

Socrates:

Of course—I might have known. You say they look like men. How are they different from men?

Jesus:

They are much better than men, and they never die.

Socrates:

How better than men?

Jesus:

More virtuous and more powerful. Much more powerful.

Socrates:

They are super-human, then.

Jesus:

Yes. Absolutely!

Socrates:

Then they are super-human and they are immortal. We in Athens would call such beings gods.

Jesus:

No! God is more powerful than they.

Socrates:

So is Zeus to us more powerful than the other Olympic gods, but the others are still by definition gods. How would you define the term God?

Jesus:

God is creator of all. He is all power, knowledge, wisdom and the epitome of justice, mercy, compassion, goodness; and peace.

Socrates:

These qualities are, however, not necessarily consistent. It is not possible for a person to be just, peaceful and merciful, all in one instance or situation. If a person or a nation deserves punishment by the rule of justice, you must punish him or wage war on them, but this would be a violation of the rule of peace and mercy. No one being could have all these qualities because they contradict each other; they cannot exist

together in the same person at the same time. It is as though a man had turned both left and right at the same corner at the same time, while still remaining whole and entire.

Jesus:

God works his wonders in mysterious ways.

Socrates:

It would seem that you have many gods just as we do in Athens, only you don't call them gods.

Jesus:

No! God is all powerful.

Socrates:

Then the only difference is the degree of power?

Jesus:

No. God is better and more virtuous than they. Sin is impossible for him.

Socrates:

What is sin?

Jesus:

It is an act of disobedience to God.

Socrates:

I see from this that God could not sin, because he could not be disobedient to himself. But since sin is impossible for him, it is no more a mark of achievement for him to be free of sin than it is a mark of achievement for a rock to be unable to move. It's merely a matter of definition. What do they do, these angels?

Jesus:

They do errands for God.

Socrates:

Why if God is all powerful, does he need others to do errands for him?