

"You will not taste death: Jesus and Epicureanism" (Gospel of Thomas Thread)

Post by "mlinssen" of February 6, 2026 at 11:15 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Ok so that's a big one. So there is no eternal soul?

29. IS said if indeed the Flesh has come to be because of Spirit, a wonder is <the flesh>; if indeed Spirit However because of the Body, a wonder [of wonder] is <the Body>. Rather, I myself wonder this one: Ho[w] did [this] great richness dwell in this poverty?

87. he said, viz. IS: a Miserable one [is] the Body which <is> hanging of a Body, and a M[i]serable is the Soul which <is> hanging of these ones both [to]gether

112. IS said: woe to the Flesh, this one who is hanging of the Soul! woe to the Soul, this one who is hanging of the Flesh!

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from mlinssen](#)

Anti-Judaism is a great distraction in Thomas.

Without being graphic, what's the general basis of this criticism. We know that Diogenes of Oinoanda is critical as well based on what appears to be general ethics, but what's the general basis of this criticism?

I'm unsure whether you are referring to my claim that it is a distraction, or whether it concerns my label of anti-Judaism. Please see my previous comment to Eukadistes regarding the rejection of religious customs: if we presume that religion to be Judaism (which I think is certainly fair to do), then these are the basic anti-Judaisms in Thomas (Logia 6, 14, 104). To those, he adds:

27. in case you do not Fast to the World, you will not fall onto the kingdom; in case you do not make the Sabbath into Father's Day (sAB'BATH), you will not behold the father

43. they said to him, viz. his Disciples: who thou? thou say these ones to us. in these: I say them to you, and you do not understand who myself <is>. Rather, you yourselves came to be in the manner of the/those Judeans: they love the tree, they hate his Fruit; and they love the Fruit, they hate the tree

52. his Disciples said to him: twenty four Prophets spoke in Israel, and they all spoke in thee. he said to them: you dismissed him who is alive within your presence, and you spoke concerning them who are dead

53. his Disciples said to him: is the circumcision Useful Or no? he said to them: were he Useful, their father would beget them from their mother circumcised. Rather, the true circumcision in Spirit found all usefulness

85. IS said: Adam has come to be from a great Power, with a gre[at] richness, and he did not come to be [he is w]orthy of you. Had they been Worthy Indeed he [would have taken taste] not of the death

88. IS said: the Messengers <are> coming toward you with the Prophets, and they will give to you them who you have; and yourselves likewise you give them from your hand to them and you say it to you: what day, <on> which they are coming, and they take him who is theirs

(In Coptic there ony are pointers to masculine or feminine nouns. The word 'it' doesn't exist, there is no neuter class. He-who can be taken to translate to that-which but wholly depends on interpretation when the referent itself is not present. I default to he-who)

102. IS said[: w]oe to them, the Pharisees! they rese[mble a] dog who sleeps upon the manger of [some] oxen: he Neither eats Nor [permits] the oxen to eat

(This is a perfect example of an anti-Judaism that *purely* is a distraction. What lesson possibly is to learn from this?!)

[Quote from Cassius](#)

So are the deities of Thomas the creators of the universe? Are they active in human affairs at all?

There are none at all. Here are the two logia that mention 'god':

30. IS said: the place <where> there are three gods, some gods are therein; the place <where> there are two Or one; I myself am existing with him

100. they showed IS a gold, and said to him: they who <are> counting to Caesar demand of us the taxes. he said to them: give those of Caesar to Caesar, give those of the god to the god, and he who mine is you give him to m

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Most of that sounds parallel but the references to "outside" and "inside" seem a little unclear (?)

The kingdom is of your inside, and of your eye - that last word is a homonym and could be interpreted to mean 'outside', but that doesn't square with the outright (hah!) rejection of outside:

40. IS said a vine of grape, they planted her **within the outside part of the father**, and she <is> not made strong - they will tear her out at her root and she is lost

64. ... the slaveowner# said to his slave: **go to the outside part, to the paths ...**

89. IS said: **because of what do you wash the outside part of the Cup**, do you not Perceive: he who has created the inside part, he <is> also he who has created the outside part

99. the Disciples said to him: **thy brothers with thy mother <are> standing to their feet on the outside part**. he said to them: they of these places who do the desire of my father; these ones are my brothers with my mother; themselves will go inward to the kingdom of my father

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from mlinssen](#)

I find the Epictetus idea of only caring for that which is in your control particularly strong in Thomas. Let's be honest, all ideas about any cosmogony are mere opinions.

As for that last part I would say that Epicurus would strongly disagree, so this would be a major point of difference.

That "all ideas about any cosmogony are mere opinions" was my personal note, please ignore - apologies

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Yes that sounds highly incompatible, and indicates something much more "dark" than I would say Epicurus would approve of. But to understand that would require more definition of whatever positive side Thomas was promoting, and I am not clear on his positive teaching at this point.

To be honest, Thomas is not teaching anything "positive". He is critical, fierce, sarcastic, biting, rejects pretty much everything there is to reject. Yeah, "love your brother" is one, but then who's that? Nope, Thomas most certainly is very dark, yes

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from mlinssen](#)

A last one: Thomas shows us how to become Son of Man, Child of the Human (106) - it is the closest to the father that we will ever come. Free of our 'garments', free from the yoke of Ego and Self, free from that hobble that limited our movement (23). Free from shame and fear. Free from our slaveowner the Ego. No rules, no plans, no paths. No worries, no virtues, no higher goals

This sounds like it's going in an eastern "nihilist" / ascetic direction that I'd say Epicurus would strongly disapprove of, because Epicurus is clearly promoting something that he believes qualifies as "happiness." What did Thomas promote?

Anti-everything, pretty much. It's funny but at this very point of writing this, this is slowly sinking in - and it's really not so very funny at all. I'll have to come back to this later on