

Epictetus and Jesus—Selected Comparative Teachings

Epictetus (Discourses)

Kinship of God (Book I:9)

Equal to gods (I:12:26))
(becoming a god—II:19:27)

Animals have all they need (I:16)

Don't attach value to things (I:18:11)

Keep commandments of Zeus (I:25)

Escape the fear of death (I:27)

If it pleases the gods (Socrates. I:29)

What master do you serve? (II:1)

Part of the whole, like the body (II:5)

Jesus (Gospels)

Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, “You are gods”’? (John 10, Psalm 82) + John 17

(cf. Gen. 3:5: “you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”)

Matthew 6: “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

Don't store up treasures

Matthew 22: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

John 11: “the one who believes in me shall never die”

Thy will be done

Which master (God or money)

Matthew 6: “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Particle of Zeus (II:8)

Luke 17: “For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among/within you.”

If someone wrongs me (II:10:24)

Luke 6: “If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.”

I am your teacher (II:19:29)

Rabbi—Teacher (Matthew 23: ““But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers.”

Attend to your wounds (II:21:22)

Healing stories

Hate brother and father, etc (II:22:15)

Hate your family. . .and follow

Soul is like a bowl of water (III:3:20)

John 4: “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

I will what Zeus wants (IV:1:89)

Thy will be done

Possessions (IV:3)

Give all you have and follow

One road to peace and happiness (IV:4:39)

“The Way”—what does it profit to own the world

Accept tests (IV:4:35)

Tested by satan (adversary; prosecutor)

Handbook

“If you would be free. . .do not wish to have things other people control” (14)

John 8: The truth will set you free* + Luke 12: ““Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

The two handles: don’t dwell on the wrong your brother does to you (43)

Forgiveness (Matthew 18: 70 times 7)

Fragment

Make human nature complete (28b)

“Nature has given us one tongue but two ears, that we may hear from others twice as much as we speak.” (attributed)

“No one is free who is not master of themselves.” (attributed)

Be perfect (complete)

Have eyes to see and ears to hear

*The truth will set you free.