

GREECE:

Paul tells a lot of people about the “unknown” God

If you could travel back in time nearly 2,000 years to visit Athens, Greece, you would discover a city that was already very old. This was a time when Paris and London were just villages occupied by the Romans, and no one was even thinking about starting Tokyo or New York.

The Romans were in charge back then, but Athens was still very important. The Greeks had so many good ideas about philosophy and law and art and science that the Romans were always trying to copy them.

When Paul the apostle visited Athens (take a look in the New Testament at Acts 17:15-34), he found a bustling city that attracted people from across the known world. They did business in the city and swapped around a lot of different ideas about life. The people of Athens always wanted to learn something new.

Paul had the best news of all. Jesus had come to earth and died on the cross and come back to life. Jesus did this so that people could be saved from their sins and could live for God.

The people of Athens were trying to find out who God is. They had lots of statues to different gods around the city. Paul even found a statue to “the unknown god.” So, every chance Paul had, he went around the city telling people about God. He’d even walk down into the marketplace where people were shopping and doing their business and talk to them about God.

After a while, some important leaders in the city heard about Paul and asked him to talk with them. Paul told them about God. Thanks to Paul’s message, some of these people believed in Jesus.

Today, if you visit Athens, you can still see some of the old buildings that were standing when Paul visited. He preached to the city leaders on the Areopagus, or Mars Hill, near the Acropolis, where the famous Parthenon pillars are still standing.

A lot of people around the world saw some of those buildings on TV in 2004 when the Olympics were held in Athens. And a lot of people also got to hear about Jesus during the Olympics.

The Assemblies of God was among many church groups that sent people to the Olympics to tell visitors from around the world about Jesus. Young people were part of this ministry. They went through the city handing out

GreeceOnline

Check out these sites about Greece on the Web.

- [Http://carlos.Emory.edu/Odyssey/](http://carlos.Emory.edu/Odyssey/)
Emory University’s Michael C. Carlos Museum sponsors “Odyssey Online,” an interactive site with all kinds of cool information about the ancient world. Click on the “Greece” button on the opening page.
- [Http://www.CIA.Gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gr.html](http://www.CIA.Gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gr.html)
The CIA isn’t just about spies. The agency sponsors a Web site with information about countries around the world.
- [Http://www.Nationalgeographic.com/kids/](http://www.Nationalgeographic.com/kids/)
Try finding some stuff National Geographic has written about Greece.
- If you want to know more about the 2004 Athens Olympics, visit <http://www.Athens2004.com/>.
- [Http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/greek/quickfix/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/greek/quickfix/)
Here are some simple things you can say in modern Greek. Click on the audio icon to hear how these phrases are pronounced.

Bible literature, doing skits and drama, giving water to thirsty tourists and looking for ways to show people how much God loves them.

You have friends at school and in your neighborhood who need to hear that God loves them and that He sent Jesus to show people His love. Maybe you have people in your family who need to hear that. Just like Paul, you can tell them the good news.

— Scott Harrup

FAST FACTS

- Athens developed a form of democracy about 2,300 years before the United States.
- Alexander the Great was only 20 when he became king of Macedon in 336 B.C. By the time he died in 323 B.C., he had conquered all of Greece and extended his empire as far as India.
- Modern Greece is bordered by Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey. Its total land area is about the size of Alabama. Greece includes about 2,000 islands.
- About 10.7 million people live in Greece. Greeks celebrate their Independence Day on March 25. Modern Greece was formed in 1821.
- The Greek flag is composed of nine equal horizontal stripes of blue and white. A blue square in the top left corner bears a white cross, symbol of the Greek Orthodox church.



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