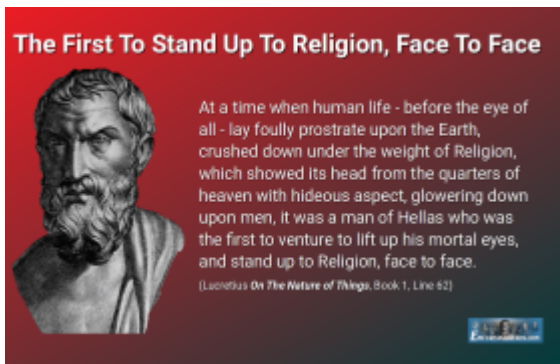


Foundations 001 - The First To Stand Up To Religion, Face to Face

Post by "Cassius" of July 27, 2021 at 8:28 AM

At a time when human life - before the eye of all - lay foully prostrate upon the Earth, crushed down under the weight of Religion, which showed its head from the quarters of heaven with hideous aspect, glowering down upon men, it was a man of Hellas who was the first to venture to lift up his mortal eyes, and stand up to Religion, face to face. (Lucretius Book 1, Line 62)



Post by "Cassius" of July 27, 2021 at 8:53 AM

Social Media Postings - I am going to try to do this as a series - go through the quotes that are pulled out and included in the "Foundations" video and produce a series of basic graphics which link back here to the discussion of each one at EpicureanFriends.com. [This is the source](https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2115-foundations-001-the-first-to-stand-up-to-religion-face-to-face/) that I will work to expand to put these in final format and provide a citation.

I need to find a way to automate this but to get started they can be done manually.



<https://twitter.com/NewEpicurean> (Twitter)



<https://epicureanworldview.com/@cassius> (Fediverse / Mastodon / Pleroma / etc.) This is the new "fediverse" server that I've set up experimentally. Because it is the open source activitypub format, it can be accessed with many free phone apps such as [Fedilab](#) for Android and any "[mastodon](#)" app for IOS. The fediverse has far fewer participants than Twitter, but the big advantage is that the site is owned by EpicureanFriends and can't be deplatformed if Twitter decides one day it doesn't like hard-hitting Epicurean philosophy.



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Epicure...27836567265272/> (Facebook Epicurean Philosophy Group)

Post by “Cassius” of July 28, 2021 at 9:40 AM

FB Poster:

Alas, the ineluctable presence of death, looming always over our lives, drives religion. Against the massive pressure of that great terror, all that mankind can do is occasionally open up little spaces for rational living, as Epicurus did.

Cassius Amicus:

The "all that mankind can do" part may be (hopefully) unduly pessimistic, but as to the "massive pressure" part absolutely yes. I would say today almost as bad as 2300 years ago, and the majority of humanity still "lays prostrate upon the earth, crushed down under the weight of religion." And it's going to remain that way until the views that Epicurus taught (which aren't uniquely his, but which he deserves credit for being among the first to popularize) become more widespread. Interestingly I think we have plenty of proof now too that it's not "science" or "knowledge" that saves the day, because religion is infinitely capable of adjusting to argue that all science comes from god. The key is the confidence - the philosophic view or attitude - that there are indeed natural answers that explain the questions we have. If we simply say "I don't know" to ultimate questions of whether there are gods behind everything then we never dispel the lingering doubt which will always contribute to that "massive pressure" to conform to religion.

Post by “Cassius” of July 28, 2021 at 3:12 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2115-foundations-001-the-first-to-stand-up-to-religion-face-to-face/>

Same FB Poster:

I'm not convinced that religion "crushes" us. Take a look at the situation in the USA, which trendily abandoned its traditional religion over the last 50 years. With that religion went a stable common morality, and when that went, as we are seeing now, so did civic peace in the USA. Religion is one of the ways of dealing with the problem of death. It has its vices and its virtues.

Cassius Amicus

I think Epicurus was all in favor of a stable common morality as indicated in the last PDs about living among friends, but as for the possibility that religion can provide that, I think Epicurus was right that there's no way that standard supernatural religion is an acceptable substitute, and as Diogenes of Oinoanda said, those nations which are most religious can be among the most contemptible:

Fr. 20

[So it is obvious that wrong-doers, given that they do not fear the penalties imposed by the laws, are not] afraid of [the gods.] This [has to be] conceded. For if they were [afraid, they] would not [do wrong]. As for [all] the others, [it is my opinion] that the [wise] are not [(reasoning indicates) righteous] on account of the gods, but on account of [thinking] correctly and the [opinions] they hold [regarding] certain things [and especially] pains and death (for indeed invariably and without exception human beings do wrong either on account of fear or on account of pleasures), and that ordinary people on the other hand are righteous, in so far as they are righteous, on account of the laws and the penalties, imposed by the laws, hanging over them. But even if some of their number are conscientious on account of the laws, they are few: only just two or three individuals are to be found among great segments of multitudes, and not even these are steadfast in acting righteously; for they are not soundly persuaded about providence. A clear indication of the complete inability of the gods to prevent wrong-doings is provided by the nations of the Jews and Egyptians, who, as well as being the most superstitious of all peoples, are the vilest of all peoples.

On account of what kind of gods, then, will human beings be righteous? For they are not righteous on account of the real ones or on account of Plato's and Socrates' Judges in Hades. We are left with this conclusion; otherwise, why should not those who disregard the laws scorn fables much more?

So, with regard to righteousness, neither does our doctrine do harm [not does] the opposite [doctrine help], while, with regard to the other condition, the opposite doctrine not only does not help, but on the contrary also does harm, whereas our doctrine not only does not harm, but also helps. For the one removes disturbances, while the other adds them, as has already been made clear to you before.

That not only [is our doctrine] helpful, [but also the opposite doctrine harmful, is clearly shown by] the [Stoics as they go astray. For they say in opposition to us] that the god both is maker of [the] world and takes providential care of it, providing for all things, including human beings. Well, in the first place, we come to this question: was it, may I ask, for his own sake that the god created the world [or for the sake of human beings? For it is obvious that it was from a wish to benefit either himself or human beings that he embarked on this] undertaking. For how could it have been otherwise, if nothing is produced without a cause and these things are produced by a god? Let us then examine this view and what Stoics mean. It was, they say, from a wish to have a city and fellow-citizens, just as if [he were an exile from a city, that] the god [created the world and human beings. However, this supposition, a concoction of empty talking, is] self-evidently a fable, composed to gain the attention of an audience, not a natural philosopher's argument searching for the truth and inferring from probabilities things not palpable to sense. Yet even if, in the belief that he was doing some good [to himself, the god] really [made the world and human beings],

[The inscription](#)