



Are Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures fallen?

Absolutely! From the time sin entered the world, every culture has been affected by the Fall. The Fallen Family infects every society with sin, disease, shame, death. Each one distorts God’s intent for people.

Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures are important to understand because they influenced world history, and these cultures are where the early Church began. The context of the original audience often gives us clues to understand the Bible.

Key Term

Biblical Cultures

Vital to understanding biblical context

Greek Society: How did the Greeks view women?

Poets, philosophers, government leaders, gods/goddesses & fictional characters show the common view of women.

- Greeks taught that women were created separately from men, as a punishment/curse from the gods.
- Aristotle taught that women were a “defective human specimen” a “deformed male” and a “monstrosity.”
- Meander wrote, “Women are an abominable caste, hated of all the gods.”
- The Chorus in Orestes sang, “Women were born to mar the lives of men.”
- Euripedes wrote, “Clever women are dangerous.”

Roman Society: How did the Romans view women?

Romans displaced the Greeks as the dominant society in the first century. They ruled Palestine when Jesus was born.

- Roman society adopted many Greek thoughts as their own. Their goddess of marriage was Juno. Her husband physically abused her and cheated on her. Juno was manipulative and undesirable.
- Venus was the Roman goddess of erotic love and the protector of prostitutes. She was beautiful and desirable. Society considered that visiting prostitutes was a good thing for men to do.
- Roman women had no individual name. Daughters took the feminine form of her dad’s name.
- Roman law allowed for “death by exposure” for any female born after the first daughter.
- Roman culture allowed upper class and wealthy women a few more rights than the Greeks, but still rare.

Jewish Society: How did the Jewish leaders view women?

Jewish leaders recorded the “official” standards in the Talmud (law interpretations) and Mishnah (rabbinic traditions).

- Eve, as a representative of all women, was “cursed with 10 curses.”
- “It is a disgrace to be the father of an undisciplined son, and the birth of a daughter is a loss.”
- Rabbis compared wives to a piece of meat. “A man may do whatever he pleases with his wife... Meat which comes from the slaughterhouse may be eaten salted, roasted, cooked, or seethed.”
- The Talmud states, “Let the words of Torah be burned up, but let them not be delivered to women.”
- A woman reached her spiritual destiny through sending her husband and son to the synagogue.

Conclusion

Every fallen culture has a similar list of poor and broken relationships. You can probably think of many examples in your own life. **Every society has drifted far from God’s Ideal Family. Into this sad, depressed, dark, unjust, sinful world... Jesus entered! Praise God! Jesus came and shined out with a new standard, a new honor, a new hope.**

4 Crucial Questions

1. What does this teach us about **GOD**?
2. What does this teach us about **PEOPLE**?
3. What command should I **OBEY**?
4. With whom can I **SHARE** this?