

Episode 277 - TD07 - Platonism Says This World Is Darkness But The Next World Is Light - Epicurus Disagrees!

Post by “Joshua” of April 22, 2025 at 9:53 PM

I think these are the passages I quoted from Christopher Hitchens' *God is not Great*;

Quote

There is one more charge to be added to the bill of indictment. With a necessary part of its collective mind, religion looks forward to the destruction of the world. By this I do not mean it “looks forward” in the purely eschatological sense of anticipating the end. I mean, rather, that it openly or covertly wishes that end to occur. Perhaps half aware that its unsupported arguments are not entirely persuasive, and perhaps uneasy about its own greedy accumulation of temporal power and wealth, religion has never ceased to proclaim the Apocalypse and the day of judgment. This has been a constant trope, ever since the first witch doctors and shamans learned to predict eclipses and to use their half-baked celestial knowledge to terrify the ignorant.

One of the very many connections between religious belief and the sinister, spoiled, selfish childhood of our species is the repressed desire to see everything smashed up and ruined and brought to naught. This tantrum-need is coupled with two other sorts of “guilty joy,” or, as the Germans say, *schadenfreude*. First, one’s own death is canceled—or perhaps repaid or compensated—by the obliteration of all others. Second, it can always be egotistically hoped that one will be personally spared, gathered contentedly to the bosom of the mass exterminator, and from a safe place observe the sufferings of those less fortunate. Tertullian, one of the many church fathers who found it difficult to give a persuasive account of paradise, was perhaps clever in going for the lowest possible common denominator and promising that one of the most intense pleasures of the afterlife would be endless contemplation of the tortures of the damned. He spoke more truly than he knew in evoking the man-made character of faith.

And here is [Tertullian](#) being being predictably revolting. Note the glancing reference to Epicureanism;

Quote

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4402-episode-277-td07-platonism-says-this-world-is-darkness-but-the-next-world-is-lig/?postID=34924#post34924>

Moreover, what a spectacle is already at hand--the second coming of the Lord, now no object of doubt, now exalted, now triumphant! What exultation will that be of the angels, what glory of the saints as they rise again! What a kingdom, the kingdom of the just thereafter! What a city, the new Jerusalem!

But there are yet other spectacles to come--that day of the Last Judgment with its everlasting issues, unlooked for by the heathen, the object of their derision, when the hoary age of the world and all its generations will be consumed in one file.

What a panorama of spectacle on that day! Which sight shall excite my wonder? Which, my laughter? Where shall I rejoice, where exult--as I see so many and so mighty kings, whose ascent to heaven used to be made known by public announcement, now along with Jupiter himself, along with the very witnesses of their ascent, groaning in the depths of darkness? Governors of provinces, too, who persecuted the name of the Lord, melting in flames fiercer than those they themselves kindled in their rage against the Christians braving them with contempt?

Whom else shall I behold? Those wise philosophers blushing before their followers as they burn together, the followers whom they taught that the world is no concern of God's, whom they assured that either they had no souls at all or that what souls they had would never return to their former bodies? The poets also, trembling, not before the judgment seat of Rhadamanthus or of Minos, but of Christ whom they did not expect to meet.

Then will the tragic actors be worth hearing, more vocal in their own catastrophe; then the comic actors will be worth watching, more lither of limb in the fire; then the charioteer will be worth seeing, red all over on his fiery wheel; then the athletes will be worth observing, not in their gymnasiums, but thrown about by fire--unless I might not wish to look at them even then but would prefer to turn an insatiable gaze on those who vented their rage on the Lord.

'This is He,' I will say, 'the son of the carpenter and the harlot, the sabbath-breaker, the Samaritan who had a devil. This is He whom you purchased from Judas, this is He who was struck with reed and fist, defiled with spittle, given gall and vinegar to drink. This is He whom the disciples secretly stole away to spread the story of His resurrection, or whom the gardener removed lest his lettuces be trampled by the throng of curious idlers.'

What praetor or consul or quaestor or priest with all his munificence will ever bestow on you the favor of beholding and exulting in such sights? Yet, such scenes as these are in a measure already ours by faith in the vision of the spirit. But what are those things which 'eye has not seen nor ear heard and which have not entered into the heart of man'? Things of greater delight, I believe, than circus, both kinds of theater, and any stadium.

Display More

Every aspect of Greek and Roman culture is brought before his creepy, leering and 'insatiable gaze', every expression of it is condemned to everlasting torment, and the witness of that torment is one of the keenest pleasures of paradise.