

# What would Epicurus have thought of going to the moon?

**Post by “Joshua” of April 19, 2026 at 12:17 PM**

That's a somewhat difficult question. Ancient Rome is usually credited with the first invention of what we now call public welfare, which for them was the grain dole; the 'bread' in 'bread and circuses'. In Greece, citizens that did not own land and thus could not support themselves were in the best case sent away to found a colony. In the worst case they were sold into slavery to settle their debts.

State coffers in antiquity were generally lavished on land and naval defense, on temples and palaces, on public festivals, or on grand engineering projects. Herodotus credits the Samians with three such public projects; the tunnel of Eupalinos, the man-made breakwaters that circumscribed the harbor at what is now called Pythagoreio, and the Temple of Hera, which was then the largest in the Greek world.

Everything about currency, taxation, and public expenditure has changed transformatively since then.

The problem is further compounded by the argument made in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that investment in the space program also boosted development in adjacent fields like satellite communication and navigation, in rocketry for wartime applications, and in the advancements in materials science and computer science which we all rely on everyday.

These are all issues that can be placed by modern individuals under an Epicurean lens, but which Epicurus himself would not have been well-equipped to discuss himself. When Lucian narrates a space voyage in his *True Story*, it's a farcical fantasy written to satirize the absurd travelogues that were being written by his contemporaries.

That is perhaps not the answer you were looking for!