

Lesson 3 Handout – Peter and John Jailed After Healing

Acts 3:1-4:31

Lesson 3 Answers:

1. Why did Peter and John heal the lame man when he asked instead for money?
Healing is so much more valuable than begging since after healing, the man can work to feed himself and not be embarrassed by begging. Secondly, this was an opportunity to display the power of Jesus by healing the man through another man.
2. Why did Peter invoke the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth when he healed the lame man?
Peter called on Jesus to do the healing so that observers became witnesses to the power of healing. Furthermore, this indicated that Peter was not the source of healing power but the risen and ascended Savior, Jesus Christ.
3. What specific accusations about Jesus did Peter place on the Jewish listeners while preaching on Solomon's Colonnade?
 - *You handed him over to be killed.*
 - *You disowned him before Pilate.*
 - *You disowned the Holy and Righteous One.*
 - *You asked that a murderer be released to you.*
 - *You killed the author of life.*
4. Why would Peter instruct the Jews who acted in ignorance during the crucifixion events be told to repent? Is ignorance overlooked?
Conviction of sin and repentance are necessary for forgiveness from that sin.
Ignorance is not overlooked. So was Jesus' request to His Father that *He forgive them because they do not know what they are doing* ignored?
5. Where is the quotation found in the Scriptures from verses 22 and 23?
[Deut. 18:15,18-19](#)
6. Where is the quotation found in the Scriptures from verse 25?
[Gen. 22:18; 26:4](#)
7. What question is asked by the elders and scribes of Peter and John after their arrest and overnight stay in jail? Is this a proper question?
By what power or what name did you do this? This is a legitimate question. Everyone must ask this question to anyone who claims authority to do or say something.

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8. Peter quotes from what Scripture in verse 11. Where is that quotation found?
Psalms 118:22 - 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'
9. Do the elders and scribes believe the forty-year old lame man was healed? Why did they decide to not punish Peter and John? What is the irony in this?
The Jewish leaders cannot deny the man standing with the Apostles had been healed from lameness since birth. They are afraid to punish Peter and John because the people are praising God for extending healing to them. It is ironic that these Jewish leaders did not recognize or acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, the one they have been awaiting for centuries; they were continuing the Jewish tradition of rejecting the prophets of God.
10. It is interesting that the believers prayed after Peter and John were released. Included in that prayer was a quote from Psalms. Which psalm?
Psalm 2:1-2
11. What happened that indicated their prayer was heard?
Verse 31 says: After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.
12. What is significant about 'the name' Jesus? Is this meaningful today?
Names are how we know each other. They contain meaning for people. They define who we are. We call on the name of Jesus when we pray; we ask for His assistance in asking His father for something. Names and naming authority for what we do is very important because it shows our lower relationship to the higher. But, we must not use names inappropriately e.g. invoking the name of God in vain.

The Jewish Temple and its Functions

By Salem Acuff

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- Worship: Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Booths, Daily Sacrifice
- Money Changers- When Jews traveled to Jerusalem from other lands, they brought money for room, board, and souvenirs. Most importantly, they were required to pay the annual half-shekel tribute to the temple. The currency they had would be of their native land or acquired in trade along their way. Money changers performed a key service when they converted the varieties of local coinage into the required tribute of silver shekels or half-shekels of Tyre. A trader would exchange foreign currency for a fee and would change coins to larger or smaller denominations for a fee. Matt. 21:12 –Jesus turns over the tables of the money changers
- Merchants- Merchants sold animals—doves or cattle—for temple sacrifices; it was easier for travelers to buy an animal near the temple than to bring one along.
- Tabernacle used for more than 400 years
- The first Temple was built by Solomon and destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
- A remnant of Jews returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the next Temple was completed in 516 B.C., exactly 70 years after its destruction. Enemies never destroyed that Zerubbabel Temple, although the Syrians did defile it for a period of three years (168–165 B.C.).
- Herod began his new construction around 20 B.C. Some confusion arises at this point, since both Zerubbabel’s and Herod’s Temples are referred to collectively as the Second Temple. Herod’s work was more of a reconstruction rather than an entirely new venture. Although, the reconstruction would have made the former unrecognizable.
- Retaining walls were built to create the Temple Mount by using thousands of tons of backfilling material. The east retaining wall was 150 feet tall. The dimensions of the Temple Mount exceed 1,500 feet long (north to south) and 900 feet wide—an area of more than 40 acres.
- The finishing touches were not actually completed until around 64 A.D., just six years before it was destroyed.
- 70 C.E. the temple was destroyed by Rome on the same date that the first temple was destroyed by the Babylonians, 9th of Av.
- The Herodian Temple consisted of two basic areas: a central sanctuary and an outer courtyard. The sanctuary could be called the *Temple Proper*, since it was there that the main sacrificial activities took place. Entering the sanctuary from the east through the Beautiful Gate—where Peter and John encountered the lame man (Acts 3:1–2).
- Proceeding through the courtyard, people would climb the 15 steps of a large staircase, where the Levites would sing the Psalms in the daily liturgy. At the top of the stairs, Israelite males proceeded through the ornate Nicanor’s Gate into the Court of Israel. This small section, limited to men, was where the worshipers would hand their sacrifices over a small fence to priests on the other side in the appropriately named Court of the

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Priests. An elaborate system of drainage channels helped solve the problems associated with such a large number of bleeding animals.

- Surrounding the sanctuary and these courtyards was a low fence that separated the Israelite worshipers from the Gentile visitors. Attached to this fence, or balustrade, were a number of plaques warning Gentiles that they would be responsible for their own deaths if they proceeded beyond it. Paul was almost torn apart by the crowd for supposedly taking a Gentile past this barricade (Acts 21:18–29).
- Mark 13:1-2 As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, *"Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"* And Jesus said to him, *"Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down."*
- If Jesus states that not one stone will be left upon another, why is this wall still standing?



A Brief History of the Roman Empire

Curator - Milwaukee Public Museum

From its founding in 625 BC to its fall in AD 476, the Roman Empire conquered and integrated dozens of cultures. The influence of these cultures can be seen in objects, such as oil lamps, made and used throughout the Empire.

The history of the Roman Empire can be divided into three distinct periods: The Period of Kings (625-510 BC), Republican Rome (510-31 BC), and Imperial Rome (31 BC – AD 476).

Founding (c. 625 BC)

Rome was founded around 625 BC in the areas of ancient Italy known as Etruria and Latium. It is thought that the city-state of Rome was initially formed by Latium villagers joining together with settlers from the surrounding hills in response to an Etruscan invasion. It is unclear whether they came together in defense or as a result of being brought under Etruscan rule. Archaeological evidence indicates that a great deal of change and unification took place around 600 BC which likely led to the establishment of Rome as a true city.

Period of Kings (625-510 BC)

The first period in Roman history is known as the Period of Kings, and it lasted from Rome's founding until 510 BC. During this brief time Rome, led by no fewer than six kings, advanced both militaristically and economically with increases in physical boundaries, military might, and production and trade of goods including oil lamps. Politically, this period saw the early formation of the Roman constitution. The end of the Period of Kings came with the decline of Etruscan power, thus ushering in Rome's Republican Period.

Republican Rome (510-31 BC)

Rome entered its Republican Period in 510 BC. No longer ruled by kings, the Romans established a new form of government whereby the upper classes ruled, namely the senators and the equestrians, or knights. However, a dictator could be nominated in times of crisis. In 451 BC, the Romans established the "Twelve Tables," a standardized code of laws meant for public, private, and political matters.

Rome continued to expand through the Republican Period and gained control over the entire Italian peninsula by 338 BC. It was the Punic Wars from 264-146 BC, along with some conflicts with Greece that allowed Rome to take control of Carthage and Corinth and thus become the dominant maritime power in the Mediterranean.

Soon after, Rome's political atmosphere pushed the Republic into a period of chaos and civil war. This led to the election of a dictator, L. Cornelius Sulla, who served from 82-80 BC. Following Sulla's resignation in 79 BC, the Republic returned to a state of unrest. While Rome continued to be governed as a Republic for another 50 years, the shift to Imperialism began to materialize in 60 BC when Julius Caesar rose to power.

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By 51 BC, Julius Caesar had conquered Celtic Gaul and, for the first time, Rome's borders had spread beyond the Mediterranean region. Although the Senate was still Rome's governing body, its power was weakening. Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC and replaced by his heir, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian) who ruled alongside Mark Antony. In 31 BC Rome overtook Egypt which resulted in the death of Mark Antony and left Octavian as the unchallenged ruler of Rome. Octavian assumed the title of Augustus and thus became the first emperor of Rome.

Imperial Rome (31 BC – AD 476)

Rome's Imperial Period was its last, beginning with the rise of Rome's first emperor in 31 BC and lasting until the fall of Rome in AD 476. During this period, Rome saw several decades of peace, prosperity, and expansion. By AD 117, the Roman Empire had reached its maximum extent, spanning three continents including Asia Minor, northern Africa, and most of Europe.

In AD 286 the Roman Empire was split into eastern and western empires, each ruled by its own emperor. The western empire suffered several Gothic invasions and, in AD 455, was sacked by Vandals. Rome continued to decline after that until AD 476 when the Western Roman Empire came to an end. The eastern Roman Empire, more commonly known as the Byzantine Empire, survived until the 15th century AD. It fell when Turks took control of its capital city, Constantinople (modern day Istanbul in Turkey) in AD 1453.

Listing of Roman Leaders

Metropolitan Museum of Art
October 2004

Julio-Claudian Dynasty

Augustus	27 B.C.–14 A.D.
Tiberius	14–37 A.D.
Gaius Germanicus (Caligula)	37–41 A.D.
Claudius	41–54 A.D.
Nero	54–68 A.D.
Galba	68–69 A.D.
Otho	69 A.D.
Vitellius	69 A.D.

Flavian Dynasty

Vespasian	69–79 A.D.
Titus	79–81 A.D.
Domitian	81–96 A.D.

The Five Good Emperors

Nerva	96–98 A.D.
Trajan	98–117 A.D.
Hadrian	117–138 A.D.
Antoninus Pius	138–161 A.D.
Marcus Aurelius	161–180 A.D.

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Antonine Dynasty

Antoninus Pius	138–161 A.D.
Marcus Aurelius	161–180 A.D.
<i>with</i> Lucius Verus	161–169 A.D.
Commodus	177–192 A.D.
<i>with</i> Marcus Aurelius	177–180 A.D.
Pertinax	193 A.D.
Didius Julianus	193 A.D.
Pescennius Niger	194 A.D.

Severan Dynasty

Septimius	193–211 A.D.
Caracalla	211–217 A.D.
<i>with</i> Geta	211–212 A.D.
Macrinus	217–218 A.D.
Diadumenianus	218 A.D.
Elagabalus	218–222 A.D.
Alexander Severus	222–235 A.D.

The Soldier Emperors

Maximinus I	235–238 A.D.
Gordian I and II (<i>in Africa</i>)	238 A.D.
Balbinus and Pupienus (<i>in Italy</i>)	238 A.D.
Gordian III	238–244 A.D.
Philip the Arab	244–249 A.D.
Trajan Decius	249–251 A.D.
Trebonianus Gallus (<i>with</i> Volusian)	251–253 A.D.
Aemilianus	253 A.D.
Gallienus	253–268 A.D.
<i>with</i> Valerian	253–260 A.D.

Gallic Empire (West)

Postumus	260–269 A.D.
Laelian	268 A.D.
Marius	268 A.D.
Victorinus	268–270 A.D.
Domitianus	271 A.D.
Tetricus I and II	270–274 A.D.

Palmyrene Empire

Odenathus	c. 250–267 A.D.
Vaballathus (<i>with</i> Zenobia)	267–272 A.D.

The Soldier Emperors (*continued*)

Claudius II Gothicus	268–270 A.D.
Quintillus	270 A.D.
Aurelian	270–275 A.D.
Tacitus	275–276 A.D.

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Florianus	276 A.D.
Probus	276–282 A.D.
Carus	282–283 A.D.
Carinus	283–284 A.D.
Numerianus	283–284 A.D.
Diocletian (<i>and</i> Tetrarchy)	284–305 A.D.

Western Roman Empire

Maximianus	287–305 A.D.
Constantius I	305–306 A.D.
Severus II	306–307 A.D.
Constantine I	307–337 A.D.

Eastern Roman Empire

Diocletian	284–305 A.D.
Galerius	305–311 A.D.
Maxentius (<i>Italy</i>)	306–312 A.D.
Maximinus Daia	309–313 A.D.
Licinius	308–324 A.D.

Constantine Dynasty

Constantine II	337–340 A.D.
Constans	337–350 A.D.
Constantius II	337–361 A.D.
Magnentius	350–353 A.D.
Julian	361–363 A.D.
Jovian	363–364 A.D.

Western Roman Empire

Valentinian	364–375 A.D.
Gratian	375–383 A.D.
Valentinian II	375–392 A.D.
Eugenius	392–394 A.D.
Honorius	395–423 A.D.
Constantinius III	421 A.D.
John	423–425 A.D.
Valentinian III	425–455 A.D.
Petronius Maximus	455 A.D.
Avitus	455–456 A.D.
Majorian	457–461 A.D.
Severus III	461–465 A.D.
Anthemius	467–472 A.D.
Olybrius	472 A.D.
Glycerius	473–474 A.D.
Julius Nepos	474–475 A.D.
Romulus Augustulus	475–476 A.D.

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Eastern Roman Empire

Valens	364–378 A.D.
Theodosius I	379–395 A.D.
Arcadius	395–408 A.D.
Theodosius II	408–450 A.D.
Marcian	450–457 A.D.
Leo	457–474 A.D.
Zeno	474–491 A.D.
Anastasius	491–518 A.D.

Philosophy of the Greeks and Romans

by Valentin Ortiz Juez

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HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY

In the Hellenistic period a spiritual historical process takes place, whose consequences are felt to this day, in our current conception of Philosophy. It is the evolution of it until it becomes an independent special science.

In the pre-Socratic time the philosopher was everything: scientific, doctor, technician, politician and along with all this, “the wise”. In the Hellenistic period the particular sciences are dismembered, as such, with a much more marked independence. Special research centres arise in which they are grown: Alexandria, Antioch, Pergamum, Rhodes. It is true that Philosophy now adheres to the great questions that were already consecrated as authentic philosophical problems by Plato and Aristotle, in the field of Logic, Ethics and Metaphysics.

But with this we also have, in return, the fact that philosophical problems acquire a human depth and that Philosophy is becoming a science of the “conception of the world”. It seizes man as such, the man who, at this time agitated and insecure by the wars of Alexander and the Diadochi (his generals and children), seeks in the inner man the salvation and happiness that external circumstances of the life cannot give him. That is why Ethics predominates in this period, which also includes the mission once entrusted to the religious myth, whose social significance progressively crumbles until it is diluted in the rationalism of a theoretical thought. Stoics and Epicureans offer a spiritual guidance of the soul and penetrate due to this with their influence in broad sectors of the people.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

With the entry of the Empire, times become even more turbulent, men feel internally more insecure and anxious. At the extreme point of this uneasiness of the times, the figure of Christ suddenly appears on the scene of the dejected world, who says of himself that he is the light of the world, the resurrection and life.

The nascent Christianity enters fully into the scene, and philosophy gradually fades from its hands the direction of the spirits. Throughout the Roman Empire the old philosophical schools continue their life. But this life languishes day by day with unequivocal signs of decline.

There are still heroic attempts to awaken and revive the spirit of the old culture. Neoplatonism is a magnificent expression of this, but a sustained and progressive evolution is lacking. The march of Christianity is certainly not a march of conquest and destruction, but rather a march after the truth and therefore does not come to extirpate Greek philosophy, but more

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exactly to absorb it. The eternal truths and values enlightened by the old philosophy are assimilated by the new thought.

Stoicism (STOA)

It is again in Athens where this new branch of philosophical thought is developed, and the meeting place will also name the school. We divide their philosophers into the three groups of Early, Middle and Late Stoa.

EARLY STOA

The founder is Zeno of Citium, Cyprus, who creates a school around 300 BC. He was a disciple of Crates, Stilpo and Xenocrates. However, he has been influenced by Crates (Cynicism) over any other current, and this will set the tone for the whole Stoa. We stumble upon the cynical influence in his theory of knowledge, in his metaphysics and in his ethics. His successor was Cleanthes of Assos, a sober man, firm of will, moral integrity and religiosity. From him we retain the first of the Hymns to Zeus, of deep religious sense, very significant to fix the spiritual appearance of the Stoa.

MIDDLE STOA

Its two main representatives are Panaetius and Posidonius. Panaetius spent long periods in Rome and was connected there with the circles of Scipio Africanus. It is from then on philosophy begins to be in Rome a requirement of the superior culture. It was otherwise the form of philosophy that came as cut by the pattern of the Roman spirit. Thus Cicero could explore extensively the writings of Panaetius on acting and omitting, on the stillness of mind and on providence, and more particularly on the duties.

LATE STOA

Three characters stand out: Seneca, master of Nero, whose mandate took his own life in 65 AD. Particularly characteristic are his writings on the questions of nature (Naturales Quaestiones), the treatises on clemency, on the benefits, on anger, as well as 20 books of moral letters to Lucilius, in which he paints a rather pessimistic picture of the customs and vices of his time. Epictetus, slave of Hierapolis, who lived as a freedman in Rome and from which proceeds the "Enchiridion". And Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher emperor. From him we preserve the "Soliloquies", aphorisms and diary notes, taken many times on the battlefield, and are typical of stoicism in general.

What is Philosophy for the Stoics? They define it this way: it is the science of divine and human things. They divide it into Logic, Physics and Ethics.

LOGIC

Stoic logic is not only a purely formal logic, but at the same time a material science, that is, it also deals with the problems included in what we now call Theory of Knowledge or Criteriology.

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Basis of knowledge

Sensism

The first is the origin of our knowledge. Here the Stoics think sensistically, and in it a point of affinity with the Cynics is discovered. The soul is not a plaque in which there is something already written “a priori”, but entirely as a clean board. It has to be filled with the contents that sensitive perception offers. What enters the spirit are representations. It transforms the representations, elaborating them and grouping them: but what ultimately retains and possesses does not go beyond being sensitive representations.

Image-copy theory

The function of representation and knowledge consists of certain copying and representing. It is based on a fundamental duality between subject and object and it is thought that the object of knowledge is something that can be transferred in image, leaving one printed as an exact copy of it in the soul. The representation or fantasy is that which is printed, recorded and sealed from the existing object as existing, as it would not happen with a nonexistent object. This is not only a naive realism, but also shows to what extent in this theory of the cognitive process, the knowledge of the corporeal external world plays a decisive role, a fact explained by the universal materialism of the Stoa.

The criterion of the truth

If knowledge is a certain copy or image, there is naturally an interest in looking for a point of support for the truth of that reproductive copy, a criterion of the truth. Because it is clear that we can deceive ourselves in our representations. Where to find the guarantee that the copy is like the model, and that the representations are adequate as the Stoics say? Such a criterion is put in the “katalepsis”, that is, in that quality of our representations, to which we cannot resist.

Elements of thought

The elements of formal thinking are, in the Stoics, the same as in Aristotle: judgment, concept and reason.

Judgment

It means a position of the subject in front of something. It takes place by assenting a representation. The assent testifies the persuasion that something is really as I represent it. Certainly, the assent is what makes the judgment really happen, but the decision on the true or false is not based on the will that gives the assent, but in the diversity of the same content of representation itself. If it agrees with reality, the judgment is true, and false otherwise.

Concept

The judgment is made up of concepts. Here also goes the Stoa with Aristotle, but sometimes completes it with certain touches of greater precision. The concept is looked at in Aristotle from the language, from the word. Universal concepts mean the same transformed representations in the Stoa.

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Reason

With the classification of possible, conditional statements, of the “if ...” form, from the point of view of the true and false, we are given the formulas that, filling them with variable contents, allow us, without further ado, characterize in advance an affirmation as true or false. It is a formalistic aspect that cannot fail bringing modern logic to thinking.

PHYSICS

Stoic physics deals with the great metaphysical questions. Two features are characteristic: materialism and pantheism.

Materialism

It is uncovered when the Stoic gives us the sense of being. After knowing its epistemological theory imbued with sensism, it will not surprise us that to the question about the essence of being, it does not give as an answer that reality is as much as corporeality. Being is also strength, energy. The force for the Stoics is that living force that occurs where there is breath, heat and fire; where life is not extinguished as in dead bodies, but possesses its characteristic tension, dynamic vigour. Therefore everything is matter and everything is also vital force.

Pantheism

We find it to the heart in the last depths and last foundation of being. The Stoic arises the problem of the ultimate foundation of being, but instinctively refuses to transcend this very being by seeking such a foundation. The foundation of the world is in itself. The world is eternal, interminable and so infinite, that it is enough to explain itself. The reason of the world and the providence involved in this process are certainly not the ideas and will of a personal, free spirit, but only the internal order of formation and movement that beats in the very matter. Matter is the last. The Stoa remains in a materialism.

Stoic religiosity

Stoic religiosity is an authentic feeling, warm and deep, as we can trace without any doubt about the Stoic anthems to Zeus that have been preserved for us. The numerous personal terms that in these hymns are applied to the divinity and come mainly from Homer’s mythology, are nevertheless not more than metaphors, and cannot remove us the conviction that the religious sentiment of the Stoic is a feeling at the level of the natural, because his god does not go beyond being the All.

ETHICS

Ethics is what has historically made the Stoa more famous. Its philosophy acquired specifically, thanks to Ethics, a tone of cosmovisional power, whose effectiveness was felt in extension and depth. But the Stoic Ethics presupposes a series of ideas about the soul life of man that go beyond the simple framework of a psychology, to constitute the anthropological-dogmatic basis of Stoic Morality.

Man’s soul life

Man is not only body; he also has a soul. But the word soul can have several meanings. Soul can be understood as that which gives man self-movement and with it life. The soul can also be understood as one of the members of the tripartition body-soul-reason, which corresponds to

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the Platonic-Aristotelian distinction of vegetative, sensitive and rational soul powers. It can also mean soul “the driving part of the soul”, the reason. And finally the term soul can be a complex name to designate all these functions in their totality and in their complex interaction. But in any case the soul is “pneuma” and, as such, it must be considered as an aggregation of fire and air. Sometimes it is divided into parts, sometimes it is conceived as a unit. On the one hand it is essentially different from the body, on the other it is the principle of the life of the body and, therefore, in living unity with it.

The core point of Stoic anthropology is the doctrine about instincts. The natural point or instinct belongs in itself to the sensitive soul. But it is together influenced by body, sensitivity and reason. From the body, through sensitive impressions, man receives representations that, automatically and spontaneously, unleash the instinctive movements.

The previous philosophy, whose conception of man exploit the Stoics, included in this context the question of the immortality of the soul. At least the rational part of the soul always appeared as something divine and eternal.

An indefinable breath of tired resignation runs through the pages of Marcus Aurelius’s Soliloquies. His sense of duty is undoubtedly elevated and noble, his perseverance may seem heroic, but the whole is offered as a horizon closed to hope.

Stoic ethics is based on this fundamental principle: good consists in living according to nature. This can be understood in two ways, because in two ways the word nature can be said: individual and cosmic. If we look at the individual nature, we are in the same starting point of the Cynics.

But it must be kept in mind that the highest element of nature, both human and cosmic, is the reason. To live according to reason is to triumph over passions, to dominate them to achieve imperturbability (apathy) and to become lord of oneself (autarky). Such is the stoic sage. Nothing dominates him. Nothing disturbs him. He does not ask for what he wants to happen. He accommodates events and wants what happens.

EPICUREANISM

The Epicureans are the hereditary enemies of the Stoics. The controversies between the two camps had no end. The founder of the school is Epicurus of Samos. He was a disciple of Nausiphanes. The atomistic ascendancy is characteristic of this whole school that Epicurus directed in his gardens in Athens.

Due to these gardens, the epicureans were given the nickname of “those of the Garden”. The figure of the founder of the school constitutes the soul of the group even more than the method or the dogmatics cultivated there. Epicurus was a fine, noble and attractive personality. His disinterest, his gentleness of treatment, his kindness and his high concept of friendship were held in high esteem. His maxims were respected as dogmas. Of his writings, which are up to 300, only few fragments have reached us.

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The Philosophy of Epicureanism is also divided into Logic, Physics and Ethics, and Ethics is also the apex and key of the entire system.

LOGIC

Logic is also called Canonical, because it gives the measure (canon=rule) of the right knowledge. But we are now very far from that valuation of knowledge by the very knowledge that we had in Aristotle. Knowing and learning will now be by and for life. They are conceived entirely according to utility.

The Epicureans will define Philosophy as an activity of the soul whose knowledge has to bring us happiness. Compared to them, the Stoics, men of reality, are still excessively theoretical. But not only in its purpose, also in its nature knowledge is reduced. According to the Epicureans, all knowing is sensitive perception, and nothing else. And this feeling and knowledge take place when some little images are released from the objects that slip through our sensory organs. This is well understood primarily from the visual sensation, but it is the same in the other senses. Epicureanism is sensism and is materialism, as was its model, the Atomism of Democritus.

Criterion of truth

If one speaks of true and false representations, the Epicureans naturally have to set a criterion that assures them of the authenticity and truth of their knowledge. Sensitive perceptions are always true. Likewise, to representations of fantasy correspond certain active influences, "because they move the soul". This amounts to saying that the truth of all sensation consists in the psychological reality of such an impression and soul affection, and only in it.

PHYSICS

In metaphysics, Epicurus and his school renew the Atomism of Democritus. As in Democritus, we now also have an infinite number of ultimate, indivisible, solid elements: the atoms. They lack quality and only differ quantitatively by shape and weight. They are not absolutely diverse, but there are certain similarities between them that allow us to talk about certain classes. The number of these classes is limited, but in each group there are infinite atoms.

It will also be necessary to admit an empty space in which the atoms are found and move. That space is unlimited. With these two elements, bodies and space, the whole being is explained; nowhere for another third class of beings. It is not materialism. The very soul and spirit would be body, finer and more subtle matter, but always matter. The soul is a part of the body, as is the hand and the foot. It is also divisible, and consequently mortal like the body. Atoms exist from all eternity and will always exist. Their total sum always remains constant and equal. This principle expresses the law of the conservation of the substance, fundamental dogma of materialism of all time.

Epicurus, with his concept of chance, pursues a peculiar attempt, to relieve man of the oppressive idea of fate. He believes in the freedom of the will. The Epicureans held a merciless fight against the Stoic fatum, for love of human freedom. His theoretical refuge was the concept of chance, explained in his own way.

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The second attack front of the Epicureans are the religious myths. They were as annoying as the fatum. Since that of intervening the gods in the affairs of men, particularly the tales from beyond the grave with the judgment of the dead and the places of eternal punishment, and no less what is said of the wrath of God, which must be placated, sounded in the ears of the Epicureans like tales of fear that disturb the beautiful enjoyment of existence and kill the will of acting and stop acting in line of their whim. Before this the Epicurean resorts to the theory of atoms. Everything happens, according to the laws of nature.

“Epicureans are not dangerous men. They know how to live, they speak well, they write well, they do not think or get into many speculative depths. Their philosophy does not have the heaviness of problematic melancholy, but rather the mild and pleasant air of the muse” (Lucretius).

ETHICS

The dogmatic core of this philosophy is the principle that the morally good consists in pleasure. It was Aristippus, who, in a clear way, advocated the theory of pleasure, and his hedonism (ethical doctrine that identifies the good with pleasure, especially with sensory and immediate pleasure) will be the one that will give the fundamental orientation to the ethical thought of the Epicureans.

While the Stoics propose as an ethical ideal a life conducted according to nature, and proclaim the value of renunciation and endurance to be able to do justice and honour to this supreme norm, it is now constituted the man's pleasure as the authentic end, and consequently the slogan of appetite and enjoyment is proclaimed as a moral solution. It is a totally opposite attitude towards life. The primitive meaning of the word “good” does not express, according to the Epicureans, a consonance with a certain order of ideal or real character, but basically translates a relationship with our appetitive appetites. For pleasing us a thing we call it good, and another for displeasing and annoying us we call it bad. Aristotle had thought in a quite different way: for being something good, that's why we like it. Epicurus turns it upside down, as it can be seen. The ethical principle is not for him an “objective” good in itself, but the “subjective” pleasure becomes the principle of good.

Wisdom of life

The Epicurean effectively has open eyes for the beauty of the world. Affirms life in its fullness. With this he surpasses himself, surpasses the dark sides of life, does not allow himself to be seized by them and thus settles free in a positive conception of existence. Neither the idea of death has to be a stumble for him. Behind the stupid demonstration that “death nothing touches us”, because while we live there is no death and when it is we are gone, there is something more serious and valuable, as is the joyful yes to life, that only looks at the positive and therefore applies to get the juice every day without worrying about the after. Friendship is the fruit of wisdom. The wise is the artist of life.

“Gray is, dear friend, all theory, and green is the golden tree of life” (Goethe)

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NEOPLATONISM

With Neoplatonism, the Hellenistic-Roman philosophy will stop being pure intellectual work to become a religious way of life. It is symptomatic about this that utopian Plotinian project of founding a city of philosophers with external features taken from the Republic of Plato, but internally similar to the early Christian monasteries. The Plotinian Platonopolis, half philosophical school, half religious convent, illustrates us sufficiently not only about the deep differences of Neoplatonism with respect to Platonism, but also on the profound discrepancies of the whole movement of religious metaphysics in relation to the preceding moral schools. Historically, three fully differentiated currents have to be distinguished:

ALEXANDRIAN-ROMAN

It was founded by Ammonius Saccas. Its greatest representative is Plotinus, the greatest thinker of the time, whose work summarizes and overcomes the Hellenistic doctrine. His two main features were an exalted spiritualism and an emanationist monism. His disciple Porphyry of Tyre, tends to convert the religious philosophy of the teacher into religion proper. With Porphyry the struggle against Christianity in the order of philosophy acquires virulence.

SYRIAC

It was founded by Iamblichus of Chalcis, disciple of Porphyry. In his system are synthesized, with the fundamental moments of the Neoplatonic emanation, the repertoire of the gods of paganism, as well as a series of angels and demons. Thus transformed the religious doctrine into a dogmatic of polytheism, it was used by the political enemies of Christianity, such as Julian the Apostate (emperor between 361-363 AD), who established paganism as the official religion of the State.

ATHENIAN

It has Themistius as a forerunner, Plutarch of Athens as founder and Proclus as the maximum representative, with whom the pagan philosophy of the ancient world can be considered virtually finished.

Neoplatonic Thought

While the Philonian synthesis (by Philo of Alexandria) is made in contact with the Jewish religion, Neoplatonism emerges as a syncretism (tendency to combine and harmonize currents of thought or opposing ideas) of the Platonic doctrine and pagan religion.

His capital representative, Plotinus, born in Egypt and educated in Alexandria, moved to Rome, where he taught philosophy with great success and numerous disciples. His life is characterized by intellectual curiosity and a strange spirituality. Plotinus wrote numerous treatises, compiled after his death by his disciple Porphyry, and arranged in six groups of nine, they received the name Enneads. The treatises that form the Enneads have a very unequal value, but as a whole the work offers great interest and is, of course, the most brilliant of all those produced by Greek philosophy since Aristotle.

The starting point is God. Plotinus seeks the primary reality, origin and foundation of all other reality. It is the One, the fullness of being, of divinity and of good. The One overflows and

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expands, giving rise, by emanation, to new beings. Therefore, it can not be matter, because matter must essentially be formed by large parts. Nor can it be spirit, because in the spirit there is given, at least in terms of knowledge, the subject-object duality. The One is above matter and above spirit. Moreover, without the One, neither plural matter nor dual spirit could exist. Plurality and duality come from unity. The One is above the being. The infinite perfection of the One places it beyond any conceivable determination, and can only be expressed through denial. All finite perfection must be denied from the One. This is the meaning of Plotinus' theology. From the One all things proceed by emanation. This is verified by a process of causations in increasing degradation that, starting from the One, end in the matter that, being born in good, end in evil. From the One proceeds, in the first place, the Nous, it is spirit, a kind of duplication of the One. There is already in the nous duality of thinking subject and thought object. In it the ideas are lodged, the whole intelligible world. From nous the soul proceeds as duplication. The soul is generated by the nous by reflection. This soul is a cosmic soul.

By the efficient causality we come from God. By the final causality we return to God. Plotinus took from Plato, who in turn had done it from the Pythagoreans, the idea of the origin of man in a fall and the reintegration of the soul to celestial places.

Indeed, human souls live in the intelligible cosmos. By virtue of a tendency to trade with matter, they fall into the tangible world, sinking into a body. Thus, man is composed of soul and body. It is not the body that sustains the soul, on the contrary, it is sustained by it. The soul is not lodged in a part of the body, but it is all in the whole body. Even after the fall, and because of its superior activity, the soul continues to live in the intelligible world of the nous, and still aspires to unite with the One. The soul attached to matter does not achieve a return to the intelligible world. With the death of man transmigrates an animal or even a vegetable. Pure souls return to the intelligible cosmos and sometimes to the One.

The ethics of Plotinus must be understood in terms of this return of the soul to God. Virtue is ascending to perfection, which will culminate in the union with God. This ascent comprises three degrees. The first is the ascesis, the exercise of renunciation of tangible material things: its virtue is catharsis. The second is the contemplation of truth and spiritual beauty, realizing the theoretical virtues. The third is the ecstasy, which is being outside of oneself and in close contact with divinity. Ecstasy is the privilege of the purest souls. When it is verified, the soul submerges in divinity, becomes the One, and literally divinizes itself. The mysticism of Plotinus is also pantheistic.

The Neoplatonism of Plotinus was the last great philosophical creation of Greek thought. With Plotinus dead, the interest in metaphysics declines among the ancients and purely ethical and dialectical concerns reappear. Christian thought bursts deeply into the world's cultural scene, and philosophers limit themselves to the apology.