

Was Lucretius More "Anti-Religious" Than Epicurus Himself?

Post by "DaveT" of December 11, 2025 at 4:35 PM

Admin Note: This thread was split off from an earlier thread regarding the [Role of Reason vs the Senses](#).

[Quote from Don](#)

These practices seem well-attested by the author of On Piety (it could have been Phaedrus or Philodemus, but now traditionally attributed to the latter) but they seem at odds with Lucretius in his scorn for religious practices in book V: 1198-1203: "It is no piety to show oneself / Bowing with veiled head towards a stone, Nor to be seen frequenting every altar, Nor to fall prostrate on the ground, with palms outspread ..." It seems Epicurus himself would have done these and encouraged his school to do so. I'm certain Epicurus ascribed different motivations for bowing, sacrificing, etc than would the hoi polloi but he seems to have taken part in all that.

So, clarify for me, please. Am I correct that neither author above was a true fan of Epicurus? If yes, then Lucretius is more correct? Or is Lucretius off base attributing to Epicurus, and imploring the reader toward either agnosticism or atheism?