

EPICURUS (d. 270 bc)

Epicurus' Philosophy

1. Nature is totally mechanistic.
 - a. Earthquakes and lightning can be explained entirely in atomic terms and are not due to the will of the gods.
2. Nature is not purposeful. Any apparent purposefulness is the result of a process of natural selection.
3. The soul does not survive after death.
4. There is no punishment in the afterlife.
5. The goal of human life is happiness, that is, the absence of physical pain and mental disturbance.
6. Fear of death and punishment is the primary cause of anxiety among human beings. That anxiety causes extreme and irrational desires.
7. The elimination of that fear would leave people free to pursue the pleasures, both physical and mental, to which they are naturally drawn.
8. The gods do not concern themselves about human beings and their behavior.
9. We must banish the fear of the gods.

Biblical Response

Is 22:13 13 ...Behold, joy and gladness, killing oxen and slaughtering sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

Ac 17:18 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with [Paul]. And some said, What does this babblers wish to say? Others said, He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

Ac 17:31-32 31 ...Because [God] has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed. And of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. 32 Now when [the philosophers] heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, We will hear you [Paul] again about this.

1 Co 15:32 32 What do I [Paul] gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

Bibliography

Konstan, David, “Epicurus”, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/epicurus/>.

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