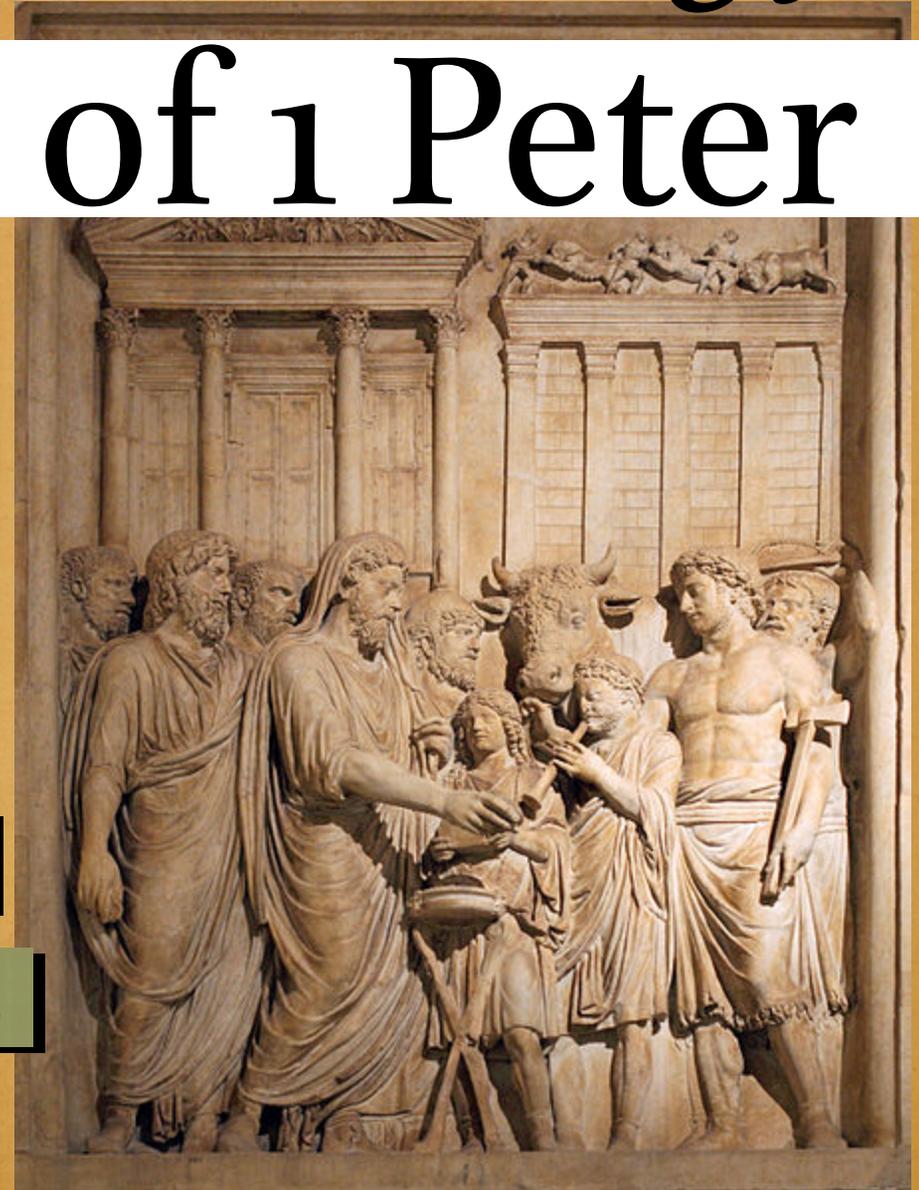
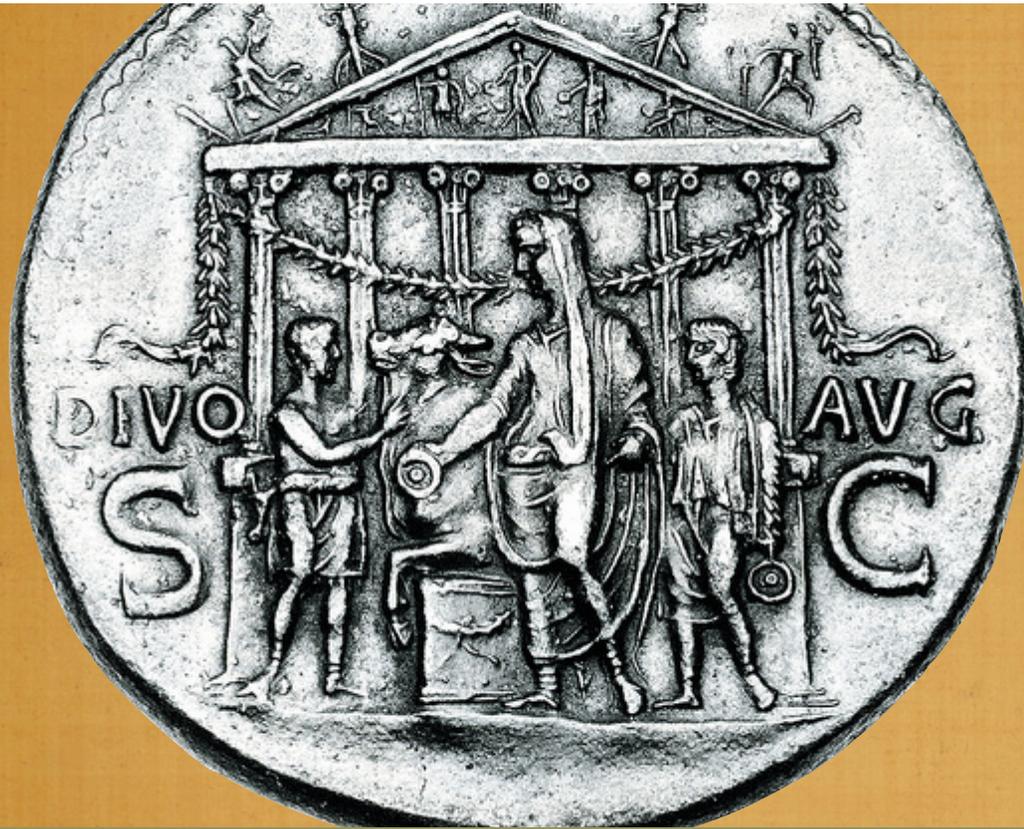


The

Situation and *Strategy*

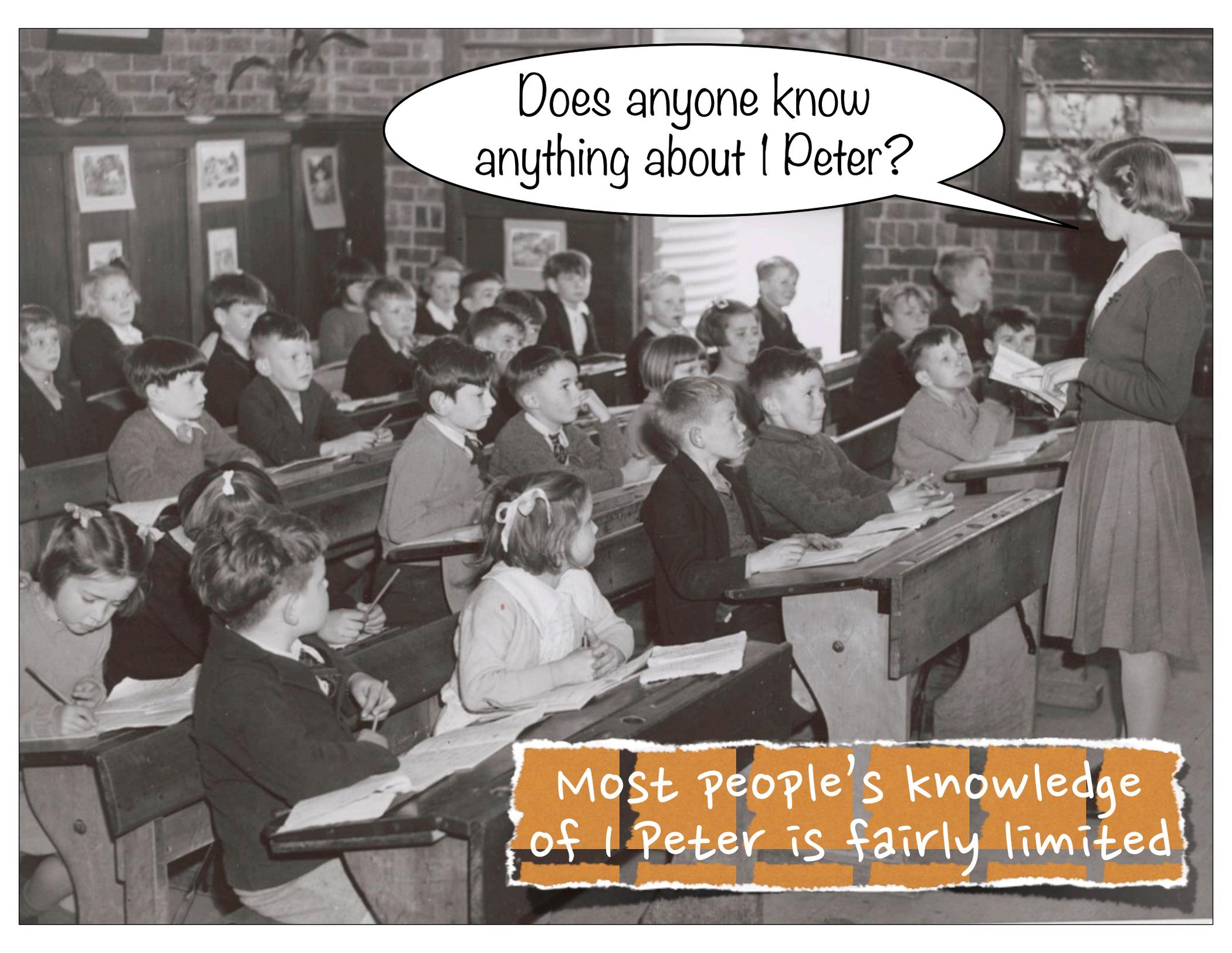
of 1 Peter



Examining the Formative

Influence of Persecution on

Christian Identity

A black and white photograph of a classroom. A female teacher stands on the right side, holding a book and looking towards the students. The students are seated at wooden desks, facing the teacher. They are dressed in formal attire, including sweaters, blouses, and jackets. The classroom has a brick wall in the background with several framed pictures or posters hanging on it. A speech bubble is overlaid on the top right of the image, containing the text "Does anyone know anything about 1 Peter?".

Does anyone know
anything about 1 Peter?

Most people's knowledge
of 1 Peter is fairly limited

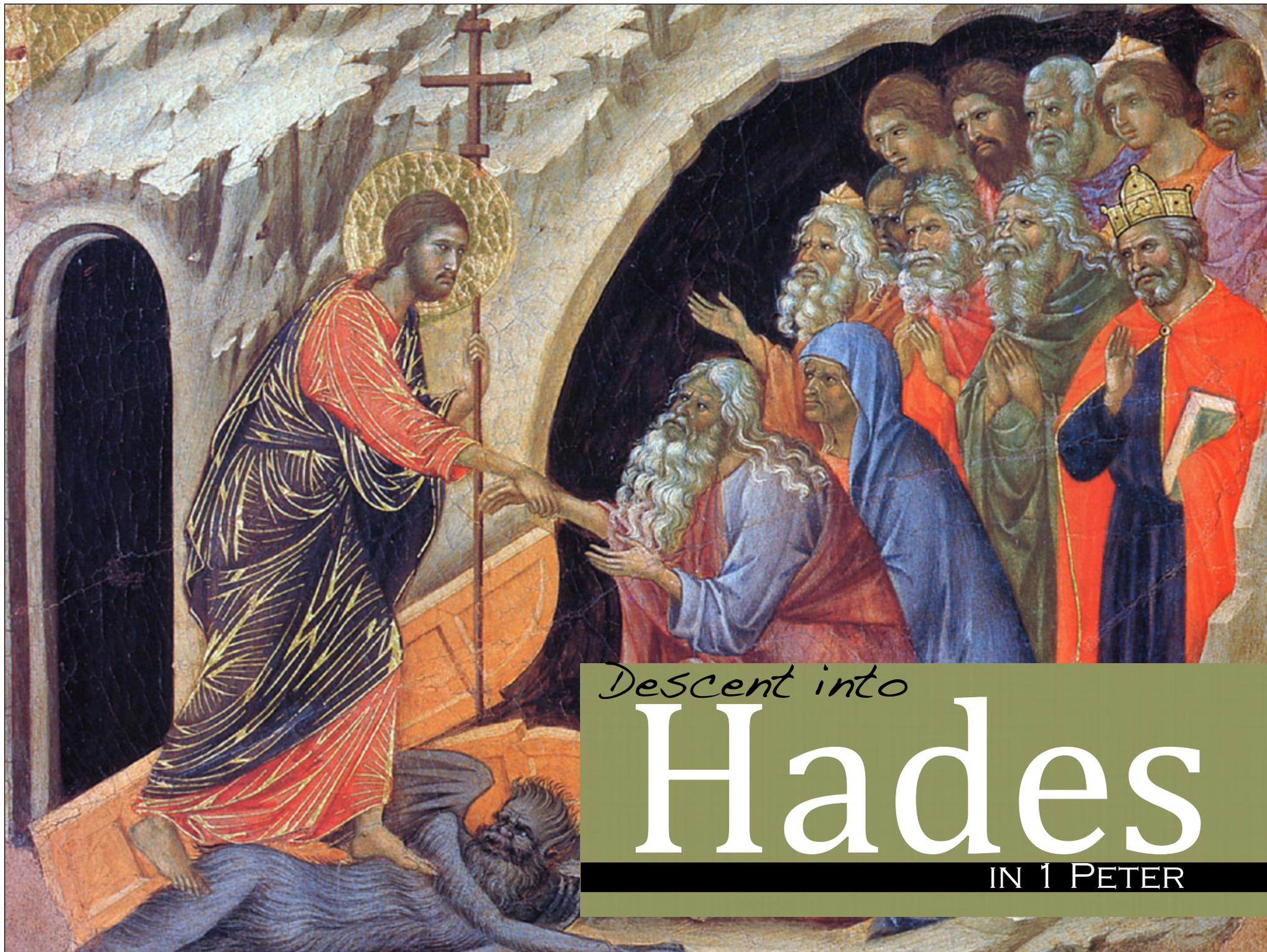
CAUTION

Even among professional *scholars*,
1 Peter is not highly valued or even
frequently studied, which led one
Petrine interpreter to ascribe to it
the label, an “**exegetical stepchild**”

Topics

OF CONTROVERSY





Descent into

Hades

IN 1 PETER

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of Heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born
of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into Hell; the third day He
rose again from the dead; He ascended into
Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God,
the Father almighty; from thence He shall
come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic
Church, the communion of saints, the
forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the
body and life everlasting. Amen.

SPIRITS

IN PRISON

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and **preached** to the **spirits** in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:18-20)



*A **Second** Chance at Salvation in 1 Peter?*

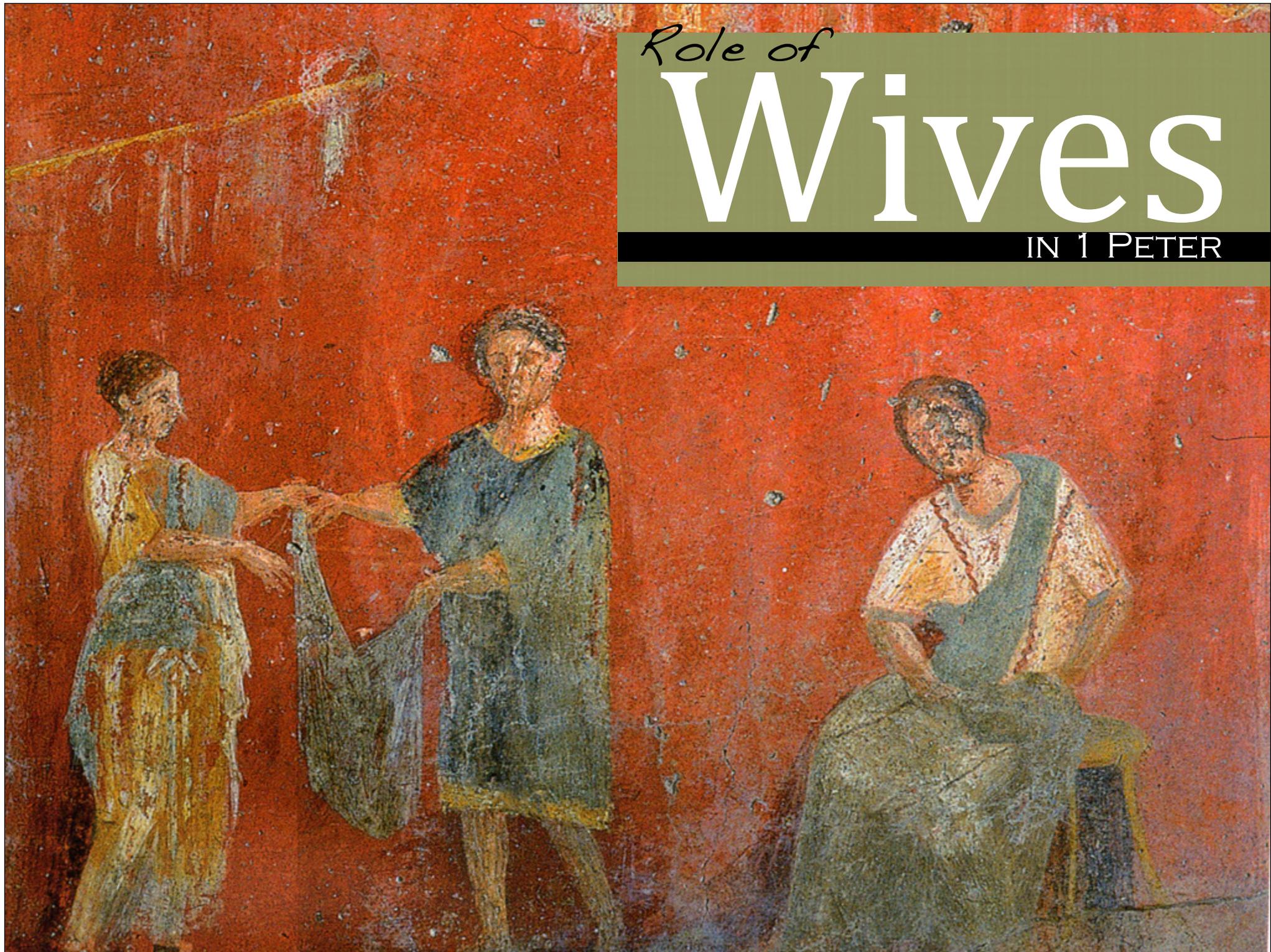


Video: Preaching to the Spirits in Prison
(5:30 - 7:50)

Role of

Wives

IN 1 PETER



Interpreting

THE BIBLE

Wives, in the same way, **submit** to your own husbands so that even if some of them do not obey the word they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct (1 Peter 3:1)



Question

What does this verse mean?
How does it apply today?

Video: Michele Bachmann Answers Submission
Question (2012 Republican Primary)
(0:00 - 1:18)

Interpreting

THE BIBLE

Wives, in the same way, **submit** to your own husbands so that even if some of them do not obey the word they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct (1 Peter 3:1)

Slaves **submit** to your masters with all deference, not only those who are good and gentle but also those who are harsh (1 Peter 2:18)

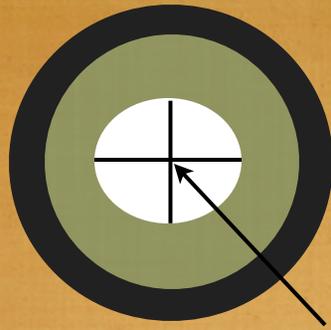
Question

What does this verse mean?
How does it apply today?

Why should wives submit?

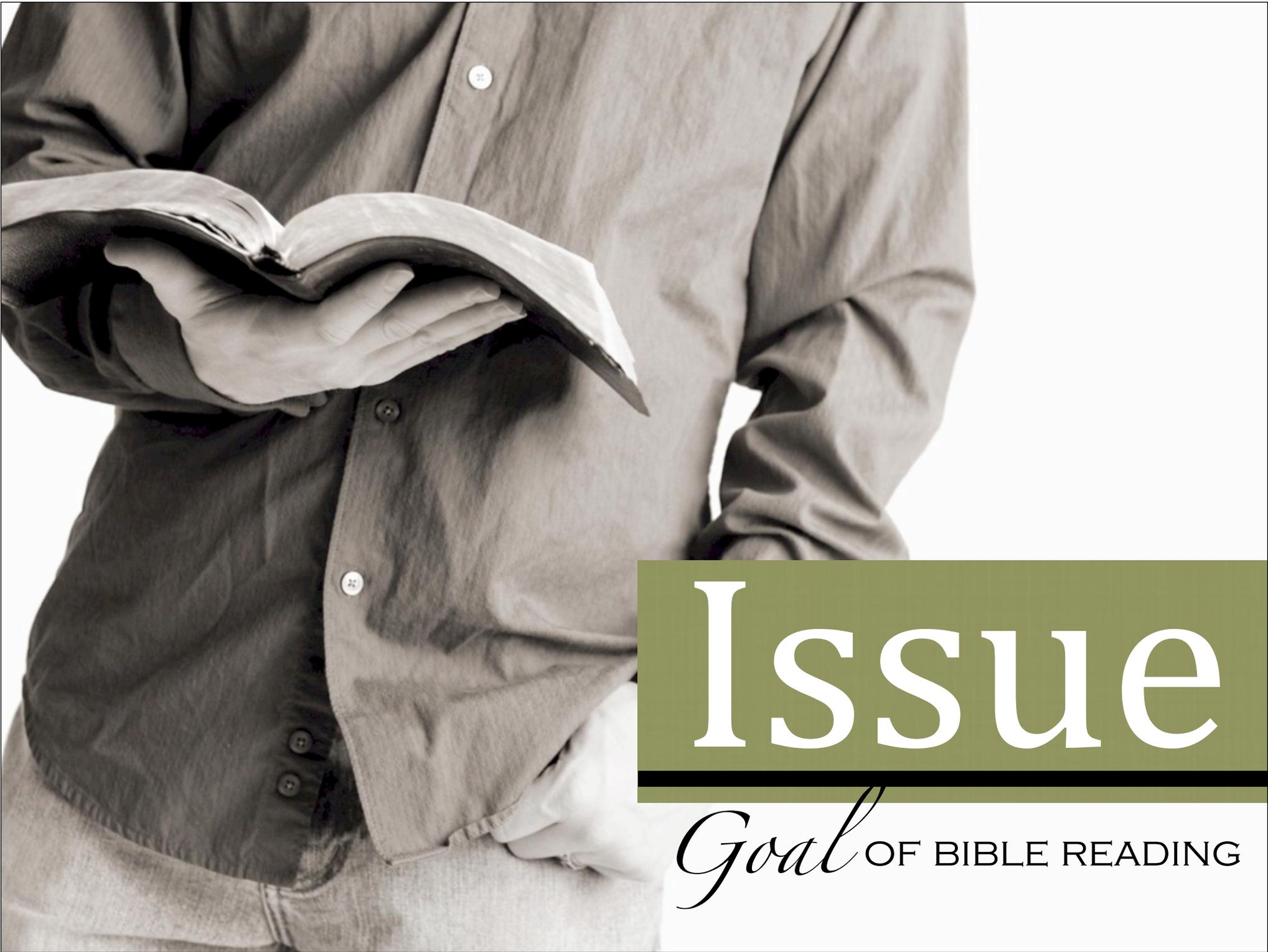


**“THE WOMAN IS THE WEAKER SEX”
(1 PETER 3:7)**



QUESTION

Given the (seeming) **clarity** of what these verses say, why might they be **controversial** in modern interpretation?

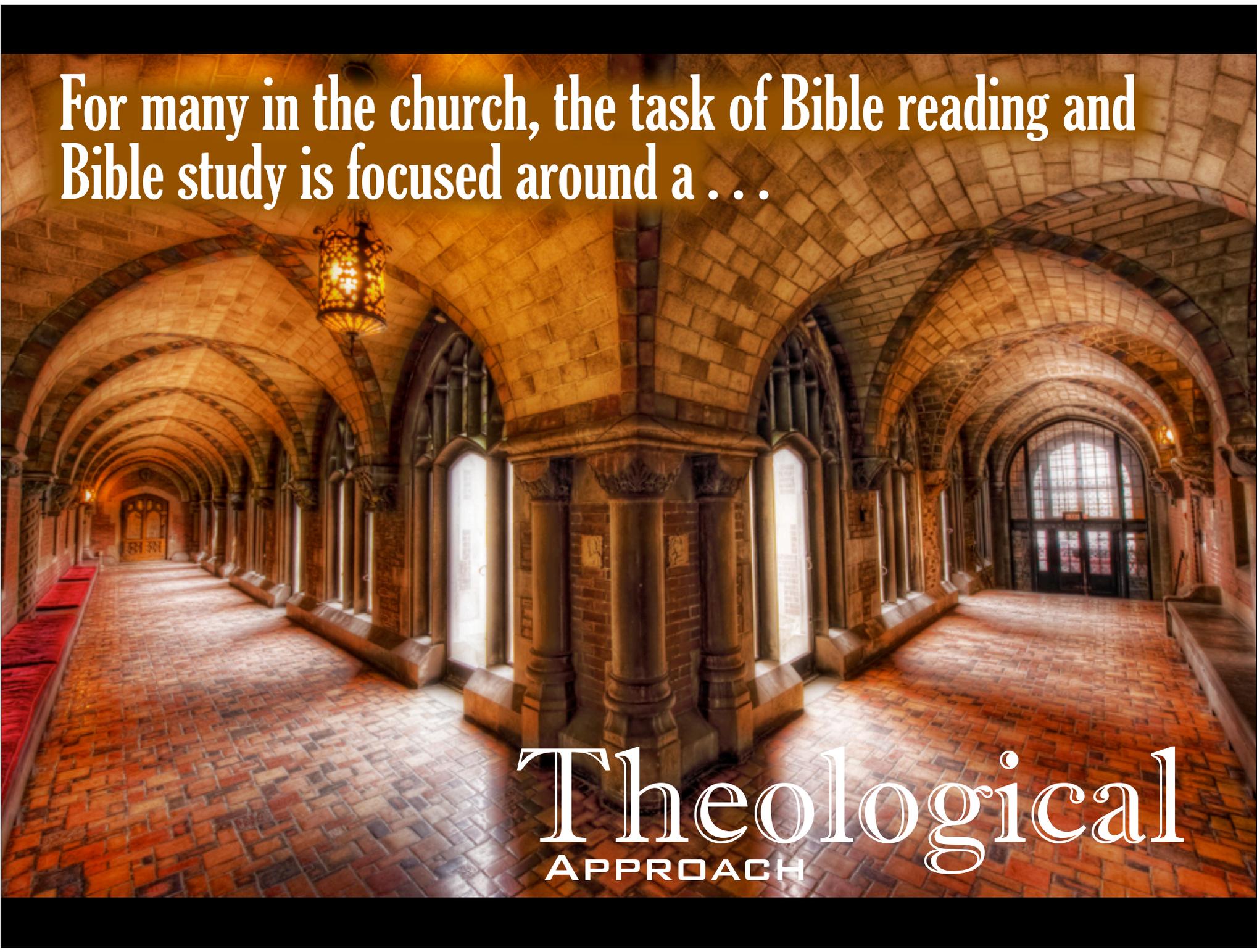


Issue

Goal OF BIBLE READING

For many in the church, the task of Bible reading and Bible study is focused around a . . .

Theological
APPROACH



THEOLOGICAL

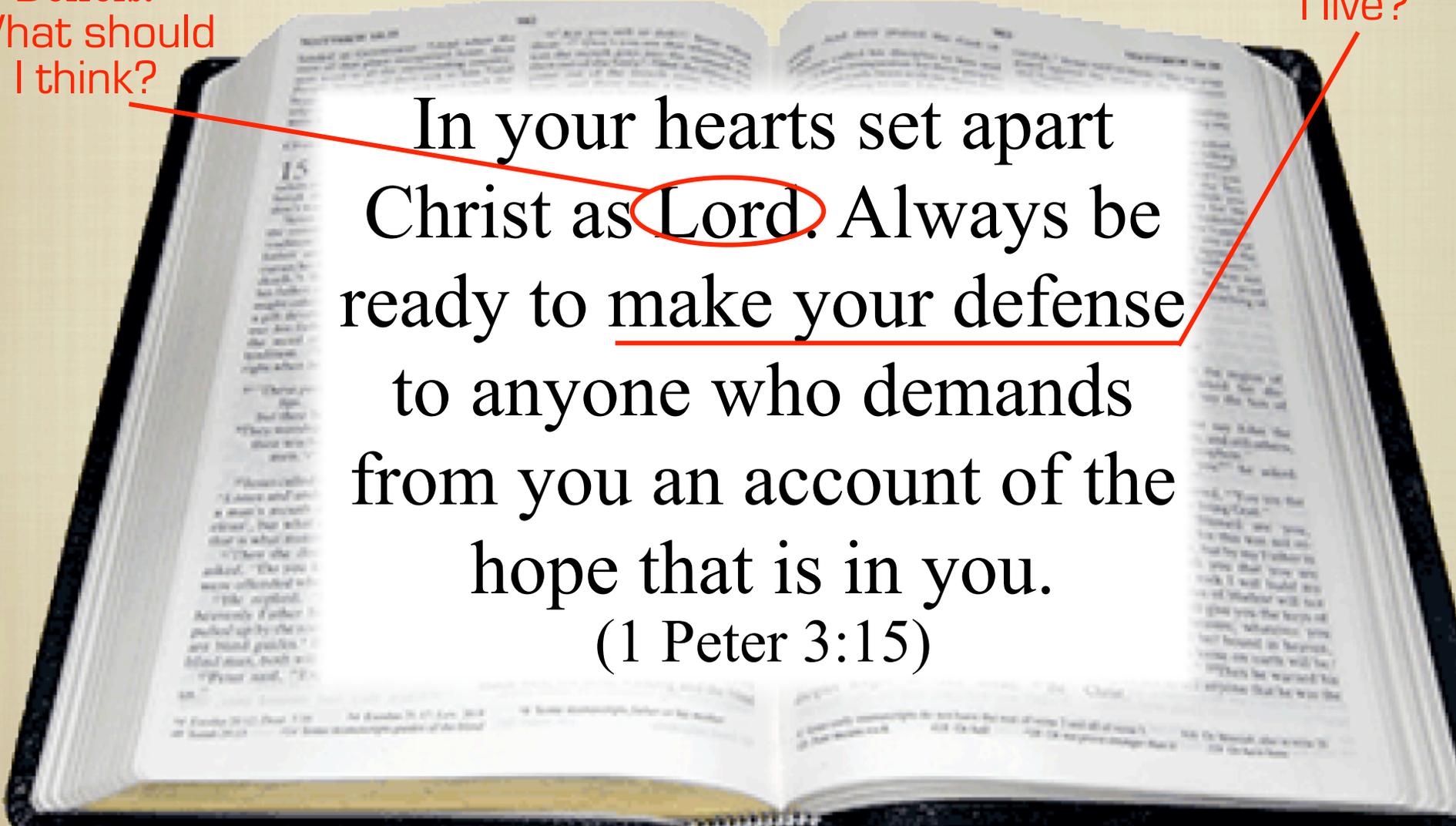
APPROACH

Beliefs:

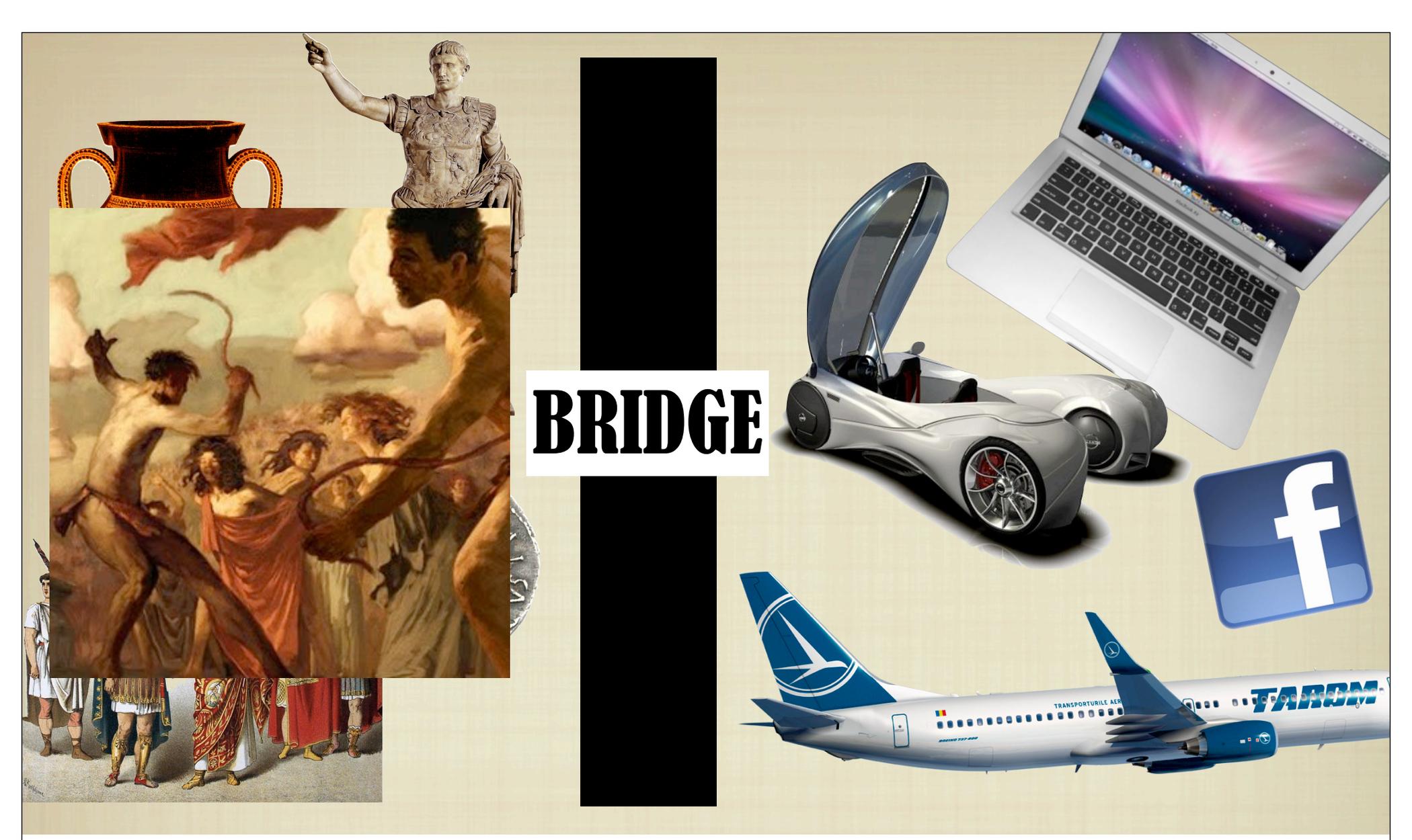
What should I think?

Behavior:

How should I live?



In your hearts set apart
Christ as Lord. Always be
ready to make your defense
to anyone who demands
from you an account of the
hope that is in you.
(1 Peter 3:15)



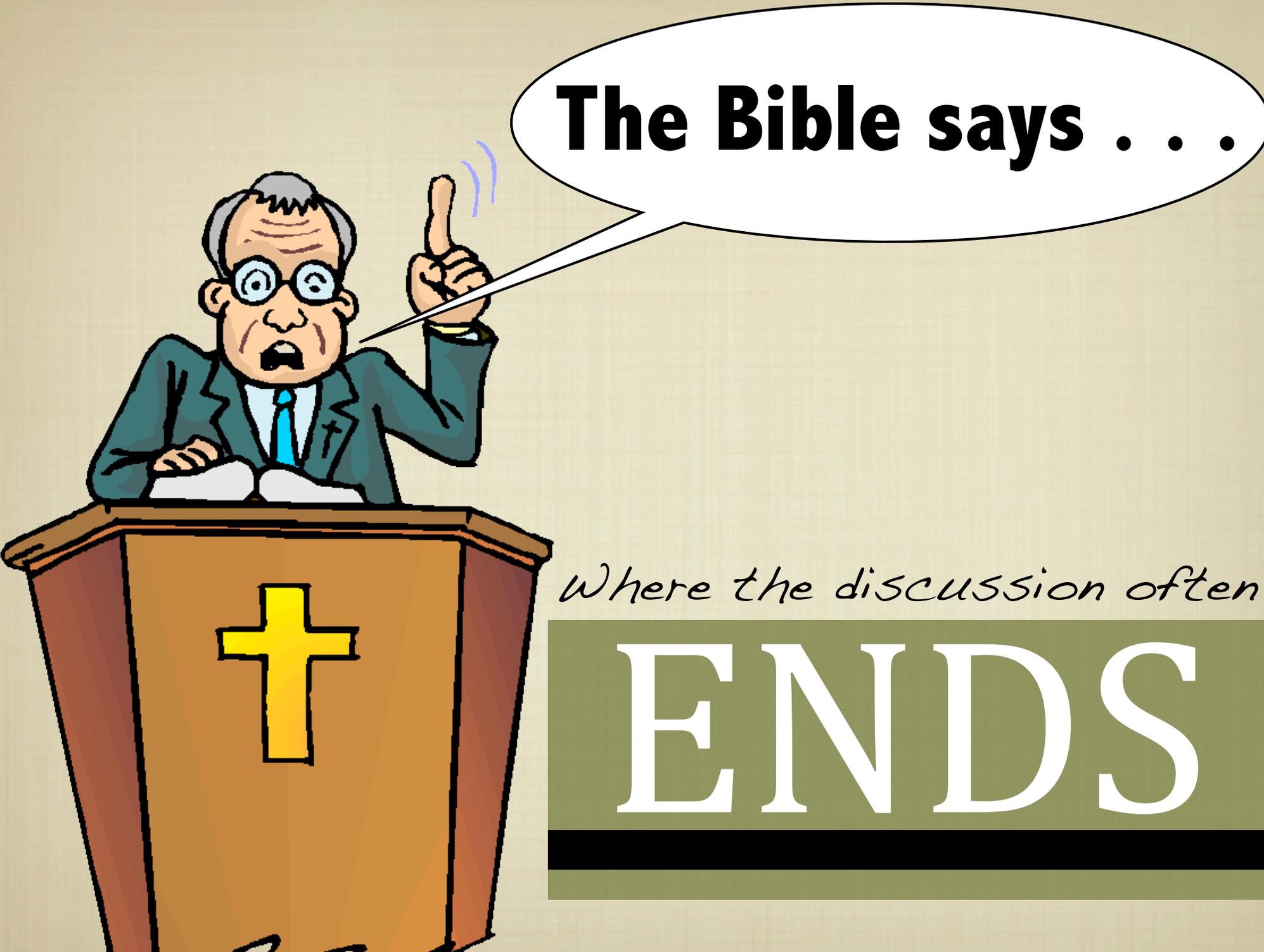
BRIDGE

This type of reading strategy makes the great gulf between the ancient world and the modern world very easy to bridge: the **Bible** says it, **we** do it



Disclaimer

The goal of this lecture series is not (primarily) to determine **what** | Peter says about a particular topic (e.g., salvation; women). We want to explore **why** | Peter says what it does.



The Bible says . . .

Where the discussion often

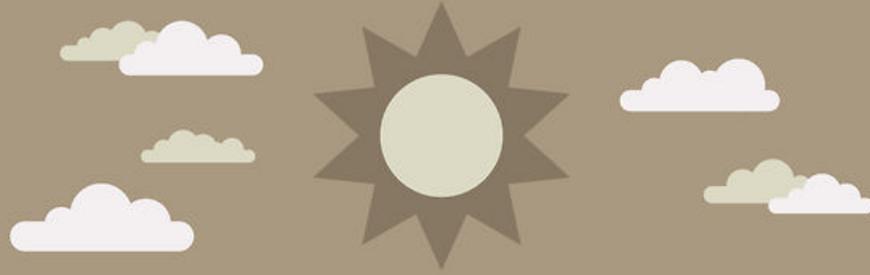
ENDS

The definition
of God is . . .



Important

The theology of the
biblical authors was
shaped by and grew
out of social and
cultural situations



1 PETER

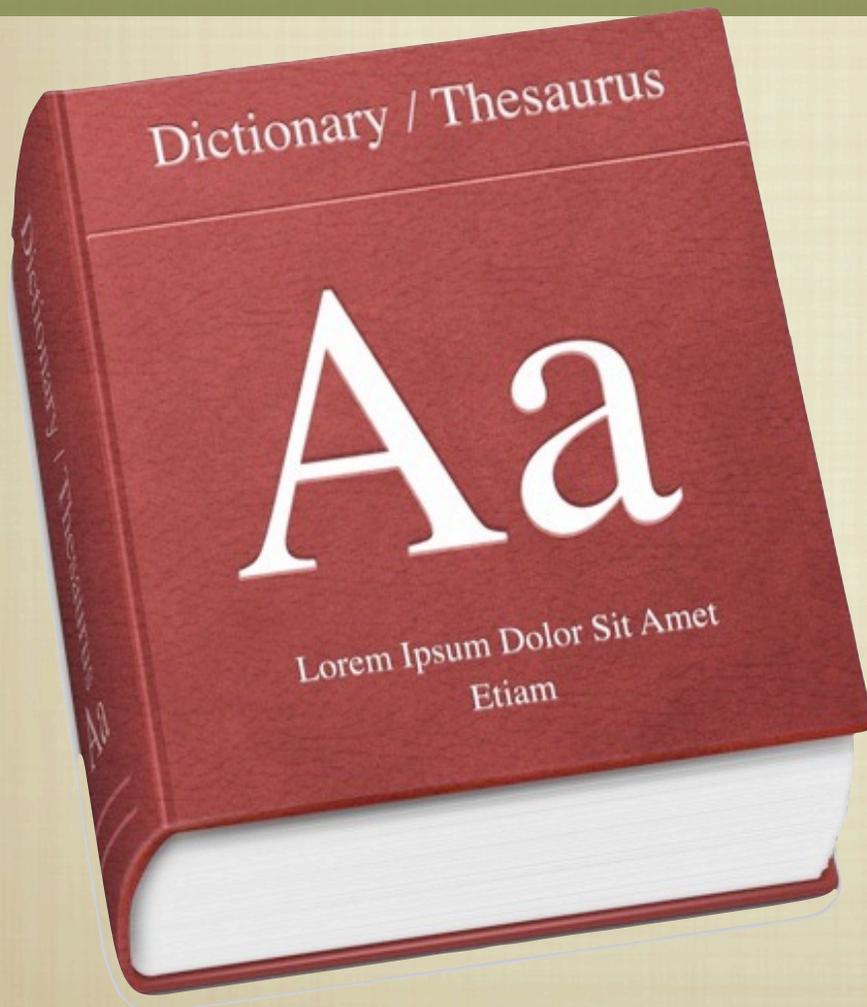


A Social-Scientific Approach

Social-

Scientific

CRITICISM



the phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the **social** and **cultural** dimension of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences

SOCIAL

Scientific

CRITICISM

To better understand the worldview, cultural codes, social values, and lived experiences of the biblical **authors** and their **audiences**



1

*Important **Uses** of Social Scientific Criticism*

Example:

What would a foreigner need to know in order to understand UT football?



Example

SOCIAL WORLD OF JESUS

Roman
rule

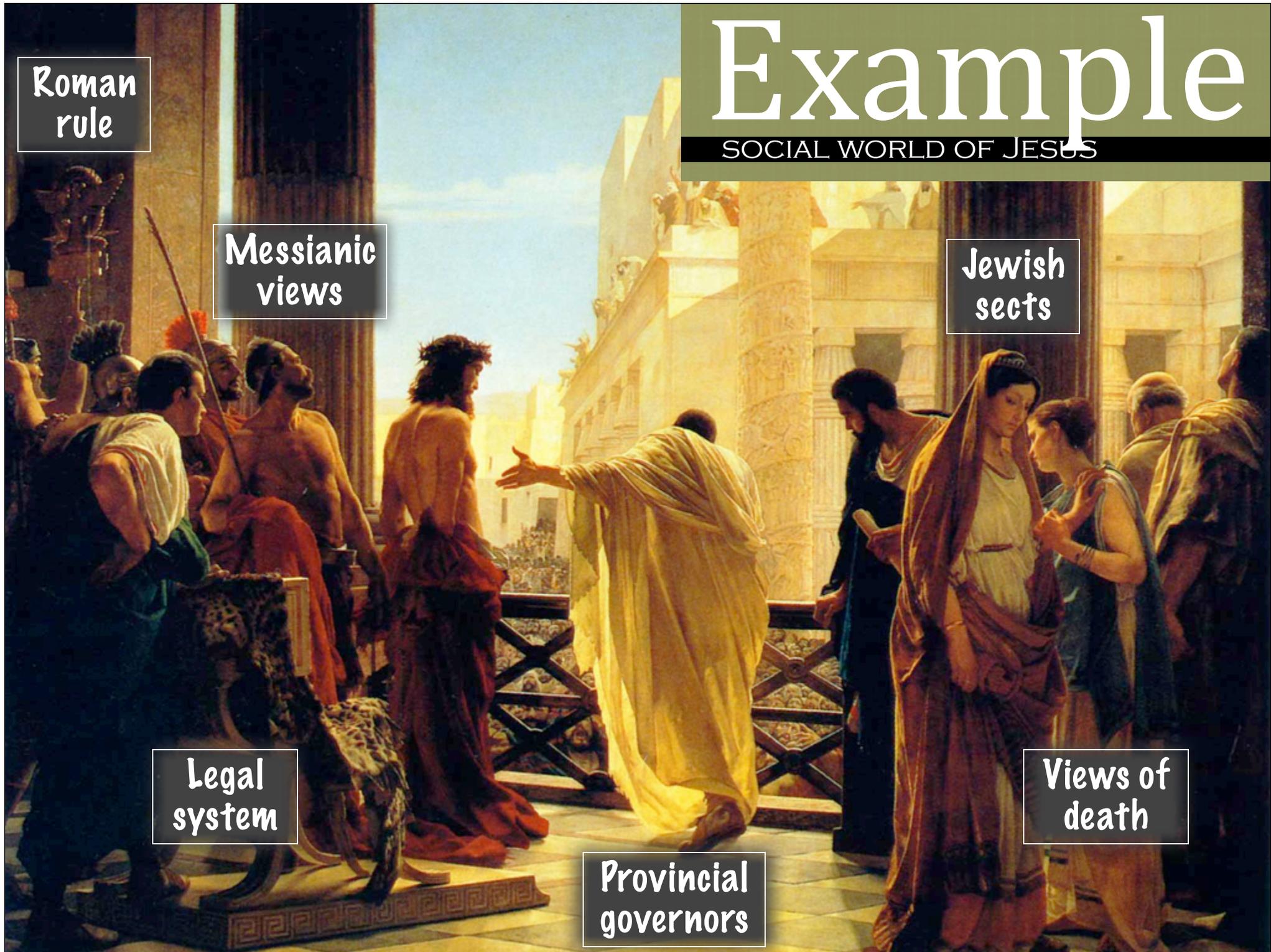
Messianic
views

Jewish
sects

Legal
system

Views of
death

Provincial
governors



SOCIAL

Scientific

CRITICISM

To properly diagnose
and evaluate the
social strategy
of the ancient
biblical authors

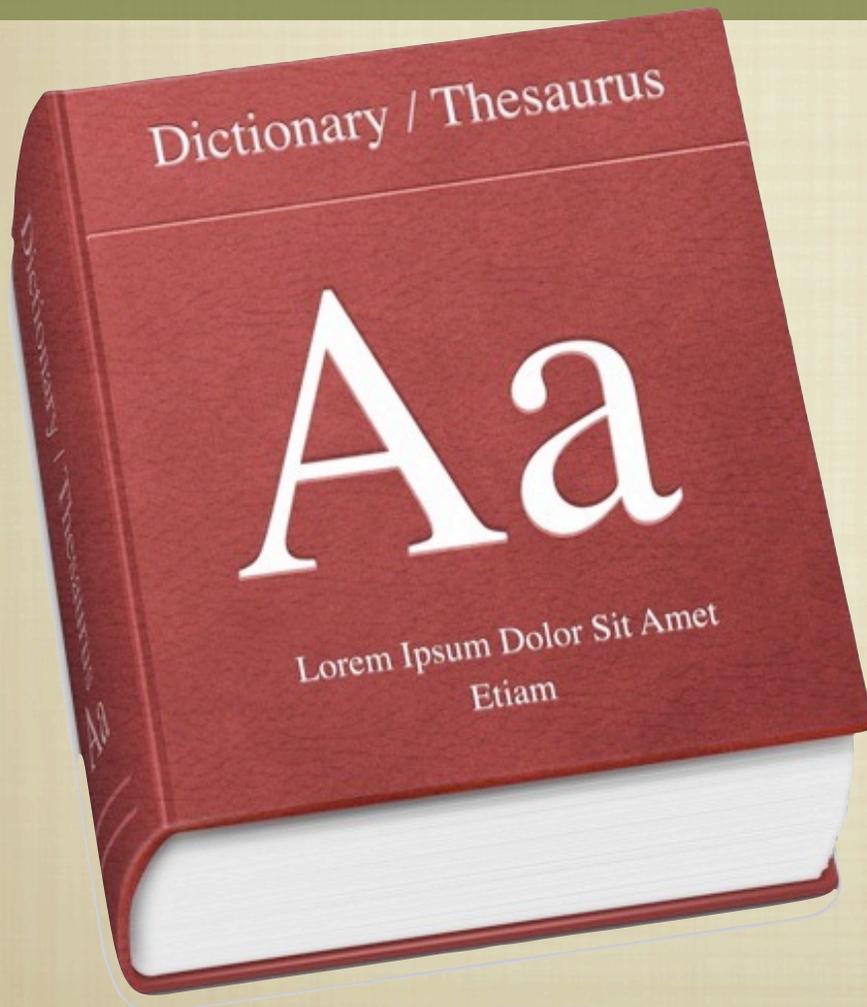


2

*Important **Uses** of Social Scientific Criticism*

Social

Strategy



the author's calculated attempt to **formulate** his letter in such a way that it might successfully elicit a particular social response from its readers

Important

Note



Our focus in this lecture series will be on how the Petrine author's interaction with and understanding of his surrounding world **affects** the instructions he gives to his readers regarding the way they should believe and act

Theological

APPROACH



Question

What does 1 Peter teach and what do its readers believe about Christian salvation?

Question

How does 1 Peter use beliefs about salvation to alleviate anxiety and motivate conduct?



Sociological

APPROACH

NOTICE

We are attempting to get
behind what the author
tells his readers
(theology) to understand
'why' (sociology)

©nakedpastor.com

Harvard
19



"Ya right! Let's see how long this idiocy lasts!"

Interesting

Tidbit

1 Peter is one of the more important documents in the New Testament - not necessarily because of its **theological** message, but because of its **sociological** dimensions





1 Peter

It is the key to unlocking the **legal status** of Christians during the late first century

Important

Note



The nature of conflict in 1 Peter is **representative** of the situational background of many other New Testament documents

Situating

NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS

Paul
64/66 CE

Matthew

Pastorals

Hebrews

John

70 CE

80 CE

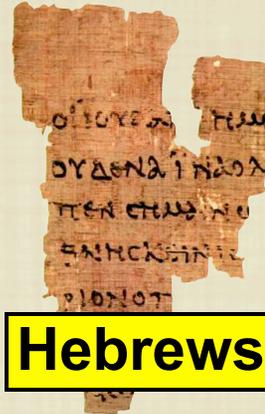
90 CE



Mark



Luke-Acts



2 Peter-Jude

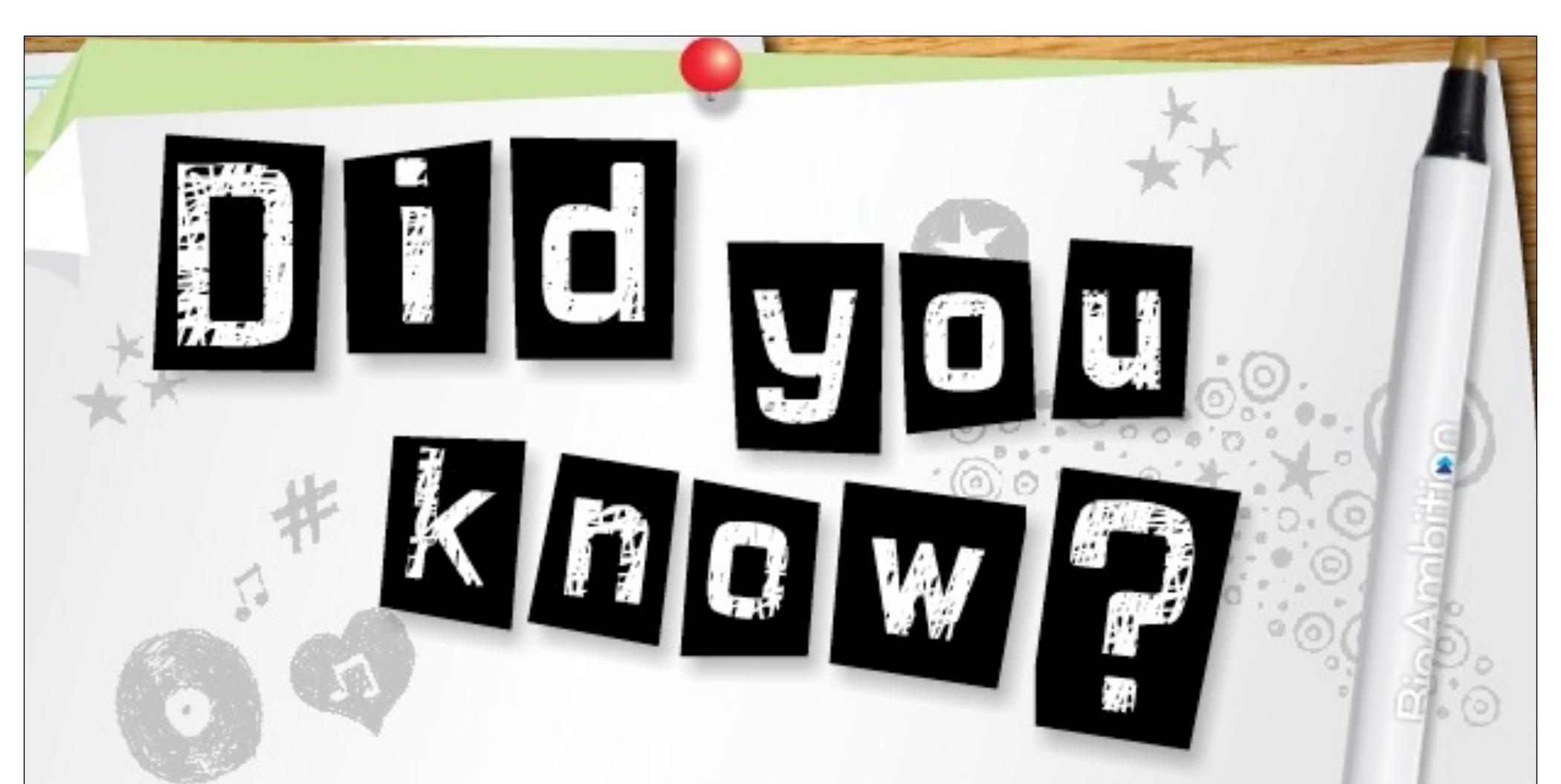


Revelation



1 Peter

It provides an important glimpse into the
formation of early Christian identity



Did you know?

1 Peter marks one of the earliest attempts by a Christian author to construct a **response** to anti-Christian **prejudice** and the **persecution** which it engenders



Preview

THEOLOGIAN-IN-RESIDENCE

The purpose of this lectures series will be to diagnose and evaluate the the social strategy of 1 Peter

A hand in a white glove is pulling a red curtain to the right, revealing a bright, glowing light source in the background. The scene is set against a dark red background.

Sneak Preview

A key to the author's
strategy is his
encouragement to his
readers to **do good**

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER

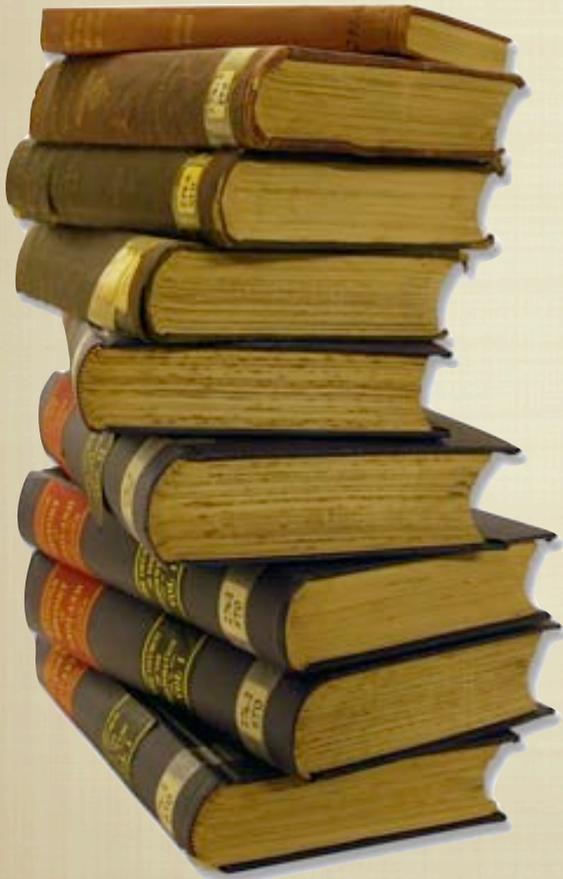
Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your **good deeds** and glorify God when he comes to judge (1 Peter 2:12)

Let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to **do good** (1 Peter 4:18-19)

*A **central** theme in the social strategy of 1 Peter*

Interpretive

KEY



If you only read this exhortation on a **theological** level, you will completely overlook what the author was attempting to do with his epistle

Social Strategy

IN 1 PETER

Rx

MEDICAL CENTER

- ① Social Situation
- ② Author's Formulation

Schedule

THEOLOGIAN-IN-RESIDENCE

WEEK 1

Introducing and Mirror-Reading 1 Peter

WEEK 2

Nature of Persecution in 1 Peter

WEEK 3

Exploring the Social Strategy of 1 Peter

WEEK 4

Function of Good Works in 1 Peter

Exploring

Resources

ON 1 PETER



1

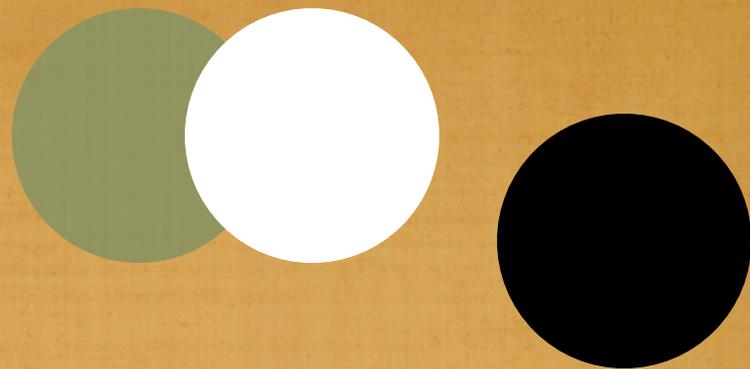
Printed Resources

2

Online Resources

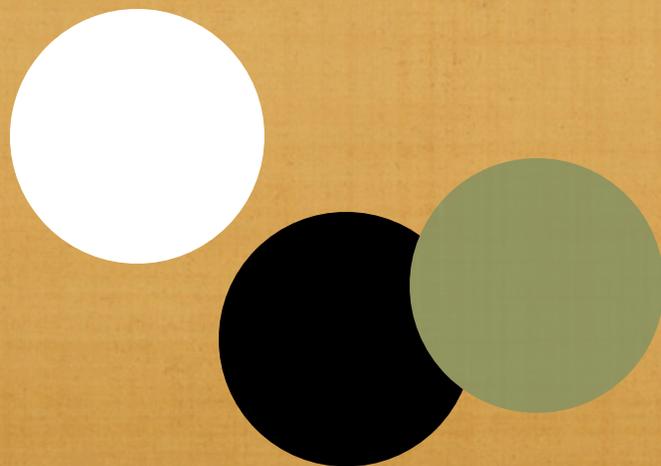


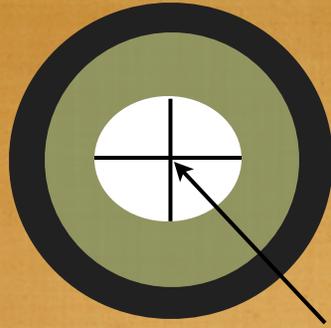
5-minute
break



INTRODUCTION

to 1 Peter





QUESTION

Who is the author of 1 Peter? Is this a **genuine** letter from the apostle, or is the epistle **pseudonymous**?

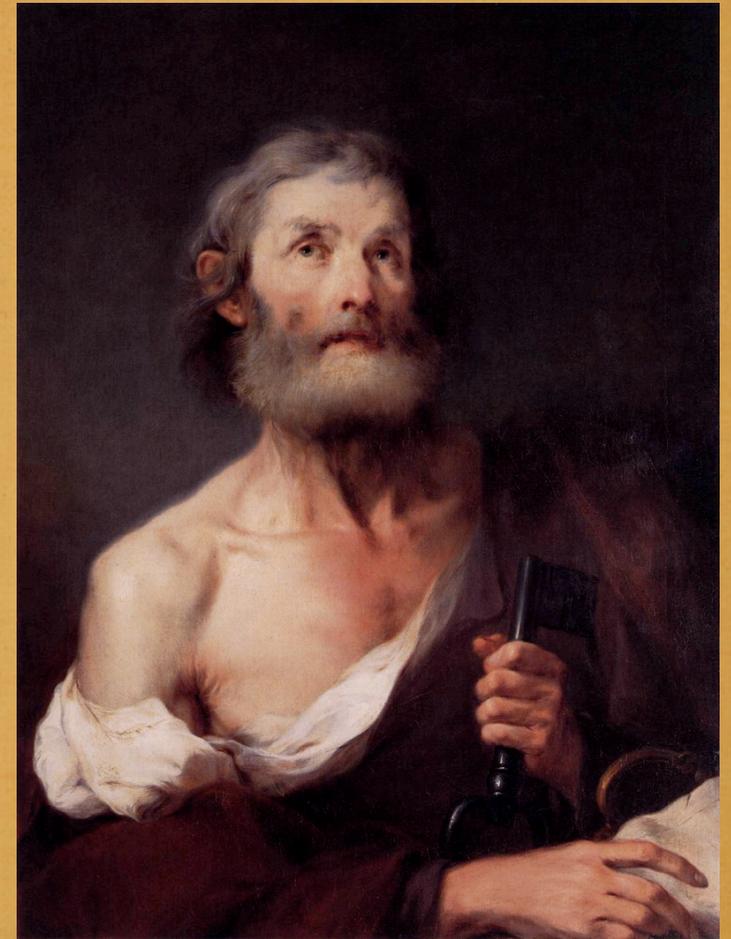
Remember!

A detailed handout on the
authorship/date of 1 Peter
is on the website

AUTHORSHIP

OF 1 PETER

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance. (1 Peter 1:1-2)



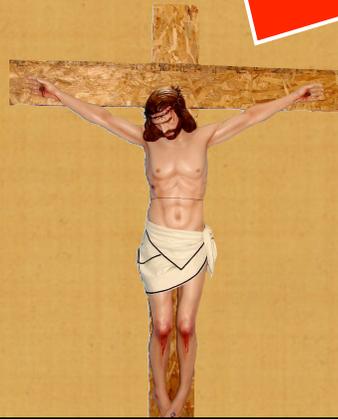
*What does the **letter** claim?*

27/29 CE



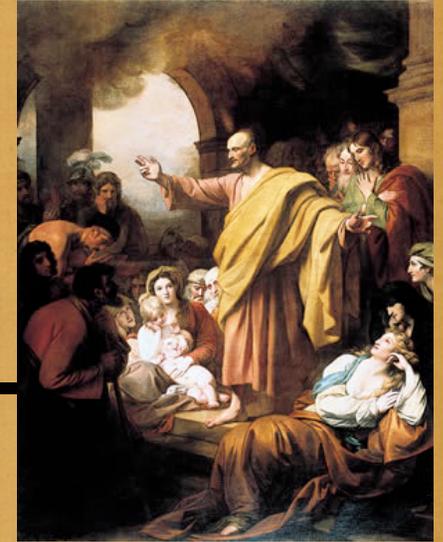
Peter's Calling

30 CE



Crucifixion

30-34 CE

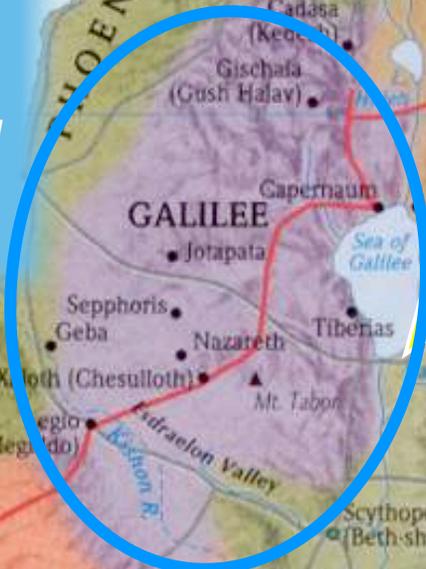


Preaching in
Jerusalem

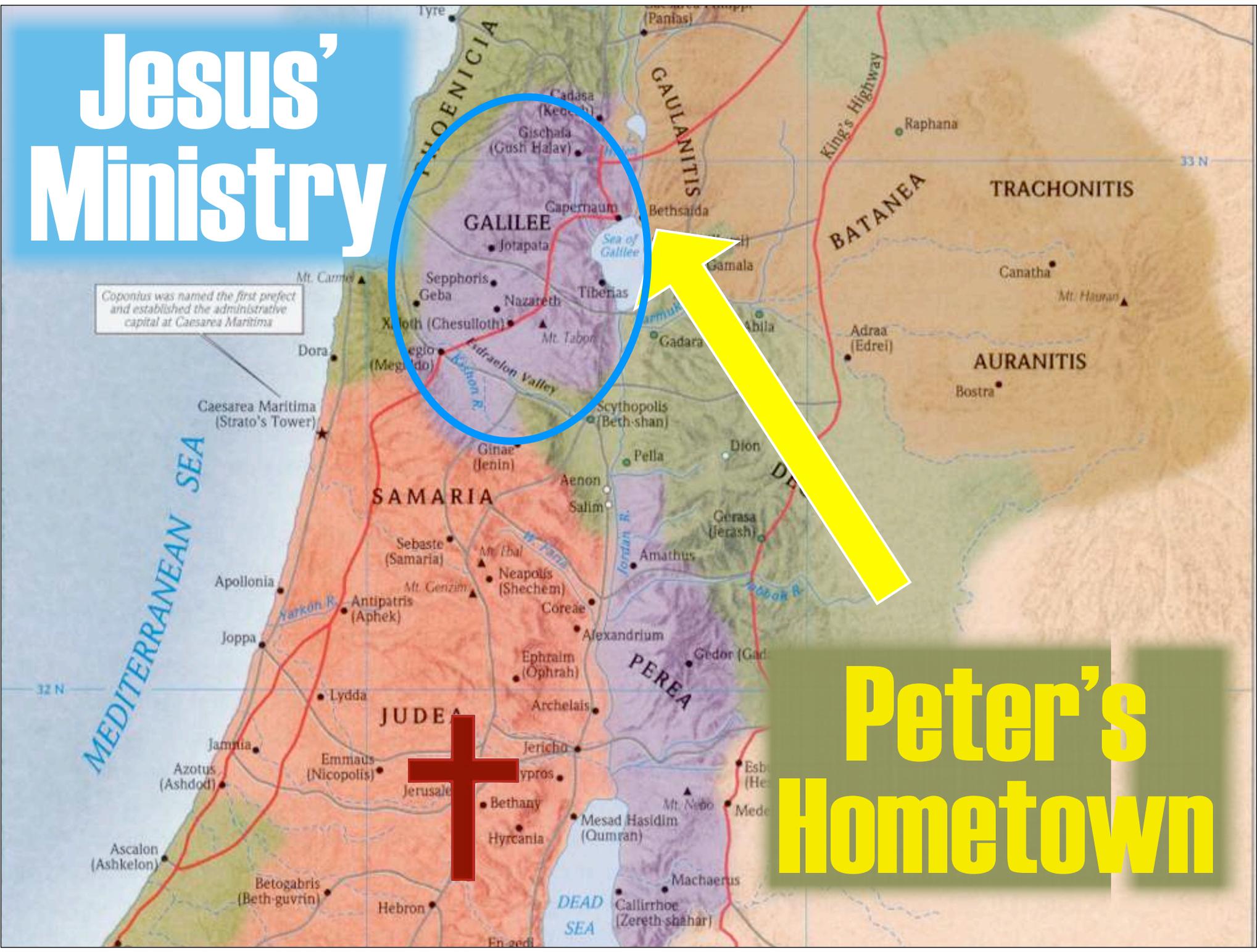
Peter's Timeline

Jesus' Ministry

Copontus was named the first prefect and established the administrative capital at Caesarea Maritima



Peter's Hometown

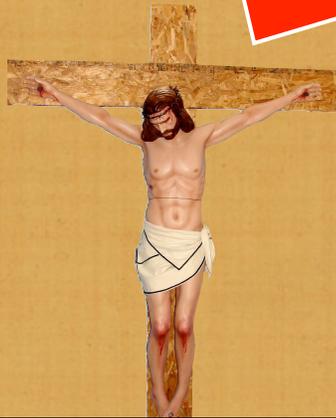


27/29 CE



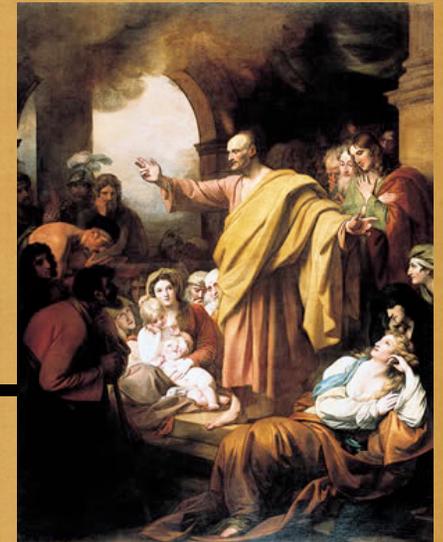
Peter's Calling

30 CE



Crucifixion

30-34 CE



Preaching in
Jerusalem

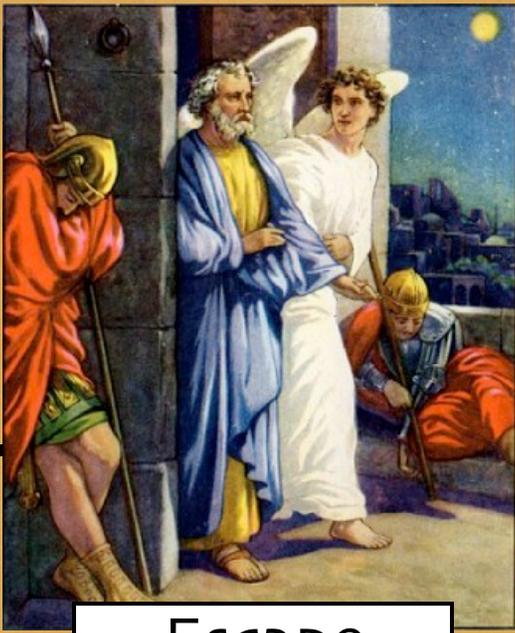
Peter's Timeline

34/38 CE



Verifying the Conversion of Cornelius

44 CE



Escape from Prison

44-59 CE



Peter's Missing Years

Peter's Timeline

Cornelius

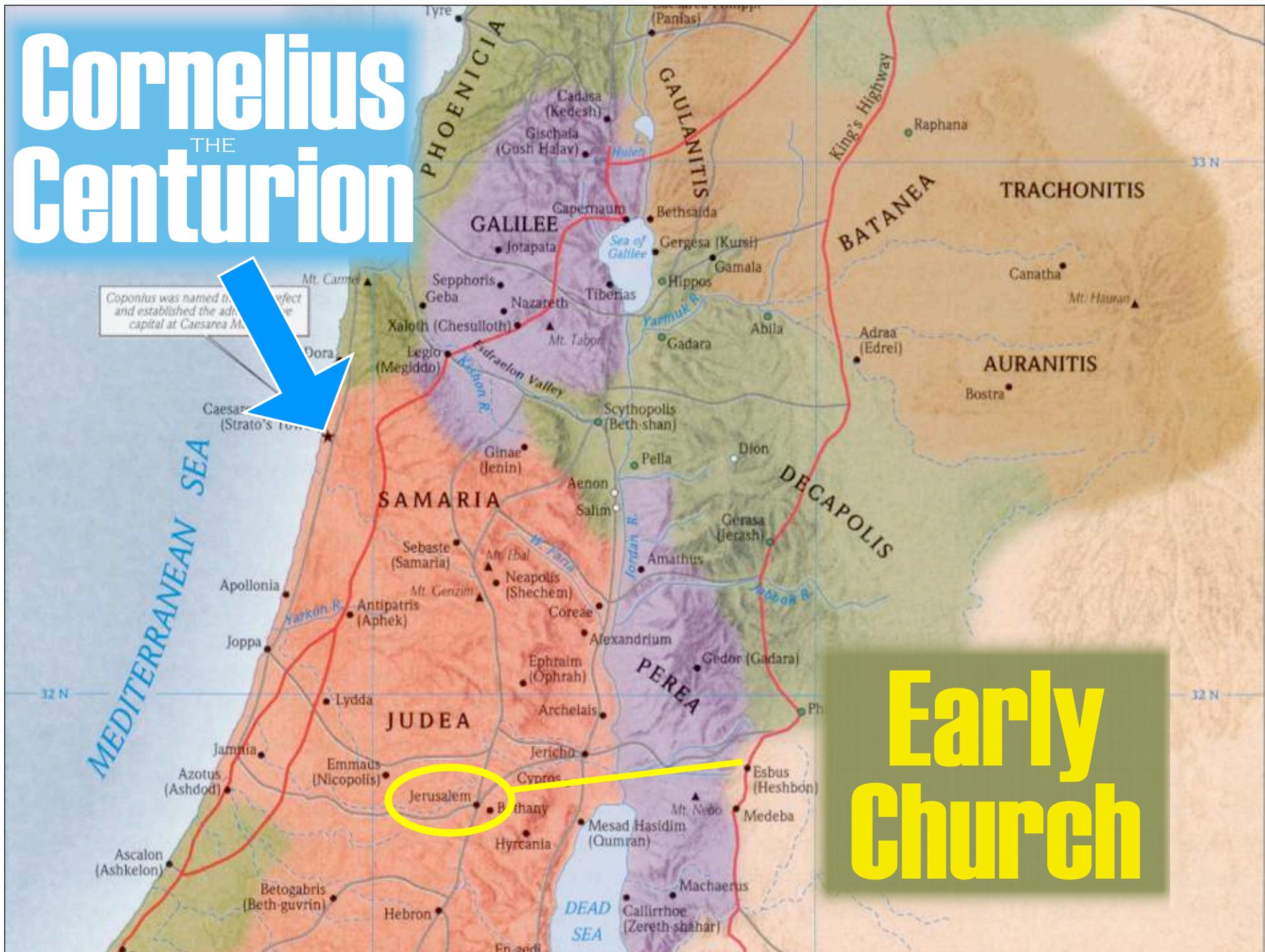
THE

Centurion

Copontus was named to the post and established the administrative capital at Caesarea Maritima.



Early Church



MISSION

TO THE JEWS

when [the leaders of the Jerusalem church] saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised [Gentiles], just as **Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised** [Jews]--for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7-8)



*In what **area** did the apostle Peter minister?*

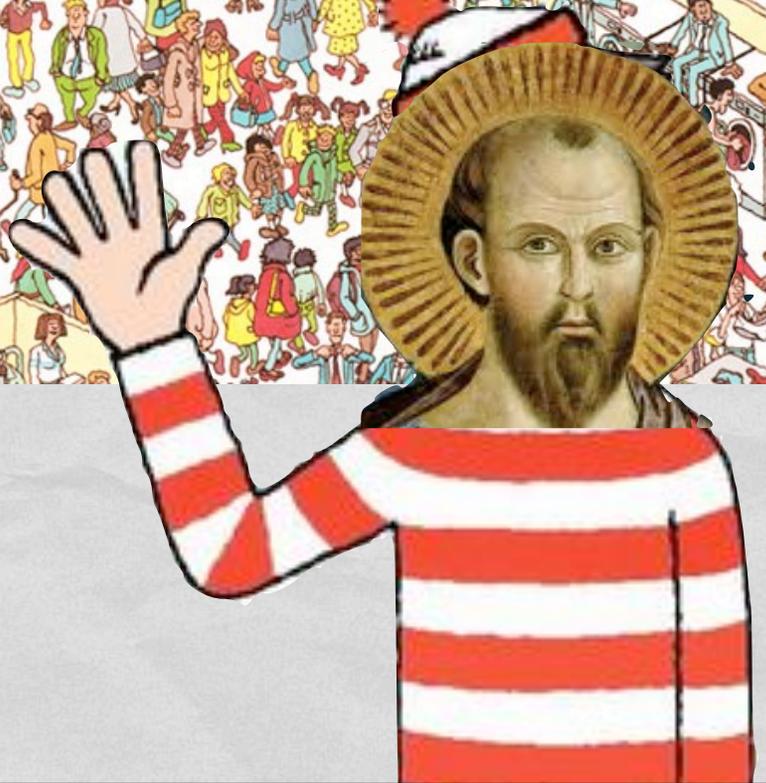
Ministry OF PETER





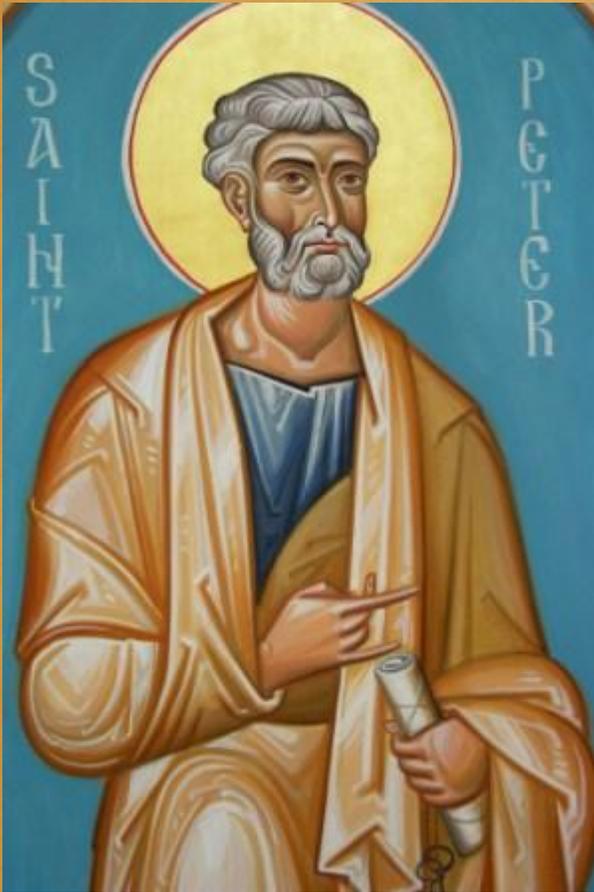
Peter

when he wrote the letter...



LOCATION

OF PETER



Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. Your sister church **in Babylon**, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. (1 Peter 5:12-13)

*From what **location** was the letter written?*

Locating

PETER



Problem

OF IDENTIFYING BABYLON

During the first century CE, Babylon on the Euphrates was in **ruins** and the city had been virtually **deserted**



*From what **location** was the letter written?*

Locating

PETER

Rome

X

Babylon



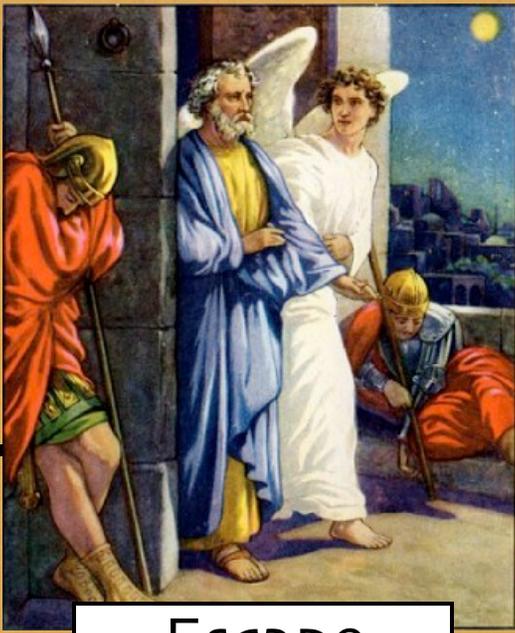
Roman Empire, c.E. 117

0 500 Miles
0 500 Kilometers

34/38 CE

44 CE

44-59 CE



Verifying the Conversion of Cornelius

Escape from Prison

Peter's Missing Years

Peter's Timeline

44-59 CE



Peter's
Missing Years

60? CE



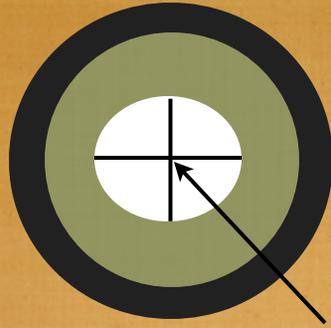
Peter in Rome

65/67 CE



1 Peter

Peter's Timeline

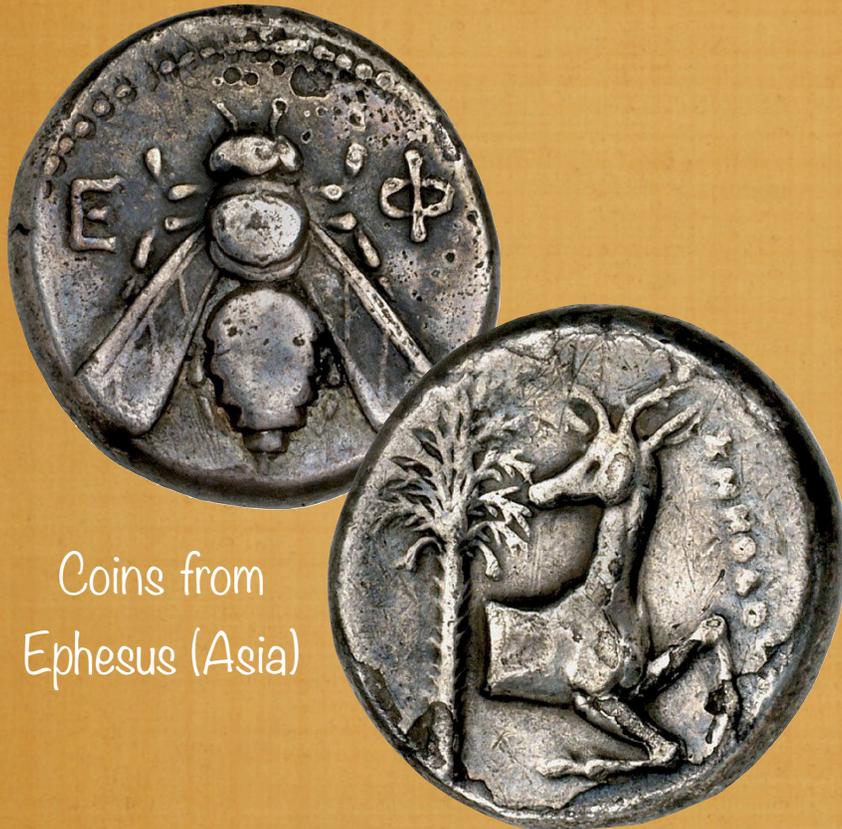


QUESTION

In what geographical area of the Greco-Roman world are the **readers** of 1 Peter located?

SETTING

OF 1 PETER



Coins from
Ephesus (Asia)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To the exiles of the dispersion in
Pontus, Galatia,
Cappadocia, Asia, and
Bithynia, who have been
chosen and destined by God the
Father and sanctified by the
Spirit to be obedient to Jesus
Christ and to be sprinkled with
his blood (1 Peter 1:1-2)

What is the **setting** of 1 Peter?



Actually, a number of good arguments could be made against Petrine authorship! The majority of scholars now view 1 Peter as a **pseudonymous** document.



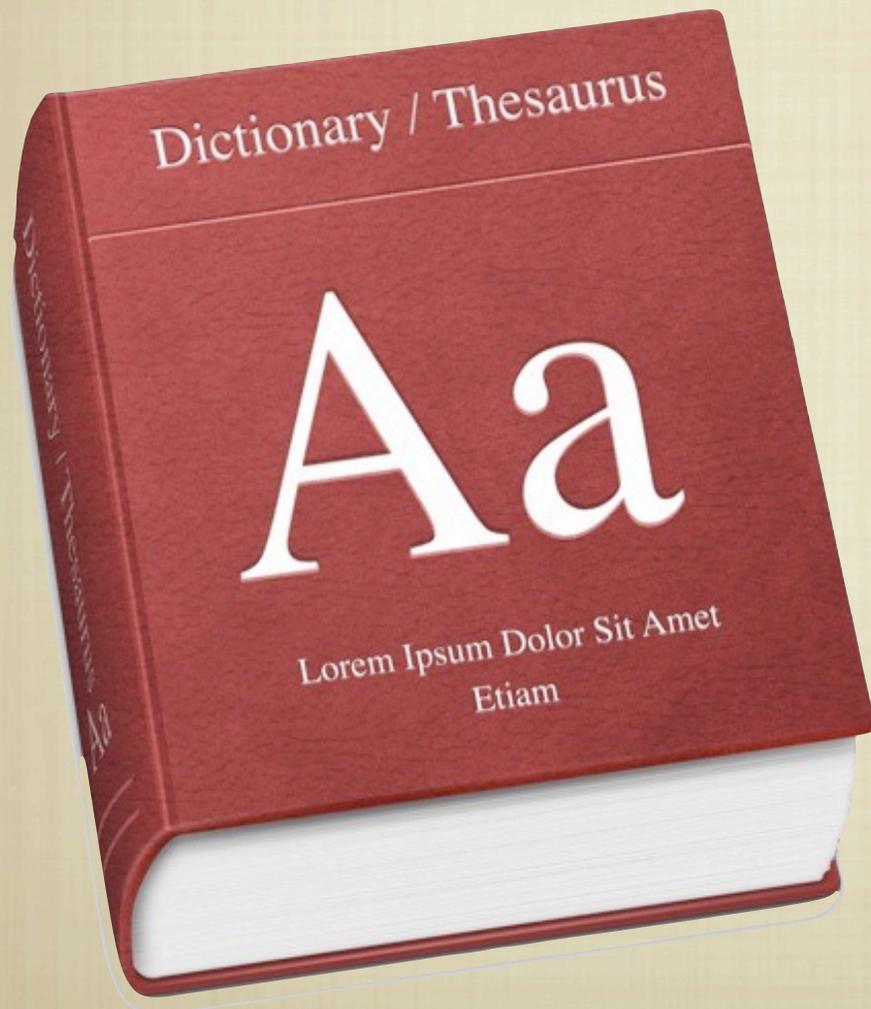
Objecting

TO PETRINE AUTHORSHIP

Defining

Pseudonymous

DOCUMENT

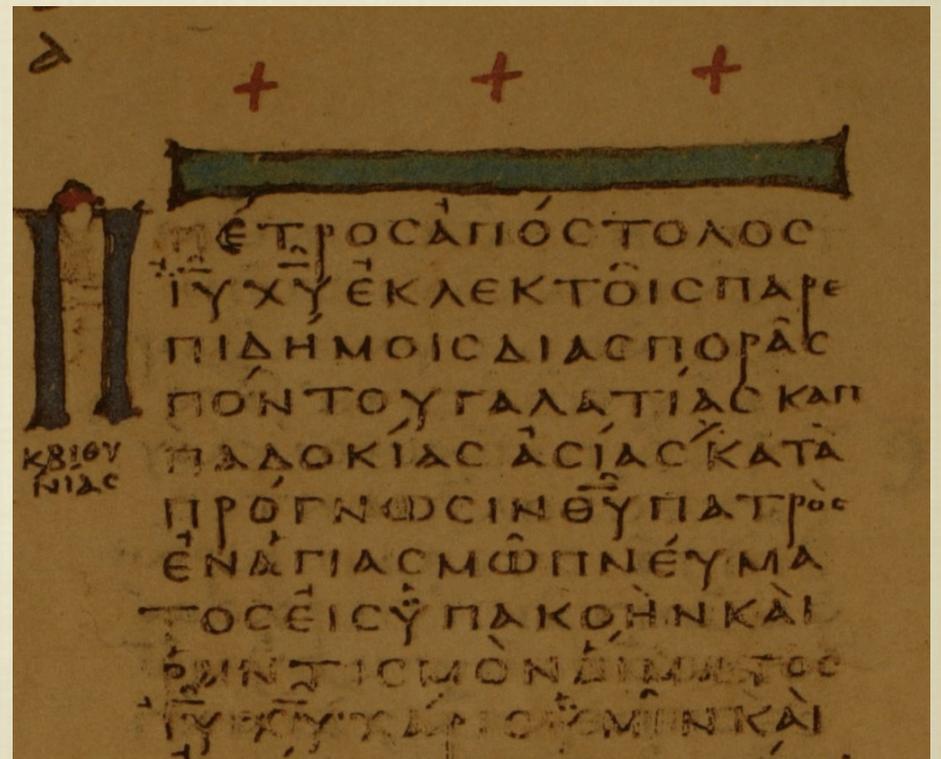


a document written under a **fictitious** name, usually attributed to a well-known person in order to provide authority to the work

Pseudonymity

OF 1 PETER

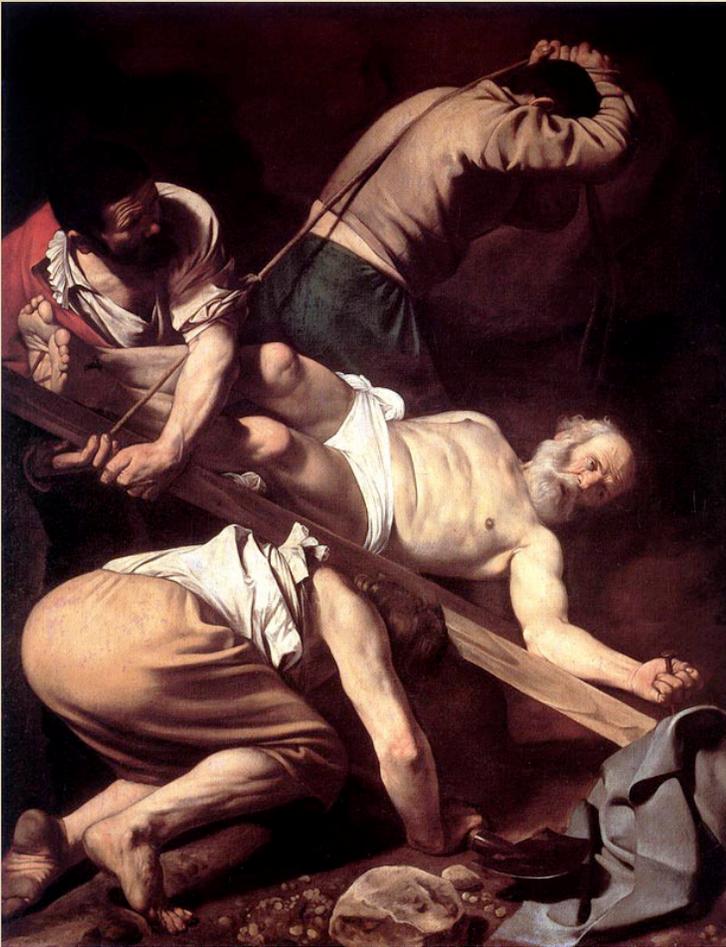
The **quality** of the Greek style in which 1 Peter is written seems much too elevated to have been written by an “uneducated” Galilean fisherman (cf. Acts 4:13)



Why might 1 Peter be **pseudonymous**?

Pseudonymity

OF 1 PETER



The use of the cipher “Babylon” (1 Peter 5:13) to refer to Rome is only attested in literature that **postdates** 70 CE, after the apostle Peter had been martyred

Why might 1 Peter be **pseudonymous**?



What **difference** does the question of authorship make? How does this relate to the nature of **persecution**?

Potential

QUESTION

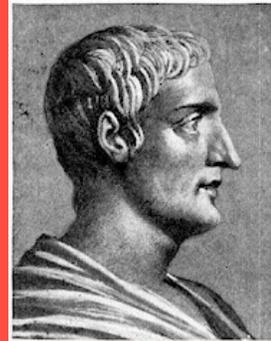
DATE

of 1 Peter

Nero
64 CE



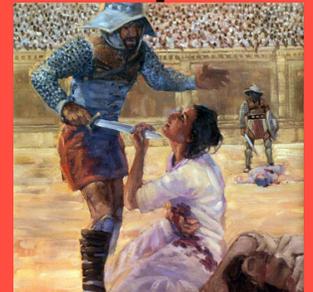
FIRST CENTURY CE



Pliny
111/112 CE

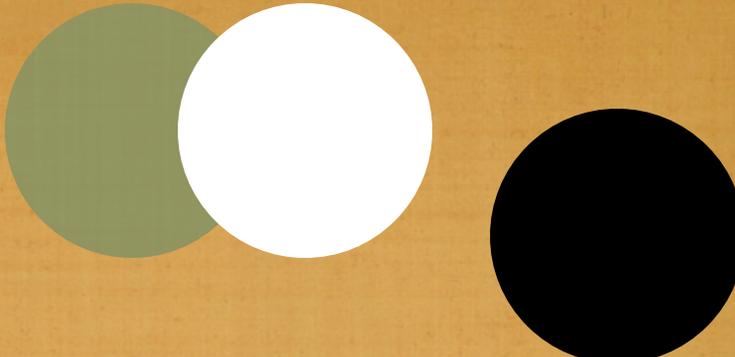
SECOND CENTURY CE

Perpetua
203 CE



Dangerous

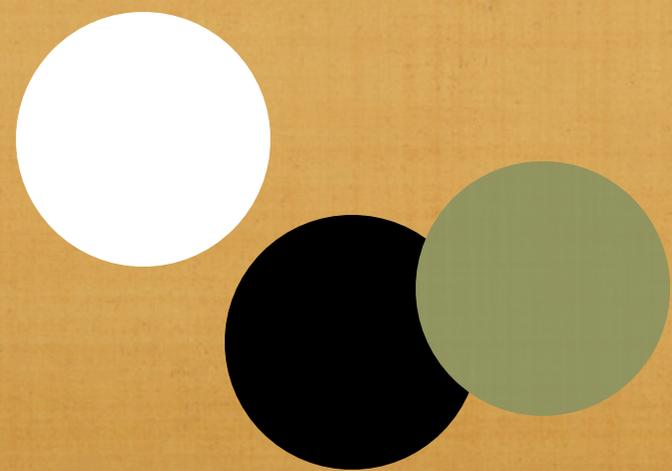
Effectively Illegal



Diagnosing

PERSECUTION

in 1 Peter



Social Strategy

IN 1 PETER

Rx

MEDICAL CENTER

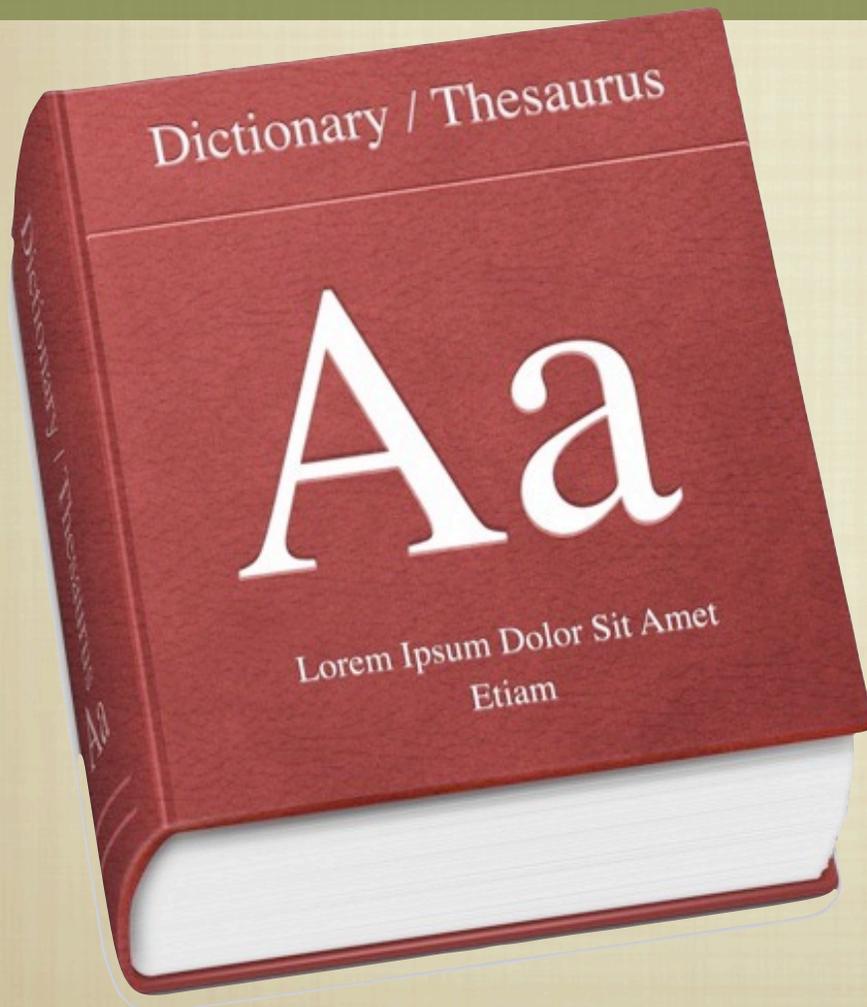
① Social Situation

② Author's Formulation

Social

Situation

1 PETER



the social
circumstances
which have shaped and
necessitated the
composition of 1 Peter

DUH

All modern scholars
agree that 1 Peter was
written in response to
persecution

THINK ABOUT IT

NO REALLY, THINK ABOUT IT

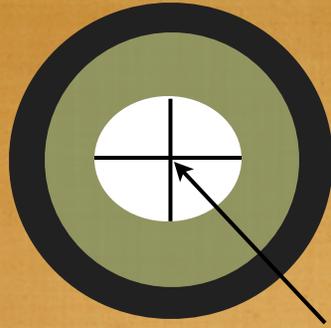
SITUATION

IN 1 PETER

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's **sufferings** (1 Peter 4:12-13)



*What **social circumstances** are addressed?*



QUESTION

How do you **envision**
the persecution of early
Christians during the
first century CE?

Christian Persecution

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- Christianity Outlawed
- Believers Hunted Down
- Thousands fed to Lions



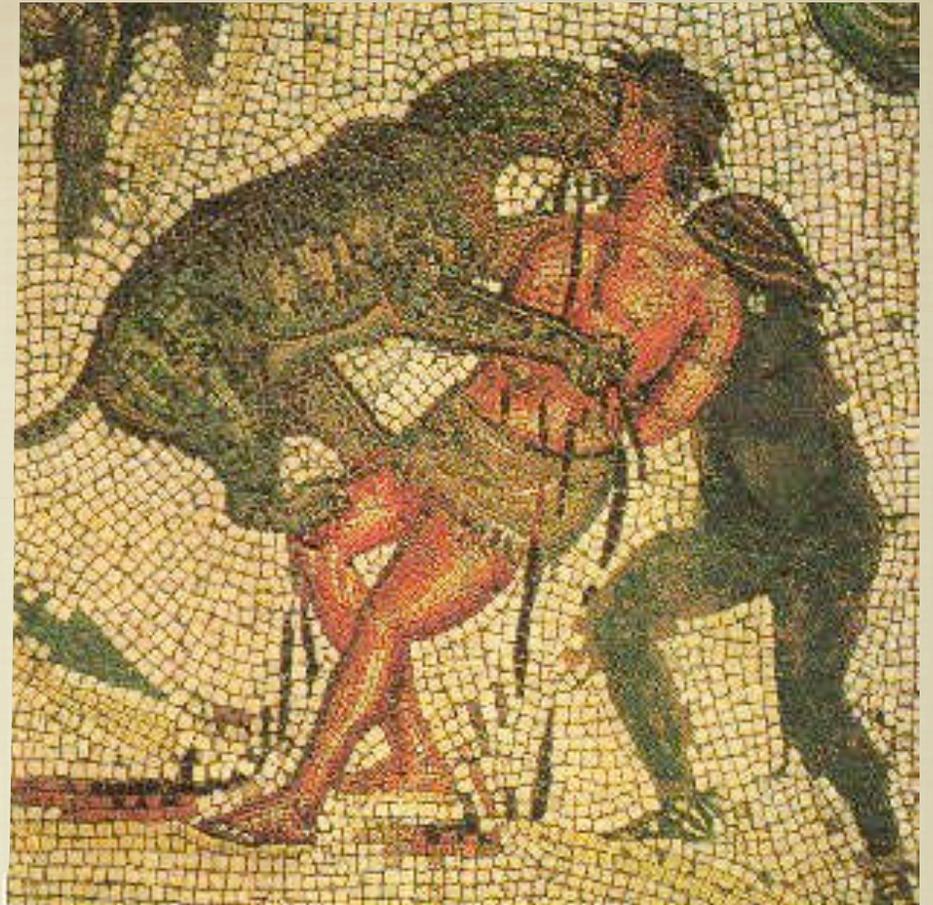
Video: Early Christian Persecution
(0:03 - 2:30)

Interpretive

Problem



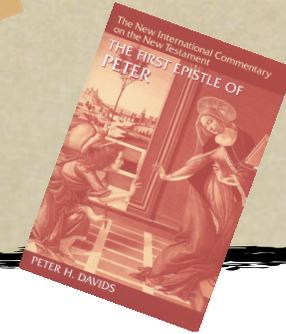
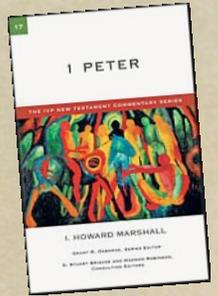
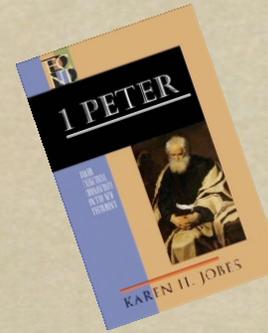
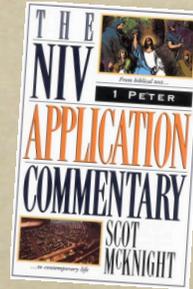
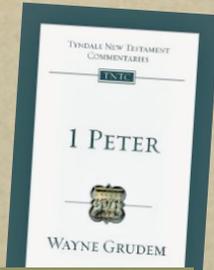
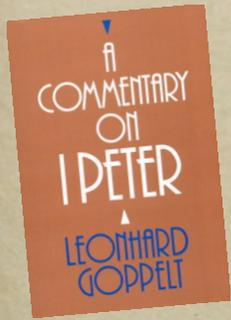
For over a century, commentators have debated the **nature** of persecution represented in 1 Peter



THE NATURE OF

Persecution

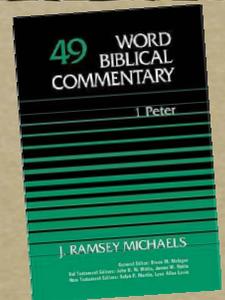
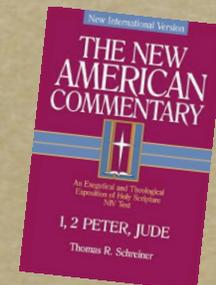
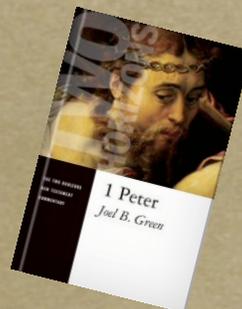
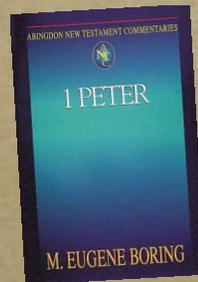
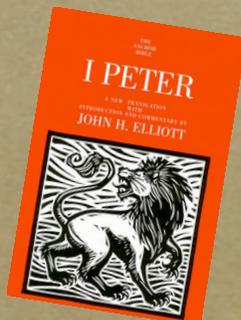
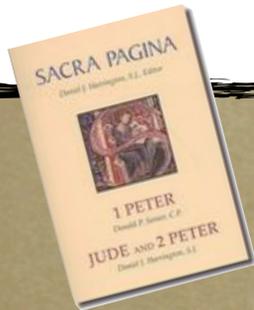
IN 1 PETER



CONSENSUS

In the judgment of most modern scholars, “the persecution of 1 Peter is local, sporadic and unofficial, stemming from the antagonism and discrimination of the general populace.”

Mark Dubis, “Research on 1 Peter: A Survey of Scholarly Literature Since 1985,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 4 (2006): 203



The persecution was . . .

Limited to only
a few locations



so it might affect
one church but
not **another**



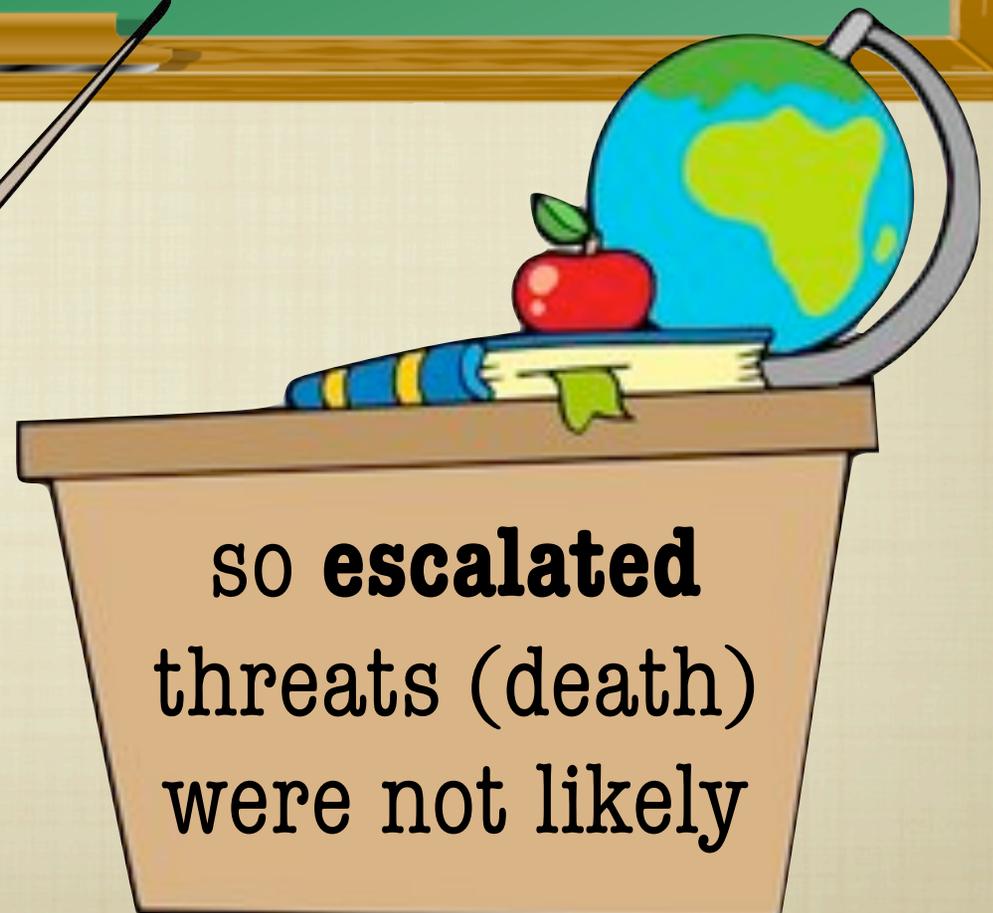
The persecution was . . .

carried out only
sporadically

so it was only
an **occasional**
threat

The persecution was . . .

mostly verbal
in nature



so **escalated**
threats (death)
were not likely

Important

Note



This view even **extends**
to early Christian
persecution in general
(outside the study of 1 Peter)

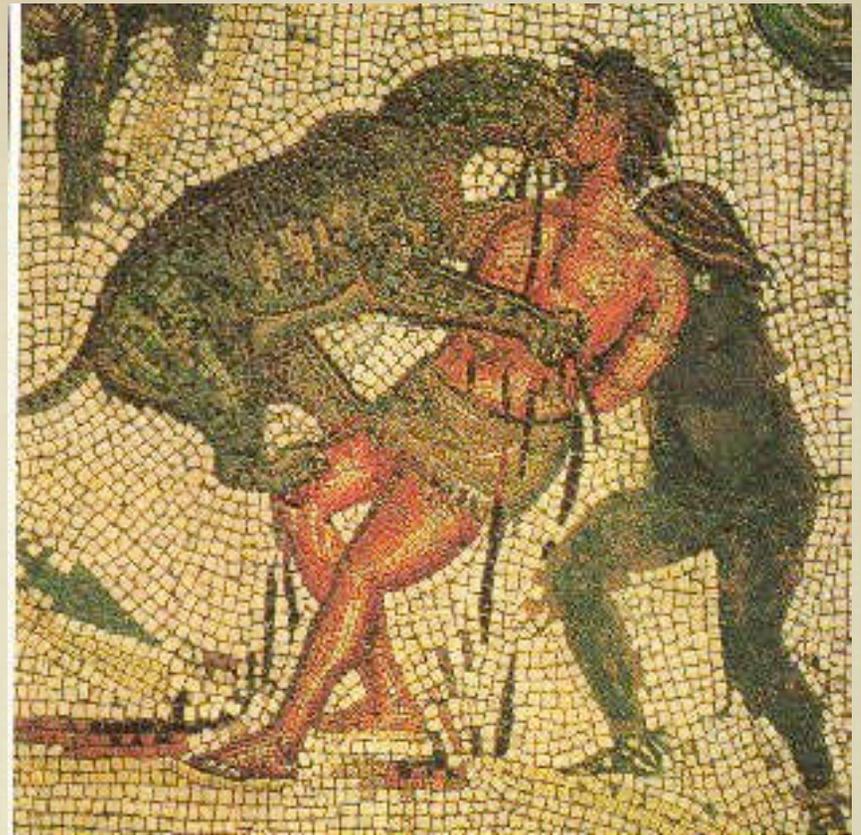
The
MYTH
f
Persecution

HOW EARLY CHRISTIANS INVENTED
A STORY OF MARTYRDOM

Candida Moss



Video: The Myth of Persecution
(0:00 - 2:09)



THE NATURE OF

Persecution

IN 1 PETER

PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION

WARNING

PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION

Scholars who have
written on 1 Peter
have consistently
misunderstood and
therefore
misrepresented the
nature of persecution

PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION

PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION



So what is so **wrong** with the consensus view, and how did it find such **acceptance** within scholarship?

Potential

QUESTION

Development

OF THE MODERN CONSENSUS

The modern consensus developed by focusing (almost exclusively) on the explicit references to **verbal** abuse in 1 Peter



1

*Focus on the **verbal nature** of persecution*

VERBAL NATURE OF

PERSECUTION

IN 1 PETER



Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they **malign** you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge (1 Peter 2:12)

*How did the modern consensus **develop**?*

Interpretive

Problem

FOR THE MODERN CONSENSUS



Problems

WITH THE MODERN CONSENSUS

What most interpreters have not accounted for are other forms of persecution which are either **implicitly** mentioned or which might be **conjectured**



*Focus on the **verbal nature** of persecution*

Important

Note



A **circular** letter like 1 Peter does not and cannot mention all forms of persecution that its readers might **potentially** face

Development

OF THE MODERN CONSENSUS



The modern consensus developed by differentiating two important **stages** in the development of persecution

2

*Differentiating **stages** of persecution*

STEP

ONE

Interpreters contend that “**official**” persecution of Christians did not begin until the pogroms of the Roman emperor Decius in 250 CE



CONSENSUS

Nero
64 CE



Unofficial

FIRST CENTURY CE

SECOND CENTURY CE

Decius
250 CE

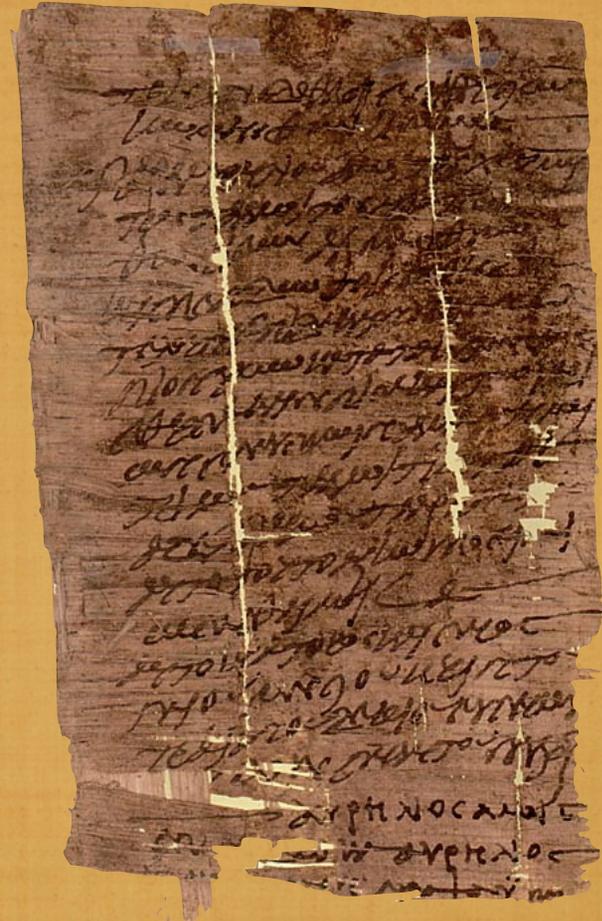


Official

PERSECUTION

OF DECIUS (250 CE)

Decius required all inhabitants of the Roman empire to make public **sacrifice** to the traditional Roman gods, and if refused, a person would face the punishment of death

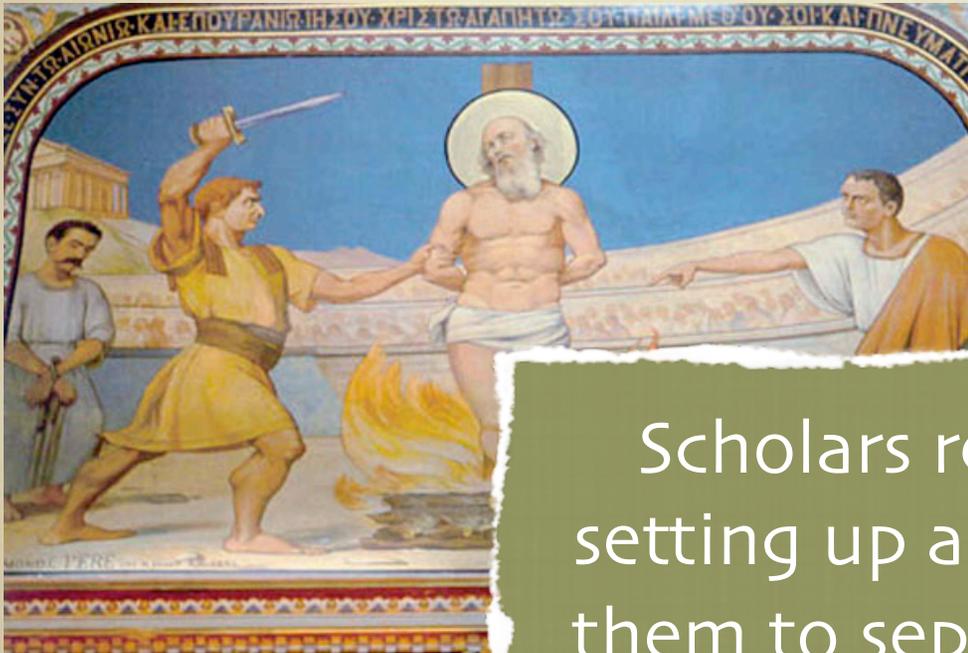


Libellus certifying the performance of pagan sacrifice

*Establishing the **time** of “official” persecution*

Interpretive

KEY

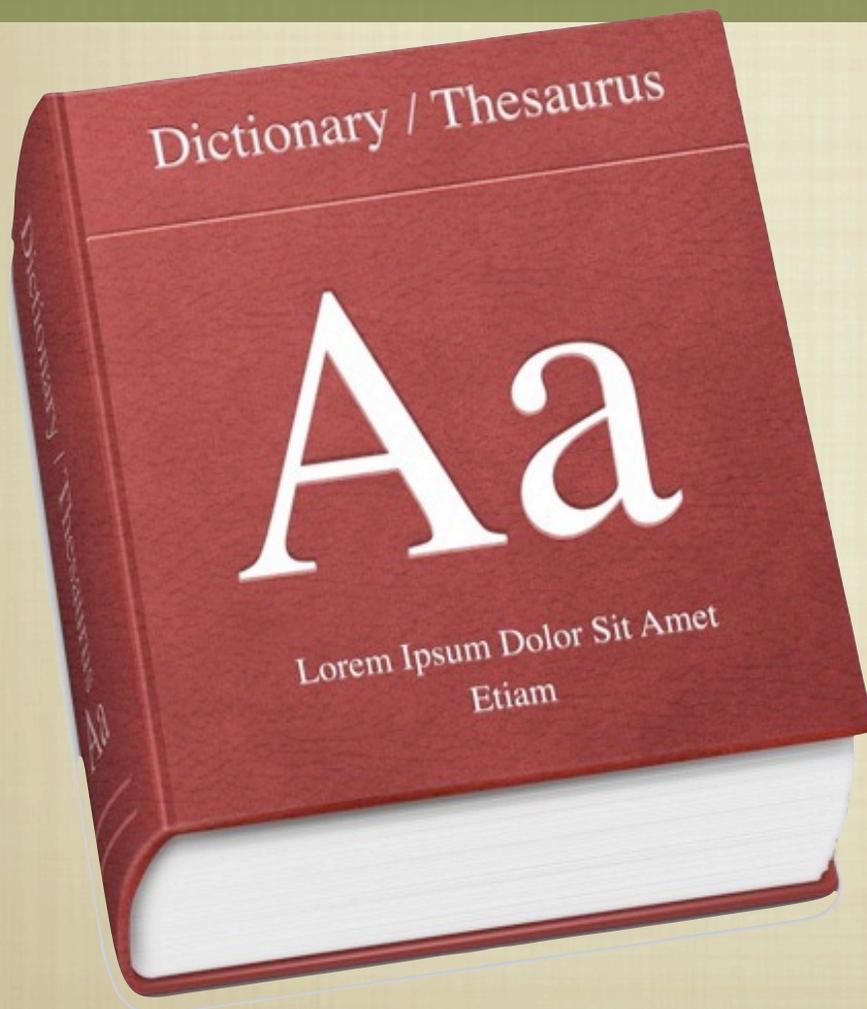


Scholars reach this conclusion after setting up a **dichotomy** that allows them to separate unofficial harassment in the first century CE from official sanctions that took place much later

Official vs. Unofficial

Persecution

IN 1 PETER



“**Official**” persecution originates from and is carried out by the organized the initiatives of the Roman state; whereas “**unofficial**” persecution consists of harassment of the general populace

CONSENSUS

Nero
64 CE



Unofficial

FIRST CENTURY CE

SECOND CENTURY CE

Decius
250 CE



Official

STEP

TWO



Establish that 1 Peter was written well **before** the Decian persecutions, and therefore Christianity must not have been illegal when 1 Peter was composed

CONSENSUS

Nero
64 CE



FIRST CENTURY CE

SECOND CENTURY CE

Decius
250 CE



Unofficial

Official

Interpretive

Problem

FOR THE MODERN CONSENSUS



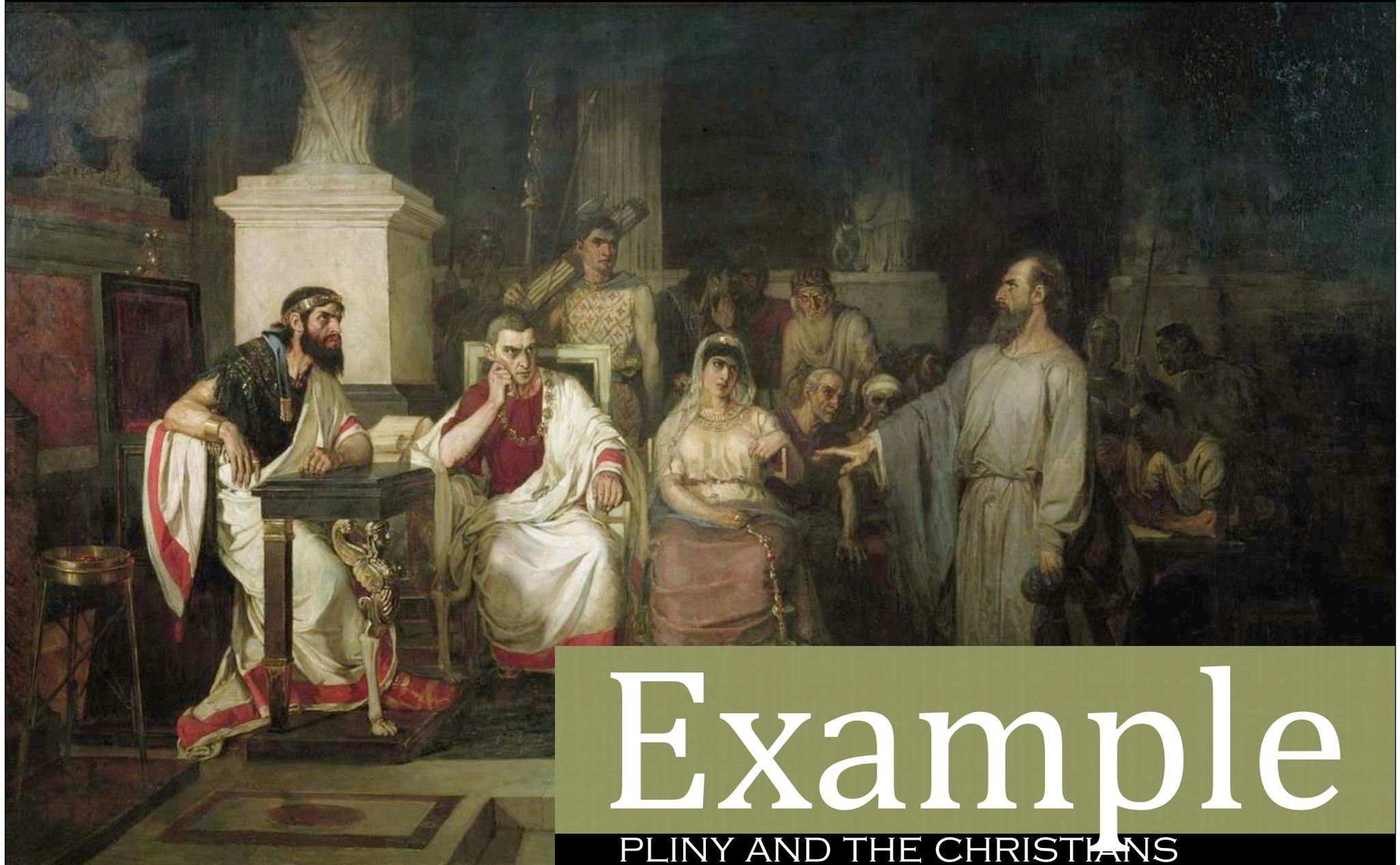
Problems

WITH THE MODERN CONSENSUS

The dichotomy of official vs. unofficial prevents scholars from asking whether the government might be involved in forms of persecution **initiated** by the general populace



*Differentiating **stages** of persecution*



Example

PLINY AND THE CHRISTIANS

PROBLEM

Nero
64 CE



Unofficial

FIRST CENTURY CE



Pliny
112 CE

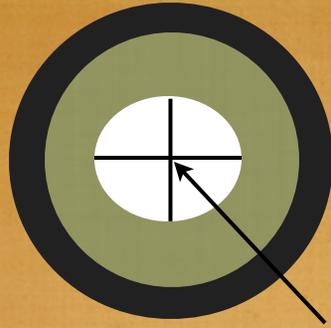
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SECOND CENTURY CE

Decius
250 CE



Official



QUESTION

How then do we
reconstruct the
nature of Christian
persecution in 1 Peter?

Mirror

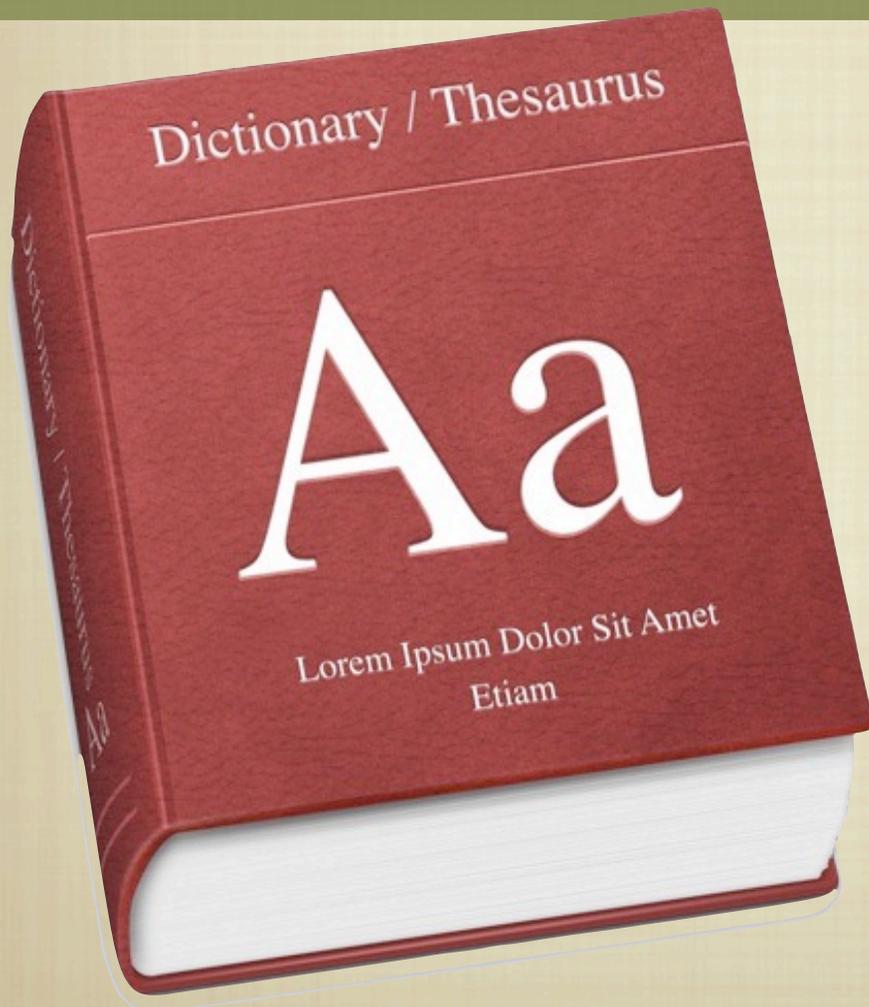
READING 1 PETER



Mirror-

Reading

1 PETER



Reading 1 Peter in attempt to understand the circumstances, events, previous dialogues, etc. that gave rise to the **response** made by the author



Modern Illustration



Remember!

A detailed handout on mirror-
reading a New Testament
letter is on the website



But 1 Peter makes very
general statements
about persecution, and the
letter is written to such a
diverse audience . . .

Potential

OBSTACLES

Interpretive

KEY



Since the conflict was **caused** by the readers' adoption of the Christian faith, and since their experience was **shared** by other Christians around the world, we are free to broaden our inquiry to the more **general** causes and forms of hostility which threatened Christians in the Greco-Roman world

The Formula

OF PERSECUTION



Information
provided by
1 Peter



Christianity
in the Greco
Roman world



Nature of
suffering in
1 Peter



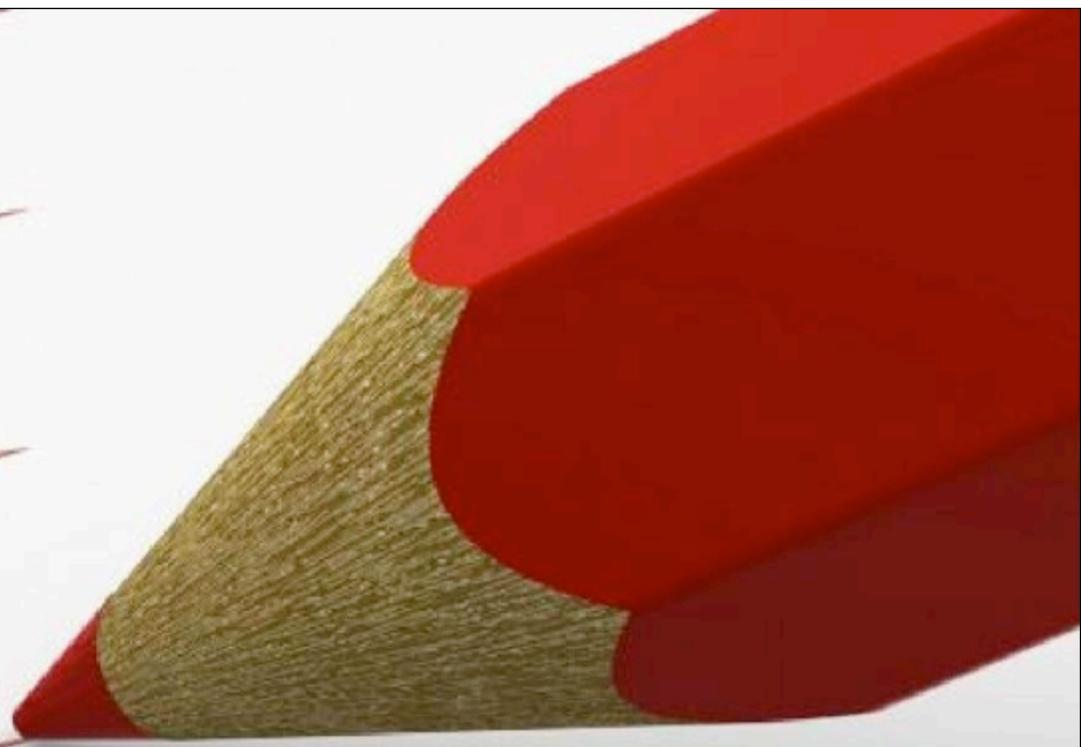
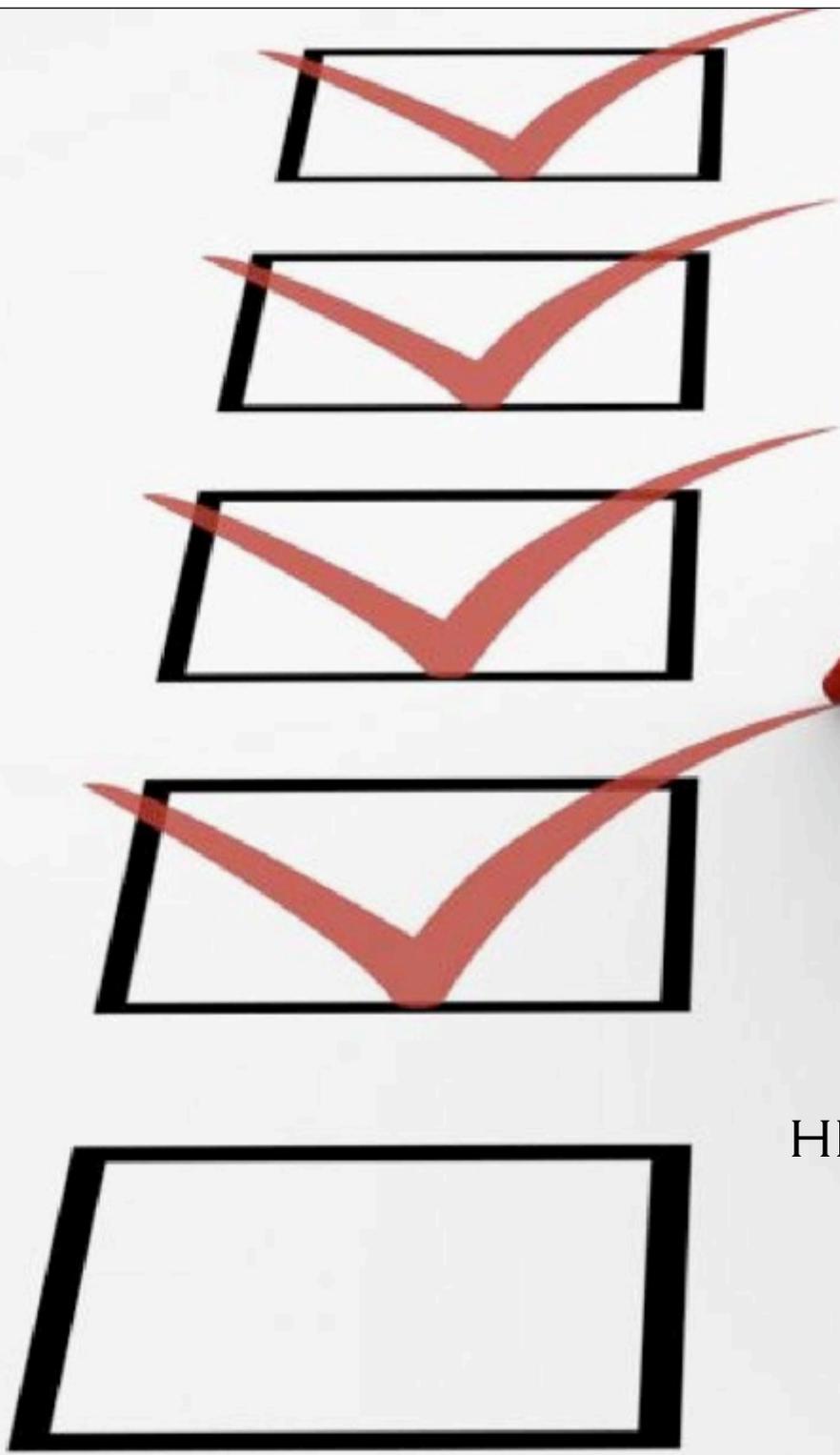
The

Aim

OF OUR STUDY



Our aim is to employ a historically-informed **imagination** to plausibly sketch how suffering may have come about for various kinds of people included in the audience of 1 Peter



Methodology

HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Methodology

HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Criterion #1

Reference to **explicit**
forms of suffering
means that the readers
are at least prone to
this threat; at most they
are experiencing it

Methodology

HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Criterion #2

References to situations where certain forms of suffering are **implied** means the readers are at least prone to this threat; at most they are experiencing it

Methodology

HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Criterion #3

Understanding the historical context allows the reconstruction of **potential** forms of suffering which are not explicit or implicit

WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP ?

1

Read handouts on Petrine **audience** and the **legal** system of Asia Minor to fill out the historical context

2

Read 1 Peter and attempt to **reconstruct** (or “mirror-read”) the nature of persecution

