

Review: A Week in the Life of a Greco-Roman Woman

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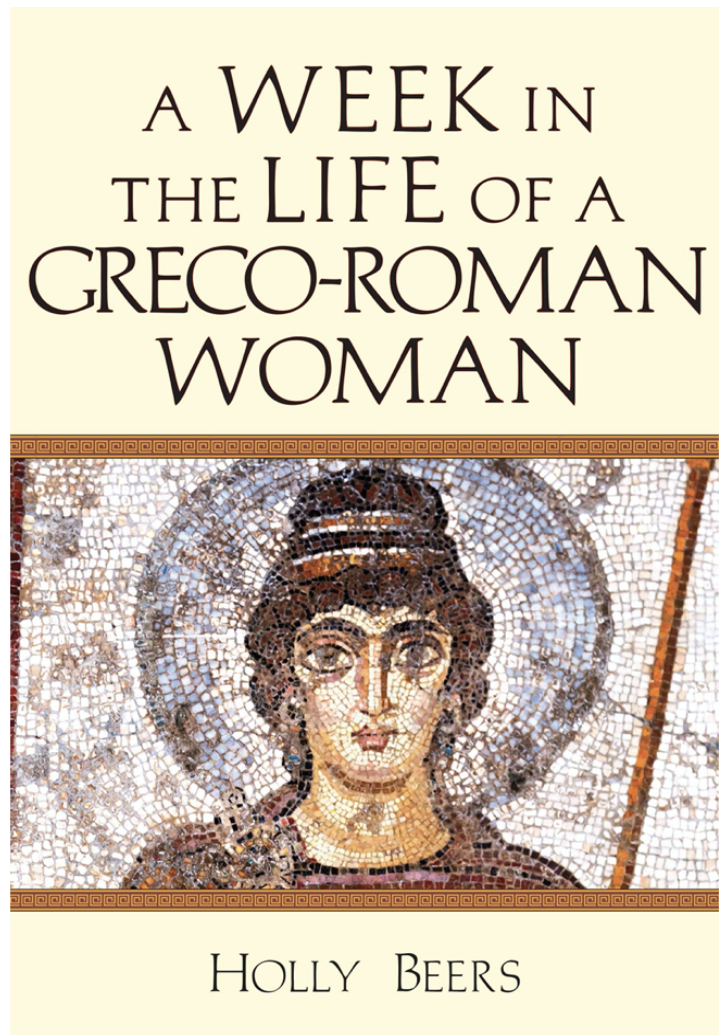
A Week in the Life of a Greco-Roman Woman

By Holly Beers

Dr. Holly Beers writes from the unique viewpoint of a woman as she takes the reader on a journey through Ephesus in the first century. The culture unfolds easily as the story takes shape and is aided by tables of historical artifacts and lifestyles of the people.

Beers presents a stark view of life and death, male and female roles, societal hierarchy and the worship of gods and goddesses. She was inspired by portions of Acts and I Corinthians and easily works Scripture into the narrative of the everyday life of an Ephesian woman named Anthia.

I enjoy historical fiction because it helps in understanding what life was like at a given time. This particular time of history was not an easy time for a woman to live. Beers gives a very clear look at a woman's fear of pregnancy and childbirth, as well as the sense of being the property of a man—her father or husband—in her descriptions of the buying and selling of women.



The gross objectification of people clearly is something considered normal in that time. Beers counters this objectification with the teachings of Paul in Ephesus. In the freedom of Jesus, slaves and free people ate together, men and women spoke openly in meeting times, children were blessed and cared for, all were welcome. The followers of The Way, as Christianity was called, were very different than the culture at large.

A Week in the Life of a Greco-Roman Woman had a deep impact on me. Anthia only knew one kind of life. It seems extremely oppressive to me, but it was her reality. She was owned. She was property. She was not given respect from the men in her life.

Anthia only heard of freedom through the teachings of The Way. That freedom made her afraid. She could not imagine her husband agreeing with any of The Way's teachings, and she knew he was enraged by those who were changing their allegiance from Artemis to Jesus. Anthia's husband's honor was tied to allegiance to Artemis, and she knew it was dangerous for her to go against his wishes. Yet, freedom in Jesus called to her. In much the same way, true freedom through Jesus calls to us.

The freedom Paul offered in Jesus' name was so radical in Anthia's culture. It was not only different than what people knew then, but it was not coercive and did not require what their gods and goddesses required.

This book also offered me hope for the future. Even out of a terrible situation and cultural norms, the Holy Spirit was working then and still works today.

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