Nov. 4: Isaiah 11, 40, 52.13-53.12; Matthew 1-10,

> The perception of God, like we were talking about in class, changes in Isaiah 53. It speaks to
the issue of our (humans’) imperfections and how God embraces them and takes our sins and
wrongdoings away through his compassion.

Also, just a minor note, I liked that in Matthew the writer noted that a prophesy was fulfilled
because it completes and legitimizes the prophet from earlier.

> Isaiah
- New king is coming, will it actually be as perfect of a rein as he describes it?
- Return of the exiled people, split the Egyptian sea into seven pieces.
- Gives hope to the exiled (lowering the mountains and hills=the hardships)
- Very good speaker, very inspiring:
  - “carry the lambs in his bosom and lead the ewes to water”
- “those who look to the LORD will win new strength, they will soar as on eagles’ wings; they
  will run and not feel faint, march on and not grow weary.”
- Series of questions to prove God’s strength
- Talks about the people of Israel or Israel as a whole as servants (suffered a lot: “his form,
disfigured…he was maltreated, yet he was submissive….he was cut off from the world of the
living…)

Matthew
- Jesus Christ (the Messiah)
- lineage is explained
- Virgin Mary’s impregnation by the Holy Spirit (kind of weird)
- Joseph takes Mary as his wife because the angel tells him to
- Escape to Egypt (Herod goes a bit crazy)
- Baptism by John…tested by Satan but does not fall for it.
- Disciples will suffer….talks about laws
- Jesus heals leprosy among one of those
- Tax collectors are sinners (haha)
- Tells disciples to not tell anyone that he is the Messiah, why?
- Is he honoring Peter by building a church or making him suffer?
- Tells his disciples their faith is too small and they therefore could not heal the small epileptic
boy.
- Head towards Jerusalem. Gets a kingly welcome at Jerusalem
- Faith is a really big theme
- Observe Passover….the last supper
Jesus is arrested, not fairly trialed and then is crucified. Even though they secure his grave for three days Jesus is resurrected and is not there when they go to look for him.

Disciples meet with him and Jesus says he has done his job but he will be with them to the end of time.

Oh the Bible! I enjoyed reading Matthew because it tells the story of Jesus from birth to resurrection. In Matthew, you can find the laws of God and understand how the world works and how it will end. I also like Jesus' use of parables. They really helped further explain what God wants of us. My favorite concept is the concept of faith. Through faith in the Lord, all things are possible. When Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, the devil told him to ask God to save him. Jesus told him not to test the Lord. Many people say, 'Well if God is so mighty, why doesn't he just...’ The main idea is Matthew 7:7: “Ask and you will receive; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, those who seek find, and to those who knock, the door will be opened.” Faith, adherence to His word, and always accepting Him will grant you eternal life.

The temptation of Jesus by the devil does not seem very tempting, or even enthusiastic. The devil tries three times, and Jesus counters with one line of scripture each time, completely ending the attempt on the devil’s part. I think it is interesting to compare this devil, the actual representation of or associated opposition to God, to the serpent seen in the garden of Eden. This serpent, just a creation of god and agent of evil, manages to trick the second human being on the Earth in one try. The temptation was not even that substantial in comparison to what the Devil offered to Jesus. I believe that we see here a lessening of power of both God and the Devil and an increase in the strength of God’s children.

I’m not sure I understand the notes on Isaiah 41 regarding pagan gods—how can pagan gods be “called to stand” and “have prevailed” if they don’t exist? In fact, how can there be an evolution towards monotheism at all? Why would God recognize or even create other gods and then deny their existence—or reversely, allow the Israelites to believe that other gods exist but He is the mightiest, and then finally state that they don’t exist? This evolution doesn’t make sense to me...it just doesn’t seem possible.

I’ve always found Matthew 16 unsettling with regards to Peter: Peter recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and Jesus thus hands him the “keys to the Kingdom,” giving him extraordinary power and leadership with his new identity as Rock. This is a huge moment in church history—it’s cited as the proof of papacy and the Pope’s power as a successor to Peter himself in the Catholic Church. Then a few verses later, Jesus is calling him Satan! Peter’s the man Jesus wants to lead his church, and he still gets it wrong a lot—goes to show they all have a long way to go.

The imagery of the crowd scene in Matthew 20 is ironic because the blind men are the ones who “see” or recognize Jesus for what he truly is, and believe that they can be healed, whereas...
the crowd doesn’t want to bother this great man with something as lowly as two blind men and their troubles. Jesus obviously has mercy and pity for the humble, the sick, the small, and the poor: in chapter 19 he lays his hands on children, he says “he who humbles himself shall be exalted,” and he heals many sick people. In Matthew 9:12 he uses sickness as a metaphor for sinfulness that needs to be healed, showing his concern for those who need healing most spiritually and physically, not for those who consider themselves righteous already.

¶Is there any particular reason why you chose Matthew as the gospel to read? I feel like there’s a lot it doesn’t include. Is it because his audience were the Jews as opposed to other gospels where the focus is different? (I like Mark personally--especially his cameo as the random naked guy and the story of the withering fig tree.) I was also wondering about pre-registration soon...how does that work? Do we just set up a meeting or fill something out online?

>Wow, I don’t even know where to begin. Can anyone say information overload? There is no possible way we are going to cover this in class tomorrow. There is so much detail and intense information, full courses could be taught on small parts of what we just covered. Regardless, I will try to get somethings down. I have such inspiration and so many thoughts and ideas are spinning around my head. Theological fervor and emotion are tumbling around my mind. Tomorrow has the potential to be a very good class, I hope my knowledge of theology pertaining to the reading can be fit into the class somehow.

¶Jesus is liberation. Jesus is the embodiment of our class in all aspects. Liberation is despised by those who benefit it and liberation is put down but the powers of liberation cannot be held back once they are tasted. Liberation spreads like wildfire and the masses grow faith in the opportunity of liberation. The urge of equality and morality is upheld and accomplished through liberation. Jesus Christ is the means to freedom, to light, to peace, the "rite of passage" to "true manhood" (heaven). Jesus Christ completes our class and ties everything together. I think everything about liberation can be tied in one way or another to our Bible readings. The Bible doesn’t just use liberation, it takes it to a whole new level. The Bible focuses on the liberation of the soul and also the ways to live the good life as a means to liberation. There were many small details in the reading that really catch my eye but I think this broader scope is more pertinent to the class.

¶It was a very good read and has been my favorite so far. It is a great example of a liberation that one would not expect. It is different than the normal light we have been seeing liberation in, but this new light is brighter and encompasses more. Our class has had an upgrade in liberation- watts.

>My favorite part of the reading was Matthew 6:1 "Be careful not to parade your religion before others; if you do, no reward awaits you with your Father in heaven." All of chapter 6 describes warns against the parading of your religion and the parading of good deeds. Why do people continually argue about their view of Christianity and claim that their views are superior?
¶Again God seems to put his faith in the humans with those of little faith. Peter's faith falters multiple times and he betrays Jesus yet he gains the key to heaven? He becomes the first Pope of the Catholic Church and is a great leader in Christianity. ¶Jesus' speech about the end times was a little confusing to me "Truly I tell you: the present generation will live to see it all. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." He then contradicts himself that no one but the Father alone knows when the world will end.

> One thing that struck me most is the change in the ethical code compared to the Old Testament's one. The old one seems to emphasize the relationship and subsequent duty between one(Christian) and God, who in turn can be in parallel to the nation to which one belongs(Islam). However, the new one embodies more personal ethics, as can be seen from Jesus' teachings ("Always treat others as youwould like them to treat you: that is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7.12), "Anything you did for one of my brothers here, however insignificant, you did for me" (Matthew 25.40), etc.) I conjecture the reason is that the Israelite society, in a crisis in a more subtle way(by hypocritical church leaders and Pharisees), should recover its internal integrity by repenting and therefore reclaim its identity descendant of God.

> These sections have definitely forced me to reconsider some of the preconceived notions I held about the Bible. In 'Isaiah', the Lord was portrayed (as opposed to in 'Exodus') as a far more peaceful entity: "There will be neither hurt nor harm in all my holy mountain" - Definitely a stark contrast to the Lord described Genesis 8. 'Matthew' seemed to keep the ball rolling: I was especially interested in the idea of "not parading one's religion". Somewhat ironic, considering the elaborateness of some of the older Gothic churches. One quote in particular seems to stick out in my mind: "For if you forgive others the wrongs they have done, your heavenly Father will also forgive you". While being forgiving is undoubtedly a good quality to possess, if it is used to achieve forgiveness from a higher entity, can it really be considered 'good'? ¶While there were still some inconsistencies in these readings, I feel like I've come away a little less jaded. These chapters seemed to deal strongly with setting a foundation of morals: including the hypocrisy of judgment, issues concerning the desire for material possessions, and mutual respect for those who differ from you. While the Bible is by no means a perfect document, there actually seems to be a lot of good that can come from it, given the right interpretation.

> To be honest, I found the note concerning the evolution from henotheism and monolatry to monotheism rather strange. For many, as far as I have seen, the Christian belief rarely, if ever, brings forth the idea of henotheism and monolatry within the Bible. More often than not, monotheism is pushed forward as the one true belief within Scripture. I understand how henotheism and monolatry are prominent in our readings, however, I have never before realized that monotheism is not truly and fully developed In Isaiah. What, specifically, makes monotheism developed in Second Isaiah, perhaps the use of God such as "Comfort my people; bring comfort to them, says your God" or "The Lord himself has spoken?"
Isaiah 11 begins with the appearance of David. It says that at his arrival the lord will bring all of his people out of egypt. Without the context of the rest of the book this is hard to understand. 40 is the deliverence of Israel God comes and tells the people he has arrived. Out of context this is really hard to comprehend but it seems like god has punished and humiliated his servant to build him up. Christ means "the anointed one" and was probably given to Jesus after the entire ordeal. The birth of Jesus was by God, and it was discovered before the actual marriage. Jesus, being the son of god, resists temptation unlike the original humans Adam and Eve. Jesus is sent on gods will spreading the message and the commandments of God. The one thing that does surprise is how Jesus demands peoples alliegance, just like the jealous God he is a jealous leader.

>What does it mean to say that "waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11.9)? In this case, if there were no water, would there still be a sea? It would seem as though their definition of sea does not fit our definition, or that there is something that i’m not seeing here... Now that i have read some of the bible, it seems that to read the bible literally is to misinterpret, what i believe, is the intended meaning. The author’s of the bible made use of very artful language (i.e. "he reckons them as less than nothing") which, while not always logical, maintains an obvious aesthetic appeal (Isaiah 40.17). So, to disregard the colorful language is to come upon significantly more inconsistencies that arise, merely, out of a debilitating rigidity when dealing with the text. Now to revisit the above-mentioned passage, keeping in mind this lenience of literalness: What the passage could mean is that knowledge of the lord is as essential to God’s Holy mountain as water is to the sea, that the imagery was simply utilized to communicate the degree of essentialness of some one thing to another. What do you think?

>On Mathew 10, when the twelve disciples of Jesus are commissioned, they are told to stay with men who are suitable in every new town or village that they enter (10.11). If the men are hospitable then the twelves are to descend their peace on the households, but if the men are not, then their peace will be retracted (10.13). This emphasis on hospitality is reminiscent of the Greek tradition, yet the punishments for inhospitality are not as immediately severe as those by the Greek Gods. In ancient Greece, if you are inhospitable then quick and severe punishment will come to you. However, with this God, if you mistreat his chosen people then you will suffer in your next life (10.15). What is similar in how human beings are punished by divinity in both traditions is that the punishments were not explicit. The Greek God’s would punish you even if you did not know that you’d committed an offense. It is the same in the Christian tradition, at least in this case, because, at that time, Christianity was not an established religious tradition and so the people that were expected to host the disciples were not aware of what would come of their inhospitality, they would have been damned to hell in spite of their ignorance.

> We had a discussion in class on why the Hebrew midwives’ names were given and that of somebody like Pharaoh not given. I find it interesting that the names of the ancestors of Jesus are all given. I think it has to do with playing an important positive role in God’s agenda.
I found the picture of God dividing the tongue of the Egyptian sea, waving His hand over the Euphrates and splitting it into seven wadis so that the remnants of His people will be rescued from Assyria intriguing. (Isa 11.15). It is a symbol of salvation just as crossing the Red Sea and the river Jordan. These symbols also made me wonder if there is a particular belief Israelites have about the rivers because every time they are delivered there is water involved. Even in baptism, there is water and baptism is a symbol of forgiveness and new life or a change of one’s ways.

>It is interesting what people will do for material, temporary satisfaction. Had Judas not been bribed with money, I’m sure he would never have betrayed the Lord. After all, he used to be a follower of Jesus, believing his teachings up until that point, so why would he doubt that betrayal of Jesus would be worse than a condemnation to death? Peter is in the same boat. Though he explicitly promised to stand by Jesus, he disowned him three times just to save his own reputation. It’s so human of them to do.

\\[It\\]However, eternal life seems like such a huge privilege, so why barter their chances of it? Considering they had known Jesus and had seen the miracles he could effortlessly perform, wouldn’t they take him seriously and heed his warnings?

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**Original sin**


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“In response to Pelagius, Augustine considerably hardened his stance. He developed the "original sin" theory (inaugurated by Cyprian, 200–258, and by Ambrose, c. 330–397) and stated that all humans are born sinful and guilty, meriting eternal damnation. With the Fall, the human spirit has been victimized by the rebellion of the body, which should have been its servant. (By contrast, the animal, although under the dictum of nature, is not guilty, because it has no reason, no spirit.) Originally nature was *natura sana*, but it has become *natura vitiata*. This explains why sin is transmitted from one generation to another, making sin as unavoidable as life itself. This inherent nothingness in humans impairs their liberty. Evil is an act; it has an existential character and can be described as a *defectus*, an *aversio a Deo*, *conversio ad creaturas* (*Against Secundinus the Manichaean* 17). For this, which is a perversion, God is not responsible. He is responsible for the musical instrument, not for its discord.”
Timeline

Ca. 2000 BCE  Call of Abraham

Ca. 1300  Exodus

Ca. 1000  Kings David and Solomon; Solomon builds first temple
          (cult center at Jerusalem; priesthood; blood sacrifice)

Ca. 900  Israel becomes a divided kingdom (Judah and Israel)

Ca. 700  Assyrians conquer Israel (northern kingdom)

587  Babylon destroys Jerusalem and the Temple

538  Cyrus the Great (of Persia) releases the Jews from Babylonian captivity

516  Second Temple dedicated

333  Alexander the Great conquers land of Israel

Ca. 250  Hebrew scriptures translated into Greek (“Septuagint”)

63  Romans take over Israel

5  Jesus born

25 CE  Jesus begins ministry

28  Jesus crucified

70  Romans destroy Jerusalem and Temple

Ca. 90

Matthew writes, possibly in Antioch