



# Discourses and the Enchiridion

*Epictetus The Stoic*

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*Epictetus The Stoic*

## **Discourses and the Enchiridion** Epictetus The Stoic

Whenever there will be a talk about Stoic Philosophy we wouldn't keep away Epictetus from the discussions. The school of stoic philosophy was founded in 3rd century B.C in Athens, the then Greek cultural and strategic capital, by Zeno of Citium. Citium is actually today's Cyprus which has its capital in Nicosia. It is located to the east of Greece in the Mediterranean Sea. And it is the third largest Mediterranean Island both in land size and population. The need of mentioning Zeno here or anywhere else is lies in the fact that the "Core" of teachings of Stoicism is propagated first by him and then further developed and disseminated by others. Stoicism is essentially based on moral ideas of cynics and it greatly emphasizes on goodness and peace of mind. The success of School of Stoicism can be acknowledged in light of evidences furnished by modern researches which clears that it (Stoicism) not only flourished from Hellenistic period through the Roman era but also played a vital role in everyday lives of Greek population/society. The earliest ideas of Stoicism were based on three key components or drivers, namely, Logic composed of Rhetoric and Grammar, and theories of Perception and thought, Physics, which had its extent from then available knowledge of physical nature of universe to the divine and godly beings and the Ethics which had its end goals to cater eternal happiness through adopting ways of righteousness in way of living.

**The Life of Epictetus:** In light of modern researches and knowledge gained by deciphering of the Greek anecdotes of ancient times, the date of birth of Epictetus is estimated to be around 55 A.D. His place of birth is contemplated as Hierapolis, Phrygia (Now a part of Turkey). The birth name of Epictetus is still unknown and his known name "Epictetus" simply means "acquired" in Greek. Possibly this name was christened or rechristened upon him by his master Epaphroditos. Epaphroditos was a wealthy freedman and a secretary to Nero (Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus was a Roman Emperor between 54-68 A.D; Nero was an infamous emperor who according to the Greek people was responsible for lighting Great Fire of Rome that remained 18 July-19 July, 64 A.D. He committed suicide in 68 A.D to escape assassination). His Interest in Philosophy and His Freedom: In early phases of life Epictetus acquired great interest/passion in philosophy, and with the permission of his affluent master he studied stoic philosophy under the guidance of Musonius Rufus. This allowed him to gain education, and respect in the society. Later on, after the death of Nero in 64 A.D he acquired his freedom and started teaching stoic philosophy in Rome.

**His School in Nicopolis, Epirus:** When Domitian came to power and become Emperor of Rome in 93 A.D he banished all philosophers from the city. Titus Flavius Caesar Domitianus Augustus or Domitian was a believer of chief deity Jupiter and emphasized on enhanced connections with it and patronized its priests and temples at Capitoline Hill. He was also a great devotee of Goddess Minerva. So when Domitian or Titus Flavius Caesar Domitianus Augustus banished philosophers from Rome Epictetus escaped to Nicopolis, Epirus and laid base of his school of thought/philosophy.

**His Discourses and the Enchiridion:** His most famous pupil Arrian of Nicomedia who was a historian, military commander, public servant and philosopher of 2nd century, studied under him in his youth and claimed to have written his famous Discourses. Arrian describes his teacher Epictatus as a powerful and magnetic speaker who had the ability to make the listeners feel things that he desired. He tells that many eminent figures of that time often sought conversation with Epictatus. He further exclaims that Roman emperor Publius Aelius Hadrianus Augustus had friendly relationships with Epictetus. It is noteworthy that Roman Emperor Publius Aelius Hadrianus Augustus was a successor of Domitian or Titus Flavius Caesar D. Augustus.

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