

A story of of socrates in the apology by plato

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Plato wrote The Apology in 400 B. C. chronicling Socrates' trial in Athens. Socrates is speaking to the court on the good will of his actions. Socrates introduces himself to the court as a man of good character and addresses the claims against him. Socrates explains to the court that the persuasive words of his accusers "almost made [him] forget who [he] was" and then asks that they do not "let [them]selves be deceived by the force of [their] eloquence." Socrates explains the time leading up to his offenses, speaks about the charges against him, and finally reflects on his views of the meaning of life.

Socrates' story begins when Chaerephon, a loyal follower of Socrates, goes to speak to the Oracle at Delphi. The Oracle is a shrine to pagan Gods and a place where people around Athens went to have their questions answered by Pythia, the priestess of Apollo. Athenians paid gold for advice and it became a common place for intellectual talk without the ties of religion. Chaerephon is told that there is no man wiser than Socrates. Socrates disagrees and decides to travel around Athens to find a wiser man than he is. Socrates remarked, "I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the God with a refutation in my hand." Socrates states in this sentence his intentions for questioning the citizens of Athens, as well as his belief in the Gods. He is speaking to everyone around him, looking for the definitions for truth, justice, fairness. Each person he talks to he "asked on behalf of the oracle" and traps people in logic and reason, showing that there is no one wiser than him. Socrates goes to talk to politicians, poets, and artisans and finds that people are very ignorant with their knowledge. Socrates states that he "neither knows nor thinks that [he] knows," showing

his humble attitude in comparison to other boastful attitudes. He also observes that poets do not write “ by wisdom...but by sort of genius and inspiration...say[ing] many fine things, but do not understand the meaning of them.” Socrates continues to search for someone who can contend with his wit and discuss more intellectual ideas.

As Socrates continues talking with the citizens of Athens, he pesters many people and is eventually charged by the court saying that “ Socrates is a doer of evil and corrupter of the youth, and he does not believe in the Gods of the state.” As he speaks to the court, he is concerned with the hypocrisy of the court in relation to the fact that he could not be the only corrupter of the youth when there are many other philosophers teaching their beliefs as well. The words “ I have concealed nothing, I have dissembled nothing,” and “ if this is the doctrine which corrupts the youth, my influence is ruinous indeed” are Socrates most powerful words when speaking to the court because they show the sound evidence and logic in his statements, but also the defeat he has experienced with the trial.

Socrates’ second charge, disbelief in Gods, comes to light when Meletus is questioning Socrates. Socrates examines Meletus’ arguments, saying that if he had not believed in the Gods he would not have gone out to disprove the pagan God. Socrates shows his faith while questioning everyone by saying “ that God only is wise.” Socrates believes that there is no one wiser than God, but wants the truth about life on Earth. Throughout his statements in trial, Socrates uses pure logic in his defenses and only tries to find the truth in the charges against him. Until the end of his trial has spoken highly of himself

and the Gods he believes in, saying to the court “ to you and to God I commit my cause, to be determined by you as is best for you and me.” Even in a time where he should be upset with the people around him, he still speaks kindly to his accusers and tries to get the court to see the truth.

In the final moments of his speech, Socrates said “ that the life which is unexamined is not worth living.” Socrates dedicated his life to finding the truth and what is good or bad in life but ended up in trouble. Socrates received the death penalty in the pursuit of knowledge and goodness. Socrates acknowledged that “ a man who is good for anything ought not to calculate the chance of living or dying; he ought only to consider whether in doing anything he is doing right or wrong – acting the part of a good man or of a bad.” This is exactly what he did until the end of his life: explored the good and evil in life and never thought about his ultimate end.

As the trial concludes, Socrates is poised and kind to his opposers. Socrates’ final thoughts included, “ I speak rather because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged anyone” and “ no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death.” He continued to believe in himself because he had shown logically how he had not done anything wrong. The court was unable to see the truth but ultimately concluded that the death penalty was necessary and that he believed death was not evil but like going to another place or into a deep sleep. It seems as though Socrates has come to the conclusion that life has more meaning than focussing on death and the ultimate end. Socrates hopes that the people around him will learn from him and continue to ponder life, just as he did.