

Would You Rather Live For A Week As (1) Epicurus During the Last Week of His Life or (2) An Anonymous Shepherd Laying In The Grass In The Summertime With No Pain At All?

Post by "Don" of September 10, 2023 at 10:17 AM

Of course, we can never know what was happening in Epicurus's mind. That said...

Epicurus spent his life cultivating his peace of mind, banishing the fears of death and the gods. Ataraxia is the quality of having a mind free from turbulence, free from fear, free from anxiety. Given that definition, Epicurus undoubtedly experienced ataraxia. He had come to accept there was no life after death. He had no fear of some divine punishment. He had memories from the past and a company of friends in the present to comfort him. He was well aware of his physical illness and its outcome. There was undoubtedly times where physical pain overwhelmed him. But I don't think that means he didn't experience ataraxia in his mind. He felt the unimaginable pain, but didn't need to accompany that pain with anxiety, needless mental suffering, or similar turbulence in his *psykhē*, his "soul."