

The Apology, believed to be an account of Socrates' address to an Athenian judge & jury (501 people), defends himself from false accusations that he has corrupted the youth, blasphemed the Athenian gods, & taught new spiritual things. Over and against longstanding prejudices many jurors already had against him, Socrates sought to reason with them in plain language with reason, respect, and love for the truth. "This is the truth of the matter, men of Athens: wherever a man has taken a position that he believes to be best, or has been placed by his commander, there he must I think remain and face danger, without a thought for death or anything else, rather than disgrace." 28d-e. "On the other hand, if I say that it is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day and those other things about which you hear me conversing and testing myself and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living for me, you will believe me even even less" 38a. ~ Dr. Paul R. Shockley, 2 September 2012 at www.prshockley.org.

Outline:

I. Introduction:

17a-17c:

"Who is the true Socrates?"

II. The First False Charges: 18a-24a

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IV. Socrates' Interpretation of His Art: 28b-32

V. Socrates' Answer to the Charges: 32e-34a

VI. Epilogue: 34c-35d

VII. The Conviction & Alternate Penalties: 36a-38c:

VIII. Final Speeches: 38c-42a

3 Themes:

1. Do not betray your own philosophy, even if death is on the line.
2. Hold the laws of the land in high regard.
3. Resilience to stand firm for a higher qualitative way of life that is expressed in intellectual & moral virtue rather than live for such things as mundane thinking, popularity, power, wealth, & dwarfed goals.

I. Introduction: 17a-17c:

- A. 17a: I'm no orator except one who speaks the truth.
 B. 17b: No need to embellish truth or give "made up stories"; truth stands well enough for itself.
 C. 17c: I will speak naturally, not in an oratory sense to tell truth.

II. The First False Charges: 18a-24a:

- A. 18a-19c: I am aware of common prejudice against me. I must address lies that have been spread against me:
 1. I seek the unseemable;
 2. I make weaker arguments to defeat stronger arguments;
 3. 19d-20b: I am not a paid educator.
 B. 20c-20d: My wisdom is merely human though it has generated troubles for me.
 C. 20e-21a: The oracle in Delphi said that no one was wiser than me, Socrates.
 D. 21b-21d: I challenged the oracle to find a wiser man than me.
 E. 21e: I attempted to reject this claim and went to "wise men" but I discovered that even though they do not know wisdom, they think they know. But I'm honest with my ignorance whereas the others are not. This irritated the "wise men." People of humility do not project what is not true.
 1. 22a-b: Poets craft their work by talent and inspiration, not by wisdom-though they think they are wise.
 2. 22c-d: Craftsmen know their crafts, but because of pride, they think they no other things as well-they deceive themselves.
 3. 22e-23b: People might think I am wise on all these subjects when I merely show my ignorance and the ignorance of others. Rather, only God is wise; human wisdom is nearly worthless. Thus, realizing that that man is worth nothing in comparison to true wisdom, I have been evangelizing this message for the sake of the god in Delphi.
 F. 23c-24a: Young people enjoy this exposure and thus follow me around and attempt to copy this method. As a result, those who have been exposed & refuted, contend that I am corrupting the youth. These exposed people create false charges since they can't find a real basis to accuse me. These false charges have evolved into prejudices which themselves in the current charges made against me.

III. The Specific Charges: 24b-28a:

- A. 24b: I will specifically examine the false charges, namely, corrupting the young, not believing in the gods in whom Athens believes, but in other new spiritual things. I will now examine each charge, point by point.
 1. 24c-25a: Charge of corrupting the young. I turn to dialogue with Meletus. Meletus confesses that it is the community which educates the young, suggesting I alone corrupt the young.
 2. 25b: Even though I do not let Meletus explain how the community educates the young, I shift the argument to horses, noting that a horse-breeder is a specialized kind of person, but this hiding by pretense, for horses best teach other horses how to be a horse.
 3. 25c-d: I would not rationally corrupt others because they would become more likely to harm me. So, I could not rationally be intentionally corrupting the young. So, if I am corrupting the young, I would be most glad to be shown my mistakes. So, why am I not being taught, but being persecuted?
 B. 26a: Meletus claims I am teaching the youth not to believe in Athen's gods but in other spiritual things.
 C. 26b-c: Meletus also claims that I am an atheist.
 D. 26d-27d: I cannot be an atheist and also teach spiritual things. Violates law of non-contradiction.
 E. 28a: Thus, I claim victory over these charges.

IV. Socrates' Interpretation of His Art: 28b-32:

- A. 28b-d: I describe how we ought to follow the truth and divine commands even if it cost us our lives.
 B. 29a-30b: To fear death is to pretend an unpossessed wisdom, since we do not know whether death is actually bad. So, I will continue to philosophize if I am permitted to live, even if I am forbidden. Again my claim is that people are not thinking well about "intelligence and truth and the soul... And if someone wants to argue with me and say that he does worry about it, I'm not going to release him right right off or go away, but will ask him and I will examine him and I will refute him, and if I think he has not acquired excellence but says he has, I will abuse him because he has his priorities wrong and makes trivialities important." Excellence makes money, not vice versa: we should worry first about the soul, not the body or the money.
 C. 30c-d: A death sentence will "hurt you more than it hurts me." I do not fear death. If I die, Athens will lose something more important. See, I am like a horsefly that wakes up a sleeping horse.
 D. 31a-b: To be sure, I have never been paid to pay to play the role of the horsefly. In fact, my almost supernatural poverty bears witness to the veracity of my statement.
 E. 31c: I have kept my philosophizing to private gatherings, not in areas of public teaching. I have a supernatural prompting that interrupts my actions and keeps me out of politics. This is fortunate because "anyone who really fights for justice, if he is going to survive any time at all, must necessarily stay in private practice and not become a public figure." Thus, my method is to show each person his folly, rather than challenge the whole city at once.
 F. A. 32a-d: I illustrate how I have chosen to face death rather than commit unrighteousness while in public office.

V. Socrates' Answer to the Charges: 32e-34a:

- A. 32e-33a: I have never acted as a teacher, only a discussor, and have always acted in good conscience both in private and in public.
 B. 33b-34a: Some of those young who are said to have been corrupted in court, and have grown up, yet they in fact support me now.

VI. Epilogue: 34c-35d:

- A. 34b-35d: It is inexcusable to try to evoke pity from the judges though I have as much reason as any person to beg for mercy, for my life and for my family's sake. In fact, any such mercy-begging should be chastised; it shows that truth is subordinate to emotionalism. Rather, teaching and persuading the judges is the right course of action.

VII. Conviction and Alternate Penalties: 35e-38ab:

- A. 35e-36a: "There are many other reasons for my not being angry with you for convicting me, men of Athens, and what happened was not unexpected. I am much more surprised at the number of votes cast on each side for I did not think the decision would be by so few votes but by a great many. As it is, a switch of only thirty votes would have acquitted me. I think myself that I have been cleared of Meletus' charges, and not only this, but it is clear to all that, if Anytus and Lycon had not joined him in accusing me, he would have been fined a thousand drachmas for not receiving a fifth of the votes." So, I would have prevailed if had also challenged Anytus and
 B. 36b-c: Rather, I think it is appropriate not to receive the death penalty but to have been sentenced "to dine with the government."
 C. 37a-d: But if I have to receive "bad" punishment, why should I choose something other than death, which may turn out to be good? Exile is no choice, for no society would accept me if Athens cannot.
 D. 37e-38a: Keeping quiet is an even worse penalty, for "the greatest good for mankind is this: every day to discuss excellence and all the other things that you hear me discussing, examining myself and others, and that an unexamined life is no kind of human life."
 E. 38a-b: A monetary penalty would be acceptable if I could pay it, possibly \$5,000,000 (one mina of silver). But my friends guarantee up to thirty minas, so I would like to propose a sentence of that amount.

VIII: Socrates' Final Speech at Trial Upon Receiving Death Penalty: 38c-41e:

- A. 38c-39b: I accept my sentence and will not commit myself to shameless begging. But my accusers are also sentenced "by truth to bad character and vice."
 B. 39c-d: I prophesy that the younger philosophers, who emulate me, will be even more harsh on the accusers, making life even more miserable for them.
 C. 39e-40b: From here to the end, I will talk to those who voted to acquit me, my true judges and say that "my prophetic spiritual voice" (my conscience) did not oppose anything I did or said during the day, and so I believe that what has happened and what is about to happen to me are good.
 D. 40c-41b: Death does not seem all that bad. For it is like a long, trouble-free sleep, it is better than most days that most people have while alive. If it is part of a spiritual transference to another place, where all the other dead people are, then one can meet all the other dead and compare information about life as well as continue philosophizing and inquiring--and it would seem that people are immortal there, too.
 E. 41c-d: Although the accusers thought they were harming me with the trial and execution, "it is not possible for anything bad to happen to a good man."
 F. 41e: I do ask to have my sons go through through the same interrogations that I have put others through, to emphasize to them that they ought to put excellence above money and all such petty things, and that they ought to put down pride.

Three Periods of Plato's Writings:

1. **399-390 BC:** Laches, Charmides, Euthyphro, Lysis, Protagoras, Hippias Major, Ion, Hippias Minor, Apology, Crito, Gorgias.
2. **388-367 BC:** Meno, Cratylus, Euthydemus, Menexenus, Symposium, Phaedo, Republic, Phaedrus, Parmenides, and Theatetus.
3. **360-348/7 BC:** Philebus, Timaeus, Kritias, The Laws, Letter 7.

11 Lessons from Socrates:

1. Honor what is right and what is just regardless of possible outcome.
2. Ensure that your soul feeds on truth and understanding; forsake pride and pretentious behavior.
3. No evil can befall a good person (41d).
4. The supernatural realm exists.
5. Truth liberates.
6. Humility is to be prized.
7. Misery accompanies duplicity, misrepresentation, and injustice.
8. Even when biases are entrenched, proclaim, pursue, and advance truth.
9. The presence and power of truth brings hope.
10. Disciple others into intellectual and moral excellence.
11. The unexamined life is not worth living.

Significant Quotes by Socrates: (1) "I am very conscious that I am not wise at all,"; (2) In my investigation in the service of the god I found that those who had the highest reputation were nearly the most deficient, while those who were thought to be inferior more knowledgeable." (3) Either I do not corrupt the young or, if I do, it is unwillingly,"; (4) "You are wrong, sir, if you think that a man who is any good at all should take into account the risk of life or death; he should look to this only in his actions, whether what he does is right or wrong, whether he is acting like a good or a bad man." (5) "To fear death, gentlemen, is no other than to think oneself wise when one is not, to think one knows what one does not know." (6) "I will not yield to any man contrary to what is right, for fear of death, even if I should die at once for not yielding." (7) "It is not the purpose of a jury man's office to give justice as a favor to whoever seems good to him, but to judge according to law, and this he has sworn to do." (8) "Since I am convinced that I wrong no one, I am not likely to wrong myself," (9) "Neither I nor any other man should, on trial or in a way, contrive to avoid death any cost." (10) "Let us reflect in this way, too, that there is good hope that death is a blessing, of it is one of two things: either the dead are nothing and have no perception of anything, or it is, as we are told, a change and a relocation for the soul from here to another place." (11) "...you know that what I said earlier is true, that I am very unpopular with many people. This will be my undoing, if I am not, not by Meletus or Anytus but the slanders and envy of many people. This has destroyed many other good men and will, I think, continue to do so. There is no danger that it will stop at me."