

Gospel of Matthew Intro:

1. **Easton's Bible Dictionary:** Matthew- gift of God, a common Jewish name after the Exile. He was the son of Alphaeus, and was a publican or tax-gatherer at Capernaum. On one occasion Jesus, coming up from the side of the lake, passed the custom-house where Matthew was seated, and said to him, "Follow me." Matthew arose and followed him, and became his disciple ( Matthew 9:9 ). Formerly the name by which he was known was Levi ( Mark 2:14 ; Luke 5:27 ); he now changed it, possibly in grateful memory of his call, to Matthew. The same day on which Jesus called him he made a "great feast" ( Luke 5:29 ), a farewell feast, to which he invited Jesus and his disciples, and probably also many of old associates. He was afterwards selected as one of the twelve ( 6:15 ). His name does not occur again in the Gospel history except in the lists of the apostles. The last notice of him is in Acts 1:13 . The time and manner of his death are unknown.
2. **Easton's Bible Dictionary:** Matthew, Gospel according to-The author of this book was beyond a doubt the Matthew, an apostle of our Lord, whose name it bears. He wrote the Gospel of Christ according to his own plans and aims, and from his own point of view, as did also the other "evangelists." As to the time of its composition, there is little in the Gospel itself to indicate. It was evidently written before the destruction of Jerusalem ( Matthew 24 ), and some time after the events it records. The probability is that it was written between the years A.D. 60 and 65. The cast of thought and the forms of expression employed by the writer show that this Gospel was written for Jewish Christians of Palestine. His great object is to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, and that in him the ancient prophecies had their fulfilment. The Gospel is full of allusions to those passages of the Old Testament in which Christ is predicted and foreshadowed. The one aim prevailing the whole book is to show that Jesus is he "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." This Gospel contains no fewer than sixty-five references to the Old Testament, forty-three of these being direct verbal citations, thus greatly outnumbering those found in the other Gospels. The main feature of this Gospel may be expressed in the motto, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." As to the language in which this Gospel was written there is much controversy. Many hold, in accordance with old tradition, that it was originally written in Hebrew (i.e., the Aramaic or Syro-Chaldee dialect, then the vernacular of the inhabitants of Palestine), and afterwards translated into Greek, either by Matthew himself or by some person unknown. This theory, though earnestly maintained by able critics, we cannot see any ground for adopting. From the first this Gospel in Greek was received as of authority in the Church. There is nothing in it to show that it is a translation. Though Matthew wrote mainly for the Jews, yet they were everywhere familiar with the Greek language. The same reasons which would have suggested the necessity of a translation into Greek would have led the evangelist to write in Greek at first. It is confessed that this Gospel has never been found in any other form than that in which we now possess it. The leading characteristic of this Gospel is that it sets forth the kingly glory of Christ, and shows him to be the true heir to David's throne. It is the Gospel of the kingdom. Matthew uses the expression "kingdom of heaven" (thirty-two times), while Luke uses the

expression "kingdom of God" (thirty-three times). Some Latinized forms occur in this Gospel, as *kodrantēs* ( Matthew 5:26 ), for the Latin *quadrans*, and *phragello* ( 27:26 ), for the Latin *flagello*. It must be remembered that Matthew was a tax-gatherer for the Roman government, and hence in contact with those using the Latin language.

As to the relation of the Gospels to each other, we must maintain that each writer of the synoptics (the first three) wrote independently of the other two, Matthew being probably first in point of time. "Out of a total of 1071 verses, Matthew has 387 in common with Mark and Luke, 130 with Mark, 184 with Luke; only 387 being peculiar to itself." (See MARK; LUKE; GOSPELS .) The book is fitly divided into these four parts:

- Containing the genealogy, the birth, and the infancy of Jesus (1; 2).
  - The discourses and actions of John the Baptist preparatory to Christ's public ministry (3; 4:11 ).
  - The discourses and actions of Christ in Galilee ( 4:12-20:16). ).
  - The sufferings, death and resurrection of our Lord ( 20:17-28 ).
4. "The Strata of Biblical Translation Into English." In *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language*, edited by McArthur, Tom. : Oxford University Press,, 1998.
- The following translations of the Gospel of Matthew (25: 14–15) show how language, style, and interpretation have changed over six centuries of translation from Greek into English.
  - 1380. Sothely as a man goynge fer in pilgrimage, clepide his seruauntis, and bitoke to hem his goodis; And to oon he 3aue fyue talentis, forsothe to an other two, but to an other oon, to eche after his owne vertu; and went forth anoon. (Wycliffe)
  - 1526. Lykewise as a certeyne man redy to take his iorney to a straunge countre, called hys seruantes to hym, and delyvered to them hys gooddes; And vnto won he gave v. talentes, to another ij, and to another one, to every man after his abilite; and streyght waye departed. (Tyndale)
  - 1611. 14 For the kingdome of heauen is as a man trauailing into a farre countrey, who called his owne seruants, and deliuered vnto them his goods. 15 And vnto one he gaue fiue talents, to another two, and to another one, to euey man according to his seuerall ability, & straightway tooke his iourney. (King James)
  - 1913. For the case is that of a man going abroad, who summoned his servants and handed over his property to them; to one he gave twelve hundred pounds, to another five hundred, and to another two hundred and fifty; each got according to his capacity. Then the man went abroad. (Moffat)
  - 1941. 14. For it is as when a man, about to take a journey, got his servants together, and gave them his property. 15. And to one he gave five pounds, to another two, to another one; to everyone as he was able; and he went on his journey. (Basic English)
  - 1983. Or again, it is like this. A man at wis gaein out of the kintra ca's up his servans an haundit his haudin owre tae them tae gyde. He lippent ane wi five talents, anither wi twa, an a third wi ane—ilkane wi the soum confeirin til his

capacitie. Syne he gaed his waas out o the kintra. (William L. Lorimer, *The New Testament in Scots*)

- 1989. 14 'It is like a man going abroad, who called his servants and entrusted his capital to them; 15 to one he gave five bags of gold, to another two, to another one, each according to his ability. Then he left the country.' (The Revised English Bible)
  - 1958. It is just like a man going abroad who called his household servants together before he went and handed his property over to them to manage. He gave one five thousand pounds, another two thousand and another one thousand—according to their respective abilities. Then he went away. (Phillips)
  - 1970. 'It is like a man going abroad, who called his servants and put his capital in their hands; to one he gave five bags of gold, to another two, to another one, each according to his capacity. Then he left the country.' (New English Bible)
  - 1982. For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away.' (Reader's Digest Bible)
5. *The Oxford Guide to People and Places of the Bible* Edited by Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan
- Herodian Dynasty.
  - Several members of the family of Herod governed Jewish Palestine during the period of Roman domination.
  - Sources: The primary source for the Herods is Josephus; for the later Herods, especially Herod Antipas, Agrippa I, and Agrippa II, the New Testament makes a small contribution to our knowledge. Josephus's two main works, *The Jewish War* and *The Jewish Antiquities*, overlap in their coverage of the Herods. Regarding Antipater and Herod the Great, Josephus depended primarily on Nicolaus of Damascus, who was Herod's court historiographer. For the period from Herod's death (4 bce) to the First Jewish Revolt (66–70 ce), Josephus relied for the most part on oral tradition and hence has far fewer historical particulars. There has been debate about Josephus's historical credibility, but most would grant him to be reliable, taking note, however, of his biases. Archaeological discoveries in Jerusalem, at Qumran, and elsewhere have supported many details of his works.
  - Origin of the Herodian Dynasty: After the Maccabean Revolt (167–164 bce), in 142 bce the Jews became politically independent under the rule of the Hasmonean family. It was the Hasmonean Alexander Janneus (103–76 bce) who appointed the Herodian Antipater, Herod the Great's grandfather, as governor of Idumea. After Alexander's death in the struggle for power among his family members, Hyrcanus II, his eldest son, after ruling only three months as king and high priest, was forced out by his younger brother, Aristobulus II (67 bce). In 63 bce Antipater II, son of Antipater and father of Herod the Great, was instrumental in having Hyrcanus II reinstated and in deposing his younger brother. With

Rome's intervention in Palestine (63 bce), both brothers appealed for Roman support, and Pompey sided with Hyrcanus II, reinstating him as high priest. Later Julius Caesar, who had defeated Pompey (48 bce), reconfirmed Hyrcanus II as high priest and granted Antipater II Roman citizenship with tax exemption, making him procurator of Judea. Antipater II appointed his sons Phasael as governor of Jerusalem and Herod as governor of Galilee (47 bce).

- Herod the Great (47–4 BCE).
- Governor of Galilee (47–37 BCE). Although Herod was only twenty-five years old when he became governor of Galilee, he displayed efficient leadership. After the murder of Caesar in 44 bce, Cassius, the Roman leader of Syria, appointed him as governor of Coele-Syria. After Antony defeated Cassius (42 bce), he appointed both Herod and Phasael as tetrarchs of Judea. In 40 bce troubles arose for the two new tetrarchs. When the Parthians arrived in Syria, they joined with Antigonus (the son of Hyrcanus II's deposed brother Aristobulus II) to depose Hyrcanus II. The Parthians besieged Jerusalem and sued for peace. Herod was suspicious of the offer, but Hyrcanus II and Phasael went to meet the Parthian king, who put them in chains. On hearing of this treachery, Herod, his family, and his troops moved to Masada and then to Petra. Antigonus mutilated his uncle Hyrcanus II's ears to prevent his being reinstated as high priest and sent him to Parthia. Phasael died of either poisoning or suicide. Herod departed for Rome, where Antony, Octavius, and the senate declared him king of Judea. On returning to Palestine, Herod was able to regain Galilee and eventually to lay siege to Jerusalem in the spring of 37 bce. Meanwhile, before the fall of Jerusalem he married Mariamne, niece of Antigonus, to whom he had been betrothed for five years. He did this not only to spite Antigonus but also to strengthen his claim to the throne, since she was a Hasmonean. In the summer of 37, Herod defeated Antigonus and became de facto the king of the Jews.
- King of the Jews (37–4 BCE). Herod's reign can be divided into three periods: consolidation (37–25 bce), prosperity (25–14 bce), and domestic troubles (14–4 bce). To consolidate his rule, Herod had to contend with four adversaries: the Pharisees, the aristocracy, the Hasmonean family, and Cleopatra of Egypt. The Pharisees, who disliked Herod because he was an Idumean, a half-Jew, and a friend of the Romans, had great influence over the majority of the people. Herod punished both the Pharisees and their followers who opposed him and rewarded those who were loyal to him. The Sadducean aristocracy, most of whom were members of the Sanhedrin, were pro-Antigonus. Herod executed forty-five of them and confiscated their property in order to pay the demands that Antony placed on him. The Hasmonean family was upset because Herod had replaced the mutilated high priest Hyrcanus II with Ananel of the Aaronic line. Herod's mother-in-law Alexandra successfully connived to have Ananel replaced with her seventeen-year old son Aristobulus (late 36 or early 35 bce). Later Herod managed to have him drowned “accidentally,” and soon after he put Alexandra in chains. His last adversary was Cleopatra, who wanted to eliminate Herod and

Malchus of Arabia and confiscate their lands. When civil war broke out between Octavius and Antony (32 bce), Herod was prevented from helping Antony because Cleopatra wanted Herod to make war against Malchus, hoping to weaken both and acquire their territories. After the defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium (31 bce) Herod proceeded to cultivate Octavius's friendship. Convinced of his loyalty, Octavius returned Jericho to him and also gave him Gadara, Hippos, Samaria, Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa, and Strato's Tower (later Caesarea). The last years of consolidation saw much tension in Herod's domestic affairs. Owing to a bizarre series of events, Herod executed his wife Mariamne (29 bce), his mother-in-law Alexandra (28 bce) after she attempted to overthrow him, and his brother-in-law Costobarus (25 bce). Hence, all male relatives of Hyrcanus II were now removed, leaving no rival for Herod's throne. The period 25–14 bce was marked largely by success, although there were still occasions of stress. Herod constructed theaters, amphitheaters, and hippodromes and introduced quinquennial games in honor of Caesar, thus violating Jewish law. On the site of Strato's Tower a large urban port was built and named Caesarea. In 24 bce he built a royal palace in Jerusalem. His crowning achievement in construction was his plan to rebuild the Jewish Temple; work on this began ca. 20 bce and was completed in 63 ce. Herod's territory was also greatly expanded in this period with the addition of Trachonitis, Batanea, Auranitis, the area between Trachonitis and Galilee containing Ulatha and Paneas, the area north and northeast of the Sea of Galilee, and Perea. To gain the good will of the people, in 20 bce he lowered taxes by a third and in 14 bce by a fourth. As Herod grew older a considerable amount of intrigue engulfed his life, much of which arose from his ten wives, each of whom wanted her son(s) to become his successor. This is evident in his changing his will six times. His first wife was Doris, by whom he had Antipater; he repudiated them when he married his second wife, Mariamne (37 bce), by whom he had five children, of whom only Alexander and Aristobulus were notable. In 23/22 bce he married his third wife, Mariamne II, by whom he had Herod (Philip). His fourth wife was a Samaritan, Malthace (23/22 bce), by whom he had Archelaus and Antipas. In 22 he took as his fifth wife Cleopatra of Jerusalem, who became the mother of Philip the tetrarch. Of the other five wives, none were significant and the names of only three are known. The main rivalry was between Mariamne's two sons Alexander and Aristobulus and Doris's son Antipater. In 22 bce Herod made his first will naming Alexander and Aristobulus as his successors. Because of the alleged plots of these two sons, Herod made a second will in 13 bce, naming Antipater as sole heir. Later there was reconciliation between Herod and Alexander and Aristobulus, and in 12 bce he made out his third will naming Antipater as the first successor and next after him Alexander and Aristobulus. Because Alexander and Aristobulus became hostile in their attitude toward Herod, he finally ordered them to be executed by strangulation in 7 bce. Immediately after their execution Herod drew up his fourth will, naming Antipater as sole heir, and, in the event of his death, Herod (Philip)

as his successor. With the discovery of Antipater's plan to kill Herod, he was tried and imprisoned. A fifth will was made in which Herod passed over the next two oldest sons, Archelaus and Philip, because Antipater had influenced him against them, and he selected Antipas as sole heir. Five days before Herod's death, he executed Antipater and made his sixth will, in which he designated Archelaus as king, his brother Antipas as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and their half-brother Philip as tetrarch of Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Batanea, and Paneas. It is during this last period of Herod's life, complicated by illness and plots to obtain his throne, that the narrative of the Magi is set (Matt. 2.1–16). In conclusion, although Herod was a successful king who was highly regarded by the Romans, his personal life was plagued by domestic troubles. After the death of Herod the Great in the spring of 4 bce, Antipas and Archelaus contested his last two wills before the emperor in Rome. Antipas favored the fifth will because in it he was sole heir; Archelaus, of course, preferred the sixth. After some delay the emperor made Archelaus ruler over Idumea, Judea, and Samaria with the title of ethnarch, promising that he could become king if he showed good leadership. He appointed Antipas tetrarch over Galilee and Perea and Philip tetrarch over Gaulanitis, Auranitis, Trachonitis, Batanea, Paneas, and Iturea.

- Archelaus (4 BCE–6 CE). Archelaus, the son of Herod and Malthace, was made ethnarch over Idumea, Judea, and Samaria in 4 bce. Before he left for Rome to contest his father's will he was given control of the realm and proceeded to kill about three thousand people; after this there was a prolonged revolt at the feast of Pentecost. On his return he treated both Jews and Samaritans with brutality and tyranny; this is the background of Matthew 2.20–23. Archelaus continued the building policy of his father, but his rule became intolerable. Finally, in 6 ce, the emperor deposed him and exiled him to Gaul. His domain became an imperial province governed by prefects appointed by the emperor.
- Antipas (4 BCE–39 CE). Antipas, the son of Herod and Malthace and a full brother of Archelaus, was appointed tetrarch over Galilee and Perea in 4 bce. After Archelaus had been deposed, Antipas was given the dynastic title Herod, which had great political significance at home and in Rome. He rebuilt what had been destroyed in the widespread revolt after his father's death, including the largest city, Sepphoris, and moved his capital to a new city, Tiberias (named in honor of the emperor Tiberius). Herod Antipas's greatest notoriety is the imprisonment and beheading of John the Baptist. This incident occurred after he had married Herodias, who was his niece and the wife of his brother Herod (Philip). John the Baptist boldly criticized the marriage, for according to the Mosaic law it was unlawful to marry a brother's wife, except for levirate marriage (Deut. 25.5). As a result, John was imprisoned, and eventually, at the instigation of Herodias with Salome's help, Herod beheaded John at Machaerus in 31 or 32 ce. According to the Gospels, Antipas thought that Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected and desired to see him, but Jesus withdrew from his territories. Later, during Jesus's final journey to Jerusalem, the Pharisees warned him to leave

Galilee because Herod wanted to kill him. According to Luke, during Jesus's trial Pilate sent Jesus to Herod when he heard that Jesus was from Galilee. In 36 ce the Nabatean king Aretas IV defeated Antipas in retaliation for Antipas's deserting his daughter to marry Herodias. Although Antipas had hoped to get help from Rome, it was not forthcoming because of the change of emperors. On his accession, Caligula (37 ce) gave his friend Agrippa I, brother of Herodias as well as nephew of Antipas, the territories of Philip the tetrarch, who had died in 34 ce, and granted Lysanius the coveted title of king. His sister Herodias became intensely jealous and urged her husband to seek the title of king for his long, faithful service. When Antipas and Herodias went to Rome in 39 ce to request the title, Agrippa brought charges against Antipas, and consequently Caligula banished him to Gaul. Agrippa I obtained his territories.

- Philip the Tetrarch (4 BCE–34 CE). Philip was the son of Herod the Great and Cleopatra of Jerusalem. In the settlement of Herod's will, he was appointed tetrarch over northern Transjordan, including Gaulanitis, Auranitis, Trachonitis, Bananea, Paneas, and Iturea. He rebuilt two cities: Paneas, which he renamed Caesarea Philippi, the site of Peter's confession of Christ, and Bethsaida, where Jesus healed a blind man. Philip married Herodias's daughter Salome, but they had no offspring. When he died in 34 ce, Tiberias annexed his territories to Syria and, when Caligula became emperor (37 ce), they were given to Agrippa I, Herodias's brother.