

how well they lived. One house contained 2,000 square feet, a central courtyard, and four ovens. Glass vessels, mosaic floors, and frescoed walls all demonstrate the wealth of its inhabitants.

Jesus prophecy of the destruction of the Temple (24:1) was fulfilled in AD 70 when the Roman army under Titus, son of the then emperor Vespasian, destroyed the city. Only two stones known to have been part of the Temple have ever been found.

The Decapolis was a Roman province created out of the territories of ten (deka) cities (polis), nine of which were east of the Jordan and one west (Scythopolis, Old Testament Beth-Shan). Matthew 4:25 is the earliest historical reference to this province.

Keys:

The beginning and end of any work are important to its understanding. The genealogy, as previously mentioned, shows descent of Jesus from Abraham and David; 5:17-20 describes his relationship to the Law; 16:13-21 contains Peter's confession and Jesus' response; 28:1-20 tells of Jesus' resurrection and resulting universal authority, given in proxy to his followers.

Study tips:

One problem with studying the New Testament as opposed to the Old is that many of the stories are so familiar that they are no longer read, merely skimmed. Read through Matthew once, sensing the flow of its material. Read it a second time with a Bible atlas, tracing Jesus' journeys. Genealogies are often surprisingly rich--study 1:1-17, looking up all the names you don't recognize in both the Bible (with a concordance) and a Bible dictionary. How does Matthew's material compare to the other Gospels, both in content and arrangement? What does this tell you about his purpose? Jesus is called the "Son of David" eight times in Matthew. Find out where and why. What does the context of these statements tell you? What signs of particularism can you find in Matthew (e.g. 10:5)? What signs of universalism (e.g. 2:1 ff)? How are these reconciled in Matthew.

Classical usage:

The list of works inspired by the life of Christ is nearly endless. To attempt to chronicle all of them with any claim to finality would require the better part of a lifetime. Nearly every field of artistic endeavor is represented: music, stained glass, sculpture, painting. The works