

# On Use Of The Term Apikoros / Apiqoros / Bikouros Against Epicureans

Post by "Cassius" of October 31, 2024 at 4:00 PM

Just for reference below is the rest of that article (the first part). The "Agreements" section is in the context of this list of disagreements which comes first. If one were to take the "Agreements" out of context one would be get a very inaccurate picture of how deeply the two viewpoints diverge -- which I would say could hardly be greater in terms of overall outlook on the nature of the universe and the nature of the best life for human beings.

## Quote

**EPICUREANISM**, a philosophy of adjustment to the social changes after \*Alexander the Great (336-323), founded by Epicurus, 342/1-270 B.C.E., "the most revered and the most reviled of all founders of thought in the Greco-Roman world" (De Witt). Recent scholarship sees in it a "bridge" to certain rabbinic and Christian moods. Epicurus taught freedom from fear and desire through knowledge as the natural and pleasurable life. He endorsed religious observance but denied earthly involvement of the perfect gods and with it providence, presage, punishment, and penitential prayer. The transformation of Epicureanism into a competitive sect celebrating Epicurus as "savior" increased the already existing opposition to it. Rhetorical literature falsely accused Epicurus of materialistic hedonism. Complaints of Epicurean dogmatism, "beguiling speech" (Col. 2:4), and compelling argumentation (of [Avot 2:14](#) "...[know] what to answer the Epicurean") are frequently heard. Rabbinic condemnation reflects knowledge of Greco-Roman rhetoric, experiences with individuals and centers (Gadara, Gaza, Caesarea), and, possibly, the favoritism shown to Epicureanism by \*Antiochus Epiphanes and \*Hadrian. "Epicurean" became thus a byword for "deviance" - ranging from disrespect to atheism - in Philo, Josephus, and rabbinism alike (see \**Apikoros*). An early unexpanded version of the "four who entered 'Paradise'" ([Hag. 14b](#)) may once have signified Epicurus' school ("the garden"), since it fits Akiva's past, Ben Azzai's celibacy and many Epicurean sayings, Elisha b. Avuyah's heterodoxy, and Ben Zoma's gnosticism (Epicureanism and Gnosticism were equated also by the Church Fathers). Akiva's "mystical" admonition ([Hag. 14b](#)) could easily have been a parody on the "apocalyptic"-enthusiastic style of the Epicureans (parallel parody H. Usener, *Epicurea*, fragm. 364; [Gen. R. 1:5](#), Theodor-Albeck, p. 2 mentions "nothing from nothing"; Mid. [Ps. to 1:22](#) the "automatic" universe; cf. Jos., Ant., 10:280).