

Sunday November 9, 2025 - Zoom Discussion 12:30 PM EST - Epicurus on Good And Evil

Post by “Cassius” of November 7, 2025 at 1:42 PM

Going along with the topic that has been central to the last several weeks of podcasts, and which will be central to Episode 306 and 307 which will be released soon, let's look closely this week at Epicurus' view of good and evil, especially the statement in the letter to Menoecus:

Quote

[129]... Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided.[130] Yet by a scale of comparison and by the consideration of advantages and disadvantages we must form our judgment on all these matters. For the good on certain occasions we treat as bad, and conversely the bad as good.

The contention that good and evil are not absolute, and that sometimes the same thing can be bad and at other times good, is very important in contrasting how Epicurus thinks with the views of most other thinkers.

A related question derives from the view of the Stoics and others that ONLY virtue is good and that there are really no other true goods but only those things that we might "prefer" or not.

A lot of this involves the question of the Stoics and others wanting to take the position that the wise man can be completely happy, and holding that the wise man through virtue has no part of evil. Let's discuss too how Epicurus can hold that the wise man can always be happy even though he experiences at times pain, which is evil.

We've been talking a lot about these issues in the podcasts so let's take the time this Sunday to get some participant feedback on these issues.