

Episode One Hundred Forty-Eight - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 04 - True Opinions And False Opinions About Epicurus

Post by "Kalosyni" of November 15, 2022 at 9:27 PM

Notes on second half of podcast:

33:00 -- Is it legitimate to speculate about possibilities without any existing evidence of your own to consider those possibilities to be valid. Is it legitimate to think you could spend an eternity in heaven and bliss because you can't rule it out and you've never been there before.

How do you sort which claims can be evaluated reasonably and which claims can't.

Christopher Hitchens - Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence - and those claims which are extraordinary but have not furnished extraordinary evidence should simply be dismissed, its not worth our time.

Thomas Jefferson and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity -- an idea has to be comprehensible before we can act upon it.

Good evidence, the nature of your evidence, the 5 senses anticipations and the feelings, as opposed to circumstantial reasoning, creating hypotheticals

35:30 -- DeWitt's importance of approaching what truth is, and how you've arrived at it (summary of what was just covered)

36:25 -- Epicurus was a man of action and not just thought. It was false to believe that Epicurus was a moral invalid, a pacifist, who taught retirement from and non-engagement with the world. The truth was that he was producing a philosophy with missionary aspects and had natural gifts of being a leader, an organizer, and a campaigner.

This was explained in "[Philosophy for the Millions](#)" essay by DeWitt

37:35 -- Joshua tells about philosophers in ancient Greece -- because philosophers are interested in the workings of nature, things that are going on in the sky, behind the scenes full attention and focus is on that so that when it comes to the real world and the things that people have to do to survive in the real world to get by, the philosophers are not adequate to the task -- many stories from the ancient world make this point -- they didn't really seem to focus on things that matter to most people

39:45 -- Many of his books were titled "Against" a particular idea or person which may be why he was considered combative

It seems from the very beginning that it was set up to be a school, it was intended to be an organized presentation of a reform movement

40:25 -- Epicurus' view about self interest -- it's false to say that Epicurus was a totally egoistic hedonist ruled solely by a narrow view of his own self interest, focused on the pleasure of the moment.

It was true that this was the first world philosophy that was acceptable to both Greeks and non-Greeks, and that Epicurus taught that we should make friends whenever possible. So it is not exclusively inward facing, but it was focused on the result of living a pleasurable life which cannot be obtained successfully in most cases unless you are to some extent engaged with the world around you -- emphasis on friendship and living among people who are your friends -- He was not an isolated thinker -- self-interest must be supported by action in the real world among your friends.

42:00 -- the false accusation that Epicurus was an "isolated thinker" doesn't go into how his followers were called "pigs in his heard" by his detractors. It was said that unlike other philosophical schools, no one was seen to leave the Epicurean school to join the other schools and so they were compared to becoming eunuchs. Scathing portrayal of Epicureans as being effeminate and lacking self-awareness in the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, as being stupid, and poor citizens.

43:55 -- Ayn Rand, Objectivism, book: The Virtue of Selfishness -- false choice between the goal of should be for your own interest as opposed to other people's interests. Epicurus would condemn the idea that your own selfishness is the goal -- ultimate goal is pleasure and cannot achieve that if you put your own interests above others -- Epicurus says sometimes you are going to die for a friend. You are going to realize there is going to be a time for putting your interests first and a time for putting other people's interests first - the goal of living pleurably

46:00 -- he said that to hold property in common showed a lack of trust among his members so that not to be done.

Establishing more friendship, broader support for pursuing pleasure.

47:50 -- Vatican Saying 43

48:25 -- Epicurus' relevance to the development of Christianity.

False to say that Epicurus was an enemy of all religion, what was true was that he had his own views of what was a proper religion, changing the emphasis from political virtues of the state to social virtues, how best to relate to other people. Applicable everywhere.

DeWitt's view stretches Epicurus' relationship to development of Christianity - sees commonalities where most of us would not see commonalities.

False opinion was that Epicurus was just an absolute atheist, dismissed the idea of talking about divinity.

50:25 -- Rather than raising citizen soldiers of the state, he was attempting to do something more personal and social that have reference to politics

51:00 -- Pictures of Epicurus in their house or on rings

52:00 -- page 8 DeWitt says: "Epicureanism served in the ancient world as a preparation of Christianity helping to bridge the gap between Greek intellectualism and a religious way of life..."

For more see DeWitt's book "Saint Paul and Epicurus" looks at different passages in the New Testament to see what relationship they could have to Epicureans.

This book may appeal to those who are coming from Christianity and looking to study Epicurus for the first time.

54:25 -- Lucian - two camps opposed to the oracle, the Christians and the Epicureans, for different reasons

55:10 -- Next week: we will turn attention to ancient Athens and the period in which Epicurus developed his philosophy and do a little bit of biographical background

56:55 -- Won't fully understand about happiness and pleasure without this background overview of where Epicurus was coming from