

The Relationship of Happiness and Blessedness

Post by “Don” of July 10, 2026 at 5:54 PM

I thought it might be instructive to see how "blessed" aka *makarios* is used in other contexts in ancient Greek contexts unrelated to the Epicurean description of the gods.

Quote from Plato, Laws

What, then, and how many are the lives in which a man—when he has chosen the desirable and voluntary in preference to the undesirable and the involuntary, and has made it into a private law for himself, by choosing what is at once both congenial and pleasant and most good and noble—may live as *happily* (μακαριώτατα makariōtata) as man can? Let us pronounce that one of them is the temperate life, one the wise, one the brave, and let us class the healthy life as one; and to these let us oppose four others—the foolish, the cowardly, the licentious, and the diseased.

Quote from Xenophon, Cyropaedia

What a *happy fellow* (μακάριε makarie) you must be,” said the Sacian, “for every reason, but particularly because from being poor you have become rich. For you must enjoy your riches much more, I think, for the very reason that it was only after being hungry for wealth that you became rich.”

Quote from Plato, Meno

Stranger, you must think me a *specially favoured mortal* (μακάριός makarios), to be able to tell whether virtue can be taught, or in what way it comes to one: so far am I from knowing whether it can be taught or not, that I actually do not even know what the thing itself, virtue, is at all.

Quote from Aristophanes, Wasps

Xanthias

Oh! tortoises! *happy* (μακάριαι makariai) to have so hard a skin, *thrice happy* (τρις μακάριαι makariai) to carry this roof that protects your backs! Oh! creatures full of sense! what a happy thought to cover your bodies with this shell, which shields it from blows! As for me, I can no longer move; the stick has so belaboured my body.