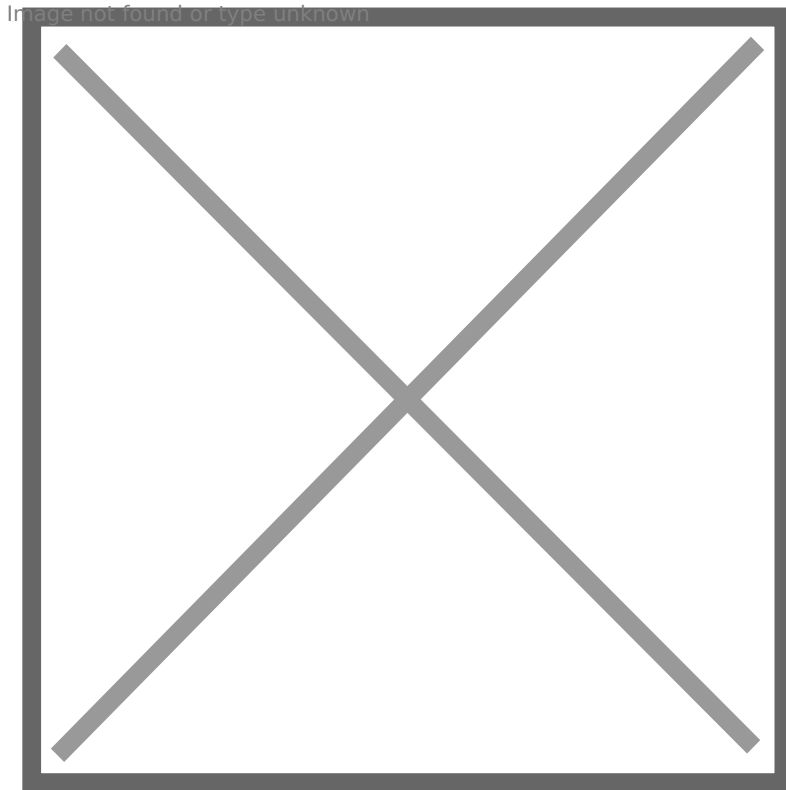


General Commentary on Logic-Based Arguments Against Epicurean Physics

Post by "Don" of April 9, 2026 at 7:25 AM

ADMIN NOTE BY CASSIUS: We have set up this category for general observations on the merits and demerits of the "logic-based" arguments. All of them share fundamental erroneous presumptions about proof and evidence, and we can explore those commonalities here. There will be separate threads for the major named arguments so that people who want to ask "what about....?" can address the individual twists and turns of specific arguments.

To be honest, I find these kinds of "proofs" of God to be tiresome, overly complicated wordplay. I couldn't even get through the Wikipedia summary without rolling my eyes. The whole "ontological argument" (of which this appears to be an early variety) strikes me as ...I don't know... too clever by half? A speciously intellectual facade masquerading as deep? The fact that other Muslims found Ibn Sina's Proof unsatisfactory, and other Christians found Anselm's thought experiment lacking, I find outsiders like Epicureans taking the time to refute or counter these a waste of valuable time.



Post by “Cassius” of April 9, 2026 at 7:35 AM

Yes done in general I agree - waste of time, at least for those of us who are familiar with the whole category of logical wordplay without reference back to physical / sense-based evidence.

However, we have a lot of people who come through the forum who aren't familiar with the overall issue, and how it relates not only to the "gods" question but also to the whole Epicurean sense-based canonics. The different forms of "Zeno's Paradoxes" are pretty much in the same category.

I think for that reason alone it would be good to develop a general framework of how all of these are defective in general, and how each one specifically fails to get around the fundamental flaw in the approach.

Just like on Youtube where people search for specific topics, if we set up a thread for each significant argument then the search engines will eventually pick up the threads and reach people with Epicurean arguments who otherwise would never find it.

So in this thread I'll focus the title on "General Responses To Logic-Based Arguments..." and those who are so inclined to address separate ones, please feel free to suggest separate threads. I'll moderate the forum structure to be sure this doesn't get out of hand, but if anyone who is a level 3 or above wants to set up specific threads please go ahead. Anyone else who is newer might want to add their suggestion to this list first.

Post by “Don” of April 9, 2026 at 8:25 AM

Fair enough.

That said, I'm happy to leave the refutations to those inclined that direction.

Post by “Cassius” of April 9, 2026 at 8:28 AM

[Quote from Don](#)

That said, I'm happy to leave the refutations to those inclined that direction.

Right - those who are interested, please contribute; those who are not - no worries.

Post by “Cassius” of April 9, 2026 at 8:48 AM

I searched and added a series of other logic-based arguments, and this was suggested as the general common thread uniting the responses:

The Common Thread

What unites Epicurus's responses is a consistent methodological stance: formal logical arguments, no matter how clever, never override the Canon. If an argument leads to a conclusion that contradicts sensation, prolēpsis (common preconceptions), or the evidence of feelings, then the argument is wrong — even if you cannot immediately identify the flaw in its premises. This made Epicurus unusual in antiquity: he was not anti-rational, but he was firmly anti-dialectical in the sense that he refused to grant pure logic jurisdiction over empirical reality.

Post by “Cassius” of April 9, 2026 at 8:58 AM

Also, in relation to how the atomism arguments fit in relation to the other logic-based issues:

Where the Common Thread Applies

The starting point is the same: Zeno's conclusion — that motion is impossible — is directly contradicted by sensation. We see things move. That is a Canon-level datum, and no formal argument can override it. So in that sense, Epicurus's first move is identical to his handling of the Liar or the Sorites: the argument reaches an absurd conclusion, therefore the argument is wrong.

But Here Epicurus Goes Further

With the Liar Paradox and the Sorites, Epicurus was largely content to dismiss the argument as a verbal or dialectical trap and move on. He didn't feel obligated to locate the precise flaw.

With Zeno's paradoxes he did something more demanding: he identified exactly where the argument goes wrong and replaced it with a positive physical theory. The false premise is infinite divisibility. Magnitude is not infinitely divisible — both atoms and the distances they traverse have genuine minima, smallest parts that cannot be further subdivided even conceptually. This doesn't just block Zeno's conclusion; it gives you a coherent account of how finite traversal of finite distances is physically possible.

The Deeper Point

So the minimal parts doctrine represents the Canon working at its most constructive. The Canon tells you the conclusion is false; reason then has the obligation to find the defective premise and build a correct account in its place. This is Epicurus at his most systematic — not just deflecting bad logic, but doing genuine physics in response to it.

It also shows that his anti-dialectical stance was not laziness or ignorance. When the stakes were high enough — when a logical argument threatened to undermine the entire intelligibility of the physical world — he would engage it fully on its own terrain and win on those terms.