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THE HOLY BIBLE NKJV REFERENCE GUIDE

NEW TESTAMENT

BOOK 40

MATTHEW



The Evangelist Matthew Inspired by an Angel by Rembrandt

SUMMARY

While Matthew did not sign his own name to “his” gospel, the early church uniformly attested to the apostle’s authorship of the book. Matthew’s name appears in all the biblical lists of the twelve apostles, though Mark and Luke refer to him as Levi.

His history as a tax collector distinguished him from the other apostles, and immediately after his call to follow Jesus, Matthew hosted a feast for Jesus in his home with an invitation list made up of Matthew’s sinful friends.

Matthew is the most Jewish-centric of the four gospels. The apostle regularly invoked the writings of the Old Testament prophets in an effort to illustrate Jesus’s identity as Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.

However, the gospel of Matthew has been notoriously difficult to date. Several factors speak to a date ranging from AD 60–65. First of all, the book makes no mention of the destruction of the temple, an event which occurred in AD 70.

Such a cataclysmic event likely would have received some comment, particularly in a book so clearly influenced by Judaism. The largely Jewish character of the book also suggests it was written at a time when much of the evangelism by Christians was directed more exclusively at Jews.

Finally, many scholars believe Mark to have been the first gospel composed, making it most probable that Matthew was written soon after.

The apostle Matthew, a Jew himself, offered a decidedly Jewish perspective on the ministry of Jesus. He included more than fifty direct citations—and even more indirect allusions—from the Old Testament.

This exceeds any of the other gospels and indicates that Matthew had the Jewish population in mind when he sat down to write. Matthew’s extensive connections between Jesus and the Old Testament provide ample prophetic evidence for Jesus’s ministry.

Matthew wrote his account of Jesus’s ministry to show that Jesus was and is indeed the King, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah. He reflected this concern in his opening line, The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

From there, Matthew consistently took his readers back to the Old Testament, providing Old Testament testimony regarding the birth of Jesus, Bethlehem as the location of Jesus’s birth, the flight to Egypt, Herod’s slaughter of the infants, and the beginning of Jesus’s ministry.

In a world where many in the Jewish community had claimed the role of Messiah for themselves, Matthew’s commitment to grounding the life of Jesus in the Old Testament raised Jesus above the multitude of these false messiahs. The apostle painted a portrait of our Lord that highlights His uniqueness among all others to ever walk this earth.

SUMMARY Continued

After enduring four hundred years of prophetic silence, God's people must have wondered whether or not He had deserted them. After centuries of regular communication from God, the people found themselves without a genuine prophet or spokesman for God.

However, the ministries of John and Jesus reminded God's people that He had not forgotten them. God's silence during that period was merely a precursor to pulling the linchpin of His redemptive plan. God hadn't forgotten—He remembered His people. Matthew made that clear.

As we read through the pages of Matthew, not only do we see Jesus Christ revealed as Israel's King and Messiah, but His coming to earth as God in the flesh reminds us of His deep love for us. Now resurrected and ascended, the Lord Jesus will always be with us, even to the end of time.

Christ's commission to His followers is still His mandate to us today: Make disciples of all the nations. Christ's work of building His church is the work He does through each of us.

The first narrative section begins. John baptizes Jesus, and the Holy Spirit descends upon him. Jesus prays and meditates in the wilderness for forty days, and is tempted by Satan. His early ministry by word and deed in Galilee meets with much success, and leads to the Sermon on the Mount, the first of the discourses.

The sermon presents the ethics of the kingdom of God, introduced by the Beatitudes ("Blessed are..."). It concludes with a reminder that the response to the kingdom will have eternal consequences, and the crowd's amazed response leads into the next narrative block.

From the authoritative words of Jesus the gospel turns to three sets of three miracles interwoven with two sets of two discipleship stories (the second narrative), followed by a discourse on mission and suffering.

Jesus commissions the Twelve Disciples and sends them to preach to the Jews, perform miracles, and prophesy the imminent coming of the Kingdom, commanding them to travel lightly, without staff or sandals.

Opposition to Jesus comes to a head with accusations that his deeds are done through the power of Satan; Jesus in turn accuses his opponents of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

The discourse is a set of parables emphasizing the sovereignty of God, and concluding with a challenge to the disciples to understand the teachings as scribes of the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew avoids using the holy word God in the expression Kingdom of God; instead he prefers the term Kingdom of Heaven, reflecting the Jewish tradition of not speaking the name of God.

The fourth narrative section reveals that the increasing opposition to Jesus will result in his crucifixion in Jerusalem, and that his disciples must therefore prepare for his absence.

The instructions for the post-crucifixion church emphasize responsibility and humility. (This section contains, in which Simon, newly renamed Peter, (*Petros*, meaning "stone"), calls Jesus the Christ, the son of the living God.

SUMMARY Continued

Jesus states that on this "bedrock" (*Petra*) he will build his church: this passage forms the foundation for the papacy's claim of authority.

Jesus travels toward Jerusalem, and the opposition intensifies: he is tested by Pharisees as soon as he begins to move towards the city, and when he arrives he is soon in conflict with the Temple's traders and religious leaders.

He teaches in the Temple, debating with the chief priests and religious leaders and speaking in parables about the Kingdom of God and the failings of the chief priests and the Pharisees.

The Herodian caucus also become involved in a scheme to entangle Jesus, but Jesus' careful response to their enquiry, Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's, leaves them marveling at his words.

The disciples ask about the future, and in his final discourse (the Olivet Discourse) Jesus speaks of the coming end. There will be false Messiahs, earthquakes, and persecutions, the sun, moon, and stars will fail, but this generation will not pass away before all the prophecies are fulfilled.

The disciples must steel themselves for ministry to all the nations. At the end of the discourse, Matthew notes that Jesus has finished all his words, and attention turns to the crucifixion. The events of Jesus' last week occupy a third of the content of all four gospels.

Jesus enters Jerusalem in triumph and drives the money changers from the temple, holds a last supper, prays to be spared the coming agony (but concludes if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done), and is betrayed.

He is tried by the Jewish leaders (the Sanhedrin) and before Pontius Pilate, and Pilate washes his hands to indicate that he does not assume responsibility. Jesus is crucified as king of the Jews and mocked by all.

On his death there is an earthquake, the veil of the Temple is torn, and saints rise from their tombs. Mary Magdalene and another Mary discover the empty tomb, guarded by an angel, and Jesus himself tells them to tell the disciples to meet him in Galilee.

After the resurrection the remaining disciples return to Galilee, to the mountain that Jesus had appointed, where he comes to them and tells them that he has been given all authority in heaven and on Earth.

He gives the Great Commission: Therefore go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. Jesus will be with them to the very end of the age.

NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

- 1:1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:
- 1:18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.
- 1:21** *And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 4:10** *Then Jesus said to him, Away with you, Satan! For it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.*
- 5:5** *Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*
- 5:6** *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*
- 6:33** *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*
- 6:34** *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*
- 7:7** *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.*
- 7:13** *Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*
- 7:14** *Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*
- 8:25** Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us! We are perishing!
- 8:26** But He said to them, Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.
- 8:27** So the men marveled, saying, Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?
- 9:10** Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.
- 9:11** And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?
- 9:12** When Jesus heard that, He said to them, *Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.*
- 9:13** *But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*
- 9:22** *But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well. And the woman was made well from that hour.*
- 10:8** *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*
- 10:14** *And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.*
- 10:18** *You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.*
- 10:19** *But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;*
- 10:20** *for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.*
- 13:49** *So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,*
- 13:50** *and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*
- 15:17** *Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?*

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 15:18** *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.*
- 15:19** *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*
- 19:16** Now behold, one came and said to Him, Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?
- 19:17** So He said to him, *Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.*
- 19:18** He said to Him, Which ones? Jesus said, *You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness,*
- 19:19** *Honor your father and your mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*
- 19:28** So Jesus said to them, *Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- 19:29** *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.*
- 19:30** *But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*
- 21:16** And Jesus said to them, *Yes. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?*
- 24:4** *And Jesus answered and said to them: Take heed that no one deceives you.*
- 24:5** *For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.*
- 24:11** *Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.*
- 24:13** *But he who endures to the end shall be saved.*
- 24:14** *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*
- 24:30** *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*
- 26:28** *For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*
- 26:62** And the high priest arose and said to Him, Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?
- 26:63** But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!
- 26:64** Jesus said to him, *It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.*
- 26:67** Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands,
- 26:68** saying, Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?

NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 27:11** Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, Are You the King of the Jews? So Jesus said to him, ***It is as you say.***
- 27:12** And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.
- 27:13** Then Pilate said to Him, Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?
- 27:14** But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.
- 28:18** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ***All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.***
- 28:19** ***Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.***
- 28:20**

CHARACTER Definitions

JESUS - Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and the Son of God. He is our Redeemer. Each of these titles points to the truth that Jesus Christ is the only way by which we can return to live with our Heavenly Father.

Jesus suffered and was crucified for the sins of the world, giving each of God's children the gift of repentance and forgiveness. Only by His mercy and grace can anyone be saved.

His subsequent Resurrection prepared the way for every person to overcome physical death as well. These events are called the Atonement. In short, Jesus Christ saves us from sin and death. For that, He is very literally our Savior and Redeemer.

In the future Jesus Christ will return to reign on earth in peace for a thousand years. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and He will be our Lord forever. He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New.

Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He went about doing good, yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example.

He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary's cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

CHARACTERS Continued

We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father.

He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.

JOSEPH - Husband of Mary, mother of Jesus. Joseph was a descendant of David and lived in Nazareth. He was espoused to Mary. Just before their marriage, Mary received a visit from the angel Gabriel, who announced that Mary had been chosen to be the mother of the Savior. Joseph also received revelation of this divine birth.

Mary was Jesus' only earthly parent because God the Father was Jesus' father. But the Jews thought of Joseph as Jesus' father, and Jesus treated him as such. Warned by heavenly dreams, Joseph preserved the infant Jesus' life by fleeing to Egypt. After Herod died, an angel instructed Joseph to take the Christ child back to Israel.

MARY - In the New Testament, a virgin chosen by God the Father to be the mother of His Son in the flesh. After Jesus' birth, Mary had other children. She was betrothed to Joseph. Joseph was told not to divorce Mary or release her from the betrothal.

The wise men visited Mary. Mary and Joseph fled with the child Jesus to Egypt. After Herod's death, the family returned to Nazareth. The angel Gabriel visited her. She visited Elisabeth, her cousin. Mary gave a psalm of praise to the Lord.

Mary went to Bethlehem with Joseph. Mary gave birth to Jesus and laid him in a manger. The shepherds went to Bethlehem to visit the Christ child. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Passover. Mary was at the wedding at Cana.

The Savior, while on the cross, asked John to care for his mother. Mary was with the Apostles after Christ was taken up into heaven. Mary was a virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. Mary would be a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel.

HEROD - King Herod the Great, born 73 B.C., is best-known for his attempts to murder the baby Jesus. His family converted to Judaism. He married Marianne and thus aligned himself with the Maccabees.

Herod was a successful but very unpopular ruler. He rebuilt the temple in an attempt to win favor with his subjects. However, he was well-known for his intense cruelty. He killed his own wife, despite loving her, out of jealousy and also killed three of his children.

When he learned of the birth of Jesus and found the child was said to be the King of the Jews, he asked the wise men to return to let him know where the child was, claiming he wanted to worship him.

CHARACTERS Continued

The wise men received divine warning to not return to Herod, so they took another route home. When they didn't return, Herod merely had all the boys under the age of two killed in Bethlehem and the surrounding area.

However, Joseph had been warned in a dream to flee to Egypt with Mary and Jesus and so Jesus was spared. Joseph was told by an angel in another dream when it was safe to return following the death of Herod.

JOHN THE BAPTIST - Son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, being of priestly descent through both parents. This lineage was essential, since John was the embodiment of the law of Moses, designed to prepare the way for the Messiah and make ready a people to receive Him.

He was the outstanding bearer of the Aaronic Priesthood in all history and was entrusted with its most noble mission. His forthcoming birth and the nature of his ministry were announced to John's father by the angel Gabriel.

He was a child of promise, with prophecies of his mission having been given by Isaiah and Malachi. He grew up in the desert until the time arrived for his ministry to prepare the way for the Savior.

The sign of the dove, as an emblem for the Holy Ghost, was a pre-appointed signal by which John knew he was to recognize that he had baptized the Son of God. At the time of the baptism of Jesus, John saw the sign and heard the voice of the Father bearing record that Jesus was the Beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased.

He had preached and baptized for several months before he baptized the Savior and continued to do so afterwards for several months. At least two of those who were later to become members of the Twelve, John and Andrew, were disciples of John before they met Jesus.

It is probable that others of the Twelve were also tutored by him. He watched, without feelings of jealousy, the waning of his own influence and the growth of the influence of Jesus. He was shut up in prison by order of Herod for criticizing Herod's unlawful marriage of Herodias.

While in prison, John sent two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus to reassure their faith. Many have thought this event reflected a lack of confidence in John's own mind. However, Jesus took the occasion to bear testimony of the great work John had done, emphasizing that he was unwavering and true.

Jesus also pointed out that John had fulfilled the prophecy of Malachi. Jesus praised John as a prophet, saying there is none who was greater. This greatness consisted of his unique privileges and the quality of his work.

He alone was entrusted with the mission of preparing the way and baptizing the Savior of the world. He did no miracle but magnificently fulfilled his assignment in bearing testimony of Jesus Christ. Jesus characterized John as a burning and a shining light. After nearly a year in prison, John was beheaded at the instigation of Herodias.

CHARACTERS Continued

SATAN - At some unknown time in the past, he decided to rebel against God. When he rebelled against the Lord this beautiful creature became the Devil or the adversary. It is clear from Scripture that God did not create the Devil.

This creature became the Devil when he decided to rebel against God. Satan was cast out of God's presence because of his sin.

The Book of Job informs us that he now has some access to God's presence but only when the Lord allows it. Satan is presently deceiving humankind. The Bible calls him the prince of this world, the god of this age and the prince of the power of the air.

Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day: ***You are of your father the Devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.***

PHARISEES - A religious party among the Jews. The name denotes separatists. They prided themselves on their strict observance of the law and on the care with which they avoided contact with things gentile. Their belief included the doctrine of immortality and resurrection of the body and the existence of angels and spirits.

They upheld the authority of oral tradition as of equal value with the written law. The tendency of their teaching was to reduce religion to the observance of a multiplicity of ceremonial rules and to encourage self-sufficiency and spiritual pride. They were a major obstacle to the reception of Christ and the gospel by the Jewish people.

SCRIBES - In the days of the Hebrew monarchy this was the title of a court official, a secretary of state. After the captivity we find the title given to Ezra and to others who acted as teachers of the law.

Scribes are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, being sometimes called lawyers. It was their business to develop the law in detail and apply it to the circumstances of their time; hence grew up the oral or traditional law side by side with the written law.

Their method of teaching relied on memorization. Their aim was to reproduce and teach others to reproduce accurately the words of the wise. The scribes taught either in houses of instruction or in the temple courts, their pupils sitting on the ground.

They formed an influential part in the supreme court of the Sanhedrin. Rabbi (my Master) was the title usually given them. As a rule they were Pharisees, though there were also Sadducean scribes.

In theory they received no pay for their work, and it was usual to combine the study of the law with the exercise of some other calling. Their influence considerably increased after the downfall of Jerusalem and the cessation of the temple worship.

As a class they offered a determined opposition to the Lord mainly because He disregarded the traditions of the elders.

CHARACTERS Continued

SADDUCEES - A party or caste among the Jews. The name is probably derived from Zadok, the high priest in Solomon's time. The party consisted of old high-priestly families who came to the front during the Maccabean war. They formed the Jewish aristocracy and were powerful, though quite small in numbers.

In their treatment of religious questions they held to the letter of the Mosaic revelation and denied the authority of ancient tradition; they taught complete freedom of the will in moral action; they were opposed to the Pharisees as to the belief in angels and spirits; they refused also to accept the doctrine of immortality as a necessary part of the Jewish faith.

It was through their influence that Greek culture spread in Israel. Their opposition to our Lord was the result of His action in cleansing the temple, which they regarded as an infringement of their rights. They opposed the work of the Apostles because they preached the Resurrection.

JAMES - In the New Testament, a brother of Jesus and of Joses, Simon, Judas, and some sisters. He was also known as James the Just and occupied an important position in the Church in Jerusalem. He probably wrote the epistle of James.

JUDAS - Jude (alternatively **Judas** or **Judah**) is believed by some to be one of the four brothers of Jesus according to the New Testament. He is traditionally identified as the author of the Epistle of Jude, a short epistle which is reckoned among the seven general epistles of the New Testament.

It is placed after Paul's epistles and before the Book of Revelation — and considered canonical by Christians. Catholics believe this Jude is the same person as Jude the Apostle and that Jude was perhaps a cousin, but not a brother, of Jesus.

CAIAPHAS - High priest from A.D. 18 to A.D. 36; son-in-law of Annas, high priest A.D. 7–14. He belonged to the Sadducee party and took an active part in the attack made upon our Lord and His disciples.

PONTIUS PILATE - Was the fifth prefect of the Roman province of Judaea from AD 26–36. He served under Emperor Tiberius, and is best known today for the trial and crucifixion of Jesus.

The sources for Pilate's life are an inscription known as the Pilate Stone, which confirms his historicity and establishes his title as *prefect*. Pilate was an equestrian of the Pontii family, and succeeded Valerius Gratus as prefect of Judaea in AD 26.

Once in his post he offended the religious sensibilities of his subjects, leading to harsh criticism from Philo, and many decades later, Josephus.

According to Josephus c. AD 93, Pilate was deposed and sent to Rome by Lucius Vitellius after harshly suppressing a Samaritan uprising, arriving just after the death of Tiberius which occurred on 16 March in AD 37. Pilate was replaced by Marcellus.

CHARACTERS Continued

In all four gospel accounts, Pilate lobbies for Jesus to be spared his eventual fate of execution, and acquiesces only when the crowd refuses to relent. He thus seeks to avoid personal responsibility for the death of Jesus.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Pilate washes his hands to show that he is not responsible for the execution of Jesus and reluctantly sends him to his death.

In the Gospel of Luke, Pilate not only agrees that Jesus did not conspire against Rome, but Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, also finds nothing treasonable in Jesus' actions. In the Gospel of John, Pilate states "I find no guilt in Him [Jesus]," and he asks the Jews if Jesus should be released from custody.

BARABBAS - Barabbas is mentioned in all four gospels of the New Testament: His life intersects that of Christ at the trial of Jesus. Jesus was standing before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who had already declared Jesus innocent of anything worthy of death.

Pilate knew that Jesus was being railroaded and it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him, so he looked for a way to release Jesus and still keep the peace.

Pilate offered the mob a choice: the release of Jesus or the release of Barabbas, a well-known criminal who had been imprisoned for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.

The release of a Jewish prisoner was customary before the feast of Passover. The Roman governor granted clemency to one criminal as an act of goodwill toward the Jews whom he governed.

The choice Pilate set before them could not have been more clear-cut: a high-profile killer and rabble-rouser who was unquestionably guilty, or a teacher and miracle-worker who was demonstrably innocent. The crowd chose Barabbas to be released.

Pilate seems to have been surprised at the crowd's insistence that Barabbas be set free instead of Jesus. The governor stated that the charges against Jesus were baseless and appealed to the crowd three times to choose sensibly.

But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. Pilate released Barabbas and handed over Jesus to be scourged and crucified.

THE 12 DISCIPLES OF JESUS

SIMON - (known as Peter) (Fisherman) *Rock*. Brother of Andrew and son of Jonah; also known as Simeon or Simon; originally a fisherman of Bethsaida, on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee.

He was called by Jesus to be a disciple; at that time he was living at Capernaum with his wife and his wife's mother. His Aramaic name, Cephas, of which Peter is the Greek equivalent, was given him by the Lord.

12 DISCIPLES Continued

He was one of the three disciples present on several important occasions. Other references to him are found where we find his confession of the Lord as the Messiah and the Son of God.

The words then addressed to him, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, have been made the foundation of the papal claims. But it is the Christ, the Son of God, which Peter had just confessed, who is the true cornerstone of the Church.

Other events connected with his life: his denial; at the Resurrection; with our Lord by the Sea of Galilee; in Jerusalem after Pentecost; with Simon Magus; at Lydda and Joppa; with Cornelius; in prison; at the Jerusalem conference; and at Antioch.

From his epistle we learn that he worked in Babylon (which may be the well-known city on the Euphrates, or more likely is a disguised name for Rome) and had as his companions Mark and Silvanus or Silas.

It was possibly under his direction that Mark wrote his Gospel. From A.D. 44 to 61 he was probably at work in Syrian towns, having Antioch as his center. It is generally believed that he suffered martyrdom at Rome, perhaps in 64 or 65.

Peter was one of the greatest of men. It is true that the New Testament recounts some mortal weaknesses, but it also illustrates that he overcame them and was made strong by his faith in Jesus Christ.

The Lord honored Peter by selecting him to hold the keys of the kingdom on earth, and it was upon the holy mount that Peter received these keys from the Savior, Moses, and Elias (Elijah).

Peter was the chief Apostle of his day; and after the death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Savior, it was Peter who called the Church together and acted in the office of his calling as the one who possessed the keys of the priesthood.

It was through Peter's ministry that the gospel was first opened up to the Gentiles. One of Three in core group of Disciples (Peter, James, and John); a leader of the Jerusalem church; baptized Gentiles; wrote 1 and 2 Peter. He was reportedly Crucified, upside down, during the reign of Emperor Nero.

ANDREW - (Peter's brother) (Fisherman) Brother of Simon Peter. As a disciple of John the Baptist he met Jesus and then brought Peter to meet Jesus. He was one of the earliest called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and was one of the Twelve. The Apostle was Crucified on an X-shaped Cross, the two ends of which were in the ground.

JAMES - (son of Zebedee) (Fisherman) Also in core group; he and his Brother John asked Jesus for places of honor in his Kingdom; wanted to call fire down to destroy a Samaritan village; first disciple to be martyred. James was killed by the sword by King Herod Agrippa.

12 DISCIPLES Continued

JOHN - (James' brother) (Fisherman) One of the Twelve Apostles in the New Testament, a son of Zebedee, and a brother of James. In his early life he was a fisherman. He is probably the unnamed disciple of John the Baptist mentioned. Later he received a call to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

He wrote the Gospel of John, three epistles, and the book of Revelation. He was one of three who were with the Lord at the raising of Jairus's daughter, at the Mount of Transfiguration, and in Gethsemane. In his own writings he refers to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved and as the other disciple.

Jesus also called him and his brother Boanerges, sons of thunder. There are frequent references to him in the accounts of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. John was later banished to Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation. He died of old age.

PHILIP - (Fisherman) Told Nathanael about Jesus; wondered how Jesus could feed 5,000; asked Jesus to show his followers God the Father; he and Andrew told Jesus that Greeks wanted to see him. He reportedly suffered Martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was severely flogged, imprisoned, and later Crucified.

BARTHOLOMEW - Initially rejected Jesus because Jesus was from Nazareth but acknowledged him as the "Son of God" and "King of Israel" when they met. He was Tortured & Crucified in India.

THOMAS - Suggested the Disciples go with Jesus to Bethany even if it meant death; asked Jesus about where he was going; refused to believe Jesus was risen until he could see Jesus alive and touch his wounds. He was reportedly killed with a Spear in India.

MATTHEW - (the tax collector) Son of Alphaeus is also called Levi. Abandoned his corrupt (and financially profitable) way of life to follow Jesus; invited Jesus to a party with his notorious friends; wrote the Gospel of Matthew. He was killed with a halberd (a pike fitted with an ax head) in Nadabah.

JAMES - (son of Alphaeus) James the Less or James the Younger-- his Mother was called "the other Mary". Some think that Matthew & he were Brothers because they were both the Sons of Alphaeus, but never called brothers. Became one of Jesus' Disciples. Was Stoned & Clubbed to Death in Jerusalem.

THADDEUS - (also known as Judas, son of James and Lebbaeus)

Asked Jesus why he would reveal himself to his followers and not to the world. He was Crucified at Edessa.

SIMON - (the zealot also known as Simon the Canaanite) Became a Disciple of Jesus. He was believed to have been Crucified in what is today called Britain.

JUDAS ISCARIOT - One of Jesus' Twelve Apostles in the New Testament. His surname meant man of Kerioth. He was from the tribe of Judah and was the only Apostle who was not a Galilean.

12 DISCIPLES Continued

He received thirty pieces of silver for delivering Christ to one of the chief priests and betrayed the Lord with a kiss. He later committed suicide by hanging himself.

MATTHIAS - Was chosen to become the 12th Apostle after Judas Iscariot had committed suicide. He was Stoned, then Beheaded at Jerusalem.

BIBLE TIMELINE

5 BC	Birth of Jesus	Matthew 1
5 BC	Visit of the Magi	Matthew 2
5 BC	Escape to Egypt	Matthew 2:13
4 BC	Slaughter of Infants	Matthew 2:16
4 BC	Return to Nazareth	Matthew 2:23
26 AD	John the Baptist Prepares the Way	Matthew 3
26 AD	The Baptism of Jesus	Matthew 3:13
27 AD	Temptation of Jesus	Matthew 4
27 AD	Jesus Calls his First Disciples	Matthew 4:18
27 AD	Sermon on the Mount	Matthew 5 - 7
28 AD	Jesus Ministers in Galilee	Matthew 8
28 AD	Jesus Lord of the Sabbath	Matthew 12
28 AD	Jesus Answers John's Disciples	Matthew 11
28 AD	Jesus Speaks Many Parables	Matthew 13
28 AD	Jesus Heals a Demoniac	Matthew 8:28
28 AD	Jesus Heals a Paralytic	Matthew 9
29 AD	Jesus Sends out His Twelve Apostles	Matthew 10
29 AD	John the Baptist Beheaded	Matthew 14
29 AD	Jesus Feeds the 5,000	Matthew 14:15
29 AD	Teachings on Clean and Unclean	Matthew 15
29 AD	Peter's Confession of Christ	Matthew 16
29 AD	The Transfiguration	Matthew 17
29 AD	Greatest and Least in the Kingdom	Matthew 18
30 AD	Final Journey to Jerusalem	Matthew 19, 20
30 AD	The Triumphal Entry	Matthew 21
30 AD	Closing Ministry in Jerusalem	Matthew 22 - 25
30 AD	Thursday Before Passover	Matthew 26
30 AD	Jesus' Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion	Matthew 27
30 AD	Jesus' Resurrection	Matthew 28

REFERENCE MAPS

