

## **Klavan's "Gateway To Epicureanism" (Note: The Title Is Part Of A "Gateway" Series - The Author Himself Is Strongly Anti-Epicurean)**

**Post by "Brandnoz" of April 14, 2026 at 1:02 PM**

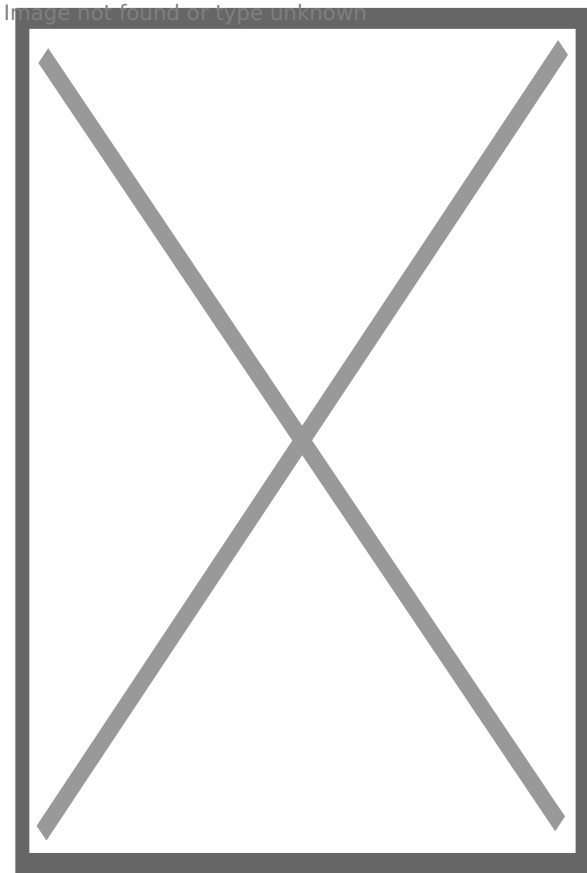
Hello, and thanks for having me. I especially was drawn into the graphic on the home page showing Epicurean physics + canonicus = ethics. A book I was reading structured Epicurean ethics in that same way and I thought that made a lot of sense. The book was "Gateway to Epicureans". I will make sure to look over all of those resources and community standards!

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**Post by "Cassius" of April 14, 2026 at 1:17 PM**

Hmmm that is interesting. Never heard of that and see that it is new... From Regnery the "conservative" publisher who also published Josh Hawleys book attacking Epicurus. And I am not familiar with Spencer Klavan either....

Was the book mostly positive about Epicurus? That introductory tagline might lead someone to think otherwise.



[Gateway to the Epicureans - Epicurus, Lucretius, and Their Modern Heirs - Regnery Publishing](#)

Two and half centuries ago, John Adams complained, "Our modern philosophers are all the low grovelling disciples of Epicurus." That's even truer today....

[www.regnery.com](http://www.regnery.com)

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### **Post by "Cassius" of April 14, 2026 at 1:26 PM**

I see this about that book at Barnes and Noble (underline added)

In this convenient volume, the classicist Spencer A. Klavan presents core selections from Epicurus' own writings and those of his most famous ancient disciple, the poet Lucretius. Listen in as the teacher outlines for his students how his system of physics, logic, and ethics works. Read the elegant presentations of these Epicurean ideas aimed at the Roman upper crust. And consider with Klavan how this philosophy has gripped the modern mind, why it is falling apart, and why it leaves confusion in its wake

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<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/5040-klavan-s-gateway-to-epicureanism-note-the-title-is-part-of-a-gateway-series-the/>

## **Post by “Cassius” of April 14, 2026 at 1:52 PM**

This is very timely so thank you again for the book reference. I am working on two articles now and I am going to at least briefly review this so I can address some of what apparently appears here.

I see that Klavan appeared on a podcast last year discussing this and I am about to set that up for listening.

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## **Post by “Brandnoz” of April 14, 2026 at 2:32 PM**

Klavan ended the preface of the book somewhat on a negative tone towards Epicureanism, I felt, but otherwise made a great case for the physics-based approach and on how 'We are all Epicureans Now' in many ways. The reason I wanted to read it is because while flipping through it, I found the 1-page Syllabus of the Doctrines of Epicurus by Thomas Jefferson. I thought it was really succinct and I liked his division of physical and moral rather than mental, emotional, etc. You can find a copy of that part here: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jeff...15-02-0141-0002>

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## **Post by “Cassius” of April 14, 2026 at 4:50 PM**

Thanks again Brandon. I just finished listening to the podcast linked below in which Klavan was interviewed about this book. Worth mentioning first is that Klavan thinks that Epicureanism is something he would like to "demolish" and "eradicate." (Most of his own opinion appears around the 43 minute mark. I also recall him referring to it as garbage but that much be in another section,)

Now having said that, I want to at least recommend this podcast interview as well worth people here taking the time to hear. There is a lot of banter and fluff in the hour-long interview, but it's not Klavan's fault. The "Thinkery" podcasters sound almost as interested in joking around as being serious, but after a few minutes it settles down to being reasonably focused.

Klavan himself comes from a "faith" background (googling indicates father Jewish and mother some form of Christian but that could be wrong). I gather also that he is or was associated with

"conservative" institutions such as the Claremont Institute. The interview cites Leo Strauss and others I am familiar with, so I think it's fair to describe him as coming from a "classical liberal" perspective. I don't gather that he is primarily Stoic or a particular religion but from a broad-based Platonic intelligent design perspective.

The interview spends considerable time with Epicurean physics, and here I strongly agree with Klavan's approach: The Epicurean view of the nature of the universe and "physics" is the basis on which everything else, including ethics, is built. If you think that modern science / math / geometry have disproven the core conclusions of Epicurean physics simply because what we can "atoms" are divisible, then you are going to reach Klavan's conclusion: Epicureanism in general is garbage and should be eradicated for all the damage that it does. And it makes no sense to try to defend the ethics if Epicurus' core conclusions about the nature of the universe are so fatally flawed.

Klavan is obviously very smart and well-read and he probably knows the standard view of Epicurus (which most of us here reject) better than most of our participants here. He even cited some Lucretian arguments (regarding the issue of whether sharp or smooth atoms cause bitter or sweet tastes) to explain part of Epicurus' sophisticated reasoning in defense of the senses. These are issues that he thinks are conclusive against Epicurus that we only rarely discuss here.

That's why I recommend anyone here who has the time to at least listen to the interview, if not the book itself. I still need to get my hands on that and see if there are excerpts worth reading.

But again if you can get past the fluff (as I did because I was driving) then Klavan himself knows what issues are important and how to cut to the chase on them. I think his core conclusions and evaluations of Epicurus are across-the-board wrong, but that's not to say that there's not a lot to learn from his commentary, just like we learn from Cicero and Plutarch, who he strongly resembles in the form of his criticisms.

As I understand what Brandeno's has written, the book itself does make an effort to cover at least some of Epicureanism in a balanced fashion, and apparently Brandeno's didn't come away from his contact with the book totally turned off to Epicureanism. That's one of the ways the "We are all Epicureans now" argument (made by John Adams as well) can lull people into complacency and misunderstanding (not referring to Brandeno's) . Probably there are a lot of people who are going to read this book and think that Klavan sounds fair and that his assessment of Epicurean philosophy should be believed.

That's a hazard of reading a book from someone who thinks that Epicurean philosophy is "garbage" and should be "demolished" and "eradicated." It's a shame he thinks that way, but this book and podcast give us an excellent opportunity to improve our own game in defending Epicurean philosophy.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1ApdsiAnS489EFKsZRnW12>

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/5040-klavan-s-gateway-to-epicureanism-note-the-title-is-part-of-a-gateway-series-the/>

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## Post by “Cassius” of April 14, 2026 at 5:22 PM

Note - In searching my records I see that [Bryan](#) brought this book to my attention last year, but I failed to follow up and investigate further. So it's long past time to remedy that.

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## Post by “Eikadistes” of April 14, 2026 at 5:34 PM

It looks like its primarily a compilation of Epicurean core texts and related texts. (It looks like the editor had a similar intention in mind as did I with *The Hedonicon*). Klavan also includes a few interesting selections of Newton, Hume, Adams, Jefferson, and Maxwell.

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## Post by “Cassius” of April 14, 2026 at 5:47 PM

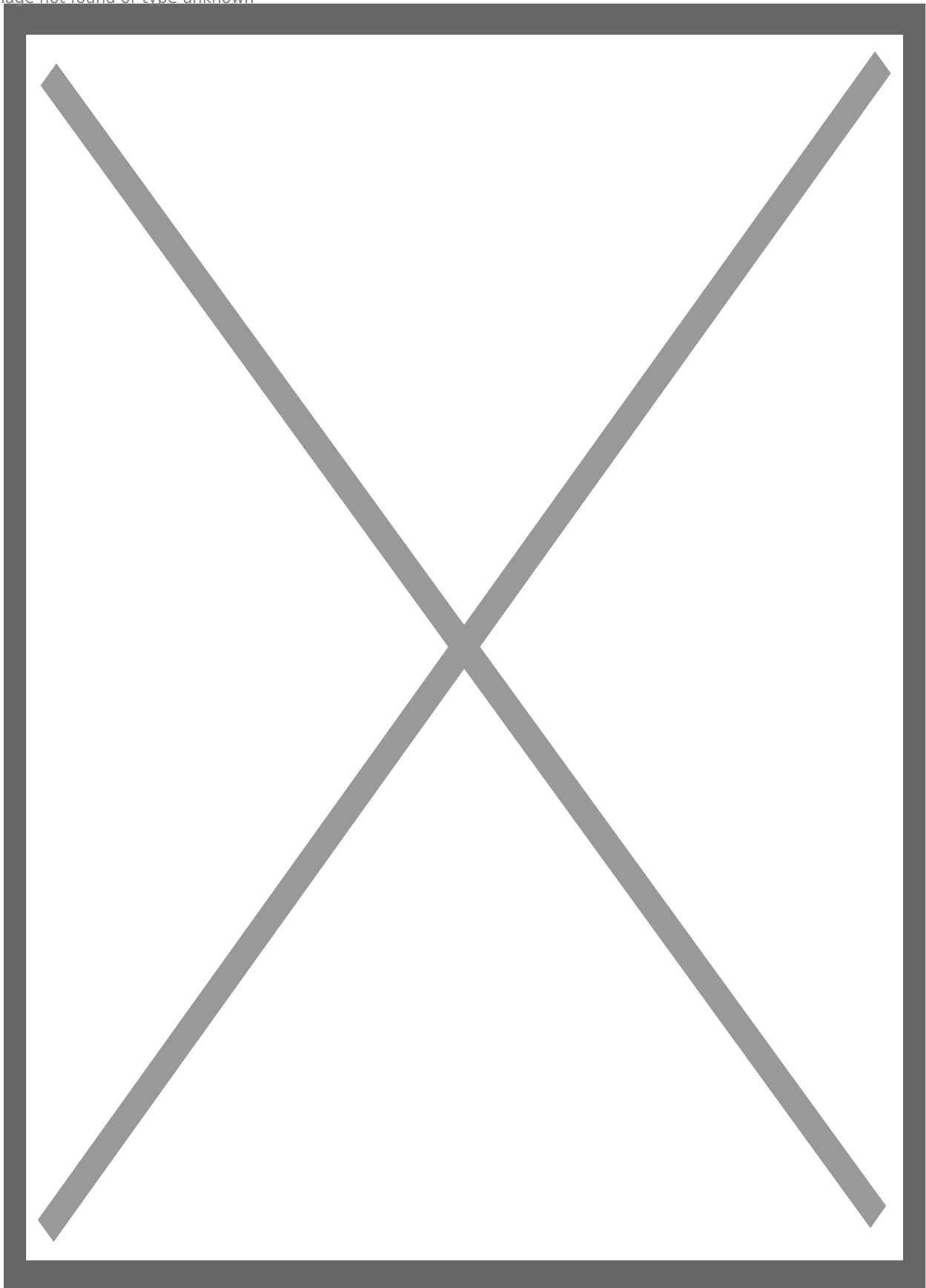
Eikadistes apparently the preface contains commentary - not sure about other parts. In the podcast I linked he's very clear about his evaluation, but I'm not sure how much of that is actually in the book. Sounds like he's written other books that also advocate the "Faith-based" approach so it's likely his opinions about Epicurus are in several places.

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**Post by “Cassius” of April 14, 2026 at 5:50 PM**

There is also this that Klavan has written on Epicurus:

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<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/5040-klavan-s-gateway-to-epicureanism-note-the-title-is-part-of-a-gateway-series-the/>

[All the Small Things: Epicureanism, Then and Now](#)

SPENCER KLAVAN What really matters in the world?

antigonejournal.com

And here is how Claude summarizes his views:

Here is a detailed account of Spencer Klavan's evaluation of Epicurean philosophy, drawn from his published writings and his recent book.

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## Spencer Klavan on Epicurean Philosophy

Klavan has engaged Epicureanism more thoroughly than almost any other contemporary conservative commentator, having edited and introduced a primary-source anthology, written a feature essay for *Antigone* journal, and discussed the subject on multiple podcasts. His view is a mixture of genuine scholarly respect and sharp philosophical opposition.

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### 1. He Sees Epicureanism as the Dominant Modern Worldview — and a Problem

Klavan's most striking thesis is that Epicurus is not a historical curiosity but the unacknowledged architect of contemporary secular liberalism. In his introduction to the anthology *Gateway to the Epicureans*, Klavan argues that Epicurus is "acknowledged or not — the source of secular 'woke' liberalism," and that the overwhelming success of modern science has turned what was once a fringe ancient philosophy into "the governing worldview of nearly everyone." [Annie Blooms](#) He quotes John Adams to drive home the point: "Two and a half centuries ago, John Adams complained, 'Our modern philosophers are all the low grovelling disciples of Epicurus.' That's even truer today." [Annie Blooms](#)

He identifies a whole constellation of ideas flowing from ancient atomism into the present: along with the new atomism has come "a whole constellation of fashionable Epicurean ideas: that peace and contentment are the most important things in life, that reality is an infinite expanse of multiverses, that divine power has no part to play in human affairs." [Annie Blooms](#)

## 2. He Takes the Epicurean Argument Seriously — on Its Own Terms

Klavan is careful not to caricature Epicurus. In his *Antigone* essay, he notes that Epicureanism "was (disappointingly) not the invitation to horny debauchery that has become associated with its name," but rather "a shot across the bow of the Socratic tradition, which agreed with conventional wisdom, at least insofar as it tended to view human life in the context of a divinely governed universe." [Antigone](#)

He summarizes the core Epicurean theological argument fairly: the trouble was not with belief in deities but with "the absurd presumption that such deities would ever give a moment's thought to mortals," citing Diogenes Laertius (*Lives* 10.123–4): "These assertions that people make about the gods are not innate convictions but inaccurate assumptions, which teach them that the gods do harm to bad men and reward good men." [Antigone](#)

He traces the argument's modern resonance, showing how Hume and Stephen Hawking are effectively channeling Epicurus, and takes this lineage seriously rather than dismissing it.

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## 3. His Core Philosophical Objection: The Self-Defeating Logic of Cosmic Insignificance

Klavan's deepest criticism is not theological but logical. He targets what he calls "Cosmic Insignificance Therapy" — the modern Epicurean-derived self-help claim that our smallness in the universe should be *relaxing*. He identifies this as "Epicurean, through and through," tracing it back to Democritus' *euthymia* and Epicurus' *ataraxia*. [Antigone](#)

His objection is that this reasoning is self-undermining: "if small things don't matter, nothing does. There is no philosophically rigorous way to draw the line between things that are big enough to be consequential, and things that are not. Do cities matter, but not individuals? Do planets, but not countries? Quasars, but not quarks?" [Antigone](#)

He pushes this further: the physical consequences of Epicurean insignificance extend not just to seminar attendance but to "your marriage and family, your kid's first birthday, your parents' burial, your contributions to science or literature, your ancestry, your entire civilization, your species and your planet. Small, small, small." [Antigone](#)

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## 4. His Counter-Thesis: Logos, Meaning, and the Socratic Tradition

Against Epicurean materialism, Klavan defends the Stoic/Platonic idea that a rational order (*logos*) governs the cosmos in a way that is attentive to human moral life. He argues that the very existence of the laws of physics "counts as further indication that the structure of our thoughts bears some relation to the structure of the cosmos," citing Einstein's ability to predict stellar phenomena from earthly reasoning as evidence that "some parts of our minds are structured not just in response to our local environment, but in conformity with the scaffolding of all things." [Antigone](#)

He closes by invoking William James: the fundamental article of faith is "that there is a truth, and that our minds and it are made for each other" — the very thing Epicurean materialism denies. [Antigone](#)

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## 5. Summary Verdict

Klavan's position is that Epicureanism is intellectually serious, historically influential, and philosophically important to understand — but ultimately self-defeating. It begins by liberating humanity from superstitious fear and ends by stripping life of all significance. He regards it as the deep philosophical root of modern secular liberalism, which in his view is a civilizational crisis, not a triumph.

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### Primary sources:

- Klavan's *Antigone* essay (May 2025): <https://antigonejournal.com/2025/05/epicureanism-then-and-now/>
  - *Gateway to the Epicureans* (his edited anthology): <https://annieblooms.com/book/9781684515165>
  - *The New Thinkery* podcast episode on Epicureanism (Feb. 2025): <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/spe...i=1000696197986>
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## Post by “Cassius” of April 14, 2026 at 8:08 PM

As we continue to discuss some of these issues I want to restate what I think are ultimate issues in Epicurean physics from which no retreat makes sense:

The first issue is whether matter is INFINITELY divisible. Epicurus says no in part because of the logical contradictions that would be involved in accepting it. It matters not whether we are talking what we today consider to be "atoms" or "subatomic particles" or "quarks" or whatever term is applied from here to the end of humanity. Logically, at SOME point the divisibility must stop.

Another issue is whether matter is acted on by some OUTSIDE FORCE (other than that which (1) we consider to have real material existence and (2) empty space) to give it organization. That is the issue we are discussing in terms of "weight vs gravity" or other terminology. The question is whether matter requires some OUTSIDE force (not matter and not space, which are the two divisions of all things) to bring about its organization. Epicurus again says no. To accept such an outside force is to open the door to any sort of "divinity" or "supernatural" that any mystic wants to suggest. It matters not whether what we are referring to as matter or material is hard bodies, energy, fields, or whatever, so long as it is repeatedly detectable and/or "measurable" by the senses and its technological amplifications

As I see it currently this pretty much sets the terms of the "nature of the universe" debate. Anyone here see that differently or able to state it better?

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## Post by “wbernys” of April 15, 2026 at 1:08 AM

Reviews like this are why i don't bother reading anything critical of Epicurus anymore, NOT because i think their CANNOT be good criticisms of Epicurus, but because they always state something that is direct opposite of what he says in his doctrines multiple times.

And they basically do the Richard Wolff meme about Socialism where by "materialism is when nihilism happens, and the more nihilism happens the more materialistic it is, and when it's really nihilistic, it's Epicureanism."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgiC8YfyDw> (Hope this doesn't violate politics rule)

### Quote from Cassius

"if small things don't matter, nothing does"

Gee, if only there a certain natural metric that humans had in order to determine what matters and what we should naturally pursue and avoid, like i dunno **pleasure**.

### Quote from Cassius

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/5040-klavan-s-gateway-to-epicureanism-note-the-title-is-part-of-a-gateway-series-the/>

the physical consequences of Epicurean insignificance extend not just to seminar attendance but to "your marriage and family, your kid's first birthday, your parents' burial, your contributions to science or literature, your ancestry, your entire civilization, your species and your planet. Small, small, small.

Aw yes because the Epicureans were famous for not bothering with caring about anything in their culture, except for you know...

*Epicurus serving in military service for Athens.*

*The Epicureans celebrating their community and friendship on the twentieth of every month.*

*Epicurus calling for his father and brothers to be honored.*

*Hermarchus guarding Epicurus bones.*

*Epicurus making provisions for the children of Metrodorus.*

*Lucretius trying to preserve Epicurus home from Memmius*

*Diogenes of Oenoanda writing for foreigners and future generations.*

*Longinus assassinating Caesar for the good of his country.*

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

citing Einstein's ability to predict stellar phenomena from earthly reasoning as evidence that "some parts of our minds are structured not just in response to our local environment, but in conformity with the scaffolding of all things."

Jesus...this is so stupid. He claims a trained scientist with advanced tools and extremely complicated mathematical observation theory based on observation problems, being able to predict phenomena that hasn't even been thought of until recently in human history is proof of ...a divine mind somehow.

I genuinely think this is just another article saying the same thing as many before. If the universe is only material it would just be really depressing so that's not right. Statements said by pathetic people who can't appreciate life without some mythical friend in the sky.

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**Post by "Cassius" of April 15, 2026 at 7:31 AM**

### [Quote from wbernys](#)

Reviews like this are why i don't bother reading anything critical of Epicurus anymore,

In case Wbernys' reference to "reviews like this" is not clear, it's a reference to the "Antigone" article by Spencer Klavan linked in my previous post.

Very good analysis Wbernys - and in this context I don't see any issues with that youtube link, which is just a short dramatization of how people oversimplify or caricature ideas they don't like.

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## Post by “Cassius” of April 15, 2026 at 4:05 PM

There's a second podcast which i haven't been able to listen to yet, but for which there is a full transcript [here](#).

Couple of highlights:

### **The Failure of Epicureanism as a System of Belief**

In the preface of *Gateway to the Epicureans*, Spencer Clavin asserts:

Quote

*“Epicureanism has proven a total failure... the idea that Epicurus had that once we cleared away the religious horizon, we would all be free to live these contented, placid lives, I think that has been just totally refuted.”*

**[31:02]**

Clavin critiques the inadequacy of Epicurean atomism in explaining the complexities of modern physics and the ethical shortcomings in addressing contemporary existential crises. He contends that the simplistic materialism of Epicurus fails to satisfy the human quest for meaning, contributing to widespread despair and societal issues like declining birth rates.

### **The Importance of Studying Epicurean Letters Today**

Addressing the perceived obsolescence of Epicureanism, **Spencer Clavin** advocates for the continued relevance of Epicurus's letters:

## Quote

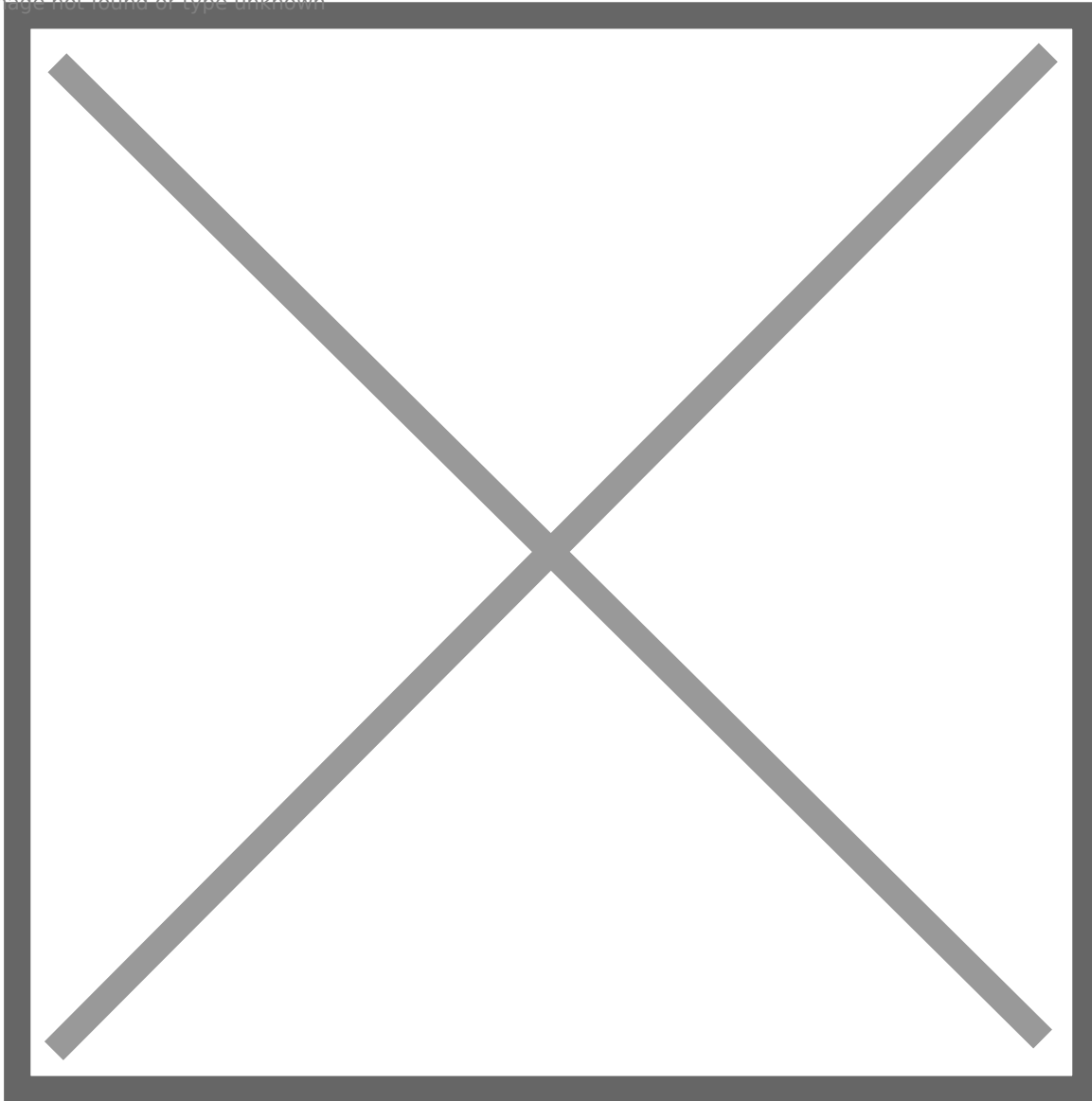
*"...unless you understand that you are swimming in water, you actually can't decide whether to get onto land."*

**[34:03]**

Clavin argues that studying Epicureanism provides critical self-awareness of the prevailing materialistic worldview, enabling individuals to evaluate and possibly transcend its limitations. By understanding Epicurean foundations, one can better navigate and critique the philosophical underpinnings of modern society.

it's episode 356 listenable directly at the link below.

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tunein.com

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**Post by “Brandnoz” of April 18, 2026 at 10:28 AM**

I finished reading this book. I liked the selections from Lucretius and Newton. That was my first time reading Lucretius. Klavan does have commentary throughout the book, and otherwise only

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writes the preface, but he ends the book with Maxwell:

"They continued this day as they were created, perfect in number and measure and weight, and from the ineffaceable characters impressed on them we may learn that aspirations after accuracy in measurement, truth in statement, and justice in action, which we reckon among our noblest attributes as men, are ours because they are essential constituents of the image of Him Who in the beginning created, not only the heaven and the earth, but the materials of which heaven and earth consist."

If I wasn't familiar with Epicurus already, and this was my reading on him, it would have been confusing. It does seem like there is some intellectual dishonesty in this work. Because it is not titled 'Against Epicurus' you would think the author is for the ideology they are writing about. The author essentially used Epicurus's science and logic to make a case for creationism in the end.

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### **Post by "Brandnoz" of April 18, 2026 at 11:13 AM**

I had a question. This part from Thomas Jefferson on the virtues of Epicurus, did he just come up with this? I haven't seen them anywhere else. It seems Epicurus was bigger on a pleasant life cannot be lived without the virtues, but we don't live for the virtues like the Stoics.

Virtue consists in: 1. Prudence. 2. Temperance. 3. Fortitude. 4. Justice  
to which are opposed: 1. Folly. 2. Desire. 3. Fear. 4. Deceit.

I'm guessing these would be seen as inaccurate? I know Epicurus said that prudence can be more important than philosophy, but Temperance and Justice seem like borrowings from Stoicism. It seems weird that Jefferson liked Epictetus and Epicurus and I find lately that more people I know prefer Epictetus out of the Stoics, but they seem to be contradictory.

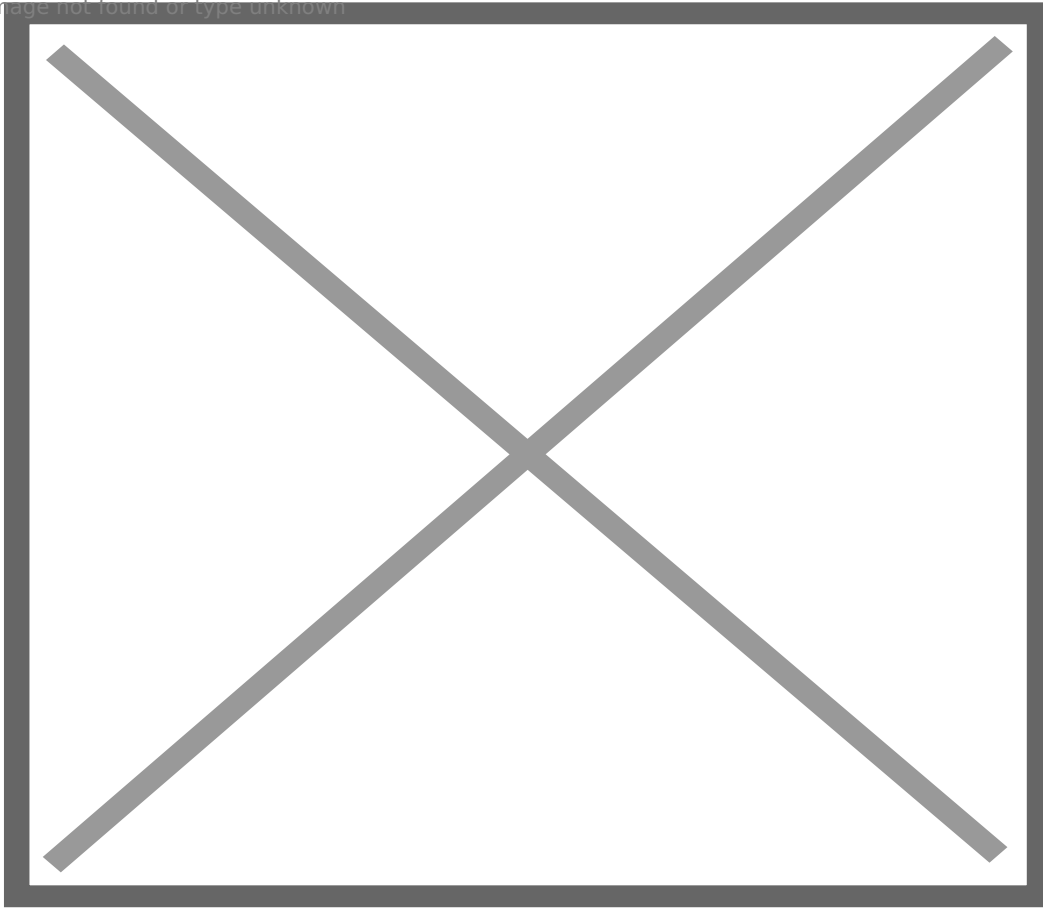
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### **Post by "Cassius" of April 18, 2026 at 11:38 AM**

I personally consider the four virtues listed to track what seems pretty much a classical list. The "opposites" seem to me to be more Jefferson's word choice, and I'd certainly question listing "Desire" unless a lot more is understood about what is meant.

Have you read the Torquatus narrative where he discusses Epicurus' view of the virtues?

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[Cicero's "Torquatus" Presentation of Epicurean Ethics - from "On Ends" - Epicureanfriends.com](http://www.epicureanfriends.com)  
[www.epicureanfriends.com](http://www.epicureanfriends.com)

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**Post by "Titus" of May 4, 2026 at 1:02 AM**

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Klavan's position is that Epicureanism is intellectually serious, historically influential, and philosophically important to understand — but ultimately self-defeating. It begins by liberating humanity from superstitious fear and ends by stripping life of all significance.

And Klavan also adds:

"Despite what we may profess to the contrary, most of us are moved by a powerful intuition that **meaning does exist, at the level of the individual human life.** The moral

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consequences of trying to suppress or explain away this basic intuition are exactly as monstrous and absurd as the physical consequences of trying to do a science experiment while doubting that valid observation is possible. If phrases like "moral worth" have any meaningful content at all then they must be built into the fabric of existence, not just coded as expedient fictions into our evolutionary programming. If so, then it starts to seem eerily possible that our sense of right and wrong is in fact reflective, however distantly, of a **logos that governs the whole universe.**"

I would like to tell him that I clearly acknowledge that meaning does exist, at the level of the individual human life. This is, because at the individual level my feelings and perceptions **exist**. This is the very reason why something matters.

It's also always funny to read argumentation on logos. This is superstitious in itself. Logos has to be self-evident and non-independent from ourselves, clearly to access and unable to deny. Otherwise I would like to ask why is it dependent on us to govern the universe? I know, I get him, he would argue logos doesn't depend on us, but we should align with it because it is an ultimate reality we not yet understand correctly...

"Epicureanism has proven a total failure... the idea that Epicurus had that once we cleared away the religious horizon, we would all be free to live these contented, placid lives, I think that has been just totally refuted."

Is there anything Klavin offers in return? (Except for abstract formulations?)

#### [Quote from Cassius](#)

##### The Failure of Epicureanism as a System of Belief

In the preface of Gateway to the Epicureans, Spencer Clavin asserts:

Clavin critiques the inadequacy of Epicurean atomism in explaining the complexities of modern physics and the ethical shortcomings in addressing contemporary existential crises. He contends that the simplistic materialism of Epicurus fails to satisfy the human quest for meaning, contributing to widespread despair and societal issues like declining birth rates.

My personal conclusion is, people in the modern (for critics of the term modern I should say "current") world are eaten up by all kinds of sorts of influences and activities in the search for meaning. Conversely, Epicurean thought could be presented as a cure that guides people to focus on the relevant experiences that are within their reach.

Having only read a glimpse of Klavin, it seems his key strategy is adding perfect sounding words, words, words (ideas) without having them to be contested in the real world. Do I get him too short?

## Post by “Don” of May 4, 2026 at 7:01 AM

This thread had flown under my radar, so I was curious to check out its Amazon page:

Best Sellers Rank

- #318,831 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)
- #543 in Ancient Greek & Roman Philosophy
- #805 in Political Philosophy (Books)
- #1,008 in Philosophy of Ethics & Morality

Not exactly burning up the charts, even in the niche categories. Good.

And this line, evidently from the book, made me both 😡 and 😏:

*In his own time, Epicurus was a fringe thinker. He and his few followers speculated...*

One of the pre-eminent schools in the ancient world that had a lineage stretching directly from Epicurus for centuries and had a presence stretching from Gaul to Asia Minor described as "fringe" and a few followers?? Disingenuous and mendacious that seems to me.

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## Post by “Patrikios” of May 4, 2026 at 7:21 PM

### [Quote from Don](#)

I was curious to check out its Amazon page:

So, if someone does go to the Amazon webpage for this Klavan book, it is interesting to see what else is served up.

With Klavan's book, it is suggested with purchase of Epictetus Guide to Stoic Philosophy. But the lineup of books is heartening under

**Customers who viewed this item also viewed:**



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### **Post by “Brandnoz” of May 5, 2026 at 10:40 AM**

In my local Books A Million, this was the only book on Epicureanism, which I find misleading because the author's purpose is to mislead people away from the topic. In my local Barnes & Nobles, I found Lucretius but nothing else on Epicureanism. It seems to me that the average person is not darting to the philosophy section of the book store, nor is very familiar with any of the ancient Greek philosophies. But none the less, there is always Plato and Aristotle. When I worked for a bookstore for a short time, I never recall anyone buying any philosophy books either. So it seems weird to me that the section is so selective given it doesn't seem to have much demand, yet seems to be purposeful selected to support one view. I can see why in a majority Christian society why people would make Epicureanism hard to find even on accident, but what surprises me is if that is the case, why is there always Nietzsche?

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### **Post by “Cassius” of May 5, 2026 at 12:45 PM**

I think that's a very perceptive comment Btandnoz. I don't think it's the Christian element that is making those selections - more the philosophy establishment - and it seems to me it's generally possible to find Marcus Aurelius and sometimes others on Stoicism.

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### **Post by “Brandnoz” of May 6, 2026 at 7:42 AM**

I can always find Marcus (often 3-4 versions of Meditations) and Epictetus in any bookstore so far. If Epicurus is suppressed despite being capable of offering more utility to human life, and if it is because he is disagreeable to the popular world view, then surely Nietzsche must be more so. Unless, the only reason I can think of, Nietzsche is protected by being eccentric and unclear. I wonder if Nietzsche has been safe despite being many times more disagreeable to the popular world view, because his conclusions are not nearly as clear in his writings as Epicurus. If so, the conclusion would be that if you intend to write philosophy that is against the popular world view, it is better that implied with hidden meanings and not fully clear. Adding an obstacle of work in comprehension seems to be a safety net to keep only the readers willing to go deep enough, to gain a true understanding of the works meaning. Since Nietzsche seems so difficult to understand, I cannot imagine an equivalent work for "Gateway to Nietzsche" where someone slyly tried to simplify then undermine, most likely to gain status by strengthening the values of the popular world view to the current majority. But this is only my guess. It could also be that Nietzsche continues to stick around because the current intellectual / academia community likes to read him as a status symbol while not agreeing or understanding what he is saying.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of May 6, 2026 at 8:01 AM**

I think a lot of the commercial appeal is 1 "Thus Spake Zarathustra" is a cool name, and (2) there's a market who want to say that they have read the philosopher who said "God is dead."

No doubt the people who are specialists or work hard to understand it eventually figure out what he is saying, but I personally don't know any educated layman who can credibly say that they have read "Thus Spake Zarathustra" and understand what it is about.

There's a coolness factor to things like "what doesn't kill us makes us stronger" that's about as far as most people get.

Which is sort of in contrast with Kant whose writing style comes across to most people as not cool but impenetrable.

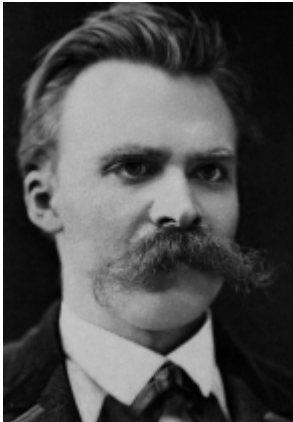
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### **Post by “Don” of May 6, 2026 at 8:18 AM**

[Quote from Brandenoz](#)

Nietzsche continues to stick around

It's the moustache.



[Quote from Cassius](#)

I think a lot of the commercial appeal is 1 "Thus Spake Zarathustra" is a cool name, and (2) there's a market who want to say that they have read the philosopher who said "God is dead."

[Quote from Cassius](#)

There's a coolness factor to things like "what doesn't kill us makes us stronger" that's about as far as most people get.

Agreed on those, too.

You can buy Nietzsche and have him on your bookshelf and make people think you're countercultural.

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**Post by “Brandnoz” of May 6, 2026 at 8:55 AM**

Those are some excellent points!

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**Post by “Cassius” of May 6, 2026 at 12:51 PM**

The more I think about it I can't remember the last time I read a popular article on "What Thus Spake Zarathustra Means To Me." 😊

Not faulting Nietzsche here - just agreeing with the basic observation that he is always being cited but few have any idea why beyond a couple of basic slogans.

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### **Post by “Eikadistes” of May 7, 2026 at 8:50 AM**

I'll bet that reading assignments partially inform Barnes & Noble sales.

If you study philosophy, you'll probably be requested to purchase a copy of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* at some point in your education. Like we discussed in another thread, I never heard the name "Epicurus" mentioned **once** in my *entire*, formal education (part of which was Philosophy in college).

I think that applies to whatever Academia considers to be "the classics".