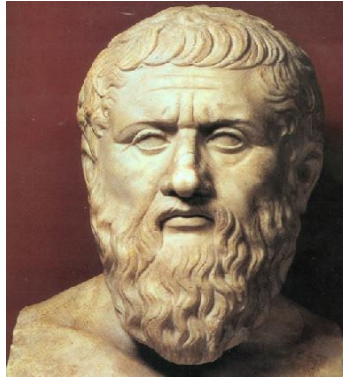


# THE REPUBLIC

by Plato



## THE AUTHOR

Plato (428-347 B.C.) was born in Athens of aristocratic parents about a year after the death of Pericles, the great ruler during whose reign Athens experienced its Golden Age. He had two brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, both of whom appear in *The Republic*. He was fascinated by politics early in life, but became disillusioned when an oligarchy gained control of Athens after the Peloponnesian War. He grew to favor democracy instead of rule by a few wealthy citizens, but that, too, failed him when a democratic jury voted to put his mentor, Socrates, to death in 399 B.C. After years of travel, he returned to Athens and established the Academy, a school where young men from all over the Mediterranean world could come and be tutored by scholars in a variety of disciplines. Plato supervised the Academy for the remainder of his life, and had considerable influence on its greatest pupil, Aristotle. His early dialogues reflected the Socratic method of reasoning in which the teacher questioned his hearers on definitions of primary virtues, and through continued questioning showed them the fallacies in their thinking (e.g., *Crito* and *Euthyphro*). Often such dialogues arrived at no definite conclusions - one of the reasons Socrates was accused of corrupting Athenian youth. Middle dialogues show more independent thought on the part of Plato, and in these (including *The Republic*, c.380 B.C., and the *Symposium*) Socrates becomes little more than a mouthpiece for the author. His later works, including *Laws* and *Timaeus*, are more difficult and obscure, and Socrates plays little or no role in them. The obscurity of these last works is such that scholars still debate what views Plato finally espoused on the issues raised in the works from the middle period.

*The Republic* begins in the fashion of a Socratic dialogue, with an attempt to define justice. Instead of ending with the failure of the proposed definition, however, Plato goes on to propose a blueprint for an ideal society. In the process, he not only questions the value of the Socratic method, but also argues against the forms of government that had failed Athens during his lifetime, especially oligarchy and democracy (his attack on timocracy reflects his knowledge of Sparta, the victor in the Peloponnesian War, while tyranny had been prominent in Sicily, which Plato had often visited). The dialogue also attacks the practices of the Sophists, itinerant teachers who emphasized rhetoric and persuasive skills, but who denied that truth or right and wrong existed. At bottom, they were pragmatists like Thrasymachus, who argues in *The Republic* that injustice is better than justice because it benefits those who practice it. The dialogue also depends,

as do many other of Plato's writings, on his theory of Forms, the idea that beyond the world of sense perceptions there exists an eternal reality of which what we see is only a shadow (note the assumption of this idea in the Allegory of the Cave, as well as its influence on such Christian writers as Augustine, Anselm, and even C.S. Lewis). The dialogue is divided into ten books, each of equal length. These do not represent divisions of thought in the material, but simply the amount of writing that could be fit onto a standard papyrus scroll.

## **SUMMARY**

### **BOOK I**

The dialogue takes place in the home of Cephalus in Piraeus. Socrates, who narrates the story, is about to return to Athens when Polemarchus, the son of Cephalus, persuades him to stay for the festival that evening. He agrees, and the group adjourns to the house of Cephalus, an old friend of Socrates. As they converse, Socrates remarks that Cephalus seems to be doing very well despite his advanced age, and the old man responds that age has nothing to do with one's spirits; an old man who is angry with the world was undoubtedly the same when he was young, and an old man who is content has learned as a youth to live amicably in this world. Socrates agrees, but suggests that the wealth of Cephalus certainly plays a role in his contentment. Cephalus responds that this world's goods certainly contribute to a comfortable old age, but argues that wealth does not guarantee happiness. Socrates says that Cephalus is indifferent to wealth because he has inherited it, but that a man who earns his fortune would value it more highly. Cephalus then notes that the real fear that plagues the elderly is not want, but death, and that increasing awareness of sin makes this fear worse. He argues, however, that the righteous man need not fear death.

Socrates then turns the discussion to the question of justice and seeks a definition. Cephalus has argued that justice involves speaking the truth to all men and paying one's debts, but Socrates considers this definition inadequate. He cites the example of returning a borrowed weapon to a deranged man, and notes that no one would consider such an act just. At this point Polemarchus joins the discussion and notes that telling the truth is not always just, either, and goes on to suggest that doing good to friends and repaying enemies with evil is the real definition of justice. Socrates then asks him why justice is important and leads Polemarchus to the conclusion that justice is needed when one seeks to preserve what one has, but that skill and knowledge are more important when one wishes to use one's possessions, leading to the somewhat bizarre statement that justice is needed only when one has no use for the things in question. Socrates further argues that those who are most skilled in some endeavor are also most able to do the opposite, so that those who are best able to do good are also best able to do evil. Consequently, justice should be viewed as practicing theft on behalf of one's friends and to the ruin of one's enemies. This is obviously unsatisfactory, and Socrates carries the argument further, showing that it is always wrong to do harm to anyone, thus demolishing the argument that justice involves doing good to one's friends and evil to one's enemies. Two definitions of justice have now been shot down.

At this point Thrasymachus enters the discussion and boldly suggests that justice is nothing more than the strong man pursuing his own interests at the expense of the weak. Socrates, however, points out that subjects are bound to obey the ruler even when he makes a mistake, and therefore the acts of rulers are sometimes contrary to their own interests. Thrasymachus attempts

to escape the trap by arguing that a ruler is only really a ruler when he acts in his own interest, just as a grammarian is only really a grammarian when he speaks correctly. Socrates then responds that any art, including that of government, has a central purpose and that the practitioner acts rightly only when he fulfills that purpose; in other words, no artist, including the ruler, acts for himself, but for his art. Despite the bluster of Thrasymachus, who argues that tyranny is far more efficient than benevolence, Socrates seeks to demonstrate that rulers must rule for the benefit of others, or else they would not need to be paid for the job, since someone acting in his own interests would not need reimbursement. Furthermore, rulers who do their work out of a desire for money or honor are condemned for greed and arrogance, while those who do so only to keep someone worse from exercising authority are praised. Thrasymachus, however, refuses to yield, and goes on to argue that the wicked lead better lives than the righteous because they are free to pursue their own interests. Socrates responds that this leads to the ridiculous conclusion that injustice is virtue, and then draws Thrasymachus out to the point where he admits that the just man seeks to dominate the unjust but not the just, while the unjust tries to dominate everyone else. Thrasymachus begins to back off, finally admitting that evil is destructive to those who practice it. Socrates then argues that all things ought to pursue their proper ends, including the soul of man, which ought to pursue virtue, justice, and happiness. Unfortunately, justice still remains undefined.

## BOOK II

Glaucon at this point picks up the argument and asserts that justice is not good in its very essence, but good only because of its consequences. He argues that no one would practice justice if he could get away with injustice, much less would someone practice virtue if to do so led to punishment while vice led to prosperity. He uses the example of Gyges, who found a magic ring that would make him invisible and used it to seduce the queen and murder the king, taking his place in the process. Who, he suggests, could resist such a temptation? He further proposes the extreme scenario where a perfectly unjust man is thought by all to be just and is able to work his will with no doleful consequences, while a perfectly just man is thought to be unjust by all and is persecuted, tortured, and suffers a horrible death. Which, he asks will be the happier? The moral of the story is that one ought rather to seem just than to *be* just. Adeimantus, Glaucon's brother, then continues the argument by noting that people praise virtue and condemn vice because of their purported consequences in the life to come, but really believe that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer in this world. Furthermore, the wicked can easily get forgiveness for their sins by sacrificing to the gods, and thus escape even eternal consequences. The gods, in short, can be bribed, or at least this is what young people learn from popular literature, which encourages them to pursue injustice. Adeimantus then begs Socrates to refute this sadly convincing argument if he can.

Socrates notes that Glaucon and Adeimantus clearly do not believe their own arguments, so they should be simple enough to refute, though to do so might be more difficult if they were sincerely espousing the positions they presented. He takes a completely different approach, arguing that, should he be able to prove his case on a large scale, the smaller scale should follow automatically. In short, if he can prove that justice is the ultimate good for the state, it should also be so for the individual. He leads his companions through the process of describing a state from its very beginnings - a few individuals who need to depend on one another's skills and

contributions to live a good life. By the time he is done, he has constructed a large and complex society, including trade, the desire for luxuries, and warfare. He then turns to the question of who ought to govern such a society. He argues that such a man must combine the qualities of gentleness and bravery (“spirit”), and that only a philosopher can be expected to combine such contradictory traits (he notes that a dog does also, being gentle with its friends and brave against his enemies). Socrates then asks how the young should be educated in such a society, and responds that music (disciplines controlled by the Muses, including art, literature, and philosophy) should be provided to nourish the soul while gymnastics should be taught to strengthen the body. Fictional literature is dangerous because it puts false ideas into the heads of the young, particularly with regard to the gods. [Note that he includes Homer here, and in the course of his argument often uses monotheistic language, though also referring to the prevailing polytheism of the literature he wishes to have censored.] He opposes the tales of the gods quarreling and playing tricks on one another, noting that these encourage the young to practice evil; those who would interpret such stories allegorically are speaking over the heads of youth, who tend to take such tales at face value. God, according to Socrates, is pure goodness and cannot be the author of evil, though he may punish those who do evil. Also, since God is pure perfection, he cannot change, nor can he be changed by any man; any change must be brought about by others, not God. Furthermore, God cannot lie, so that lies should be hated by good men as well. Both Glaucon and Adeimantus agree with these conclusions.

### BOOK III

Having dealt with the fundamental theological issues, Socrates then asks about the training needed to produce men who are both brave and gentle. He argues that bravery, especially to the point of giving one’s life in battle, requires that a man not fear death. The poets, however, cultivate the fear of death by making the underworld appear to be a dreadful and unpleasant place to which no sane man would desire to go. Such stories, even if they come from the pen of the great Homer, are to be rejected as inappropriate for young scholars, especially those who are being trained for leadership. Brave men should not fear their own deaths, nor should they mourn unduly for the deaths of their friends. How much more, then, should the gods refrain from undue grief over the deaths of their favorites in war? In fact, far too many stories about the gods set bad examples. The gods are mirthful to the point of frivolousness, play tricks on one another and on mortals, and behave in the most immoral ways, even to the extent of drunkenness and sexual debauchery. Not only do the poets slander the gods with such tales, but also pen stories that convey the message that the unjust are happy while the just are miserable. Potential leaders instead must have their heads filled with tales of bravery and endurance, of those who suffer great pain and remain steadfast and those who sacrifice themselves willingly for their fellows.

Socrates then goes on to analyze stylistic elements in poetry, noting that all such literature takes the form of either narrative (what we would call third person omniscient) or imitation (in which the writer takes on the character of a person in the story; this can take either the form of dialogue or first-person narration). He goes on to argue that imitation has its dangers, since a man should confine himself only to what he does well, and thus cannot effectively imitate others. If this is dangerous for a poet, how much more so for a guardian of the state. He must stick to his business and not be encouraged to imitate others, especially those who provide bad examples (e.g., those who on the stage portray villains, weaklings, madmen, or even animals). On the other hand,

imitating those of good character is to be encouraged. From a stylistic standpoint, simplicity is to be admired. Imitators who do not confine themselves to what is pleasing and edifying may be admired for their skill, but should immediately be exiled from society. Even certain rhythms are harmful to the populace - relaxed rhythms encourage immorality, while martial ones promote courage. Similarly with musical instruments - the lyre and the harp are acceptable (and perhaps the pipes in the country), but all others tend toward immoral influences. In short, good citizens should constantly be exposed to the beautiful and noble, while the ugly and dissonant are to be excluded as baneful influences. This will produce perfect harmony of body and soul - a man who benefits from gymnastics and music alike.

Glaucon then asks if one might have an excess of good things. Socrates argues that true love will never seek excess, especially in the realm of physical gratification, and will never seek its own pleasure at the expense of another or without the consent of the beloved. Thus physical training should explicitly reject excess of any kind, whether of food or drink or sexual gratification. The man whose life is harmonious should be his own physician and his own lawyer, not seeking to prolong his life beyond its natural length nor to take from others what is not his due. True physicians will treat only those who can be cured, but will not simply prescribe treatments to extend life when no cure is possible, which leads to misery for the patient and is harmful to society. While a doctor should know disease from his experience of the sufferings of his own body, the judge or lawyer should ply his trade from his knowledge of the experience of others. He must seek remedies for injustice without himself being a practitioner of injustice. In short, the wise man rarely avails himself of either doctors or lawyers. Such harmony and balance is achieved by being trained both in gymnastics, which hardens the body, and music, which softens the soul.

If such are to be the characteristics of guardians of the state, who should be chosen to fulfill such a heavy responsibility? Surely the elder should rule the younger, and only those who have been tried by experience and proved to be worthy of responsibility. The worthy should be discovered through testing, exposing them to the temptations of pleasure and deception and the fears of danger and pain. Those who pass the test are worthy of great honor, and are to be called "guardians," while the younger men who are in training are to be called "auxiliaries." The warriors who protect that state are to live the lives of professional soldiers, having no possessions or homes of their own and dwelling in tents under rustic circumstances so that nothing may distract them from their primary responsibility.

## BOOK IV

Adeimantus then wonders how the citizens of Socrates' ideal society can be happy living in primitive conditions with no money. Socrates responds that happiness must be judged in terms of the society as a whole rather than by looking at the condition of individuals. After all, if the society operates smoothly, everyone will benefit. He further argues that a society of rich men would soon disintegrate, since workers would have no motivation to attend to their work and soldiers would lose the discipline necessary to fight well against their enemies. In fact, a small band of well-trained soldiers, poor though they be, will always defeat a larger group of fat and ill-trained wealthy men. Socrates further asserts that his ideal state will be able to form alliances with others because these other states will recognize that more plunder is to be had by joining with a well-disciplined and united people. Unity will also lead to victory because, in other societies,

classes are divided against one another so that many within the enemy state will quickly turn against their own rulers. Because of the importance of unity, a state should only be so large as to enable that unity to be maintained. He briefly mentions the importance of citizens holding all things in common in order for unity to thrive, and suggests that this applies to wives and children as well, then proceeds without further comment.

Socrates then moves on to stress the importance of education, and notes that the foundations of music (the arts) and gymnastics should never be altered. The young always want to change the way things are done, but their changes, which start merely as amusements, lead to disregard for manners, customs, contracts, and ultimately laws, so that the entire society is undermined. Thus the young should be exposed only to that which is harmonious and beautiful, not to those amusements that lead to rebellion. When his friends point out that Socrates has left many aspects of his society unmentioned, he points out that a people who are sound with regard to the fundamentals will be able to work out the rest themselves. Societies that are constantly changing their laws are compared to patients who are perpetually doctoring themselves, with the same baleful effects. Religion, too, is to be left entirely to the gods and outside the realm of the state. In order for such a state to prosper, the guardians must be exceedingly wise, and since only a few possess such wisdom, one must assume that the class of guardians will be the smallest portion of any society. In the same way that the guardians personify wisdom, the soldiers who defend the kingdom personify courage, and thus the state benefits from two of the leading virtues. The third, temperance, is achieved by balancing wisdom and courage. In the same way that an individual who is able to control his passions is both the master of himself and the slave of himself, so an ideal society is one where the rulers control the passions of the many, thus achieving harmony. The fourth great virtue, justice, which was the subject that began the dialogue in the first place, then involves each man doing the one thing he by nature is designed to do, leading to a society that possesses wisdom, courage, and temperance, and must thus needs be a just society. Justice occurs when each person does what he ought to do and is satisfied with what he ought to have, therefore not seeking the condition or status of others.

Socrates then notes that this harmony of virtues that constitutes justice in the state also characterizes the well-balanced individual, in whom the mind (wisdom), the will (courage), and the passions (temperance) are in harmony. He develops his argument using the law of non-contradiction and giving examples to show that these are three principles, not merely two, since a person often acts contrary to his desires when his reason musters his passions to assert control over his actions. He then returns to the importance of music and gymnastics in bringing the components of man into harmony, since they involve the exercise and training of all three. Socrates now concludes that the three principal parts of the state are the same as those of the individual, and the harmony of the three constitutes justice. Obviously, then, the opposite constitutes injustice, and no one could possibly argue that the unjust are happier than the just.

## BOOK V

Socrates is about to launch into a discourse of the evil state by examining the opposite of the just state of which he has spoken, but Glaucon and Adeimantus stop him and insist that he return to a subject he had glossed over earlier - the role of women and children in his ideal state. Socrates argues that women should be able to fill any role in society allotted to men, since the differences between men and women are not relevant to the business of the state. No such

distinction exists in the animal world, nor should it exist among humans. He thus asserts that women should receive the same education as men, focusing on music and gymnastics (he even argues that women should exercise naked as men do), and that, if so trained, they will be able to play an important role in war. He does acknowledge, however, that, though women can do all the same things as men, they will never do them quite as well. In the same way that men possess different virtues in different degrees, so do women, thus equipping them to fulfill different roles in society. After all, society is better off with educated women than with uneducated ones.

Glaucon now brings Socrates back to his earlier comment about people holding all things equally, including wives and children. Socrates then argues that having wives in common is not only the best way of running a state, but also is readily achievable. He then proceeds to advocate eugenics (the state determining who ought to procreate with whom), by which the superior men and women should reproduce as often as possible while the inferior are discouraged from reproducing at all. Thus a group of guardians and a group of "wives" will be the chief progenitors of an ideal society. The offspring of such unions will be cared for by the state, with no adults knowing the identity of their own children, nor any children knowing who their parents are. The result of this, according to Socrates, is that all adults will consider all children their offspring and all children will consider all adults their parents. Under such an arrangement, how can conflict arise in the society? Children will respect all as their parents, adults will consider all their brothers and sisters, so how can violence or lawsuits possibly plague such a state? Children who are born of unlicensed unions are to be kept apart from the educational system and governing of the state, and those born of inferior parents are to be destroyed at birth. Planned children are to accompany their parents to the wars in order to learn courage, though they ought not be exposed to serious dangers before they are prepared. Behavior can also alter a man's status in society - cowards are to be degraded, while those who show extraordinary courage are to be rewarded with food, drink, and the choicest of women, along with an honorable burial when they die. Socrates next addresses the question of those against whom wars are to be fought. He assumes that his perfect society is a Greek one, and therefore argues that, while conflicts may occur against other Greek city-states, they are not to be treated as enemies in the same sense as barbarians, but are to be dealt with honorably - no enslavement, no burning or looting - so that the goal of such warfare will be a lasting peace, naturally desired by the citizens of all states who love the Hellenic way of life.

When he is challenged, Socrates admits that his state will never be perfectly achieved, but that men should strive for it anyway. The way to accomplish this is to seek out as guardians the true wise men - the philosophers. A state that is ruled by men who love wisdom will move a long way toward the ideal condition. The wise man or philosopher is one who loves all knowledge and is able to distinguish between what is good and what is not. He then follows a tangent in which he notes that the objects of knowledge must exist, while that which does not exist cannot be known. Thus knowledge and ignorance are associated with being and non-being, respectively. There is a third condition, however - that of opinion. Opinion lacks the certainty of knowledge, but is not ignorance, for who would have an opinion about that which does not exist? Knowledge cannot err, but opinion can, thus the wise man is one who traffics in knowledge rather than opinion, though most men concern themselves much more with opinion than with knowledge.

## BOOK VI

Socrates continues to discuss the qualities of a true philosopher. He is one who loves all truth and all being, who seek the eternal rather than the temporal. Because the pleasures of the mind dominate his thinking, he will neither give attention to nor be tempted by the pleasures of the body, and thus will be incapable of corruption or covetousness. Because he values the eternal, he will not fear death, yet will not be so heavenly-minded that he is unable to relate to his fellow men. He must not only possess great knowledge, but must also have a good memory so he is able to retain and use what he has learned. At this point Socrates' hearers remark that, though his philosopher seems a genuine paragon of all virtue, he is unlikely to convince others because most people view philosophers as useless bores and con men. Socrates agrees with this assessment, but explains the true nature of the case using a parable about a ship on which the captain is strong but inept and the crew members are surly, ignorant, and rebellious. On such a ship, the pilot, the only one with true knowledge and skills, is regarded as a fool and is pushed aside by the others. In his parable, the captain of the ship is the people, strong but unskilled in running the ship of state. The crew members are the fraudulent philosophers who know nothing but insist they have all knowledge, meanwhile being unwilling to listen to either the people or the true philosophers, represented by the pilot. Socrates then asks whether anyone should be surprised that philosophers have little regard in society, since most of those who profess to be philosophers are charlatans and true philosophers are ignored by all. He goes on to argue that even those who have the potential to be true philosophers are often turned aside from the task by the lure of prosperity or solitude or the pressure of public opinion. True philosophers, because of their noble character and great talents, are also subject to flattery, which will turn them aside from philosophical pursuits. In addition, true philosophers are often persecuted, even to the point of death. False philosophers, on the other hand, bend to the opinions of the changeable populace and teach only what is currently in favor. They succumb to flattery and labor for wealth and recognition. Furthermore, a great mind, when corrupted by a bad education, becomes, not useless, but instead a source of great evil.

True philosophers thus are extremely few, and no state may be cited that fits the model of the ideal society portrayed by Socrates. There are, in fact, no philosopher-kings, and are unlikely to be any until the people come to appreciate true philosophy rather than being exposed only to its tepid imitation. How, then, may such a state be constructed? According to Socrates, the legislator must begin with a blank slate, removing from society and from the philosopher in training all that preconditions one to follow the conventional pattern of the world (the phrase here is *tabula rasa*, the same used by John Locke in a different context). Once the old ways have been erased, the new laws will become self-evidently good, even to those who initially object to them. The training of the philosopher-king must be a long and arduous process, during which he is tested to demonstrate his virtues, knowledge, and perseverance. During the time of his probation he must learn to know and love the good, which is above all truth and opinion and may be mastered only by the use of logic. Reason thus must be seen as the highest of human faculties, above understanding, faith, and perception, which increasingly partake of opinion rather than knowledge.

## BOOK VII

Socrates begins this section of the dialogue with his famous Allegory of the Cave, in which he attempts to illustrate the nature and plight of the true philosopher. He pictures a society where everyone is chained in an underground cavern facing the back wall, with the only light coming from a fire behind them. As a result, all they can see are shadows, but to them these are the only reality. He argues that if the prisoners are unchained, they would still maintain that the shadows to which they are accustomed constitute true reality. One who is forced to the entrance of the cave is dazzled by the light, but gradually becomes accustomed to it, only then realizing the inadequacy of his previous understanding of the nature of things. He, for the first time and alone among his fellow-citizens, sees things as they really are. When he returns to the cavern, however, his eyes are unable to adjust fully to the relative darkness, and he appears to his fellows foolish and inept, nor do they believe his accounts of the outside world. The true philosopher, who knows the essence of things as they are in themselves, must not simply bask in his superior knowledge, but must return to the ignorant world below, no matter what the consequences. Only then can a society be formed that is founded in truth and goodness rather than in mere opinion, represented by the shadows on the wall. Though the philosopher will be reluctant to return to the cave, he must be induced to do so by a superior lifestyle that will keep him from covetousness, and coerced to do so if necessary.

The training of such rare souls begins, as noted previously, with music and gymnastics, but must move on beyond these to skills that are necessary for military prowess: arithmetic and plane geometry. These have not only practical value, but also train the mind to think clearly, though few mathematicians seem to have mastered the art. These disciplines enable the philosopher to make sharp and clear distinctions and bring unity out of diversity while training the mind to think in abstract rather than concrete terms. Socrates is prepared to move on to astronomy, but Glaucon reminds him of solid geometry, a necessary intermediate step because astronomy involves the movement of solid objects. Socrates argues that this is hardly worth discussing because the discipline is so poorly understood and poorly taught. While Glaucon marvels at the beauty of the stars, Socrates reminds him that astronomy in its highest form, like arithmetic, deals in abstractions rather than physical realities. Once all these have been studied, they must be brought together, and this is possible only through the study of dialectic. Such studies must be begun in early childhood, though dialectic ought not be introduced until the student reaches the age of twenty. The best should enter advanced studies at the age of thirty, but such students must be guarded against skepticism lest they repudiate all that they have learned through an excess of pride. At the age of thirty-five, they are to assume lower public office, whether military or political, in order to gain necessary life experience, then at the age of fifty the best will be suited to become guardians of the state, during which time they give themselves to the contemplation of the good and the essence of things, entering periodically into the life of the people in order to share their wisdom. The first step in this process is obviously to seize the most promising children and take them away from their parents in order to begin their training.

## BOOK VIII

Socrates now returns to the question of the characteristics that are contrary to the absolute good, both in societies and in individuals. His approach is to consider the different kinds of states

other than his ideal one, then to discourse concerning the individuals that inhabit such states. His own he denominates aristocracy, and argues that four others exist, each worse than the last and each flowing from the failures of the last. These four are timocracy (a society based on honor, such as that of Crete or Sparta), oligarchy (also sometimes called plutocracy, or rule by the wealthy), democracy, and tyranny.

He argues that timocracy results when the rulers of an aristocracy, which he defines as “rule by the best,” forget to regulate births and deaths, and thus produce an excess of population. This leads to discord and strife, which leads to the insistence on private property, which leads to violence and covetousness. The young are thus characterized by ambition, and those who are the most ambitious are those who become the rulers. Such men oppress their slaves and fail to respect their elders, even their parents, because those parents have failed to satisfy their ambitions.

Then follows oligarchy, which is a society governed by the wealthy. Private property leads to the desire to accumulate more than one’s fellows, and ambition, when satisfied, seeks material comforts. Such rulers are never satisfied with what they have, but always desire more, thus creating a society where great disparity exists between the few who are rich and the many who are poor. Virtue is cast aside in the quest for material goods. Such a society, unlike the timocracy, can no longer succeed in war, since the rich fear the poor, and thus refuse to arm them, while the rich are indolent and incapable of winning contests of strength and courage. Large numbers of poor also produce a society full of paupers and criminals. Such a society has no interest in the higher faculties, but only in obtaining and preserving wealth.

This leads to democracy, as those who have been deprived of wealth through the greed of others and those who have never known anything but poverty are driven to revolution when they discover that the rulers of the oligarchy are weak and inept. The resulting society tolerates a wide variety of opinions and characters, and, since freedom becomes the primary good, laws are soon disregarded and order and good taste are left by the wayside. The primary maxim of an orderly state, that each man should do only one thing according to his nature, has long been left behind as men become dilettantes, trying this and that in their search for novelty and satisfaction. Sadly, ultimate freedom leads to ultimate slavery, as the people call for order and are willing to have it at any cost.

This then opens the door for tyranny. People cannot long live in a society where common courtesy as well as law is abandoned and citizens have no respect for authority, and are willing to sacrifice their precious liberties in order to avoid anarchy. Soon a man arises who offers to bring order to society and to give the people what they crave - the vast mass of workers are offered the wealth of the productive members of society, while this redistribution is managed by unproductive talkers who seduce the populace. The tyrant then reveals his true colors, systematically killing first his enemies and then his friends, so that soon no one remains who has any possibility of overthrowing the dictator. He strengthens his position by freeing the slaves and making them his personal army, enabling him to overpower anyone who would threaten him. He then raises taxes at will and uses his army to crush his enemies from without. He inevitably grows unpopular, but by this time is impregnable. He seizes any remaining wealth in the kingdom and silences any dissent with the violence of his guard. If the people dare revolt, he puts down the rebellion ruthlessly. The end is absolute slavery.

## BOOK IX

Socrates now goes on to describe the character of the tyrant, and notes that he is a man completely controlled by his passions; the evil desires that most men know only in their most horrible dreams become for the tyrant the governing drives of his life. For the sake of his passions he will steal the inheritance of his brothers and dominate his parents in order to be able to afford the company of prostitutes, and then turn to theft when the family money is consumed. The worst of such men becomes a tyrant over the state, and not only enslaves the people and makes them miserable, but is himself the most miserable of all men because he must constantly fear overthrow by those who detest his tyranny.

Socrates then reiterates his original assertion: that the five kinds of states - monarchy (or aristocracy), timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny - are ranked in order of the happiness they give to their subjects and the admirable qualities of their rulers. Thus, no one may legitimately argue that the practice of injustice produces the greatest happiness. He goes on to note that the leading qualities of states are parallel to the principles of the soul - knowledge and truth, ambition, and passion. The philosopher, the lover of wisdom, is clearly the superior because he alone can judge what is best, having experienced and subdued ambition and passion in his own life. The others, while affirming the superiority of honor and appetite, respectively, know nothing of true being, and thus are in no position to judge. Socrates then goes on to discuss pleasure and pain, and notes that, while some pleasures are defined as the absence of pain, some things are pleasurable in and of themselves, and indeed the highest pleasures are those of the mind rather than the senses. He then launches into a mathematical tangent in which he attempts to argue that the pleasures of the philosopher-king are 729 times greater than those of the tyrant, and supports this conclusion by noting that 729 is very close to the number of days and nights in a year. He then proposes an illustration, supposing that the outer appearance of a man hid within it a man, a lion, and a monster (reason, honor, passion). Clearly the best and happiest man is the one whose reason controls his inner lion and beast. Such control is admitted by all when we observe the need for discipline of children and laws in the state.

## BOOK X

Socrates begins the final book of the dialogue by supporting his earlier argument that imitative poets such as Homer and dramatists and comedic bards should be banned from the ideal State. He notes that universals are pure and unitary while particulars are many and derivative, and that artists such as painters are one step further removed from the pure and true because they only represent the particulars, and that without any essential knowledge of their characteristics. The ideal bed is created by God, while artisans make particular beds and a painter merely makes a picture of a particular bed from one perspective only. One should thus not imagine that the poet, who is nothing but an imitator no matter how great his skills, has any real knowledge of the truth or essence of things, and those who claim that poetry gives such insight are deceived. True knowledge of things is possessed by the user, whose knowledge then instructs the maker (as the user of a flute dictates its characteristics to the artisan), but the imitator need have no such knowledge. Furthermore, the imitative arts are harmful to the observer. While men commonly understand that extremes of emotion are to be restrained for the good of all, the arts thrive by displaying the excesses of emotion, thus encouraging in the observer what is generally condemned

in polite society, making of him a weak-minded crybaby or a loud-mouthed buffoon. Thus, while poetry is enjoyable, the only kinds that Socrates is willing to admit into his State are encomiums in praise of gods and worthy men.

He then turns to an argument for the immortality of the soul. He argues that only evil can destroy, while nothing is destroyed by the good. Furthermore, we observe that even the worst of evils do not destroy the soul, which outlives all forms of moral and physical evil. He then asserts that, if the soul cannot be destroyed, the number of souls must be fixed and unchangeable. In addition, because the just man loves the gods, they will assure that he will be repaid for his goodness by good and not by evil, both in this life and in the afterlife; similarly, the unjust man will suffer for the evil he has done. He concludes the dialogue with the parable of Er, who died in battle, but ten days later returned to earth to tell his friends what he had seen. He observed the cosmos, controlled by Necessity and the Fates and looking very much like the crystalline spheres of Ptolemy. Souls were taken to a region in which could be seen four holes, two leading upward and two downward. Souls were ascending and descending through these holes. Conversations with those who had emerged from the upper and nether regions revealed that they had suffered rewards and punishments tenfold for their deeds on earth lasting a thousand years (even longer for some whose crimes had been particularly heinous). The souls were now given the opportunity to choose a new life; a wide variety of lives, good and evil, powerful and obscure, were laid out before them, and they chose according to the casting of lots. Most chose lives contrary to those they had known before, even to the extent that people chose to become animals and animals people. Most chose foolishly, but a few chose wisely, seeking lives of calm and quiet contemplation. After choosing, they were led to the river of Forgetfulness, from which they drank deeply, so that none should remember their past lives. Er alone returned to earth to tell this tale and tell his friends of the path to bliss in this life and the life to come. Socrates then concludes the dialogue by exhorting his friends to live lives of wisdom and justice, dear to one another and to the gods.

## **MAJOR CHARACTERS**

- Socrates - Plato's mentor is the narrator of the account, which details a dialogue between himself and a number of others.
- Cephalus - The owner of the house where the dialogue takes place.
- Polemarchus - Son of Cephalus who invites Socrates to stay in Piraeus for a festival instead of returning to Athens.
- Thrasymachus - A young man who argues that justice is only the interest of the strong, not the good of the people.
- Glaucon - A pugnacious man who plays devil's advocate, arguing what he professes not to believe: that men would always be unjust if they thought they could get away with it, so that justice is a good, not in itself, but only of necessity. He soon falls in behind Socrates and follows his reasoning throughout the dialogue.

- Adeimantus - Glaucon's brother, he argues that people praise virtue and condemn vice because of their consequences, but really believe that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. He, too, quickly follows Socrates' arguments with few objections.

## NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“When he finds that the sum of his transgressions is great he will many a time like a child start up in his sleep for fear, and he is filled with dark forebodings. But to him who is conscious of no sin, sweet hope, as Pindar charmingly says, is the kind nurse of his age.” (Cephalus, Book I, p.8)

“Speaking the truth and paying your debts is not a correct definition of justice.” (Socrates, Book I, p.9)

“ An enemy, as I take it, owes to an enemy that which is due or proper to him - that is to say, evil.” (Polemarchus, Book I, p.10)

“Justice is the art which gives good to friends and evil to enemies.” (Polemarchus, Book I, p.10)

“So of all the other things; - justice is useful when they are useless, and useless when they are useful?” (Socrates, Book I, p.12)

“Then if a man says that justice consists in the repayment of debts, and that good is the debt which a man owes to his friends, and evil the debt which he owes to his enemies, - to say this is not wise; for it is not true, if, as has been clearly shown, the injuring of another can be in no case just.” (Socrates, Book I, p.16)

“I proclaim that justice is nothing else than the interest of the stronger.” (Thrasymachus, Book I, p.19)

“The ruler, in so far as he is the ruler, is unerring, and, being unerring, always commands that which is for his own interest; and the subject is required to execute his commands.” (Thrasymachus, Book I, p.23)

“Thrasymachus, there is no one in any rule who, in so far as he is a ruler, considers or enjoins what is for his own interest, but always what is for the interest of his subject or suitable to his art; to that he looks, and that alone he considers in everything which he says and does.” (Socrates, Book I, p.26)

“In the execution of his work, and in giving orders to another, the true artist does not regard his own interest, but always that of his subjects; and therefore in order that rulers may be willing to rule, they must be paid in one of three modes of payment: money, or honor, or a penalty for refusing.” (Socrates, Book I, p.31)

“For I know not what justice is, and therefore I am not likely to know it is or is not a virtue, nor can I say whether the just man is happy or unhappy.” (Socrates, Book I, p.44)

“This they affirm to be the origin and nature of justice; - it is a mean or compromise, between the best of all, which is to do injustice and not be punished, and the worst of all, which is to suffer injustice without the power of retaliation; and justice, being at the middle point between the two, is tolerated not as a good, but as the lesser evil, and honored by reason of the inability of men to do injustice.” (Glaucon, Book II, p.46-47)

“The highest reach of injustice is: to be deemed just when you are not.” (Glaucon, Book II, p.49)

“For what men say is that, if I am really just and am not also thought just, profit there is none, but the pain and loss on the other hand are unmistakable. But if, though unjust, I acquire the reputation of justice, a heavenly life is promised to me. Since then, as philosophers prove, appearance tyrannizes over truth and is lord of happiness, to appearance I must devote myself.” (Adeimantus, Book II, p.54)

“Let us begin to create in idea a State; and yet the true creator is necessity, who is the mother of our invention.” (Socrates, Book II, p.60)

“That those who are punished are miserable, and that God is the author of their misery - the poet is not to be permitted to say; though he may say that the wicked are miserable because they require to be punished, and are benefitting by receiving punishment from God; but that God being good is the author of evil to any one is to be strenuously denied, and not to be said or sung or heard in verse or prose by any one whether old or young in any well-ordered commonwealth. Such fiction is suicidal, ruinous, impious.” (Socrates, Book II, p.76-77)

“Then it is impossible that God should ever be willing to change; being, as is supposed, the fairest and best that is conceivable.” (Socrates, Book II, p.78)

“Can he be fearless in death, or will he choose death in battle rather than defeat and slavery, who believes the world below to be real and terrible?” (Socrates, Book III, p.82)

“Then we shall be right in getting rid of the lamentations of famous men, and making them over to women (and not even to women who are good for anything), or to men of the baser sort, that those who are being educated by us to be the defenders of their country may scorn to do the like.” (Socrates, Book III, p.84-85)

“If anyone at all is to have the privilege of lying, the rulers of the State should be the persons; and they, in their dealings either with enemies or with their own citizens, may be allowed to lie for the public good. But nobody else should meddle with anything of the kind.” (Socrates, Book III, p.86-87)

“Ugliness and discord and inharmonious motion are nearly allied to ill words and ill nature, as grace and harmony are the twin sisters of goodness and virtue and bear their likeness.” (Socrates, Book III, p.104)

“We would not have our guardians grow up amid images of moral deformity, as in some noxious pasture, and there browse and feed upon many a baneful herb and flower day by day, little by little, until they silently gather a festering mass of corruption in their own soul. Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of the beautiful and graceful; then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the good in everything.” (Socrates, Book III, p.105)

“He who has received this true education of the inner being will most shrewdly perceive omissions or faults in art and nature, and with a true taste, while he praises and rejoices over and receives into his soul the good, and becomes noble and good, he will justly blame and hate the bad, now in the days of his youth, even before he is able to know the reason why; and when reason comes he will recognize and salute the friend with whom his education has made him long familiar.” (Socrates, Book III, p.105-106)

“Then I suppose that in the city which we are founding you would make a law to the effect that a friend should use no other familiarity to his love than a father would use to his son, and then only for a noble purpose, and he must first have the other’s consent; and this rule is to limit him in all his intercourse, and he is never to be seen going further, or, if he exceeds, he is to be deemed guilty of coarseness and bad taste.” (Socrates, Book III, p.107-108)

“Bodies which disease had penetrated through and through he would not have attempted to cure by gradual processes of evacuation and infusion: he did not want to lengthen out good-for-nothing lives, or to have fathers begetting weaker sons; - if a man was not able to live in the ordinary way he had no business to cure him; for such a cure would have been of no use either to himself, or to the State.” (Socrates, Book III, p.114)

“This is the sort of medicine, and this is the sort of law, which you will sanction in your state. They will minister to better natures, giving health both of soul and of body; but those who are diseased in their bodies they will leave to die, and the corrupt and incurable souls they will put an end to themselves.” (Socrates, Book III, p.117)

“Wealth, I said, and poverty; the one is the parent of luxury and indolence, and the other of meanness and viciousness, and both of discontent.” (Socrates, Book IV, p.131)

“In the case of citizens generally, each individual should be put to the use for which nature intended him, one to one work, and then every man would do his own business, and be one and not many; and so the whole city would be one and not many.” (Socrates, Book IV, p.133-134)

“Why, yes, he said, and there is no harm; were it not that little by little this spirit of license, finding a home, imperceptibly penetrates into manners and customs; whence, issuing with greater force, it invades contracts between man and man, and from contracts goes on to laws and

constitutions, in utter recklessness, ending at last, Socrates, by an overthrow of all rights, private as well as public.” (Adeimantus, Book IV, p.135)

“The meaning is, I believe, that in the human soul there is a better and also a worse principle; and when the better has the worse under control, then a man is said to be master of himself; and this is a term of praise: but when, owing to evil education or association, the better principle, which is also the smaller, is overwhelmed by the greater mass of the worse - in this case he is blamed and is called the slave of self and unprincipled.” (Socrates, Book IV, p.144-145)

“The same thing cannot at the same time with the same part of itself act in contrary ways about the same.” (Socrates, Book IV, p.156)

“There is no special faculty of administration in a state which a woman has because she is a woman, or which a man has by virtue of his sex, but the gifts of nature are alike diffused in both; all the pursuits of men are the pursuits of women also, but in all of them a woman is inferior to a man.” (Socrates, Book V, p.176)

“Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils, - no, nor the human race, as I believe, - and then only will this our State have a possibility of life and behold the light of day.” (Socrates, Book V, p.203)

“He who has a taste for every sort of knowledge and who is curious to learn and is never satisfied may be justly termed a philosopher.” (Socrates, Book V, p.205)

“Those who love the truth in each thing are to be called lovers of wisdom and not lovers of opinion.” (Socrates, Book V, p.213)

“He whose desires are drawn toward knowledge in every form will be absorbed in the pleasures of the soul, and will hardly feel bodily pleasure - I mean, if he be a true philosopher and not a sham one.” (Socrates, Book VI, p.216)

“And may we not say, Adeimantus, that the most gifted minds, when they are ill-educated, become preeminently bad? Do not great crimes and the spirit of pure evil spring out of a fulness of nature ruined by education rather than from any inferiority, whereas weak natures are scarcely capable of any very great good or very great evil?” (Socrates, Book VI, p.225)

“Neither cities nor States nor individuals will ever attain perfection until the small class of philosophers whom we termed useless but not corrupt are providentially compelled, whether they will or not, to take care of the State, and until a like necessity be laid on the State to obey them; or until kings, or if not kings, the sons of kings or princes, are divinely inspired with a true love of true philosophy.” (Socrates, Book VI, p.235)

“And do you not also think, as I do, that the harsh feeling which the many entertain towards philosophy originates in the pretenders, who rush in uninvited, and are always abusing them, and finding fault with them, who make persons instead of things the theme of their conversation?” (Socrates, Book VI, p.236-237)

“They will begin by taking the State and the manners of men, from which, as from a tablet, they will rub out the picture, and leave a clean surface.” (Socrates, Book VI, p.237-238)

“Do you think that the possession of all other things is of any value if we do not possess the good? or the knowledge of all other things if we have no knowledge of beauty and goodness?” (Socrates, Book VI, p.243)

“And the soul is like the eye: when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands and is radiant with intelligence; but when turned towards the twilight of becoming and perishing, then she has opinion only, and goes blinking about, and is first of one opinion and then of another, and seems to have no intelligence?” (Socrates, Book VI, p.249)

“Wherefore each of you, when his turn comes, must go down to the general underground abode, and get the habit of seeing in the dark. When you have acquired the habit, you will see ten thousand times better than the inhabitants of the den, and you will know what the several images are, and what they represent, because you have seen the beautiful and just and good in their truth.” (Socrates, Book VII, p.261)

“The truth is that the State in which the rulers are most reluctant to govern is always the best and most quietly governed, and the State in which they are most eager, the worst.” (Socrates, Book VII, p.261)

“Have you further observed, that those who have a natural talent for calculation are generally quick at every other kind of knowledge; and even the dull, if they have had an arithmetical training, although they may derive no other knowledge from it, always become much quicker than they would otherwise have been.” (Socrates, Book VII, p.270)

“I have hardly ever known a mathematician who was capable of reasoning.” (Glaucou, Book VII, p.278)

“And do you also agree, I said, in describing the dialectician as one who attains a conception of the essence of each thing? And he who does not possess and is therefore unable to impart this conception, in whatever degree he fails, may in that degree also be said to fail in intelligence?” (Socrates, Book VII, p.281)

“Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind, [so] do not use compulsion, but let early education be a sort of amusement; you will then be better able to find the natural bent.” (Socrates, Book VII, p.284-285)

“We have arrived at the conclusion that in the perfect State wives and children are to be in common; and that all education and the pursuits of war and peace are also to be common, and the best philosophers and the bravest warriors are to be their kings?” (Socrates, Book VIII, p.291)

“These and other kindred characteristics are proper to democracy, which is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike.” (Socrates, Book VIII, p.312)

“In such a state of society the master fears and flatters his scholars, and the scholars despise their masters and tutors; young and old are all alike; and the young man is on a level with the old, and is ready to compete with him in word or deed; and old men condescend to the young and are full of pleasantry and gaiety; they are loth to be thought morose and authoritative, and therefore they adopt the manners of the young.” (Socrates, Book VIII, p.319)

“The excess of liberty, whether in States or individuals, seems only to pass into excess of slavery.” (Socrates, Book VIII, p.321)

“Certain of the unnecessary pleasures and appetites I conceive to be unlawful; every one appears to have them, but in some persons they are controlled by the laws and by reason, and the better desires prevail over them - either they are wholly banished or they become few and weak; while in the case of others they are stronger, and there are more of them.” (Socrates, Book IX, p.329-330)

“Or if some other person begins at the other end and measures the interval by which the king is parted from the tyrant in truth of pleasure, he will find him, when the multiplication is complete, living 729 times more pleasantly, and the tyrant more painfully by this same interval.” (Socrates, Book IX, p.354)

“Will any one say that he is not a miserable caitiff who remorselessly sells his own divine being to that which is most godless and detestable?” (Socrates, Book IX, p.357)

“In heaven, I replied, there is laid up a pattern of it, methinks, which he who desires may behold, and beholding, may set his own house in order. But whether such an one exists, or ever will exist in fact, is no matter; for he will live after the manner of that city, having nothing to do with any other.” (Socrates, Book IX, p.360)

“And the same may be said of lust and anger and all the other affections, of desire and pain and pleasure, which are held to be inseparable from every action - in all of them poetry feeds and waters the passions instead of drying them up; she lets them rule, although they ought to be controlled, if mankind are ever to increase in happiness and virtue.” (Socrates, Book X, p.377-378)

“Hymns to the gods and praises of famous men are the only poetry which ought to be admitted into our State.” (Socrates, Book X, p.378)

“But the soul which cannot be destroyed by an evil, whether inherent or external, must exist for ever, and if existing for ever, must be immortal?” (Socrates, Book X, p.383-384)

“Then this must be our notion of the just man, that even when he is in poverty or sickness, or any other seeming misfortune, all things will in the end work together for good to him in life and death: for the gods have a care of any one whose desire is to become just and to be like God, as far as man can attain the divine likeness, by the pursuit of virtue?” (Socrates, Book X, p.386-387)

“Let him know how to choose the mean and avoid the extremes on either side, as far as possible, not only in this life but in all that which is to come. For this is the way of happiness.” (Socrates, Book X, p.394)

“Wherefore my counsel is that we hold fast ever to the heavenly way and follow after justice and virtue always, considering that the soul is immortal and able to endure every sort of good and every sort of evil. Thus shall we live dear to one another and to the gods, both while remaining here and when, like conquerors in the games who go round to gather gifts, we receive our reward. And it shall be well with us both in this life and in the pilgrimage of a thousand years which we have been describing.” (Socrates, Book X, p.397)

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. In Book I of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates uses a method of questioning the purpose of which is to reveal to his opponents the weaknesses and contradictions in their own beliefs. Compare this with the approach used in presuppositional apologetics referred to by Francis Schaeffer as “taking the roof off.” Be sure to consider both the method and the goal of the process in your analysis, and refer to specifics in Plato's monumental work.
2. In Book II of Plato's *Republic*, Glaucon uses the example of Gyges, who uses a magic ring that confers invisibility to seduce the queen of his kingdom and murder the king, to argue that no one would shun injustice if he could get away with it. Comment on this argument, using both Scripture and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* to assess the point made by Glaucon.
3. In Book II of Plato's *Republic*, Glaucon argues that an unjust man who is thought just will be happier than a just man who is thought unjust, so that reputation is more important than the reality of a person's character. Would Niccolo Machiavelli, author of *The Prince*, agree? Compare the teachings of the two political writers on the question of reputation versus reality, and evaluate their conclusions on the basis of Scripture. Remember that you are speaking of the argument of Glaucon rather than the conclusion of Socrates or Plato himself.

4. Compare and contrast the argument of Adeimantus in Book II of Plato's *Republic* about the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering with the treatment of a similar problem by Asaph in Psalm 73.
5. Analyze the treatment of the problem of evil in Book II of Plato's *Republic*. How biblical are his ideas on the subject? To what extent is an implied monotheism foundational to his understanding of the issue?
6. In Book III of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues that the ideal society will be careful that the young are raised in an environment where they are exposed only to the beautiful and noble, while anything ugly or dissonant is to be prohibited. Evaluate his argument in the light of Philippians 4:8, and apply it to the question of popular entertainment, musical and otherwise.
7. Evaluate the discussion of doctors in Book III of Plato's *Republic*. Would he advocate euthanasia as it is being discussed in America today? Why or why not? How would you respond to his arguments?
8. In Books II-III of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates often argues for the benefits of censorship if the young are to develop character and rulers are to possess it. Do you agree? If not, refute his arguments logically. In any case, defend your position from Scripture.
9. In Book III of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues that a glorious afterlife is a stronger motivator to deeds of courage than a miserable one. Do you agree? Why or why not? Relate your answer to the Bible's teachings about the glories of heaven and the horrors of hell.
10. In Book IV of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues that wealth and poverty are twin evils, both harmful to society and the people in it. Agur makes a similar argument in Proverbs 30:8-9. Compare and contrast the two assessments of the dangers of wealth and poverty. In what ways do Socrates and Agur agree? Do you see significant differences in their approaches? If so, what are they?
11. As Socrates describes his ideal society in Plato's *Republic*, he repeatedly affirms that each man should do that for which nature has equipped him, and that one thing only. Contrast this approach to an ideal society with the concept of the Renaissance Man, which favored the citizen who was skilled in all areas of endeavor. Which approach would produce the superior society? Why? Is either approach really practical? Why or why not?
12. In Book IV of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates summarizes the law of non-contradiction in these words: "The same thing cannot at the same time with the same part of itself act in contrary ways about the same." Explain the role played by this fundamental principle of logic in Socrates' arguments. Why is this principle central to any understanding of truth, including biblical truth?

13. In Book IV of Plato's *Republic*, Adeimantus speaks of the effect of amusements on society in these words: "There is no harm; were it not that little by little this spirit of license, finding a home, imperceptibly penetrates into manners and customs; whence, issuing with greater force, it invades contracts between man and man, and from contracts goes on to laws and constitutions, in utter recklessness, ending at last, Socrates, by an overthrow of all rights, private as well as public." Is he exaggerating? Cite evidence from contemporary culture of the far-reaching effects of popular amusements on society as a whole. Would the Bible support Adeimantus' warning?
14. In Book IV of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates speaks of temperance or self-control in these words: "The meaning is, I believe, that in the human soul there is a better and also a worse principle; and when the better has the worse under control, then a man is said to be master of himself; and this is a term of praise: but when, owing to evil education or association, the better principle, which is also the smaller, is overwhelmed by the greater mass of the worse - in this case he is blamed and is called the slave of self and unprincipled." Compare and contrast his understanding of self-control with the Bible's teaching on the subject. Be sure to use specific passages of Scripture in evaluating Socrates' assertions on the subject.
15. In Book V of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates speaks at some length about the role of women in his ideal society. To what extent does he espouse male-female equality? Would modern feminists be pleased with his assessment of the roles and capacities of women? Why or why not?
16. In Book V of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates promotes a radical view of marriage and child-bearing that in fact eliminates the former in any real sense and entrusts decisions about reproduction and child-rearing to the state. Among other things, he argues that wives and children should be shared in common by all and that children should never know who their biological parents are. He further argues that such an arrangement is best for all concerned. How would you respond to his view of the family and its role in society? Use Scripture, but also be sure to refute the specific arguments he makes during the discussion.
17. In Book V of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates promotes a radical view of marriage and child-bearing that in fact eliminates the former in any real sense and entrusts decisions about reproduction and child-rearing to the state. A somewhat similar approach is portrayed in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, but Huxley sees the arrangement as horrible. Draw on both sources to evaluate the perspectives of the authors with regard to the role of marriage and the family in a healthy society.
18. In Book V of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates promotes a radical view of marriage and child-bearing that in fact eliminates the former in any real sense and entrusts decisions about reproduction and child-rearing to the state. The Soviet Union under Stalin tried to implement something of the sort, though they never achieved anything as extreme as that advocated by Plato. Using your knowledge of twentieth-century history, respond to Socrates' assertion that his approach will contribute to the formation of an ideal society.

19. In Book V of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates promotes a radical view of marriage and child-bearing that in fact eliminates the former in any real sense and entrusts decisions about reproduction and child-rearing to the state. John Humphrey Noyes, the founder of the Oneida Community in the nineteenth century, advocated complex marriage, which amounted to much the same thing. Noyes was considered a bizarre and dangerous cultist, while Plato continues today to be thought a great philosopher. What explains the difference in perception? Was Plato's ideal society any less bizarre and dangerous than the one founded by Noyes? Why or why not?
20. Near the end of Book V of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates makes his famous assertion that society will never achieve true light until philosophers are kings (or, what amounts to the same thing, kings are philosophers). Evaluate his assertion, paying special attention to his definition of a philosopher. To what extent does his claim conform to the biblical teachings about the necessity of wisdom?
21. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates seems quite willing to impose his vision of an ideal society on others who are considered unfit for rule or other forms of leadership. Is he overly optimistic in his belief that the inferior will readily submit to the authority of the fit, or is he missing something of great importance in his optimistic assessment of the way in which society is to achieve his ideal state?
22. In Book VI of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates says, "And may we not say, Adeimantus, that the most gifted minds, when they are ill-educated, become preeminently bad? Do not great crimes and the spirit of pure evil spring out of a fulness of nature ruined by education rather than from any inferiority, whereas weak natures are scarcely capable of any very great good or very great evil?" Evaluate this assertion in the light of the figure of the evil genius in literature. Choose one such figure, such as Moriarty in the Sherlock Holmes stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and show how the character illustrates the truth of Socrates' comment.
23. In Book VI of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues that few people respect philosophers because most of those who profess to be philosophers are frauds who undermine the reputation of the few true practitioners. Do you agree with him? Could the same assertion be made concerning the popular reputation enjoyed by Christians? Why or why not?
24. In Book VI of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues that the education of the young and the formation of the state alike must involve a clean slate, or *tabula rasa*, from which all previous habits and practices have been erased. The term used here is the same used by the empiricist John Locke in describing the condition of the human mind at birth. Compare and contrast the meanings and implications of the term as it is used by the two great thinkers.
25. In Book VII of Plato's *Republic*, the author presents his famous Allegory of the Cave. Evaluate the accuracy of this symbol as a description of human experience. Be sure to use Scripture in your assessment.

26. Critic T.Z. Lavine once said, “The Allegory of the Cave may be viewed as a devastating criticism of our everyday lives as being in bondage to superficialities, to shadow rather than to substance. Truth is taken to be whatever is known by the senses. A good life is taken to be one in which we satisfy our desires.” Is this a faithful reading of Plato’s analogy? Given this interpretation, to what extent is it an accurate description of contemporary life and society? Be sure to use Scripture in your assessment.
27. In Book VII of Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates argues that “the State in which the rulers are most reluctant to govern is always the best and most quietly governed, and the State in which they are most eager, the worst.” Do you agree? What does this suggest about the political process by which leaders are chosen in the United States? Does this have any implications for the church (cf. I Timothy 3:1)?
28. In Book VII of Plato’s *Republic*, the author both praises those who are skilled in calculation and scoffs at the reasoning power of mathematicians. To what extent does skill in mathematics carry over to other fields and contribute to reasoning power? What does your answer suggest about the role of mathematics in a good education?
29. The ideal state described by Socrates in Plato’s *Republic* is an elitist institution. Only the best rule, only the best reproduce, and only the best receive an education. In Book VII he says, “Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind, [so] do not use compulsion, but let early education be a sort of amusement; you will then be better able to find the natural bent.” What does this statement convey about the author’s views on human nature and education? Is his technique workable? Why or why not?
30. Compare and contrast the ideal state described in Plato’s *Republic* with another utopian society such as El Dorado in Candide’s *Voltaire*, the land of the Houyhnhnms in Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, or the society presented in Thomas More’s *Utopia*. How do the similarities and differences between the two utopian societies illuminate the authors’ understandings of human nature? Be sure to incorporate biblical principles into your assessments.
31. In Book VIII of Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates defines his favored system of government, aristocracy, as “rule by the best.” Is this an accurate description of aristocracy as it has actually existed in human history? Use examples of aristocratic states in the eighteenth century such as France, Austria, and Russia to support your analysis. Be sure to compare these states with the ideal society envisioned by Socrates in this dialogue.
32. In Book VIII of Plato’s *Republic*, Socrates takes time to describe the other four forms of government - timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny - that exist in addition to his favored system of aristocracy. In each case, he argues that each system fails because of its own internal weaknesses and inevitably collapses into the next. Choose one of the four transitions he describes and discuss the legitimacy of his argument. If possible, give historical examples to support or refute his contention.

33. In Book VIII of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates describes timocracy, a form of government where rulers value honor above all else. The result is a militaristic state of which Sparta was the best-known contemporary example. Apply his description and assessment to the kingdom of Prussia in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. How well does Socrates' description fit? Did his evaluation prove to be valid? Why or why not?
34. In Book VIII of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates describes oligarchy, which he defines as rule by the wealthy. It is a materialistic society in which greed and covetousness dominate rulers and people alike. To what extent does his description apply to America in the twenty-first century? Does his assessment of the nature and weaknesses of oligarchy fit our present experience? Why or why not?
35. In Book VIII of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates describes democracy, or popular rule. It is a society that values freedom above all else, in which all are equal, and laws, customs, and authority mean little. To what extent does his description apply to America in the twenty-first century? Does his assessment of the nature and weaknesses of democracy fit our present experience? Why or why not?
36. In Book VIII of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates describes tyranny and argues that it inevitably follows democracy. To what extent is his argument valid? Use a twentieth-century totalitarian state such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics under Stalin or Nazi Germany under Hitler to assess the validity of his argument.
37. In Book VIII of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates insists that absolute freedom leads to absolute slavery. Do you agree? Respond to his argument and analyze his assertion on the basis of Scripture.
38. In Book IX of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates says, "Will any one say that he is not a miserable caitiff who remorselessly sells his own divine being to that which is most godless and detestable?" Compare and contrast these words with Jesus' statement in Mark 8:36. Do the two men mean the same things by their similar-sounding assertions? Why or why not? Be sure to consider the contexts in which the two statements are found in your answer.
39. In Book IX of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates speaks of the impact of his ideal society on the heart of a wise man in these words: "In heaven, I replied, there is laid up a pattern of it, methinks, which he who desires may behold, and beholding, may set his own house in order. But whether such an one exists, or ever will exist in fact, is no matter; for he will live after the manner of that city, having nothing to do with any other." Compare and contrast this statement with Hebrews 11:10,16, which also speaks of an ideal heavenly city that motivates godly men in their earthly experience. Do Socrates and the writer of Hebrews have the same idea? If not, what are the important differences between the two?

40. In Book IX of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates describes the tyrant as a man who will rob his brothers of their inheritance and impoverish his parents in order to waste his substance on riotous living. Compare and contrast this character description with Jesus' portrayal of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. How are these characters the same? Do they have the same motives? Are the descriptions enunciated by Jesus and Socrates for the same reasons? Be sure to discuss the lessons intended by the two teachers in your evaluation.
41. In Book X of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues that epic and theatrical poetry should be banned from the ideal state because they are far separated from reality and are conducive to the kind of behavior that ought to be shunned in polite society. Assess his argument in the light of contemporary controversies about the impact of popular entertainment (TV, movies, music) on the behavior of the audience. Does Socrates make his case? If not, how would you respond to his arguments?
42. In Book X of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues that, for the just man, "all things will in the end work together for good." Compare and contrast this with Paul's similar statement in Romans 8:28. Are they saying the same thing, and for the same reasons?
43. In Book X of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates describes the way of happiness as lying in the ability to "choose the mean and avoid the extremes on either side." Evaluate his claim that the good is always to be found at the midpoint between two evil extremes (note that Aristotle said something very similar). Be sure to use Scripture in your evaluation.
44. In Book X of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argues for the immortality of the soul and insists that such a conclusion must naturally imply the transmigration of souls because souls cannot be destroyed. Assess this argument. How would you respond to someone who suggested that the immortality of the soul proved the truth of reincarnation?
45. In Book X of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates devotes considerable time to the Myth of Er. What is the significance of this myth to the argument of the dialogue? Be sure to discuss its connection to the major themes of justice and the role of philosophy in society as well as Plato's view of the afterlife.
46. In Book X of Plato's *Republic*, Socrates concludes the dialogue by arguing that, even though the ideal state may not exist, and in fact may never exist, one should learn from the discourse about its characteristics how to live in this present life in order to prepare for eternity. Evaluate his conclusion, both in the light of his own arguments and in the light of Scripture.
47. In the early years of the Christian Church, apologists such as Justin Martyr so admired the great Greek philosophers that they argued that men such as Plato would find a place in heaven, manifesting the virtues of Christianity before the time of Christ. Having read Plato's *Republic*, comment on Justin's conclusion. Incorporate into your analysis the ways in which the teachings found in the book find their parallels in Scripture, but also be sure to examine the heart of Plato's message in relationship to the teachings of Jesus.

48. The great Greek philosopher Socrates was forced to drink hemlock by the magistrates of Athens because they believed him to be a corrupter of young minds. Given the words of Socrates as represented in Plato's *Republic*, were the magistrates right or wrong? Support your conclusion with specifics from the dialogue.
49. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates often argues from analogy, comparing the makeup and functioning of the state to that of the human soul. Is the comparison a legitimate one? Why or why not? Consider not only the nature of the analogy itself, but also how Socrates uses it in building his arguments.
50. Discuss the role of propaganda in the ideal society pictured in Plato's *Republic*. Why is propaganda necessary? How does Socrates justify deceiving the people for their own good? Use actual history, dystopian fantasies such as Orwell's *1984* or *Animal Farm*, and Scripture to evaluate Plato's scenario.