

Episode 180 - "Epicurus And His Philosophy" Part 32

- Chapter 13 - The True Piety 03

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Welcome to Episode 180 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the only complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics. We are now in the process of a series of podcasts intended to provide a general overview of Epicurean philosophy based on the organizational structure employed by Norman DeWitt in his book "Epicurus and His Philosophy." This week we continue our discussion of Chapter 13, entitled "The True Piety."

Chapter XIII - The True Piety

- Gradation In Godhead
- Incorruptibility And Virtue
- Isonomy And the Gods
- The Life of the Gods
- Communion And Fellowship
- Prophecy And Prayer

- Gradation In Godhead

+ starting at 263 we may talk about the issue of images making up the gods like the issue of drops of water making up a river.

- Incorruptibility And Virtue

+ the maintenance of their own incorruptibility is ascribed to the gods as a virtue.

+ Epicurus himself did not call the gods immortal.

+ Thus it must be discerned that just

as the happiness of man is self-achieved, so the happiness of the gods is

self-preserved.

- p268 Plutarch, for example, who, though hostile. wrote with texts of Epi.

curus before him, has this to say: "Freedom from pain along with incorruptibility should have been inherent in the nature of the blissful being, standing in no need of active concern:"

- the gods are consequently

not deathless, only incorruptible; this incorruptibility, not being inherent. demands some sort of conservation. which can only be ascribed to the foresight and effort of the gods themselves. This. then, is their virtue. to preserve their own happiness and incorruptibility.

Here is part of Dewitt's reference:

Quote

"Since the prophet Daniel, for instance, was believed to have been inspired by God, it was to be expected that his prophecies would be fulfilled by God. Prophecy was subsidiary to divine providence. In conformity with this view Josephus gives a somewhat extended account of the prophecies of Daniel and their precise fulfillments, thus demonstrating for his readers the falsity of the Epicurean doctrines, which he rehearses at suitable length."

And here from Josephus is the concluding aspect of that section, referencing the Epicureans:

Quote

"And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel's vision; and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government; and that our countrey should be made desolate by them. All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had shewed them to him. Insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honour wherewith God honoured Daniel; and may thence discover how the Epicureans are in an error, who cast providence out of human life; and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world; nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature: but say, that the world is carried along of its own without a ruler and a curator: which were it destitute of a guide, to conduct it, as they imagine, it would be like ships without pilots; which we see drowned by the winds: or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned: so would the world be dashed to

pieces by its being carried without a providence, and so perish and come to nought. So that by the forementioned predictions of Daniel those men seem to me very much to err from the truth, who determine that God exercises no providence over human affairs. For if that were the case, that the world went on by mechanical necessity, we should not see that all things would come to pass according to his prophecy. Now as to my self I have so described these matters as I have found them and read them. But if any one is inclined to another opinion about them, let him enjoy his different sentiments without any blame from me."

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