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12 Page Analysis Summaries

Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament*

### **Chapter Historical Background to the New Testament Era**

James Jeffers, the author of "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament," offers a thorough account of the political, social, and cultural setting in which the New Testament was written in the chapter "Historical Background to the New Testament Era" of his book.

The Hellenistic period, which started with Alexander the Great's conquests in the fourth century BC and continued until the creation of the Roman Empire in the first century BC, is covered in the first chapter by Jeffers. Greek culture at this period extended across the Mediterranean region and had a significant influence on the societies it touched. According to Jeffers, during this time new philosophical and religious movements like Stoicism and Epicureanism gained popularity. These movements' beliefs would later have an impact on the formation of Christianity.

The Roman Republic and the establishment of the Roman Empire under Julius Caesar and Augustus are the topics that follow in Jeffers' analysis. He observes that the Roman Empire was notable for having a highly centralized administration and a huge infrastructure network that supported trade and communication over the entire empire. Jeffers also addresses the emperor's position in politics and religion, pointing out that they were frequently deified and revered as gods.

Jeffers then discusses subjects like slavery, women's roles, and the significance of honor and shame in Mediterranean civilization before moving on to the social and cultural framework of the New Testament era. He points out that the doctrines of Christianity were developed within this complicated social and cultural environment.

The chapter's many historical and cultural aspects provided by Jeffers help to create a picture of the time and place when the New Testament was written. He also emphasizes how this setting influenced the early Christians' ideas and practices as well as the growth of Christianity. All things considered, this chapter provides a lot of insight for anyone trying to comprehend the social, political, and cultural setting of the New Testament.

### **Chapter Life & Death in the First Century**

In the chapter "Life & Death in the First Century" of his book "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament," author James Jeffers gives a thorough analysis of the social, cultural, and theological dimensions of life and death in the ancient Mediterranean region.

Beginning with a discussion of the value of family and kinship in Mediterranean culture, Jeffers points out that these societies frequently included big, extended families that shared deep ties of obligation and devotion. He also emphasizes the importance of families in passing along cultural and religious traditions.

The different periods of life, from early childhood to old age, and the cultural behaviors and beliefs related to each step are then covered by Jeffers. He points out that infancy was a dangerous time in the ancient world because there was no medical knowledge to treat children's ailments and high infant death rates. Additionally, Jeffers analyzes the rites that marked the

passage from childhood to adulthood, as well as the difficulties elderly people experienced in a culture that put a great emphasis on youth and physical prowess.

The conversation then shifts to death and burial, and Jeffers points out that both death and burial rituals were significant elements of religious and cultural practice in ancient Mediterranean civilization. He talks about the several funeral customs that were in use at the period, such as cremation, burial in tombs, and burial in ossuaries, and observes that these customs differed greatly depending on things like social standing, financial level, and religious affiliation.

A variety of historical and cultural information is provided by Jeffers throughout the chapter to help us better understand life and death in the ancient world. Additionally, he emphasizes how these customs and ideas would have impacted the growth of Christianity, particularly in relation to family and kinship, religious ritual, and the idea of an afterlife.

An intriguing and educational chapter, "Life & Death in the First Century" provides important insights into the social and religious setting of the New Testament era.

### **Chapter The City in the Greco-Roman World**

The author of "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament," James Jeffers, examines the social, cultural, and political significance of cities in the ancient Mediterranean world in the chapter "The City in the Greco-Roman World" of the book.

Jeffers starts out by talking about the growth of ancient towns, pointing out that they were frequently hubs of trade, commercial, political, and religious influence. He also mentions how ethnically and culturally diverse the cities were and how people came from all over the world to live there.

The layout and architecture of ancient towns are then covered by Jeffers, who points out that they were frequently constructed using a grid system and built to assist trade, transit, and communication. He also talks about the numerous kinds of structures that can be seen in ancient towns, such as government buildings, private residences, and religious buildings.

After that, Jeffers discusses urban life, touching on issues including social stratification, slavery, and women's place in the city. He points out that cities were extremely stratified, with affluent elites living at the top and the impoverished and outcasts at the bottom. Additionally, he points out that slavery was a prevalent aspect of urban life, with slaves engaged in a variety of jobs.

Jeffers emphasizes how cities in the ancient world functioned as hubs of political, social, and cultural power throughout the whole chapter. A lot of the New Testament literature was directed at urban groups and reflected the social and cultural realities of city life. This suggests that cities were important in the growth of Christianity.

"The City in the Greco-Roman World" is a comprehensive and educational chapter that provides insightful information about the importance of cities in the ancient world. Jeffers offers a nuanced and thorough knowledge of the context in which the New Testament was written and the manner in which Christianity was influenced by its urban environment. He does this by examining the social, cultural, and political facets of urban life.

### **Chapter Influences on Christian Organization**

The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament author James Jeffers examines the numerous social, cultural, and religious forces that influenced the organization and structure of early Christianity in the chapter "Influences on Christian Organization."

As an example of the significance of social and cultural setting in the growth of early Christianity, Jeffers points out that the early Christian communities were embedded in a larger Greco-Roman social and cultural context. He then moves on to a consideration of the many elements, such as Jewish and Greek organizational patterns, the impact of Roman law, the importance of social networks, and patronage, that shaped the structure and organization of early Christian communities.

The organization and structure of early Christian communities are then covered by Jeffers, who also points out that these communities were frequently highly unstructured and flexible. He also points out that charismatic leaders with a lot of power over their followers frequently served as the leaders of early Christian communities.

After that, Jeffers discusses the many positions and responsibilities that early Christian societies had, including those of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and widows. He points out that when social, cultural, and religious circumstances changed over time, these responsibilities and offices also changed.

Jeffers focuses on how the larger cultural and social milieu in which early Christianity formed affected it throughout the entire chapter. In the evolution of Christian organization and structure, he also emphasizes the significance of change and continuity as early Christian communities responded to new problems and circumstances.

In conclusion, the chapter "Influences on Christian Organization" is a useful resource that provides significant insights into the intricate and dynamic process of early Christian growth. Jeffers offers a nuanced and thorough understanding of the social, cultural, and religious context

in which the New Testament was written and the ways in which Christianity was influenced by its surroundings by examining the various factors that influenced the organization and structure of early Christianity.

### **Chapter Religion in the Greco-Roman World**

Author James Jeffers gives a thorough summary of the religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Mediterranean civilization in the chapter "Religion in the Greco-Roman World" in the book "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament."

The ancient Mediterranean region was home to a variety of polytheistic and monotheistic religious traditions, including the worship of the Olympian gods, mystery cults, and various types of Judaism, which Jeffers examines in his opening chapter. Additionally, he talks about the significance of religion in ancient culture, emphasizing how it influenced social, political, and cultural life.

The consideration of ancient Mediterranean religious activities and rites, such as prayer, sacrifice, divination, and pilgrimage, is then taken up by Jeffers. He points out that these activities, which were frequently very ritualistic, were meant to create and uphold a relationship between humans and the divine.

The influence of Jewish monotheism and the absorption of Greek philosophical ideas are two examples of the many ways that ancient Mediterranean religion influenced the growth of Christianity. He also highlights the differences between Christianity and the old Greco-Roman religion, particularly in terms of its rejection of polytheism and stress on individual redemption and faith.

Jeffers underlines the variety and diversity of ancient Mediterranean religion throughout the entire chapter. He also emphasizes how religion was a dynamic and developing component of ancient society that changed in response to shifting social, cultural, and political conditions.

Overall, the chapter on "Religion in the Greco-Roman World" is helpful and provides significant insights into the religious attitudes and customs of the ancient Mediterranean region. Jeffers offers a nuanced and thorough knowledge of the setting in which the New Testament was written and the ways in which Christianity was influenced by its religious milieu. He does this by examining the diversity and complexity of ancient religion.

### **Chapter Tools of Governance: Finances, Law & the Military**

The fundamental instruments that the Roman Empire used to preserve its authority and control over its large regions, including the province of Palestine, are examined in the chapter "Tools of Governance: Finances, Law & the Military" in the book "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament," written by James Jeffers.

Jeffers begins by talking about the Roman taxation system, pointing out that the empire significantly relied on its capacity to collect taxes from its citizens in order to finance its military operations and other undertakings. He also emphasizes how taxation was a complicated and frequently contentious topic, particularly in regions like Palestine where there were significant tensions between the Jewish population and the Roman government.

Jeffers then moves on to a review of Roman law and how it affected the citizens of the empire. The Roman legal system, he observes, was intricate and heavily structured, with a concentration on the upholding of contracts and property rights. Additionally, Jeffers emphasizes

the military's responsibility for upholding law and order, particularly in regions where uprising and turmoil were frequent.

Finally, Jeffers examines how the Roman military was vital to upholding the empire's authority and strength. He points out that the Roman military, which had a well-trained and well-equipped standing army, was one of the biggest and most advanced armed forces in the ancient world. He also mentions how the military was employed throughout the empire to spread Roman power and authority, both through military operations and the construction of military outposts and garrisons in vital strategic places.

Jeffers underlines how the Roman Empire's methods of rule had a significant impact on its subjects' day-to-day life throughout the chapter, particularly in provinces like Palestine where there were significant tensions between the locals and the Roman authorities. Additionally, he highlights the ways in which these instruments of government influenced the social, economic, and political climate of the ancient Mediterranean region.

Overall, the chapter "Tools of Governance: Finances, Law & the Military" is valuable because it offers crucial insights into how the Roman Empire operated and how it affected the province of Palestine during the time of Jesus and the early Christian movement. Jeffers provides a sophisticated and thorough knowledge of the political and economic setting in which the New Testament was written as well as the ways in which Christianity was influenced by that background by examining the intricate and multifarious methods of control employed by the empire.

## **Chapter Social Class & Status in the Empire**

In the chapter "Social Class & Status in the Empire" of his book "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament," author James Jeffers examines the Roman Empire's intricate and hierarchical social structure and how it affected the lives of its citizens.

The governing class of aristocrats and affluent landowners, the middle class of merchants and skilled laborers, and the lower class of slaves and manual laborers are only a few of the social classes and statuses that existed inside the empire that Jeffers first discusses. He points out that social mobility was uncommon and challenging and that elements like income, education, and occupation were frequently used to determine social position.

The next section of Jeffers' book examines how social position and class influenced people's lives within the empire. He points out that while those in the lower classes frequently battled to meet their most basic demands, the ruling class had access to the best legal, medical, and educational resources. Additionally, he draws attention to the ways that social standing and class affected religious beliefs and practices, particularly in the setting of the early Christian movement.

Last but not least, Jeffers explains how social class and position were mirrored in the Roman Empire's material culture, from the magnificent city architecture to the expensive clothing and jewelry worn by the affluent elite. He also mentions how the empire's literature and art reflected its values and social structure.

Under this chapter, Jeffers focuses on how social class and position were fundamental components of Roman society and how they affected almost every facet of daily life under the

empire. He also draws attention to the ways in which these social strata influenced the growth of early Christianity, particularly with regard to its views on authority and power.

In general, the chapter "Social Class & Status in the Empire" is valuable because it offers significant insights into the social and cultural setting in which the New Testament was composed. Jeffers provides a nuanced and thorough understanding of the ways in which social class and status shaped the lives of individuals and communities within the empire, as well as the ways in which these dynamics affected the development of early Christianity, by examining the complex and hierarchical social structure of the Roman Empire.

### **Chapter The Jews in the Cities**

The experiences of Jewish communities in the cities of the Roman Empire, as well as their interactions with both their fellow Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors, are examined in the chapter "The Jews in the Cities" of the book "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament," written by James Jeffers.

Beginning with the diversity of Jewish communities within the Roman Empire, Jeffers explains how these groups' experiences varied based on things like location, language, and social standing. While Jewish communities experienced prejudice and persecution frequently, he points out that they also had some autonomy and self-governance, which allowed them to retain their unique cultural and religious practices.

Jeffers then looks at both positive and bad interactions between Jewish communities and their non-Jewish neighbors. He points out that although Jews frequently encountered animosity and mistrust from their non-Jewish neighbors, they also created partnerships and alliances with them for business and political reasons.

The importance of synagogues in Jewish communities is then examined by Jeffers, who points out that they acted as places of social and political organization in addition to serving as religious centers. He describes how synagogues served as gathering places for Jews to engage in religious activities, academic pursuits, and social interaction, as well as how they were essential to the preservation and dissemination of Jewish identity and culture.

Finally, Jeffers talks on how the Jewish-Roman Wars affected Jewish communities in the Roman Empire, noting that they intensified anti-Jewish prejudice and persecution and contributed to the final fall of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

Jeffers focuses on the intricate and varied aspects of Jewish life in Roman cities throughout the chapter, as well as the manner in which Jewish communities managed their interactions with both their Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors. He also emphasizes the adaptability and tenacity of Jewish identity and culture in the face of prejudice and persecution, as well as the significant role synagogues played in the transmission and preservation of Jewish traditions.

In general, "The Jews in the Cities" is an insightful chapter that offers significant insights about the encounters of Jewish communities in the Roman Empire and their interactions with the larger social and cultural contexts in which they lived. Jeffers provides a nuanced and thorough overview of the manner in which Jewish culture and identity were developed and upheld in the ancient world by examining the diversity and complexity of Jewish life in the cities of the Roman Empire.

## Chapter Slavery

The author of "The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament," James Jeffers, offers a thorough account of the institution of slavery in the ancient Greco-Roman world as well as its consequences for the social, economic, and cultural surroundings of the New Testament in the chapter "Slavery" of the book.

Jeffers begins by talking about the presence of slavery in antiquity, pointing out that it played a significant role in the Greco-Roman world's economic and social structure. While slaves came from various backgrounds and served in a variety of capacities, he points out that they were generally regarded as property and were subject to a number of legal and social constraints.

Next, Jeffers examines how the Greco-Roman world's cultural and social norms both influenced and were influenced by the institution of slavery. He points out that slavery was frequently justified by racial, ethnic, or cultural differences and that it had a significant impact on how the ancient world's social structure was organized.

The discussion of slavery in the New Testament follows, and Jeffers points out that while the Bible does not explicitly condemn the practice, it does contain verses that present a more equitable understanding of human relationships. He points out that certain early Christian groups did make an effort to oppose the practice of slavery because the Christian message of love and compassion had the ability to disrupt Greco-Roman social and cultural norms.

Lastly, Jeffers examines how the history of slavery in the Greco-Roman civilization has influenced current society, pointing out that the heritage of racism and prejudice still has an impact on modern society.

Overall, the chapter "Slavery" provides a thorough and nuanced knowledge of the institution of slavery in the ancient world. It is thought-provoking and enlightening. Jeffers makes a significant contribution to the study of ancient history and biblical studies by examining the social, cultural, and economic ramifications of slavery and its relationship to the New Testament. He also expands our understanding of the legacy of slavery in modern society.