

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

Post by “TauPhi” of December 5, 2023 at 7:22 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

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.

I'm the last person on Earth willing to defend Stoicism but I don't think watching anything for five minutes is really good for anything. It's not fair to any school of philosophy to make quick judgements like that. After all, if someone wants to spend 5 minutes on Epicureanism and reaches for the most famous text on it, they get this:

Mother of Rome, delight of Gods and men,

Dear Venus that beneath the gliding stars

Makest to teem the many-voyaged main

And fruitful lands- for all of living things

Through thee alone are evermore conceived [...]

My point is, it should take time and effort to get to the point of accepting something or rejecting it. Stoicism is not evil. It's just another school of thought. For us here, it's deeply flawed school of thought but it doesn't take anything from the fact it's most interesting to spend some time studying Stoicism. It has to have some merit to it. If it fell away quickly, it would have been forgotten long time ago.