

How "Epicurean" is Diogenes of Oenoanda?

Post by "wbernys" of April 3, 2026 at 5:13 PM

I recall @Eikadistes mentioning how Diogenes of Oenoanda strong statements of empathy sound almost Judeo-Christian.

"I have therefore composed this inscription, because I consider it a part of wisdom for a good man to give benevolent assistance, to the utmost of his ability, to those men who are capable of receiving it."

"In addition to my fellow-citizens who are in this predicament, I desire to help future generations, for they too, though unborn, belong to us, as do any foreigners who may happen to come here."

Curious for other opinions on this, is he an update on Epicurus crude hedonism for a more developed one or is he kind of mixing Epicureanism with other concerns or rather orthodox?

Post by "Cassius" of April 3, 2026 at 5:35 PM

[Quote from wbernys](#)

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I see Diogenes of Oinoanda as completely orthodox and consistent with Lucretius' tone as to sympathy for "hearts in darkness." And of course Epicurus' whole career and school-building was outward-facing.

And I don't know what you would mean in referring to Epicurus' "crude hedonism" unless that's coming from the viewpoint of a Ciceronian or modern dismissal of pleasure there as "crude." And it's the Ciceronian and modern viewpoint that I would dismiss as "crude."

Post by "wbernys" of April 3, 2026 at 5:43 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

And I don't know what you would mean in referring to Epicurus' "crude hedonism"

I just put that as an option in case others view his hedonism as more crude. I don't really agree but still some people will say it so wanted that as an option.

The only matter I may consider Epicurus a little crude I think is his insistence that all pleasure and pain is found in bodily sensation as Torquatus says. I think things like a "guilty conscious", love of helping strangers like with this inscription, and wanting to win praise after death which Diogenes of Oenoanda actually mentions is difficult to view as taking origin in bodily sensation, happy to be corrected on this though.

Post by "Cassius" of April 3, 2026 at 6:26 PM

[Quote from wbernys](#)

s his insistence that all pleasure and pain is found in bodily sensation as Torquatus says.

i think this is a misreading if from it you conclude that Epicurus is deprecating mental experience that is not painful as not being pleasure. Everything about us ultimately arises through the body as we do not exist without it. That means anything mental cannot be separated from the body or presumed to exist without the body. Cicero and the antiEpicureans were taking just the position that you are summarizing, but the thrust of Torquatus' defense of Epicurus is that this is not correct. All mental and bodily experience that is not painful counts as pleasure because there are only two feelings.