

# True And False Opinions About Epicurus - From Chapter 1 of "Epicurus And His Philosophy"

Post by "Cassius" of April 21, 2018 at 11:46 AM

This list of eleven "True And False Opinions About Epicurus" taken from Chapter 1 of DeWitt's "Epicurus and His Philosophy," may be of general interest:

## 1. TRUE AND FALSE OPINIONS ABOUT EPICURUS:

### 1. Epicurus' Place In Greek Philosophy:

1. **True:** Epicurus came immediately after Plato (idealism; absolutism) and Pyrrho (the skeptic). Platonism and Skepticism were among Epicurus' chief abominations. Epicurean philosophy was fully developed before Zeno began teaching Stoicism.
2. **False:** Epicurus taught in response to Stoicism.

### 2. Epicurus' Attitude Toward Learning:

1. **True:** Epicurus was well educated and a trained thinker.
2. **False:** Epicurus was an ignoramus and an enemy of all culture.

### 3. Epicurus' Goal For Himself And His Work:

1. **True:** Epicurus was not only a philosopher but a moral reformer rebelling against his teachers.
2. **False:** Epicurus was nothing more than a philosopher who was ungrateful to his teachers.

### 4. Epicurus' Place in Greek Scientific Thought:

1. **True:** Epicurus was returning to the Ionian tradition of thought which had been interrupted by Socrates and Plato. Epicurus was an Anti-Platonist and a penetrating critic of Platonism.
2. **False:** Epicurean scientific thought simply copied Democritus.

### 5. Epicurus' Role As a Systematizer:

1. **True:** As with Herbert Spencer or Auguste Comte, Epicurus was attempting a synthesis and critique of all prior philosophical thought.
2. **False:** Epicurus was a sloppy and unorganized thinker whose system-building is not worth attention.

### 6. Epicurus' Dogmatism:

1. **True:** Epicurus's strength was that he promulgated a dogmatic philosophy, actuated by a passion for inquiry to find certainty, and a detestation of skepticism, which he imputed even to Plato.
2. **False:** Epicurus' demerit was that he promulgated a dogmatic philosophy, because he renounced inquiry.

### 7. Epicurus' View of Truth:

1. **True:** Epicurus exalted Nature as the norm of truth, revolting against Plato, who had preached “reason” as the norm and considered “Reason” to have a divine existence of its own. Epicurus studied and taught the nature and use of sensations, and the role in determining that which we consider to be true.
  2. **False:** Epicurus was an empiricist in the modern sense, declaring sensation to be the only source of knowledge and all sensations to be “true.”
8. Epicurus’ Method For Determining Truth:
1. **True:** Epicurus taught reasoning chiefly by deduction. For example, atoms cannot be observed directly; their existence and properties must be determined by deduction, and the principles thereby deduced serve as standards for assessing truth. In this Epicurus was adopting the procedures of Euclid and partying company with both Plato and the Ionian scientists.
  2. **False:** Epicurus taught reasoning mainly by induction.
9. Epicurus’ As A Man of Action
1. **True:** Epicurus was the first missionary philosophy. Epicurus was by disposition combative and he was by natural gifts a leader, organizer, and campaigner.
  2. **False:** Epicurus was effeminate and a moral invalid; a passivist who taught retirement from and non-engagement with the world.
10. Epicurus’ View of Self-Interest
1. **True:** Epicureanism was the first world philosophy, acceptable to both Greek and barbarian. Epicurus taught that we should make friends wherever possible.
  2. **False:** Epicurus was a totally egoistic hedonist ruled solely by a narrow view of his own self-interest.
11. Epicurus Is Of Little Relevance to the Development of Christianity
1. **True:** Epicurus reoriented emphasis from political virtues to social virtues, and developed a wider viewpoint applicable to all humanity.
  2. **False:** Epicurus was an enemy of all religion and there is no trace of his influence in the “New Testament.”