

**Archeologists have uncovered the actual prison cell where Socrates was kept as he awaited his execution. Here is a photograph with an actor seated in that very cell.**



Socrates awaits his execution in prison. The Athenians have sent a boat laden with offerings to the gods in order to insure a better future for Athens. The Athenians won't execute him until the boat returns. Socrates and his friends know that there will be several days until the boat returns. While in prison Socrates is visited by his friends. One of his friends is an old and wealthy Athenian named Crito. Crito visits one day and informs Socrates that he has arranged for Socrates' escape. The guards have been bribed and he wants Socrates to leave with him. Socrates will go off and live in another town. Socrates is not eager to go off with his friend. He asks him why he should do this. Crito responds by informing Socrates that he loves him and does not want him to die. He asks Socrates to think of what people will say about Crito. They expect the old man to help out his friend. He has a great deal of money and people would think poorly of him if he did not assist Socrates. Crito's reputation is at stake. Socrates does not accept Crito's appeals to his emotions. Socrates again asks why he should leave. Crito informs Socrates that:

- a) It is not a great deal of money
- b) Crito's reputation is at stake
- c) Socrates' children would be let down by his leaving them. Socrates should remain alive to raise his children in a virtuous manner.

Socrates is not quick to give in. Instead he reminds Crito that they had agreed through all the years that a person should act according to what reasoning seems to be the best and not give in to emotions or to what the mob wants. Socrates shall not respect the opinions of the

many or even all only the reasons given by the few who have positions resting upon knowledge of justice and the GOOD.

For Socrates the only consideration is whether or not he would be doing the right thing by leaving. Socrates wants to do no wrong at all. Crito reminds Socrates that he has been done wrong by the jury. Socrates is not guilty of the crimes he was charged with and is being asked to die. Crito urges him to leave. He does not need to accept the verdict of a jury that has wronged him. Socrates responds by pointing out that we must do no wrong at all even in return for a wrong. The laws did not wrong Socrates the jury did. Socrates does not want to harm the Laws by doing wrong to them. Two wrongs do not make a right! Do not return a wrong for a wrong. Crito does not quite understand Socrates point. In order to make it easier to understand Socrates asks Crito to consider the Laws of Athens as a being standing at the doorway as Socrates is about to leave. The Laws ask Socrates why is he leaving and Socrates repeats Crito's reasoning. The Laws would object that it was not the understanding that the Laws had with Socrates. The Laws were like a father in assisting Socrates as he grew. They educated him and enriched him. They gave him a share in all the beautiful things of the city, citizenship and the right to leave at any time. Socrates in particular is bound to them because for all his life he remained in the city, leaving only to defend it in battles. He could have emigrated at any time but he choose to remain and in so doing to obey its Laws.

If Socrates were to leave he would be disobedient and wrong toward the Laws in different ways:

1. Hurting the Laws as they are as Parents to him
2. Defying the laws who were his nurturers
3. He would be breaking his agreement to obey

Socrates can not leave. He swore an oath to accept the verdict and penalty. He swore to the gods. If he leaves he will not convince anyone that he was right and they were wrong. No, rather it would be proof that they were right in convicting and executing him. If he leaves he would become guilty of the two crimes he had been accused of:

1. **Impiety**- he would be breaking his oath to the gods and thus show that either he disbelieves in them or is insulting them deliberately

2. **Corrupting the young-** he would be setting a very bad example for the youth of Athens as they would see Socrates run off into exile and think that they could do likewise in a similar situation and thus did not need to keep their oaths.

Socrates believed in the Law that said if you make an oath, keep it. If you make a promise, keep it.

Socrates must stay and die to prove that he is innocent. In order to remain innocent he must die. He stays to die because he is innocent and wants to remain innocent and virtuous. If he leaves he becomes guilty and deserves to die!

Men and not the Laws wronged Socrates. He sees no reason to harm the Laws now. He does not want to do wrong and thereby deserve the penalty. He wanted always and everywhere to do what reason directed him to see as the GOOD, the virtuous.

The decision made by Socrates changed the course of events for the entire world! If Socrates had left the prison there would have been no Plato and had there been no Plato there would have been a different course of events in the Western world and therefore in the entire world. The development of science and ideas of political reform were all as they are because of the works of Plato. Had Socrates not remained in prison to die, Plato would not have become a Philosopher and would not have written the dialogues that impacted on history. If Socrates had not remained to die in prison, I would not have been born!

Socrates remains in prison and is executed by drinking hemlock.

He offers arguments for the existence and immortality of the soul in the last hours of his life

Let's move into that matter and discussion in the next section.