

# Prolepsis of the gods

Post by "Don" of June 27, 2025 at 8:55 AM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

Now again - not everyone is bothered by the claims of philosophical skepticism or sees the immediate relevance to them. If they are not so bothered, then more power to them, but we likely would not have Epicurean philosophy to talk about in the first place if Epicurus and Metrodorus and Hermarchus and Lucretius and Diogenes of Oinoanda and Philodemus had not been bothered by them.

In light of this excerpt above and others' reactions to my post, I feel I need to define my position a little more.

Do I feel that having a strong argument against radical skepticism (and superstition and religion and other anti-Epicurean positions) is important? Absolutely! This is one of the through-lines from the establishment of Epicurus' school down to the present day. Epicurus didn't wall himself away from the world. He vigorously engaged with the ideas circulating in his day, and modern Epicureans are called to the same.

Religion, skepticism, superstition, et. al. do a terrible amount of damage, both to individuals and to society in general. Am I bothered that many of the hoi polloi are in the grip of superstition, ignorance of natural science, etc.? Of course!!

And this little corner of the Internet - Our little boat of the SS EpicureanFriends - is one way to make authoritative material available "out there" in the market of ideas and to welcome passengers aboard.

What I don't want to get uptight about are the *details* of 2,000+ year old physics.

Is Epicurus onto something with his Canonics, his Theory of Knowledge? Absolutely! Otherwise, I wouldn't be on this forum or be thinking of myself as an "Epicurean." Is it necessary to have confidence in the truth of a REAL existing physical world with which we can interact in a meaningful way and not believe it is some pale reflection of a Realm of Ideal Forms or the "proving ground" for an after-death existence or some other lesser-than existence? Absolutely! And Epicurus' grounding the truth of our reality - our existence - in the use of our natural physical and mental senses/sensations and feelings provides a bedrock, fundamental ground on which to stand. There IS an external physical universe with which we interact. There are a number of modern philosophies dressed up as science that need to be counteracted today, including "we live in a simulation" "we are constantly hallucinating" etc. As modern Epicureans, I firmly believe we need to understand the workings of the mind to be able to counteract these

philosophies. Do I have a good grasp of their arguments? No, no I do not. There aren't enough hours in the day for me to read everything I want to read and do everything i want to do. But should I get anxious and frustrated and be in pain? Nope. I'll do what I can do. That's one reason I like the accessible style of Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett's popular books and those of others.

Epicurus was *brilliant* in his devising possible causes for vision, for memory, for hearing, for constructing mental pictures in our minds, for applications of "atomic" theory, but he was a human being living 2,000+ years ago with a brilliant mind but limited access to information. Understanding HIS arguments against radical skepticism and superstition should fully inform the style of our own arguments and inspire modern Epicureans to combat ignorance and superstition and religious dogmatism in our own day as he did in his.