

Socrates, Jesus
and Freedom

Socrates, Jesus and Freedom

A Philosophical Reflection

JOAN ARNSTEEN

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SOCRATES, JESUS AND FREEDOM IS DEDICATED TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY SISTER KAY, WHO PASSED ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2014, AND THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY MOM, SARA, WHO PASSED ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2014. I LOVE YOU BOTH AND AM MISSING YOU. THE COMPLETION OF THIS BOOK WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF JAMES T. NEUMANN, HEAVEN'S EMISSARY, WHO CAME TO ME TO REPAIR MY BROKEN HEART WITH HIS LOVE.

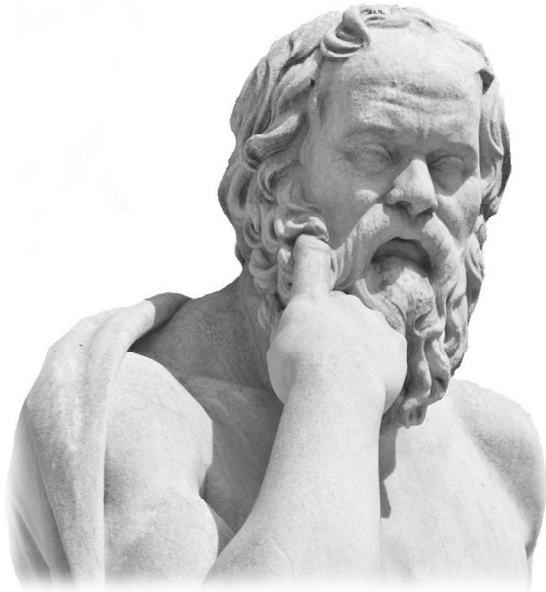
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INTRODUCTION

Under the Spell of Philosophy

I came under the spell of Socrates at an early age, following his example and awakening from the amanuensis that, according to Socrates, plagues us all. When I reflected upon the care of the soul and quickening of the spirit that are tenets of Socratic teaching, I became aware of the parallels of the teaching of Socrates and Jesus. Socrates taught that the highest purpose of the human being was to care for one's soul and to be a lover of wisdom and by doing so we give birth to intellectual children (ideas) which will become immortal. Jesus taught us to "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7 *The New Inductive Study Bible*).¹ There are many similarities between Socrates and Jesus Christ, for example, both men never wrote anything down but had a profound effect on their followers. Their spiritual influence remains as powerful today as it was in the past as the confluence of ancient Greek philosophical thought and Judeo-Christian religion are studied and understood within a complex territory of new ideas. Socrates'

love for his fellow citizens is evident in the care that he took to guide the ancient Athenians in open conversations that led to the truth. The treasure of our Lord's love for us belongs to each of us as individuals, and belongs to the past, present, and future for all human beings. Our education and training are mission-oriented, as God's vision directs us; we then follow in obedience and with love. The love of Christ refers to both the love of Jesus Christ for humanity and each individual and our love and worship for Christ. Like Jesus, Socrates taught his followers to care for their souls, and both men (one divine and one human) taught using inductive reasoning, the art of dialectic (question and answer), and ancient symbols to impart their knowledge and wisdom. Both the philosopher and the Son of God claimed divine inspiration — Socrates from his *daimonia*, and Jesus from the Holy Father — as they taught their followers to “know thyself” (*gnothi sauton*) for an insight into our spiritual selves. We can vividly see the martyrdom of both men through the eyes of their devoted disciples, and — with our inquisitive natures and hearts open to love — we become the heirs of their teaching. When we think about Socrates, we are within the secular realm, and when we worship Christ with love and reverence, we enter the sacred realm, but this is not to say that these two realms are separated by time and space — the sacred realm is embedded into the secular realm as a diamond embedded into a rock. Our human workshop is within the secular realm, where we learn how to use the gifts of God in preparation for obedient discipleship within that sphere. This book is a measure

of my devotion to Socrates, who was unique in his philosophical wisdom, as he taught the ancient Athenians the art of living a good life, virtue, and caring for their souls. The humble inspiration for this book flows from the teaching of Jesus Christ, who taught his followers the same virtues, (albeit holy virtues), and — for Christ-believers — He comes into our hearts to transform us in His image, and sharpen our spiritual hearing and eyesight. When we examine the teaching similarities between Socrates and Jesus Christ, we learn through study and devotion — to open our minds and hearts to the *agape* love that God has for us. God’s Word teaches us that He designed our minds for an understanding of the Spirit of Truth and our souls for eternal life and joy. Both Socrates and Jesus encouraged questions that are in the spirit of a child, as we do our best to seek the truth, these questions will bring us closer to God.

The Divine Oracle and the Delphic Oracle, Jesus and Socrates, teach us about being human in the best sense, that is, as a loving creature of God. Both the King and the Philosopher orientate us within the time and place that anchor us as humans who look to God for our lessons on goodness, although God is outside of time. Philosophy is but a shadow of the divine, but we see the shadow before we see the light. My goal with this book, *Socrates, Jesus and Freedom*, is to bridge the gap between the mundane and the sacred for our growth as God’s emissaries on earth. I hope to accomplish this goal by demonstrating the similarities between Socrates and Jesus’ teaching techniques by examining inductive methodology. An analysis of parts of the *Holy Bible* and

Plato's Republic will serve as our framework to conduct this investigation. As a writer, I also aspire to tell a good non-fiction story that will engage the reader and provide many important questions that will send us on a search for answers. In the brief introductory chapter 1, "How Philosophy can Move us Closer to God", I introduce the inductive blueprint for us to begin thinking about both Socrates and Jesus' teaching through induction and dialectic. We become aware of the historical significance of ancient Greek philosophical thought and Judeo-Christian religion, and how studying both philosophy and religion will lead us to the truth. In chapter 2, "The Delphic Oracle: Socrates and Freedom", I introduce the reader to Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher who was born in Athens in 469 B.C. and put to death in 399 B.C. Socrates' life-long mission was to discover if there was someone wiser than he was, in the belief that he did not have any wisdom. Socrates believed that his role was one of a "gadfly" — stinging his listeners out of their intellectual complacency. We look at the historical setting of 6th century Athens, and the impact that the new democracy had on Athena's children. We examine Athens through the eyes and ideas of Socrates, as we learn to care for our souls and develop virtue as Socrates taught — when he said, "Knowledge is virtue." In chapter 3, "The Divine Oracle: Jesus and Freedom", I introduce the reader to the ministry of Jesus through the Four Gospels — Mathew, Mark, Luke and John — harmonious books that shed light on our understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. We learn the miraculous story of Jesus' ministry, the gathering of His disciples, and His

death and resurrection. Jesus makes use of arguments that have a rabbinical precedent with an assertion and a contrast of ideas as He teaches His followers in an inductive manner. We learn that Jesus did not leave us as orphans, but left the power of the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us. In chapter 4, “ ‘Know Thyself’ Socratic Wisdom”, I pick up the golden thread of knowledge in ancient Athens, and weave its meaning into modernity in order to assist our growth as rational, spiritual and free human beings. In chapter 5, “The Inspiration for Inductive Methodology”, I examine inductive reasoning and the art of dialectic, two methodologies used by Jesus and Socrates to teach their knowledge and wisdom. We learn that Jesus and Socrates were not dogmatic teachers, but taught in an inquisitive and spiritual manner. Socrates, for example, practiced inductive reasoning when he questioned others in search of a reasoning process moving from particulars to universals. Inductive methodology can provide us with the tools to reason, study, think, teach, learn, obtain premises and conclusions, question, answer, persuade, and come to hold beliefs. In chapter 6, “The *Republic*: The Good City”, we will learn more about the historical Socrates and his cognitive theory through the pen of his most famous pupil, Plato. In the *Republic*, Socrates — the main narrator — defines justice, the character of a just city-state, and the just man. Socrates taught justice (*dikaiousune*), and his teaching anticipates Christian ethics, goodness, and morality. We learn that justice is one of the main themes of God’s Holy Word. In chapter 7, “The Spirit of Freedom is Upon the Earth”, I examine the concept of

freedom (taught by Jesus and Socrates) and what freedom means to us as individuals. I argue that human beings desire to be free, and so we pursue those things that will bring us spiritual growth, beauty, comfort, joy, peace, pleasure, and happiness. Freedom is the natural state of the human being and is our most essential characteristic. In chapter 8, “The Nature of the Philosopher and the Good City”, I summarize the philosophy of individual freedom. I show how we yearn to be a spiritual person and how being free will set the pattern for an aesthetic enjoyment of life, and a clearer — intuitive — understanding of what it means to be free. In chapter 9, “The Passing of Night’s Scepter to Day’s Crown”, I teach how to study Plato’s dialogues and the Bible inductively by reasoning from specific propositions to general propositions. Socrates used induction in his cross-examination where he would have his subject set aside his or her prejudices in order to gain a clearer understanding of a concept or the topic under discussion. For our biblical studies, inductive methodology means that we will interpret the scripture without bringing our own pre-judgments or preconceived views to the interpretation. Our interpretation of the Bible is from specific and consistent text: the scripture is the source, its books are harmonious, and the whole is inerrant. In chapter 10, “Genesis: Intimate with God”, I apply the inductive methodology to the Biblical book of Genesis, in order to learn about our Lord God, who is infinite, all-powerful, and created material matter out of non-material nothing. We learn how the creation story is a key to our own happy lives; we know by failure our own weaknesses,

and by our strengths, we voluntarily choose God. Genesis is the river of truth that runs throughout the Bible and flows into the Book of Revelation. In chapter 11, “Exodus and Moses, Man of God”, I bring Moses into our book about Jesus and Socrates, because we can learn more about ourselves if we apply Moses’ story to our own actions. In practicing our inductive methodology that we have learned from Socrates, we can interpret Exodus as a revelation to us of the Holiness of God. In chapter 12, “Socrates, Love and the *Symposium*”, I write that the similarities between Socrates and Jesus are bound together with love: love toward our fellow men and women, and love toward our Creator. God is *agape* love; love fulfills every law of God. Socrates was born in a pre-Christian era, but his message was also one of love. I teach Socrates’ story of love to the reader through the *Symposium* from the dialogues of Plato. Chapter 13, “God’s *Agape* Love”, summarizes what we have learned through inductive methodology where we find a logical framework to process symbols, signs, and concepts, and how this method strengthens our faculties for the perception of the archetypes that God has given us for knowledge of Him. The Socratic notion of virtue was an idea within the concept of love. When the New Testament was written, there were four primary Greek words to describe the concept of love: *eros*, *stergo*, *phileo*, and *agape*. The love that God has for us is called *agape*, and this holy love is available through Christ who reconciles us to God. Through God’s *agape* love, all things are possible: we choose life, not death; we choose truth, not falsehood, and we choose love, not hate. In the summary

chapter 14, “The Lord is There” we remind ourselves that we all have opinions, beliefs, faith, trust, and seek the truth, as we set high aspirations, hope, and expectations for our family and ourselves. We are committed to discerning God’s truth and laws, and we will act on this truth. We apply the theory of induction in order to understand Socrates’ teaching that “virtue is knowledge.” We also apply the theory of induction to the Gospels that record the Good Word. Through our inductive practice, we keep in mind what makes up a spiritually good city. God guides us in our development of His Word and he protects our soul from evil for the edification of His Kingdom. We are the earthly hands for the building of the New Testament Church — a holy place of worship that we call the City of God. This book, *Socrates, Jesus and Freedom*, is humbly presented for my love of Jesus Christ, “Your words were found and I ate them, And your words became a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts” (Jer 15:16).

