

Avowed Enemies of Epicurus: Paul / Saul of Tarsus

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And listing one more point of reference, there is [the Nietzsche material collected here:](#)

One of the inflection points of world history which researchers into Epicurus will frequently encounter is the work of Paul of Tarsus. Norman DeWitt devoted a book to the subject ([St. Paul and Epicurus](#)), in which he explores the many references in Pauline letters which appear to be direct attacks on Epicurean philosophy.

It is also well known that Friedrich Nietzsche, a frequent admirer of Epicurus, was as much (or more) an enemy of Paul of Tarsus than of Jesus of Nazareth. In his last book, “[AntiChrist](#),” Nietzsche explains this in detail. He directs blast after blast against Paul, specifically accusing him of perverting the progress toward human happiness that had been made under Epicurus:

But it [Roman civilization] was not strong enough to stand up against the corruptest of all forms of corruption—against Christians... These stealthy worms, which under the cover of night, mist and duplicity, crept upon every individual, sucking him dry of all earnest interest in real things, of all instinct for reality—this cowardly, effeminate and sugar-coated gang gradually alienated all “souls”, step by step, from that colossal edifice, turning against it all the meritorious, manly and noble natures that had found in the cause of Rome their own cause, their own serious purpose, their own pride. The sneakishness of hypocrisy, the secrecy of the conventicle, concepts as black as hell, such as the sacrifice of the innocent, the unio mystica in the drinking of blood, above all, the slowly rekindled fire of revenge, of Chandala revenge—all that sort of thing became master of Rome: the same kind of religion which, in a pre-existent form, Epicurus had combatted. One has but to read Lucretius to know what Epicurus made war upon—not paganism, but “Christianity”, which is to say, the corruption of souls by means of the concepts of guilt, punishment and immortality.—He combatted the subterranean cults, the whole of latent Christianity—to deny immortality was already a form of genuine salvation.—Epicurus had triumphed, and every respectable intellect in Rome was Epicurean—when Paul appeared... Paul, the Chandala hatred of Rome, of “the world”, in the flesh and inspired by genius—the Jew, the eternal Jew par excellence... What he saw was how, with the aid of the small sectarian Christian movement that stood apart from Judaism, a “world conflagration” might be kindled; how, with the symbol of “God on the cross”, all secret seditions, all the fruits of anarchistic intrigues in the empire, might be amalgamated into one immense power. “Salvation is of the Jews.”—Christianity is the formula for exceeding and summing up the subterranean cults of all varieties, that of Osiris, that of the GreatMother, that of Mithras, for instance: in his discernment of this fact the genius of Paul showed itself. His instinct was here so sure that, with reckless violence to the truth, he put the ideas which lent fascination to every sort of Chandala religion into the mouth of the “Saviour” as his own inventions, and not only into the mouth—he made out of him something that even a priest of Mithras could understand... This was his revelation

at Damascus: he grasped the fact that he needed the belief in immortality in order to rob “the world” of its value, that the concept of “hell” would master Rome—that the notion of a “beyond” is the death of life. Nihilist and Christian: they rhyme in German, and they do more than rhyme.