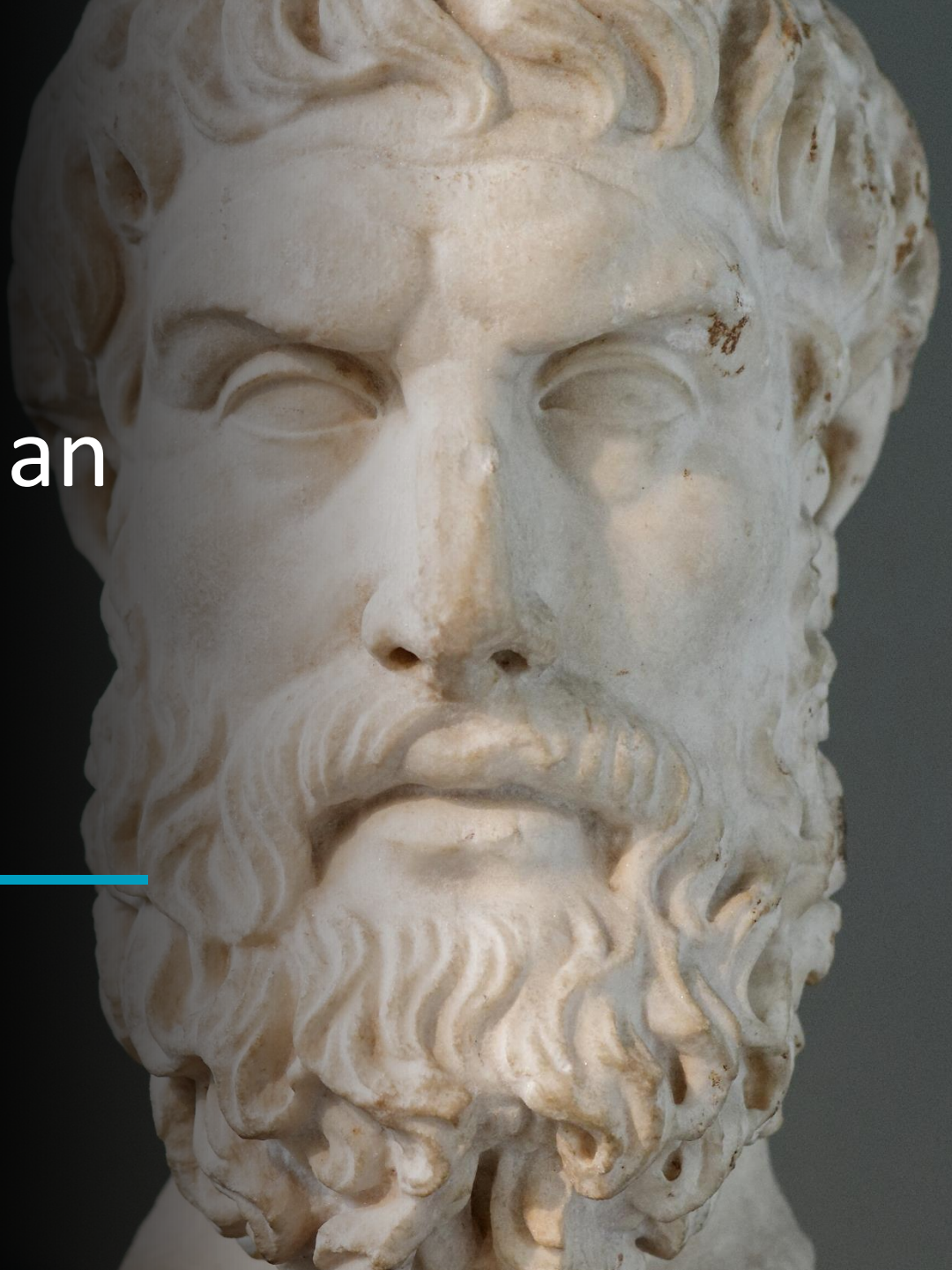
“How great Thou art,
The Lord supreme for ever and
for aye!
No work is wrought apart from
Thee, O God,
Or in the world, or in the heaven
above,
Or on the deep, save only what
is done
By sinners in their folly.”

CLEANTHES OF ASSOS

Hymn to Zeus (translated by E. H. Blakeney)

“God had no
need of human
resources”

PHILODEMUS
On Piety, fr 38



Balbus

God exists

World is governed by
them

Cares for the fortunes
of mankind

Paul

“made the world and everything in it...”
(17:24a)

“He Himself gives all men life and breath
and everything else” (17:25b)

“determined their appointed times and
the boundaries of their lands” (17:26)

3

List out ways in which Paul adjusted his approach for the Athenians.

1 Thess. 1:9

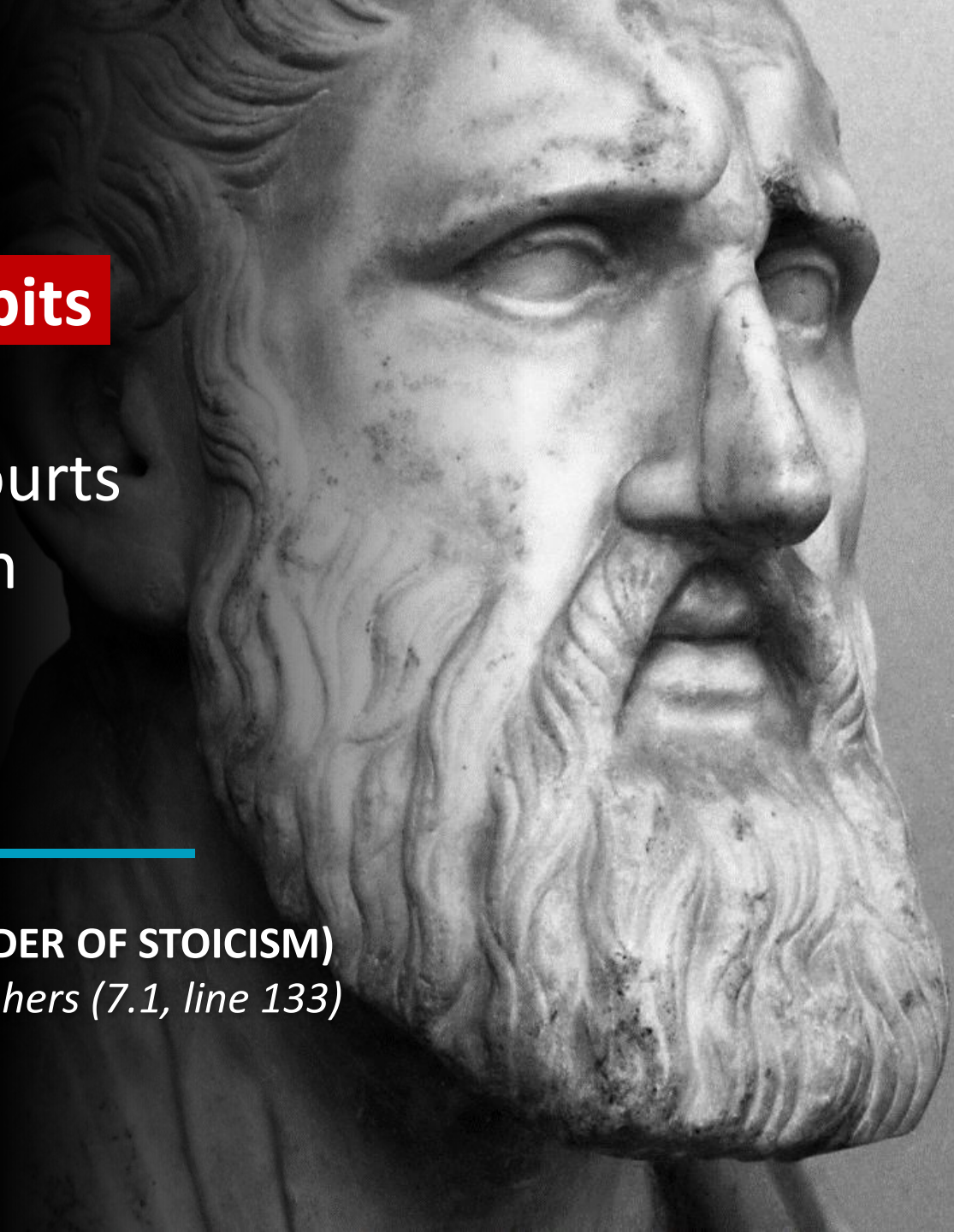
“First believe that God is living,
immortal and blessed”

Romans 1:23

1 Tim. 1:11

EPICURUS (IN A LETTER TO MENOECEUS)

Lives of Eminent Philosophers, 10.123

A black and white photograph of a marble bust of Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism. The bust is shown in profile, facing right. It features a full, curly beard and hair, and a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

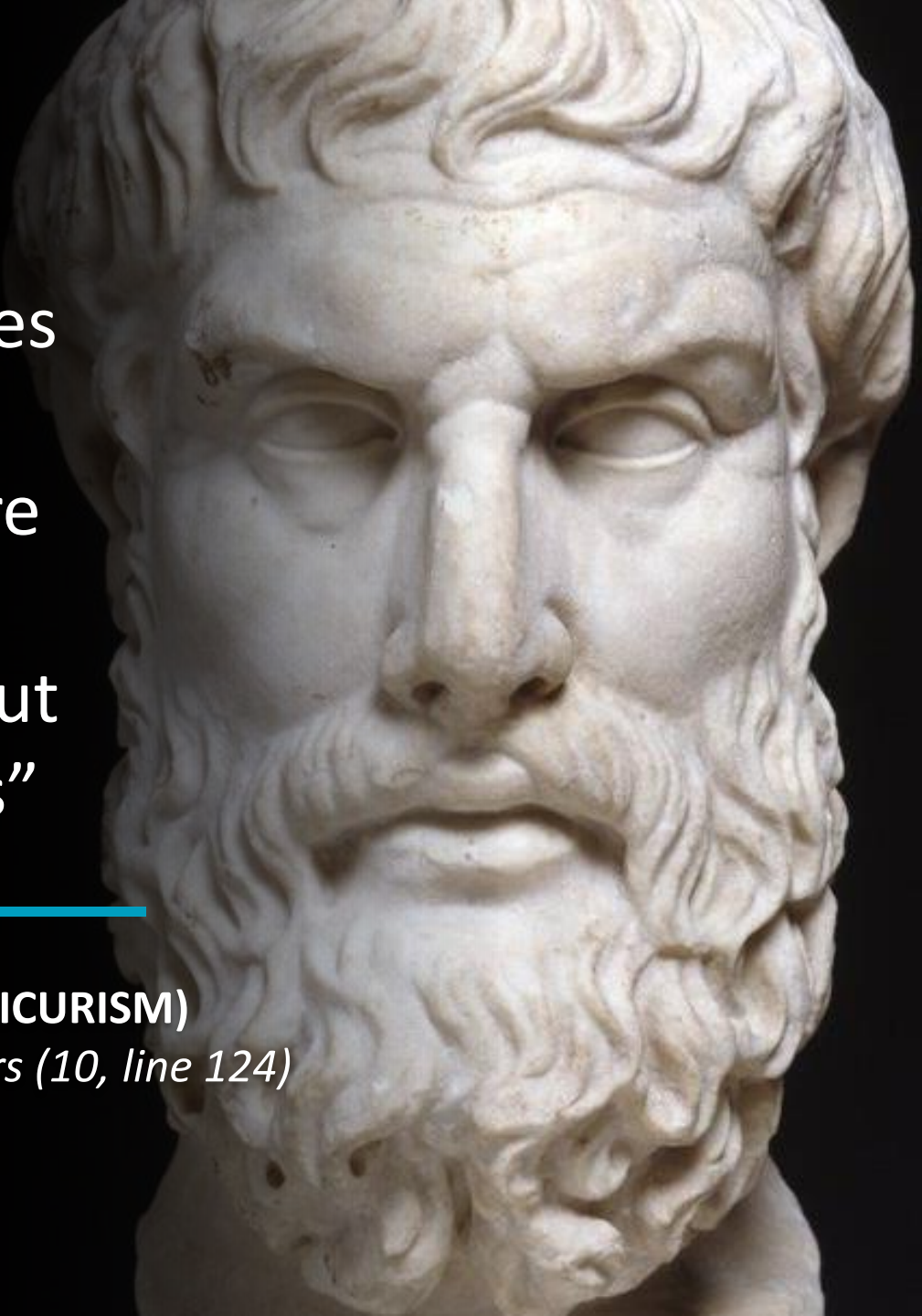
“line 200 prohibits
the building of
temples, law courts
and gymnasia in
cities.”

ZENO OF CITIUM (FOUNDER OF STOICISM)
Lives of Eminent Philosophers (7.1, line 133)

“For the utterances
of the multitude
about the gods are
not true
preconceptions but
false assumptions”

EPICURUS (FOUNDER OF EPICURISM)

Lives of Eminent Philosophers (10, line 124)



“People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which **they have themselves discovered** than by those which have come into the mind of others”

BLAISE PASCAL

Pensées



4

What is the argument that Paul uses against idolatry? Why would this argument be persuasive?

5

In what ways in which Paul showed courage?

“what good is it when you complain about racism to people who already agree? You are literally preaching to the choir.”

DARYL DAVIS



6

Want can we learn from the
response to Paul's message?

“Now when they heard about the resurrection from the dead, **some began to scoff**, but others said, “**We will hear you again** about this.” So Paul left the Areopagus.

But **some people joined him and believed.”**

ACTS 17:32-34

7

Was there anything else that stood out to you?

Key Takeaways

1

Remember that **you are a foreigner** spreading the Gospel in a foreign land (the United States)

2

Look for areas of agreement before looking for areas of disagreement

3

Build a case for the Gospel starting with the areas of agreement