

Comparing Epicurus With Stoicism via Stoacon 2023 (Cleanthes' Hymn To Zeus et al.)

Post by “Cassius” of December 5, 2023 at 6:15 PM

This program was pointed out to me today and it's worth a link. It's apparently seven hours long and there's no way I am going to watch much of it, but I already see a very useful aspect of it.

If you'll check out the link starting at 7:23 you will see a five minute long dramatic reading of Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus. Seems to me that watching this is really good for helping it sink in how utterly anchored Stoicism is in a theistic world-view. In the Stoic framework Zeus gives orders to nature in every bit as sweeping way as any Abrahamic religion ever dreamed of. In my view it's only in this kind of framework that Stoicism makes any kind of sense at all -- and if you once reject the theistic base, the rest falls away quickly too.

Listening to this reading helps dramatize that a world-view of nature that rejects such ideas is at the core of Epicurus' philosophy. Pleasure as the goal is where you end up when you realize that "Zeus" doesn't have other plans, but you first have to deal with the mindset expressed here. Casual readers of Stoicism need to see this and understand what really divides the schools.

<https://youtu.be/IK5Xo47zqzk?si=Y05DmMXPLrH38N2H&t=443>