

Episode 155 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 11 - The Canon, Reason, and Nature 02

Post by "Joshua" of January 2, 2023 at 6:43 PM

canon

noun (1)

can·on 'ka-nən

1 A: a regulation or dogma decreed by a church council B: a provision of canon law 2 [Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Late Latin, from Latin, model]: the most solemn and unvarying part of the Mass including the consecration of the bread and wine 3 [Middle English, from Late Latin, from Latin, standard] A: an authoritative list of books accepted as Holy Scripture B: the authentic works of a writer; "the Chaucer *canon*" C: a sanctioned or accepted group or body of related works; "the *canon* of great literature" 4 A: an accepted principle or rule B: a criterion or standard of judgment; "the *canons* of good taste" C: a body of principles, rules, standards, or norms

I'm rethinking the various usages of the word "canon" as compared with Epicurus' Canon of Epistemology, and I'm beginning to think that we haven't been very clear on this point in previous episodes. I think the word *test* gets at the heart of all of these disparate applications. For example:

- Canonized saint (Catholic Church); a person by whom a Catholic is to *test* their life.
- Western Canon; A collection of writings against which to *test* the aesthetic and literary value of new writings.
- The Epicurean Canon; the three sources of knowledge by which we *test* what is true or knowable.

I could probably go on, but it seems to me that what separates the Epicurean canon is **not** that it is a test or measuring stick, and the others are not: what distinguishes the Epicurean canon is that it is a test of epistemology--other uses of the word canon are also tests, but they test different things by different criteria.