

About philosopher socrates



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Throughout history there have been people who questioned the world's functioning and the society that lives within that world to try and figure out a theory that can answer those questions. There are individuals who spend their life working to discover such answers using by their intelligence, common sense, and the material of other's ideas. These individuals are known as philosophers.

One of the most well-known philosophers in history is Socrates. Socrates was not one to document his teachings. The only way his teachings were remembered was through his student, Plato, who kept record of his dialogues and was able to educate others about his deceased teacher's discoveries. As of today, his words and history is still being taught.

Socrates was born in ancient Greece in the city capital of Athens in 469 BCE. In adulthood, he chose to become a philosopher and eventually a husband who fathered three boys. His philosophy brought great change to the people and inspired many. He taught those who wished to learn his views of the world and spoke to a variety of people, teaching them his philosophies. He even had Socratic classrooms, philosophical counselling, [...] ? the Socratic cafe'...(Ahbel-Rappe, pg. 2). His most popular and well-known dialogues are Apology, Crito, Euthyphro and Meno to name a few. The ones that will be discussed are Apology and Crito since both dialogues are ones that recall Socrates' words during his trial and last moments in a cell before his execution.

Socrates did not have the best ending to his life. Those who saw him as an enemy made others view him as a threat to Athens' way of life and also

accused him of attempting to corrupt the minds of the Athenian youth. Not only was he accused, but he was also being prosecuted for not believing in the city's gods, questioning their religion, and seeking out other god-like figures to believe in.

Although Socrates was framed as an unjust man, sentenced to an undeserved punishment, and received an unfair hearing, he still took everything that came his way and did not show any defiance to their legal procedures or try to avoid the issue altogether. Plato viewed this type of attitude as an opportunity to write about Socrates' words to elaborate on his mentor's life in the most respectable way.

There were many individuals who were a part of Socrates' accusations and trial. These people were very familiar with him just as much he was of them. In the dialogue, *Apology*, he attempts to turn the jury's viewpoint of his charges during the hearing. This is one of Socrates' most important speeches, as he will be fighting for his life.

In his dialogue, *Apology*, Socrates faces the court to plea against his prosecution. The scene takes place in an Athenian court, which allowed access for all to see, along with having a very vast jury that seated five hundred people, or so it is said. There is an issue in Plato's version of the *Apology*, since none of his students who attended were able to record what was spoken word-for-word. Therefore, there is no way to verify if the recorded information stays true to what Socrates said, or if there are any points in his speech that should have been mentioned. As said before, his student Plato only praised his teacher, hence the possible reason for

Socrates' speech appearing differently than the written works of Socrates' other student, Xenophon.

Nevertheless, the viewpoint spoken of will be from Plato's. Within Socrates' speech, he chooses to use a tactic where he names all the prejudices that his accusers planted on to him and elaborating on them, all the while trying to explain why they are false. However, at first, one would think he is convincing the jury to believe they are true. He feigns guilt with his tactics, using his own methods to make the accusations seem injudicious. After He even goes as far as confessing his beliefs of not committing any crimes and that he should receive a reward rather than punishment. He also tries to compromise by asking for his sentence to be a fine that he, along with his friends, can pay together.

The people of the court were not convinced with his plead and denied his requests. It is said that, his mission in turning any conversation into a deep moral examination of the interlocutor would have looked better if he had not allowed his defence speech to change into a deep and critical examination of Athenian courts themselves – and of juries in particular.(Plato, pg. 37). What this means is that if Socrates did not turn every statement about him into an analysis of the people who were in the court, then his outcome could have possibly been better than what he received.

Throughout his speech, Socrates does not seem to show any aggression towards his accusers. Instead, he speaks to them in a calm manner and claims he has no anger towards them. At the end of his speech, he concludes with, The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our own ways – I to die,

and you to live. Which is better God only knows.(Plato, Segal, pg. 28). His last statement in the dialogue shows how he tries to give the jury an opportunity to think over whether or not Socrates' so-called crimes are legitimate and if he truly deserved to be executed for said crimes, but in the end, the verdict pleads guilty and he is sentenced to death. Some suggest that there was no way for Socrates to phrase his speech any way without going against his own beliefs and that he thought himself called by God in a give direction, and nothing would persuade him to change.(Plato, pg. 38).

Even though the courts viewed him to be guilty there were many who did not want to see their beloved philosopher put to death. They were willing to go against Athenian law to ensure that Socrates would be able to live. Therefore the next dialogue narrates the last moments Socrates spent inside his cell when he is suddenly greeted by an unexpected visitor.

In the dialogue called Crito, the text recalls the day before Socrates' execution, where he holds a conversation with his friend, Crito, who was able to visit him. Here, Crito attempts to convince Socrates to allow himself to be freed from his prison before he can be killed. Within this collaboration, Crito elaborates about what reputation could be more disgraceful than the reputation of caring more for money than for one's friend.(Plato, Segal, pg. 32). His statement refers to how although it is painful enough to soon be without his close friend, it would look terrible towards him if he did not do his best to at least make an attempt to save his friend's life even if doing such a task would cost a very large sum of money. Socrates then reminds Crito that in the beginning they never cared for how others viewed them, so he should not worry over those beliefs in the first place.

Although touched by his friend's attempt, Socrates continues to refuse to escape his demise for a number of reasons. Such are that he will not go against the laws of the Athens, for it will show that he is willing to disobey his homeland, and since the city is not ideally formed yet, if people knew of his escape, the news could bring down the structure of Athens' legislation even more than it was at that moment. He also refuses to leave because he could never forgive himself if his friends were to be accused of aiding him in his disappearance and punished on his behalf. There are more reasons as to why he did not escape, but either way, the outcome remained the same. By the end of his conversation, he tells Crito, then let it be, Crito, and let us do as I say, since the god is our guide.(Plato, Segal pg. 45). With this final statement, he continues to stay in his cell knowing he had lived his life well where he soon faces his punishment and [dies] from taking hemlock in a jail in Athens in 399 BC.(Santas, pg. 2).

Many of Socrates' friends and students were saddened by his demise. After his death, his pupil, Plato, took it upon himself to write and teach the philosophies that his mentor taught him. He would even have his own arguments against that of his teacher's, as a true philosopher would, which shows how influential Socrates was. Even though the world lost a passionate philosopher so unfairly, he became apart of history and his wisdom will be shared for centuries to come, not to mention becoming an inspiration to those who wish to follow in his footsteps as a philosopher as well. Although there is no way to validate what else he could have taught us and what other questions he may have had, there is still plenty to learn from the dialogues written.