

Name: _____

Philosophy 1100: Introduction to Ethics

Exercise 3: The Gospel According to Matthew

Due Date: Thursday, September 15

Proportion of Final Grade: 5%

This exercise has two objectives. First, and as was noted in the previous two exercises, many people find it somewhat difficult, initially, to read religious writings in a critical fashion, and to pay close attention to exactly what is said, and to precisely what beliefs and values are being put forward. One purpose of the present exercise is to provide you with additional practice in doing this.

Secondly, one of the crucial issues that each one of us faces is how one can determine what moral standards are correct. The thrust of this course is that the best approach involves critical, philosophical reflection upon the alternatives, and upon the arguments for and against each alternative. Many people in Western society believe, however, that this is not the right approach. For they believe that there is a certain man, Jesus, who was either God Incarnate, or who at the very least stood in a unique relationship to God, and who, as a consequence, spoke with unsurpassed authority on religious and moral matters. The present exercise is designed to raise the question, then, of whether it is in fact reasonable to treat Jesus as an authority on ethical and religious matters.

Reading: *The Gospel According to Matthew*

The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is currently available at the following address:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/browse.html>

The King James Version of the Bible is available online at

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/k/kjv/browse.html>

Either version should be fine, although I think the Revised Standard Version is the better translation.

Part 2 of this exercise deals with certain teachings of the Catholic Church, and the relevant passages are sometimes translated differently in Catholic Bibles. It is best, then, to use one of the above translations, so that you do not miss the relevant passages. If you have a Catholic Bible, you can then compare translations, to see whether that affects the answer.

Instructions

1. Give **very brief** answers to each of the questions below, and then list as many passages as you are asked to give in support of your answer.
2. In the case of some of the questions, there are several passages that are relevant. Always try to use the most clear and explicit passage (or passages).

3. Each correct written answer is worth one point, as is each correct supporting passage. There are 19 questions in all, and a total of 31 supporting passages, so that the maximum possible score for the exercise as a whole is 50 points.

4. In Exercises 1 and 2, I arranged the questions to correspond to the order in which one encounters a passage that contains the answer. I found that this was very difficult to do in the case of Exercise 3, in part because there are often multiple passages that one can cite in the case of a given question.

For some questions – namely, questions 5, 8, and 14 in Part 1, and question 5 in Part 2 – I have been able to find only a single passage that enables one to answer the question. It is therefore very easy to miss the answer, and given the length of the reading, going through the reading again is not really an option. What I’ve done below, accordingly, is to indicate, for each chapter, which questions one can find **good** answers for, and the order in which you will encounter answers to those questions in the chapter. (There are many passages that contain less satisfactory answers to some of the questions. I haven’t mentioned those.)

In the case of some of the questions, you are asked to list two or three supporting passages, rather than just one. As you’ll see below, then, many questions occur on the lists of more than one chapter, and sometimes more than once on a given list. As a result, in the case of several questions, there will be many more passages than you need. But even when you have all of the passages that you need to answer a given question, do keep an eye open for later passages that may be either more detailed or more clear-cut.

Finally, as you’ll also see, some chapters are not relevant to any of the questions. Especially if you’re pressed for time, it may be tempting to skip those chapters. But let me encourage you not to do that, since, given the impact of Christianity upon the Western world, I do think it is very valuable to have read at least one of the Gospels carefully from beginning to end.

Chapter 1: Part 2: Q 3.

Chapters 2 and 3: None.

Chapter 4: Part 1: Q 13, Q 3, Q 13.

Chapter 5: Part 1: Q 7, Q 12. Part 2: Q 1. Part 1: Q 13.

Chapter 6: None.

Chapter 7: Part 1: Q 1, Q 2, Q 9.

Chapter 8: Part 1: Q 3, Q 13.

Chapter 9: Part 1: Q 3.

Chapter 10: Part 1: Q 3, Q 13, Q 9, Q 11, Q 6, Q 9.

Chapter 11: Part 1: Q 9, Q 11.

Chapter 12: Part 1: Q 3, Q 13, Q 8, Q 11, Q 13. Part 2: Q 3.

Chapter 13: Part 1: Q 13, Q 13, Q 1, Q 11, Q 4, Q 11, Q 4. Part 2: Q 3.

Chapter 14: None.

Chapter 15: Part 1: Q 14, Q 7, Q 12.

Chapter 16: Part 2: Q 4, Q 1, Q 4. Part 1: Q 4, Q 6, Q 11.

Chapter 17: Part 1: Q 3.

Chapter 18: Part 1: Q 1. Part 2: Q 2.

Chapter 19: Part 2: Q 2. Part 1: Q 12, Q 7.

Chapter 20: Part 1: Q 10.

Chapter 21: None.

Chapter 22: Part 1: Q 1, Q 2.

Chapter 23: None.

Chapter 24: Part 1: Q 11, Q 4, Q 6, Q 5, Q 4.

Chapter 25: Part 1: Q 2, Q 4, Q 11, Q 13, Q 1, Q 1.

Chapter 26: Part 1: Q 10. Part 2: Q 4. Part 1: Q 4.

Chapter 27: Part 2: Q 5.

5. What you may want to do, then, before reading each chapter, is to glance at the questions for which, as indicated above, answers can be found in that chapter.

I. Some Attitudes and Beliefs of Jesus, According to Matthew

1. Was the idea of people suffering eternal torment in hell invented by the Catholic Church, as some people seem to believe, or did Jesus himself believe in hell?

Two supporting passages are

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. Did Jesus give any indication of what **proportion** of people might wind up in hell, and if so, what?

Two supporting passages are

(1) _____

(2) _____

3. Did Jesus believe that any illnesses were caused by demonic possession?

Two supporting passages are

(1) _____

(2) _____

4. What did Jesus say would happen at his Second Coming, when he returned to earth at some future point in time? (Note that the two expressions, "the Second Coming," and "the resurrection of Jesus," are supposed to refer to **different** events. Thus the *American College Dictionary*, for example, defines "Second Coming", or "Second Advent", as follows: "the second coming of Christ to establish a personal reign upon the earth as its king.")

Two supporting passages are (1) _____
 (2) _____

5. Did Jesus claim to know **exactly** when his Second Coming would take place?

A supporting passage is (1) _____

6. Did Jesus provide any indication of **roughly how soon** his Second Coming would be?

Three supporting passages are (1) _____
 (2) _____
 (3) _____

7. Did Jesus advance any view on the morality of sex before marriage?

A supporting passage is (1) _____

8. Did Jesus teach that God would forgive absolutely **any** sin, if one sincerely repented?

A supporting passage is (1) _____

9. What was Jesus' attitude toward those who did not accept his teaching, or the teaching of his disciples?

Two supporting passages are (1) _____
(2) _____

10. Christianity teaches that Jesus' death is an atoning sacrifice, without which it would not be possible for God to forgive people their sins. Did Jesus accept this idea that his own death would be an atoning sacrifice?

A supporting passage is (1) _____

11. Some Christian churches teach that there will be a Final Judgment that takes place on earth, where everyone is judged. Does Jesus express any view on this matter?

Two supporting passages are (1) _____
(2) _____

12. Many people today seem to believe that sexual desire is quite a natural emotion, and not something, in itself, to be condemned. Did Jesus share this view?

Two supporting passages are (1) _____
(2) _____

13. Did Jesus believe in the existence of demons, or the devil?

A supporting passage is (1) _____

14. What did Jesus take God's commandment to be concerning what should be done to a person who curses his or her father or mother?

A supporting passage is (1) _____

II. Questions About the Content of Matthew, and about the Teachings of the Catholic Church

1. The Catholic Church teaches that divorce is never permissible. Was this the view of Jesus?

Two supporting passages are (1) _____
(2) _____

2. Did Jesus found a church, and if so, what powers did he give to it?

A supporting passage is (1) _____

3. The Catholic Church teaches that Mary was not only a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus, but that she was always a virgin. Is this reasonable in the light of Matthew?

Three supporting passages are (1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

4. The Catholic Church teaches that God is a triune deity, consisting of three distinct persons, and that Jesus was one of those persons, and so God Incarnate. Which passage in Matthew most clearly indicates Jesus' own view of himself? Did Jesus hold that he was God Incarnate, according to that passage?

This is a rather challenging question, and to tackle it you need to consider what the alternatives are. One possibility is that Jesus thought of himself as the latest of the Hebrew prophets. Another possibility is that he thought of himself as the Jewish Messiah.

A supporting passage is

(1)

5. Matthew claims that Jesus arose from the dead. But there is another event that Matthew claims to have happened, within a very short time after Jesus' death, and that is even more remarkable. What was the claimed event in question?

A supporting passage is

(1)