



# **The Mind Behind the Gospels: A Commentary to Matthew 1-14 (Reference Library of Jewish Intellectual History)**

*Herbert Bassler*

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In this work, Herbert Basser uses a new translation of Matthew, graciously offered by Peter Zaas (with some minor revisions by David Malone and Herbert Basser), to give us a verse-by-verse commentary to the first half of the Gospel based on his study of Matthew through the lens of Jewish texts. These texts, skillfully interpreted by Basser, illuminate the powerful poetry and mystery behind much of Matthew's genius in reworking evangelists' sources. These Jewish materials provide a creative, cultural way of thinking about what God expects from human beings infused with the words and images of Matthew. Basser demonstrates how Jewish idioms and artistry move the speeches, story, and figure of Jesus through various layers of Church tradition, from a Jewish preacher to a Gentile savior. Each chapter of commentary is preceded by a preliminary discussion, and the book is introduced by an accessible, scholarly preface and introduction discussing the methodological issues of the commentary as a whole. In many ways, this book deepens Basser's initial views of the New Testament in his *Studies in Exegesis*, (Leiden and Boston, E.J. Brill, 2000). The present book will appeal to a broad audience of knowledgeable readers of any or no faith. Basser is presently completing his annotations to the Epistle of James for *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, to be published by Oxford University Press.

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