Chapter 17 - Assignment 4: The "Melian Dialogue" (by Thucydides) — [1]

In order to answer the following questions, read pages 15–18 in Chapter 17.

1. The Melians faced a dilemma. (See page 16 in Chapter 17.)

   (i) If the Melians were to *win* the debate, then what would happen to them?

   (ii) If the Melians were to *lose* the debate, then what would happen to them?

2. On what justice is, the Athenians agreed with one of the three definitions proposed in Book 1 of Plato's *Republic*. (See pages 4–8 in Chapter 12.) On what justice is, the Athenians agreed with whom? Explain. (See pages 16 & 18 in Chapter 17.)

3. According to the Athenians, both countries would benefit from the Athenians enslaving the Melians. (See page 16 in Chapter 17.)

   (i) According to the Athenians, how would the Melians benefit from being enslaved by the Athenians?

   (ii) According to the Athenians, how would the Athenians benefit from enslaving the Melians?

4. According to the Athenians, why would it have been dangerous for them *not* to try conquering Melos? (See page 17 in Chapter 17.)

5. According to the Melians, it would have been dangerous for the Athenians to *conquer* Melos. (See page 17 in Chapter 17.)

   (i) Why did the Melians think so?

   (ii) How did the Athenians respond to that point?

6. The Athenians and Melians disagreed about whether or not if would have been virtuous for the Melians to have tried to defend themselves against the Athenians.

   (i) According to the Melians, if they were to make no attempt at preserving their freedom, then which cardinal virtue would they have lacked?
   (See page 17 in Chapter 17.)

   (ii) According to the Athenians, if the Melians were to try to preserve their freedom, then which cardinal virtue would they have lacked?
   (See page 17 in Chapter 17.)

7. According to the Athenians, when is *hopefulness* a mistake?
   (See page 17 in Chapter 17.)

8. The Melians and the Athenians each believed that the gods were on their side. (See pages 17–18 in Chapter 17.)

    (i) According to the *Melians*, why were the gods on their side?

    (ii) According to the *Athenians*, why were the gods on their side?

9. According to the Athenians, what did the Spartans think about justice? (See page 18 in Chapter 17.)

10. According to the Melians, why would the Spartans have thought that it would've been just for them to help the Melians? (See page 18 in Chapter 17.)