

# 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 "Cassius" of September 13, 2023 at 9:20 AM

## [Quote from Don](#)

I would agree that the common knowledge has become ataraxia is a special unique mystical state etc. Syncretism and conflation with other traditions is at play in my opinion. Additionally, I think Epicurus's philosophy is very practical and down to earth and open to all. People/academics don't want practical, down to earth. They want Ideal Forms, Essences, Prime Movers, the Logos, mystery, mysticism, and so on.

Yes - very well stated. This is the foundation on which we move forward, and it needs to be understood as pretty much the "theme" of everything we are doing with EpicureanFriends.com. You've stated both sides that I think are important: (1) the common sense understanding that any person of normal intelligence can grasp Epicurean philosophy as a way of organizing the universe, and (2) the unpleasant fact that we're not just facing internal fears, anxieties, and understandings, but we're also facing an active, organized, opposition of which Cicero was not the first and definitely not the last. Cicero's opinion dominates today - maybe it always dominated, even in Epicurus's day. And today's Cicero's don't just have a limited audience of rich people for their opinions, they can broadcast them to *everyone* in seconds on Twitter and the like.

So in the modern world Cicero's perspective is probably even more dominant and more dangerous. Another example is that in this week's podcast Joshua makes the point that to the extent that people today no longer have the same familiarity with death in our daily lives, we are worse off than in the past in the amount of knowledge most people have.

Even though today most people have some basic knowledge of natural science, I don't believe that has translated at a mass scale into the fading away of religious superstition and fears of heaven and hell. The adoption of the position "God created the atoms" has anesthetized the majority into thinking they can have their cake and eat it too by blending superstition with "science." I think the key to counterattacking on that issue is already contained in the arguments in Herodotus and Lucretius, so we have plenty with which to work. That means not slighting the "physics" side of things on the mistaken idea that everyone understands atoms and void and that solves the problem.

So in general I'd say that the circumstances of today with technology and social media making it easier for peer pressure to suppress unwanted ideas require creative responses -- analogous to Lucretius stepping "out of the box" to produce his poem. With the two points you raised and I quoted above being central to moving forward.