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### Jesus, a Jewish Sage

David Flusser's "The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius" is a book that explores the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Flusser is a Jewish scholar. He approaches the subject uniquely, highlighting Jesus' Jewish roots and placing him within Jewish history and culture. The book begins by providing a historical and cultural background to the time and place in which the "Son of Man" lived, discussing the social and political climate of first-century Palestine and the various religious sects of the time. Flusser then delves into the life of Jesus, examining his teachings and the methods he used to convey them.

Throughout the book, the author argues that Jesus' teachings were firmly grounded in Jewish tradition and that his message was ethical and moral living rather than a call to establish a new religion. David also discusses the controversies surrounding Jesus during his lifetime, including his clashes with the religious authorities of the time and his execution by the Roman authorities. He argues that Jesus' death directly resulted from His instructions and willingness to challenge the status quo.

The book's layout is organized thematically and follows a logical progression, making it easy for readers to follow the arguments. Each chapter is focused on a topic, and Flusser uses biblical texts, Jewish writings, and historical references to support his ideas. The preface is essential to the book because it presents Jesus' background that many Bible readers are unfamiliar with. The author argues that Jesus should be understood within his cultural and

historical context rather than as a figure separate from his Jewish roots. Flusser also emphasizes the importance of understanding Jesus' teachings rather than a call to establish a new religion.

I chose to describe chapters 2, 5, and 9 as they explain essential contexts in the book.

Chapter 2: discusses the Jewish concept of the "sage" and argues that Jesus should be understood as a Jewish sage rather than a Christian theologian. Chapter 5: debates the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish authorities of his time, arguing that Jesus' teachings were seen as a threat to their power. Chapter 9: consider the issue of forgiveness in Jesus' teachings, arguing that it was a central aspect of his message.

In Chapter 2, Jesus should be understood as a Jewish sage rather than a Christian theologian. Flusser argues that Jesus' teachings were grounded in Jewish tradition and that his message was one of ethical and moral living, which aligns with the teachings of other Jewish sages of the time. Flusser uses parables and aphorisms spoken by Jesus to support his argument, his focus on practical ethics, and his use of rabbinic methods of argumentation. He also cites parallels between Jesus' teachings and those of other Jewish sages, such as Hillel and Rabbi Akiva. Flusser presents a compelling argument that Jesus should be understood as a Jewish sage. His use of examples and parallels with other Jewish sages of the time supports his idea and provides a new perspective on Jesus' lectures.

The main idea of Chapter 5 is that Jesus' teachings were perceived as a threat to the authority of the Jewish leaders of his time, which led to his eventual arrest and execution. Flusser argues that Jesus' moral living message challenged the time's religious and political status quo, leading to conflict with the Jewish authorities. David cites Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees over issues such as Sabbath observance and purity laws and his critique of the Temple establishment as an example. He also discusses how Jesus' teachings were perceived as a threat by the Jewish

leaders, such as his use of the title "Son of Man" and his claim to be able to forgive sins.

Flusser's argument in Chapter 5 is supported by historical evidence and biblical texts. The conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities is a well-established aspect of Jesus' life and teachings.

The main argument of chapter 9 is that his followers interpreted Jesus' death and resurrection as the fulfillment of Jewish messianic expectations and that this interpretation was essential to the development of Christianity. Flusser uses the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible, their fulfillment in Jesus' life and death, as well as the role of the concept of the Messiah in Jewish thought and practice. He also discusses how early Christian beliefs about the resurrection were grounded in Jewish conceptions of the afterlife and eschatology. Flusser's argument in chapter 9 is supported by historical evidence and biblical texts. The role of messianic expectations in the development of Christianity is a widely accepted aspect of religious scholarship.

"The Sage from Galilee" is a thought-provoking and insightful book that sheds new light on the life and teachings of Jesus. The author attempts to challenge traditional understandings of Jesus and to provide a unique perspective on his life and teachings. Flusser argues that Jesus should be understood as a Jewish sage emphasizing practical ethics and moral living rather than a Christian theologian teaching salvation through faith in his divinity.

Overall, Flusser's arguments are well-supported by historical evidence and biblical texts, and his book offers a fresh perspective on Jesus' life and teachings that challenges traditional understandings. While some readers may disagree with Flusser's interpretation of Jesus or his stance on Christianity and Judaism, his book contributes to religious scholarship. It offers a new way of thinking about one of the most influential figures in human history.