

# Pros and Cons Of Considering Epicurean Philosophy To Be A "Religion"

Post by "Cassius" of March 23, 2024 at 6:11 AM

I think Epicurus would completely disagree with contentions that he did not have good evidence or reasoning to support his positions on the gods. My reading is that he was as confident on the basics of this subject as he was on atoms, which we also cannot perceive directly either, but about which we can make confident deductions based on things that we do perceive.

I don't know that I have any significant additional thoughts to add to comments such as those of Tau Phi that he doesn't find Epicurean theology valuable other than to emphasize Don's comments: Regardless of what some of us may think ourselves, Epicurus and the leading Epicureans found it valuable. Given that they clearly thought so, the theology is definitely an important part of the philosophy that someone studying the subject needs to know about if they want to understand Epicurus' conclusions before forming their own. "Epicurean philosophy without the theology" is not fully Epicurean philosophy.

To me, I think Epicurus saw this theology as essential for at least two major reasons beyond those discussed already in the thread above:

1 - As inoculation against the idea that humans are alone in the universe, and that we therefore occupy some kind of special and supernatural focus of existence. For most ordinary people who think that we are alone in the universe, that's a prescription for a slippery slide toward all sorts of mysticism.

2 - As important for understanding that while "pleasure is pleasure" from a conceptual point of view, there are important questions to be answered as to *which* pleasures to pursue in life. Contemplation of the nature of a truly blessed existence - one which even though "godlike" must act to sustain itself - is similar to Epicurus' views of reverence for men wiser than ourselves. It's an important aspect of our own drive to use our lives in the **most** pleasurable way, and not to settle for less than what we are capable of obtaining.