

# Epicurean Similarities With Early Christianity

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On Epicurus being a *herald*:

“Epicurus is occasionally described as as a saviour (*sōtér*) or messenger (*kéryx*), terms which are also used by Epicureans themselves and are reminiscent of Old Testament expressions. Perhaps such a choice of words was intended as a kind of ‘competitive offer’ to the blossoming Christianity.” (*The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* 53)

“Diogenes employs similar language to describe Epicurus to his fellow Epicureans in Rhodes, calling him ‘the herald who saved you’ (NF 7 III.12f [see Smith (1971) 365-71]) = fr. 73 Casanova [= fr. 72.III.12-14 Smith]). The conception of Epicurus as a savior is of course not unique to Diogenes; we find it in Pompeia Plotina’s letter to the Epicureans of Athens, and elsewhere among Epicureans both Greek and Roman. But the term *kēryx* is neither common nor orthodox. Epicurus had, it seems, used the verb *Kῆρῦν* in his enthusiastic description of friendship ‘dancing about all of the inhabited world, heralding the call to us all: Awake to proclaim blessedness!’ Diogenes speaks of ‘salvation’ when he states his motives for displaying on the wall of his stoa the gospel of Epicurean philosophy. The philosophy as a soter is not a commonplace in the philosophical literature of the second century. And Diogenes’ description of Epicurus as a herald (*kēryx*) is even less common. Both terms, ‘savior’ and ‘herald,’ remind us rather of the language of the New Testament. The language of I Timothy 2.7 combines the terms ‘herald’ and ‘apostle,’ and ‘savior’ is the word for Christ in II Timothy 1.10. The *kērygma* of the New Testament is of course the coming of Christ as the Messiah and savior.” (Clay, *Paradosis and Survival* 243-244)

"For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all--this was attested at the right time. For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." (1 *Timothy* 2:5-7)

"This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has not been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gossell was appointed a herald and an apostle and la teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do." (2 *Timothy* 1:9-12)

"For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of the deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment; and if he did not spare the ancient world, even though he saved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood on a world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:4-5)