

Standard 10.1.1 Analyze the similarities and differences in Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman views of law, reason and faith, and duties of the individual.

## Document-Based Assessment

### Politics and Philosophy in Ancient Greece

Philosophy flourished under Athenian democracy. In their search for the best form of government, the best leaders, and the perfect society, Greek philosophers created works that have influenced thinkers for ages. These “lovers of wisdom” used reason to guide their quest for truth, as the documents below show.

#### *Document A*

“...politics is not peripheral but central to Greek Philosophy; the formation of the Good Society comes first, the quest for personal salvation or scientific truth about matter or imaginative truths about the human heart second. Through identifying the active source of Good with reason not with Will, they doomed themselves to the hopeless task of finding the ideal form of society...”

-W.H. Auden, Introduction to **The Portable Greek Reader**

#### *Document B*

“[Justice] is not a matter of external behavior, but of the inward self and of attending to all that is, in the fullest sense, a man’s proper concern. The just man does not allow the several elements in his soul to usurp one another’s functions; he is indeed one who sets his house in order, by self-mastery and discipline coming to be at peace with himself...when he speaks of just and honorable conduct, he will mean the behavior that helps to produce and to preserve this habit of mind; and by wisdom he will mean the knowledge which presides over such conduct. Any action which tends to break down this habit will be for him unjust: and the notions governing it he will call ignorance and folly.

That is perfectly true, Socrates.

Good, said I. I believe we should not be thought altogether mistaken, if we claimed to have discovered the just man and the just state and wherein their justice consists.”

-from **Republic** by Plato

#### *Document C*

“[F]or the truth is that you can have a well-governed society only if you can discover for your future rulers a better way of life than being in office; then only will power be in the hands of men who are rich, not in gold, but in the wealth that brings happiness, a good and wise life. All goes wrong when, starved for lack of anything good in their own lives, men turn to public affairs hoping to snatch from thence the happiness they hunger for. They set about fighting for power and this internecine conflict ruins them and their country. The life of true philosophy is the only one that looks down upon offices of state and access to power must be confined to men who are not in love with it.”

-From **Republic** by Plato

#### *Document D*

“The legislator should always include the middle class in his government; if he makes laws oligarchical, to the middle class let him look; if he makes them deomcratical, he should equally by his laws try to attach this class to the state. There only can the government ever be stable where the middle class exceeds one or both of the others, and in that case there will be no fear that the rich will unite with the poor against the rulers...There comes a time when out of a false good there arises a true evil, since the encroachments of the rich are more destructive to the constitution than those of the people.”

-From **Politics** by Aristotle

Use your knowledge of the Enlightenment and Documents A, B, C, D, to answer the questions

1. According to Document A, Greek philosophers were most concerned with how to-
  - a. Build a perfect society
  - b. Find personal salvation
  - c. Learn scientific truth
  - d. Understand artistic truth
2. According to Plato in document C, which group of people would make the best rulers?
  - a. Artists
  - b. Rich aristocrats
  - c. Philosophers
  - d. soldiers
3. According to Aristotle in Document D, why is the middle class necessary for a stable government?
  - a. To give rich people allies
  - b. To offer hope to poor people
  - c. To contribute a reasonable tax base
  - d. To balance the rich and the poor
4. Greek philosophers held a deep interest in politics. What does this reflect about Greek society? Base your response on these documents and information from class and the readings.