

Apology

Apology, is a formal speech of Socrates at the court on his defense against the charges made by young man Meletus. Socrates has been charged with crimes of corrupting the youth and refusing to acknowledge the gods of the state. In addition to the defense against these charges, it also entails large body of explanation for personal philosophy of Socrates. However, unlike title defines, Socrates' speech is far from the modern meaning of apology as he explains his conducts and defends himself from baseless charges.

Socrates starts the speech by saying that Meletus, the prosecutor, is not the first person to accuse him, but is the voice of multitude of old accusers that ended in convicting him. He addresses these old accusers saying that it is unfair to blame him responsible for making outrageous claims and corrupting the youth with his nonsense doctrines. He knows only one thing, which is he knows nothing and he lacks any kind of ability to instruct others. Socrates wishes he had that the teaching skills, as he believes it is a greatest of all skills. He also suggests an alternative explanation for why people started hating him that much. Socrates possesses a unique kind of wisdom that stems from being praised by the oracle at Delphi that he is the wisest of all men. In a process of testing and proving this, he tested the wisdom of many poets, politicians, orators, artisans and so on, and came up with a conclusion that humans do not know anything in respect to wisdom. He concludes that he must be wiser than others, only as he knows that he knows nothing. Socrates tries to explain how his bad reputation is being spread, as he considered exposing wise men's false wisdom as ignorance, which earned him much admiration among youths but lead to hatred and anger from people around him.

Next, Socrates goes on to refute the accusations of Meletus. Socrates first states that no man wishes to be harmed, if he does evil, evil will in-turn come back to him. He thinks it is ridiculous to say that he intentionally corrupt youth, even if he does, it is unintentional and not a matter for court. As Meletus is insisting upon the charges, Socrates makes his argument by saying that teaching someone about something requires a belief in ultimate existence, which contradicts Meletus' accusation for Socrates for not believing in God. Socrates exemplifies in one of his conclusion that he compares himself a gadfly stinging around the lazy people of Athens, which annoys and wakes them up for virtuous work.

Lastly, as Socrates found guilty and refuses to appeal to Judges emotionally, he is asked to propose a penalty. To Socrates imprisonment and exile are the worst alternatives and he believes that death is not evil at all. Rather, Socrates settles this with a large penalty, which his friends are ready to pay. When jury come back with the verdict that Socrates is going to put for death, he again explains his observation that it is unknown what happens after death and so it would be foolish to fear what one does not know.