

Summary of phaedo



Summary of phaedo In the remote Peloponnesian township of Phlius, Echecrates encounters Phaedo of Elis, one of the men present during Socrates' final hours. Eager to hear the story from a first-hand source, Echecrates presses Phaedo to tell what happened. A number of Socrates' friends were gathered in his cell, including his old friend Crito and two Pythagorean philosophers, Simmias and Cebes. The account begins with Socrates proposing that though suicide is wrong, a true philosopher should look forward to death. The soul, Socrates asserts, is immortal, and the philosopher spends his life training it to detach itself from the needs of the body. He provides four arguments for this claim. The first is the Argument from Opposites. Everything, he says, comes to be from out of its opposite, so that for instance a tall man becomes tall only because he was short before. Similarly, death is the opposite of life, and so living things come to be out of dead things and vice versa. This implies that there is a perpetual cycle of life and death, so that when we die we do not stay dead, but come back to life after a period of time. The second is the Theory of Recollection. This theory suggests that all learning is a matter of recollecting what we already know. We forget much of our knowledge at birth, and can be made to recollect this knowledge through proper questioning. That we had such knowledge at birth, and could forget it, suggests that our soul existed before we were born. The third is the Argument from Affinity. Socrates draws a distinction between those things that are immaterial, invisible, and immortal, and those things which are material, visible, and perishable. The body is of the second kind, whereas the soul is of the first kind. This would suggest that the soul ought to be immortal and survive death. At this point, both Simmias and Cebes raise objections. Simmias suggests that perhaps the soul is like the

attunement of a musical instrument. The attunement can only exist so long as the instrument exists, and no longer. Cebes admits that perhaps the soul is long-lived, and can outlive many bodies, but argues that this does not show that the soul is immortal. Socrates replies to Simmias by pointing out that his theory of attunement is in conflict with the Theory of Recollection, which proposes that the soul existed before the body. As for Cebes, Socrates embarks on a complex discussion of causation that ultimately leads him to lay out his fourth argument, positing the unchanging and invisible Forms as the causes of all things in this world. All things possess what qualities they have only through participation in these Forms. The Form of Life is an essential property of the soul, Socrates suggests, and so it is inconceivable to think of the soul as ever being anything but alive. Socrates concludes with a myth of what happens to souls after death. Then he has a bath, says some last goodbyes, drinks the poisonous hemlock, and drifts imperceptibly from this world to the next.

Overall Analysis and Themes phaedo The Phaedo stands alongside the Republic as the most philosophically dense dialogue of Plato's middle period. It contains the first extended discussion of the Theory of Forms, four arguments for the immortality of the soul, and strong arguments in favor of the philosophical life. It also contains Plato's moving account of Socrates' final hours and his compelling myth about the fate of the soul after death. More than most of Plato's other writings, the Phaedo is in constant dialogue with the Pre-Socratic theories of the world and the soul, in particular those of Pythagorus, Anaxagoras, and Heraclitus.

Philosophically, the Theory of Forms is the most important aspect of the dialogue. Though we find hints toward such a theory in dialogues like the Meno, the Phaedo is the first dialogue where Forms are mentioned explicitly

and play a fundamental role in advancing Plato's arguments. Yet Plato does not seem at all compelled to argue for the theory itself. The Forms are introduced without any fanfare by Socrates, and immediately agreed upon by all his interlocutors. Later, in discussing his method of hypothesis, Socrates asserts that he can think of nothing more certain than the existence of Forms, and all his interlocutors agree. Due to the haste and ease with which the theory is introduced and put to work, a number of clarifying questions are left unanswered. For instance, what is the scope of Forms? Socrates normally alludes to non-material ideas, such as the Form of Beauty, or the Form of Justice, though he also appeals to numbers--such as the Form of Threeness and the Form of Oddness--to relative terms--such as the Form of Tallness and the Form of Equality--and to the Forms of Life and Death. An argument can be made that he also alludes to the Form of Fire and the Form of Snow, which would open the field even wider. We might ask what sort of things Forms are that they can encompass such a wide range. There are also questions as to what Plato means in saying that the Form of Equality is equal, or in saying that material objects participate in different Forms. More detailed treatments of these questions are given in the Commentary to sections 72e-78b and 100b-102d, respectively. The Phaedo gives us four different arguments for the immortality of the soul: The Argument from Opposites, the Theory of Recollection, the Argument from Affinity, and the final argument, given as a response to Cebes' objection. Plato does not seem to place equal weight on all four of these arguments. For instance, it is suggested that the Argument from Affinity by no means proves the immortality of the soul, but only shows that it is quite likely. The Theory of Recollection and the final argument seem to be given the greatest import, as

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both of them follow directly from the Theory of Forms. But while the Theory of Recollection can only show that the soul existed before birth, and not that it will also exist after death, the final argument purports to fully establish the immortality of the soul, and is considered by Plato to be unobjectionable and certain. The account of Socrates' death gives us a portrait of a man so detached from the needs and cares of his body that his soul can slip away without any fuss at all. Plato does not present this as strict asceticism, though, but rather a lack of excessive concern for earthly things. (In this sense, one could argue Plato's ideal is somewhat similar to the Buddhist "middle way.") The Phaedo is one of Plato's great masterpieces, combining difficult and profound philosophy with a lively and engaging narrative. As a result, it is one of the rare philosophical classics that is easily readable and rewarding of rewarding careful study. Overall Summary symposium

Apollodorus relates to an unnamed companion a story he learned from Aristodemus about a symposium, or dinner-party, given in honor of the tragedian Agathon. Socrates arrives at the party late, as he was lost in thought on the neighboring porch. After they have finished eating, Eryximachus picks up on a suggestion of Phaedrus', that each person should in turn make a speech in praise of the god of Love. Phaedrus begins by saying that Love is one of the oldest of the gods, and the one that does the most to promote virtue in people. Pausanias follows Phaedrus, drawing a distinction between Common Love, which involves simple and mindless desire, and Heavenly Love, which always takes place between a man and a boy. In the case of Heavenly Love, the boy, or loved one, sexually gratifies the man, or lover, in exchange for education in wisdom and virtue. After Pausanias, Eryximachus, the doctor, speaks, suggesting that good Love

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promotes moderation and orderliness. Love does not restrict itself to human interaction, but can be found in music, medicine, and much else besides. The next to speak is the comic poet Aristophanes. Aristophanes draws an engaging myth that suggests that we were once all twice the people we are now, but that our threat to the gods prompted Zeus to cut us in half. Ever since, we have wandered the earth looking for our other half in order to rejoin with it and become whole. Agathon follows up Aristophanes, and gives a rhetorically elaborate speech that identifies Love as young, beautiful, sensitive, and wise. He also sees Love as responsible for implanting all the virtues in us. Socrates questions Agathon's speech, suggesting that Agathon has spoken about the object of Love, rather than Love itself. In order to correct him, Socrates relates what he was once told by a wise woman named Diotima. According to Diotima, Love is not a god at all, but is rather a spirit that mediates between people and the objects of their desire. Love is neither wise nor beautiful, but is rather the desire for wisdom and beauty. Love expresses itself through pregnancy and reproduction, either through the bodily kind of sexual Love or through the sharing and reproduction of ideas. The greatest knowledge of all, she confides, is knowledge of the Form of Beauty, which we must strive to attain. At the end of Socrates' speech, Alcibiades bursts in, falling-down drunk, and delivers a eulogy to Socrates himself. In spite of Alcibiades' best efforts, he has never managed to seduce Socrates as Socrates has no interest at all in physical pleasure. Soon the party descends into chaos and drinking and Aristodemus falls asleep. He awakes the next morning to find Socrates still conversing. When everyone else has finally fallen asleep, Socrates gets up and goes about his daily business as always.

Symposium holds in our canon comes as much as a result of its literary merit as its philosophical merit. While other works among Plato's middle-period dialogues, such as the Republic and the Phaedo, contain more philosophical meat, more closely examining the Theory of Forms and intensely cross-examining interlocutors, none can match the dramatic force of the Symposium. It is lively and entertaining, with sharp and witty characterization that gives us valuable insight into the social life of Athenian intellectual circles. From a philosophical standpoint, the Symposium is also far from bankrupt. Not only does it give us some insight into the Theory of Forms in Diotima's discussion of the Form of Beauty, but it also gives us a number of varying perspectives on love. Significantly, we see Plato rejecting the romanticization of sexual love, valuing above all an asexual and all-consuming passion for wisdom and beauty. Ultimately, he concludes, the philosopher's search for wisdom is the most valuable of all pursuits. In the Symposium, Plato values philosophy, as exemplified by Socrates, over a number of other arts which are given as points of comparison: medicine, as exemplified by Eryximachus, comedy as exemplified by Aristophanes, and tragedy as exemplified by Agathon. The series of speeches in praise of Love are not simply meant as beating around the bush that leads up to the main event. They mirror Diotima's discussion of the mysteries, where she suggests that one can approach the truth only through a slow and careful ascent. Similarly, we can see each speech, with a few exceptions, as coming closer and closer to the truth. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that Socrates alludes to all the foregoing speeches in his own speech, as if to suggest that his words could not be spoken until everyone else had said their piece. This staggered approach to truth is also reflected in the framing of the

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narrative, whereby we are only able to gain access to this story through a series of narrative filters. We should note that Socrates is the exemplar of the lover of wisdom and the lover of beauty, but is neither wise nor beautiful himself. In this way, he best represents Love, which Diotima describes as a mediating spirit that moves between gods and men. Love himself never has anything, but is always desirous of happiness, beauty, and wisdom. The same is true with Socrates. Those who follow his lead will not necessarily attain wisdom, but will find fulfillment in a life-long pursuit of wisdom. The state of having attained wisdom is represented by Diotima, not Socrates, and she speaks through Socrates as a god-like and unapproachable figure. There is also some discussion as to exactly what is being discussed in the Symposium. The Greek word eros leaves the matter ambiguous as to whether we are discussing love in the normal, human, sense of the word, or if we are discussing desire in a much broader sense. The later speeches in particular tend toward this broader interpretation. Diotima gives what is perhaps a satisfactory answer by suggesting that, while all kinds of desire might be considered love, we normally restrict use of that term to one particular kind of desire, the desire that exists between two human beings. Philosophy aside, however, the Symposium still makes a terrific read. Aristophanes' myth is delightful, Alcibiades' drunken antics are entertaining, and the whole narrative shimmers with life. We also get a very clear sense of the dynamics of sexual attraction and courtship--both male-male and male-female--in ancient Athens, and we are given a beautiful portrait of one of the high-points of the Athenian scene: the symposium. David By Shira Schoenberg The biblical King David of Israel was known for his diverse skills as both a warrior and a writer of psalms. In his 40 years as ruler, between <https://assignbuster.com/summary-of-phaedo/>

approximately 1010 and 970 B. C. E., he united the people of Israel, led them to victory in battle, conquered land and paved the way for his son, Solomon, to build the Holy Temple. Almost all knowledge of him is derived from the books of the Prophets and Writings: Samuel I and II, Kings I and Chronicles I. David was the eighth and youngest son of Jesse from the kingly tribe of Judah. He was also a direct descendent of Ruth the Moabite. David began his life as a shepherd in Bethlehem. One day, the prophet Samuel called him out of the field and anointed him without the knowledge of the current king, Saul. David simply returned to his sheep. His first interaction with Saul came when the king was looking for someone to play music for him, and the king's attendant summoned the skilled David to play for him. Saul was pleased with David and kept him in his service as a musician. The first time David publicly displayed his courage was when, as an inexperienced boy armed with only a stick and a few stones, he confronted the nine-foot, bronze armored Philistine giant, Goliath of Gath. After skilled warriors had cowered in fear for 40 days, David made a slingshot, invoked God's name, and killed the giant. After this, Saul took David on as commander of his troops and David formed a close friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan. David was successful in battle against the Philistines and this aroused the jealousy of Saul, who tried to kill David by throwing a spear at him. David stayed with Saul, however, and Saul offered him his own daughter, Merav, as a wife. He later reneged on his promise, but offered David his second daughter, Michal, in exchange for the foreskins of 100 Philistines, a price that David paid. Saul's jealousy of David grew and he asked his son Jonathan to kill David. Jonathan was a friend of David's, however, and hid David instead. He then went to his father and convinced Saul to promise not to kill David. Saul promised, and David

returned to his service. This promise did not last and, after Saul attempted to kill David a second time, Michal helped David run away to the prophet Samuel in Ramah. David returned briefly to make a pact of peace with Jonathan and to verify that Saul was still planning to kill him. He then continued his flight from Saul, finding refuge with the king of Moab. On the way, the priest Ahimelech of Nob gave David a weapon. When Saul heard this, he sent Doeg the Edomite to kill 85 of the city's priests. In the course of his flight, David gained the support of 600 men, and he and his band traveled from city to city. At one point, in Ein Gedi, David crept up on Saul while he was in a cave, but instead of killing him, cut a piece from his cloak and confronted Saul. Saul broke down and admitted that David would one day be king and asked David to swear that he would not destroy Saul's descendants or wipe out Saul's name. David swore to this, but it did not stop Saul from continuing to pursue him. Finally, David and his supporters joined the service of Achish, the Philistine king of Gath who entrusted David with control of the city of Ziklag. Under Achish's employ, David raided the cities of nomads who harassed the Jews and gave the spoils as gifts to the leaders of Judah to win their support for him against Saul. Eventually, while David was out battling a tribe called the Amalekites, Saul and Jonathan were killed on Mt. Gilboa in a fight with the Philistines. David mourned, and then began a new stage in his life, as king of Judah. He moved to Hebron, along with his wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, and his followers. The people of Judea were grateful to David for saving them from desert raiders while he was in Ziklag, and they appointed David king. Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner crowned Ish-Boshet son of Saul king over the tribes of Israel. The kingdoms of Judah and Israel fought, with David's dynasty growing stronger

as Saul's grew weaker. Finally, after Abner had a fight with Ish-Boshet, Abner approached David and made a pact with him, which allowed David to unite the two kingdoms and rule over all of Israel. As Abner was leaving David, however, David's advisor and army commander, Joab, killed Abner without David's knowledge. Soon, Ish-Boshet was also killed and the tribes of Israel anointed David as their king. David was 30 years old at the time, and had ruled over Judah for seven years and six months. Over the years, he had taken more wives and had many children. He had also made pacts with kings of various surrounding countries. David's first action as king was to capture what is now the City of David in Jerusalem, fortify it and build himself a palace. When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king and was threatening their hegemony over all of Palestine, they attacked, spread out over the Valley of Raphaim and captured Bethlehem. David retaliated and, in three battles, forced the Philistines out of Israel. Once David had established the safety of his kingdom, he brought the Holy Ark, which had been passed from city to city, to Jerusalem. He then wanted to build a temple to God and consulted Natan the prophet. Natan replied to David that God would always be with David, but it would be up to David's son to build the Temple because David had been a warrior and shed blood. David then began fighting wars against Israel's neighbors on the east bank of the Jordan. He defeated the Moabites, the Edomites, the Ammonites and the Arameans. These wars began as defensive wars, but ended with the establishment of a Davidic empire that extended over both sides of the Jordan River, as far as the Mediterranean Sea. David enforced justice in his empire and established civil and military administrations in Jerusalem, modeled after those of the Canaanites and Egyptians. He divided the country

into twelve districts, each with its own civil, military and religious institutions. He also established Jerusalem as the secular and religious center of the country. Each district paid taxes to Jerusalem and the people began to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem each year on the holidays of Passover, Shavout and Sukkot. Despite this flawless reign on a national level, David had many problems in his personal life. One day while the men were at war, David spied a beautiful woman, Bathsheba, from his rooftop. He discovered that she was married to Uriah the Hittite, but this did not stop him from sending for her and getting her pregnant. He then recalled Uriah from battle and pretended that Uriah was the father of Bathsheba's baby. Uriah refused to go home to his wife, so David sent Uriah to the front lines of battle, where he was killed. David then married Bathsheba. When confronted by Natan the prophet, David admitted his sin. In punishment, Bathsheba's child died and David was cursed with the promise of a rebellion from within his own house. Bathsheba and David soon conceived a second son, Solomon. David's personal strife continued when his son Amnon raped Tamar, Amnon's half-sister. Absalom, who was David's son and Tamar's brother, then killed Amnon. Absalom fled, but David could not stop thinking about him. Finally, Joab convinced David to allow Absalom to return. Absalom was a handsome man and became popular with the people of Israel. Then, 40 years after Samuel had anointed David king, Absalom, along with 200 men, journeyed to Hebron with the intention of rebelling against his father and taking over his kingdom. He had the support of the men of Hebron who were insulted by the removal of the kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem, the elders whose status was undermined by parts of David's policy and the Benjamites who wanted to avenge Saul's family. David feared that Absalom would return and

conquer Jerusalem, so he and all his followers fled the city, leaving only 10 concubines to guard the palace. David told the priests Zadok and Abiathar to remain in the city along with his friend and now spy Hushai the Archite. Meanwhile, Absalom reached Jerusalem, took over the city and slept with David's concubines. Hushai befriended Absalom, advised him, and told the priests to send messengers informing David of Absalom's plans. David gathered his troops and then killed 20, 000 of Absalom's Israelite soldiers, including Absalom himself. David returned to power. A second revolt broke out at the hands of Sheba son of Bichri, but with the help of Joab, David succeeded in crushing this rebellion as well, and in killing Sheba. Eventually David grew old and had to stop fighting. He constantly felt cold and could not get warm. At this point, Adonijah, David's oldest son, declared himself king. David, however, had promised Bathsheba that her son Solomon would be king, and publicly anointed Solomon. Fearful of retribution Adonijah ran to the altar in Jerusalem, but Solomon pardoned him and sent him home. David delivered a last set of instructions to his son, telling him to follow the words of God and to repay in kind specific people that had either wronged David or helped him. David then died after 40 years as king, 33 of those in Jerusalem. He was buried in the City of David. David was a poet and the rabbis believe that David wrote the Book of Psalms, or at least edited it. Throughout his life, David prepared for the construction of the Holy Temple by setting aside the necessary physical materials, commanding the Levites and others in their duties for the Temple, and giving the plan for the Temple to Solomon. It is then fitting that according to tradition, the Messiah, who will build the third temple, will be from the Davidic dynasty. Today, Jews pray daily for the coming of the " Messiah, son of David." David (King David) David was the

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youngest son of Jesse, the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth, born in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah. He was handpicked by God, anointed by Samuel, and became Israel's second, and greatest, king. David was a shepherd in his early years. After killing Goliath, with a slingshot, he joined the entourage of King Saul, Israel's first king. Saul eventually became jealous of David's popularity with the Israelites and tried to kill him several times. David and his followers had to flee and hide out from Saul, but with the defeat of the Israelites and the death of Saul at the hands of the Philistines, David was anointed King over Judah. Later, David defeated Ishbosheth the son of Saul, who was King of the northern tribes of Israel. Thereafter, in his eighth year, David united all the tribes and became King of all Israelites. He moved the capitol to Jerusalem, and brought the sacred Ark of the Covenant there. David defeated the Philistines in two decisive battles, at Baal Perazim and at Rephaim, and the Philistines were no longer a serious threat to Israel. David then defeated Moab, Edom, Damascus, and Ammon, and they all became subjugated. David committed adultery with Bathsheba and sent her husband Uriah to his death. For this, God rebuked David through Nathan the prophet, and told David that murder will be a constant threat to his family from this time on. David's first child by Bathsheba died seven days after birth. One of David's sons, Absalom, killed his half-brother Amnon, after Amnon raped Absalom's sister, Tamar. Later, Absalom revolted against his father David and tried to take over the throne, but was killed by Joab, David's army commander. Another son of David, Adonijah, was killed soon after David died. David was king for about 40 years. He was an extraordinary musician and poet, and wrote many of the Psalms in the Book of Psalms. He had many sons and daughters and died at an old age, and Solomon, his

second son by Bathsheba, became the next king. David is noted for several things. He initiated a cultural and literary revival which was continued by Solomon. He undertook far-reaching reforms in national institutions and administration. He also began preparations for building a central sanctuary in Jerusalem (the first Temple) and chose the site. The worship of God became the official state religion, and the priesthood was organized under the chief priests. He also reorganized the army. Because the prophets, during the Old Testament times, had proclaimed that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David, people would use the phrase "son of David" as a way to refer to Messianic prophecy or to their hopes that the Messiah would arrive during their lifetime. Jesus is often called the "son of David." A blind man named Bartimaeus, for example, refers to Jesus by that title, in Mark 10: 46-52, shortly before Jesus healed him and restored his sight. Details about the life of David can be found in the Bible's books of 1 and 2 Samuel and the first two chapters of 1 Kings, also in 1 Chronicles.