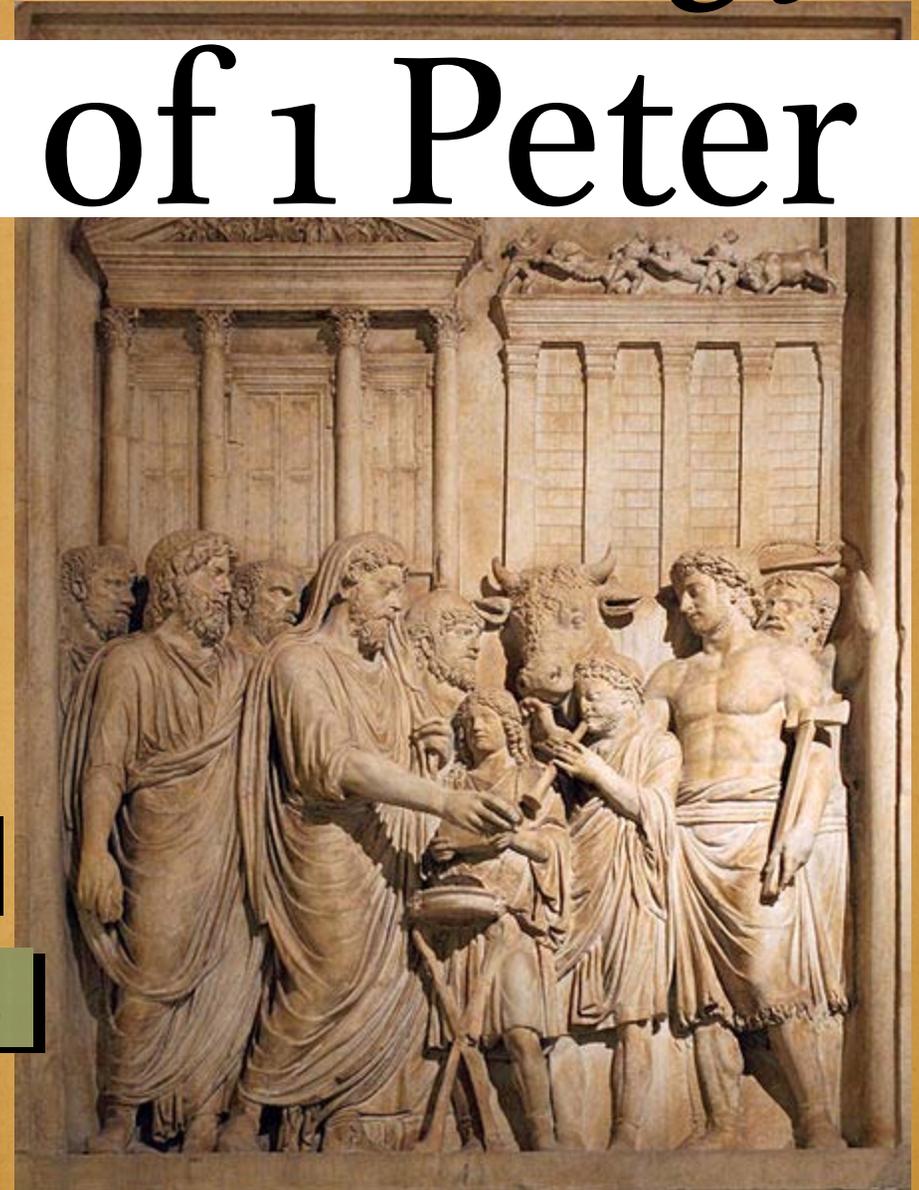
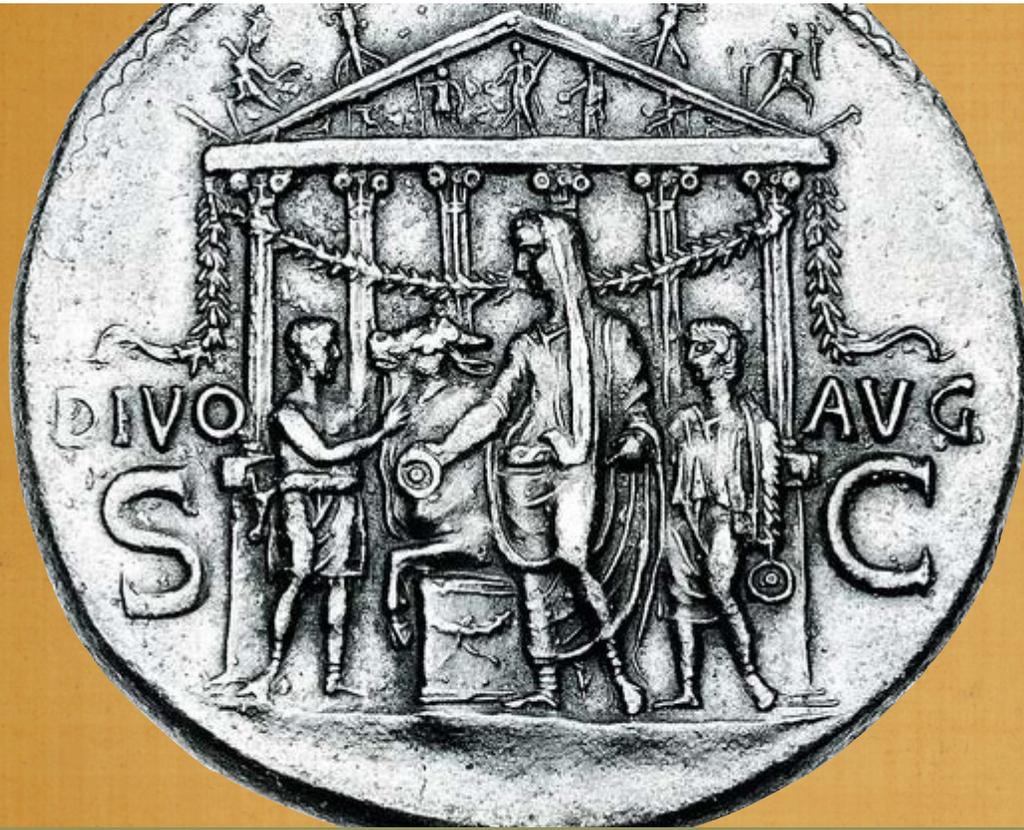


The

# *Situation* and *Strategy*

# of 1 Peter



Examining the Formative

Influence of Persecution on

Christian Identity

re  
this week's

reccap



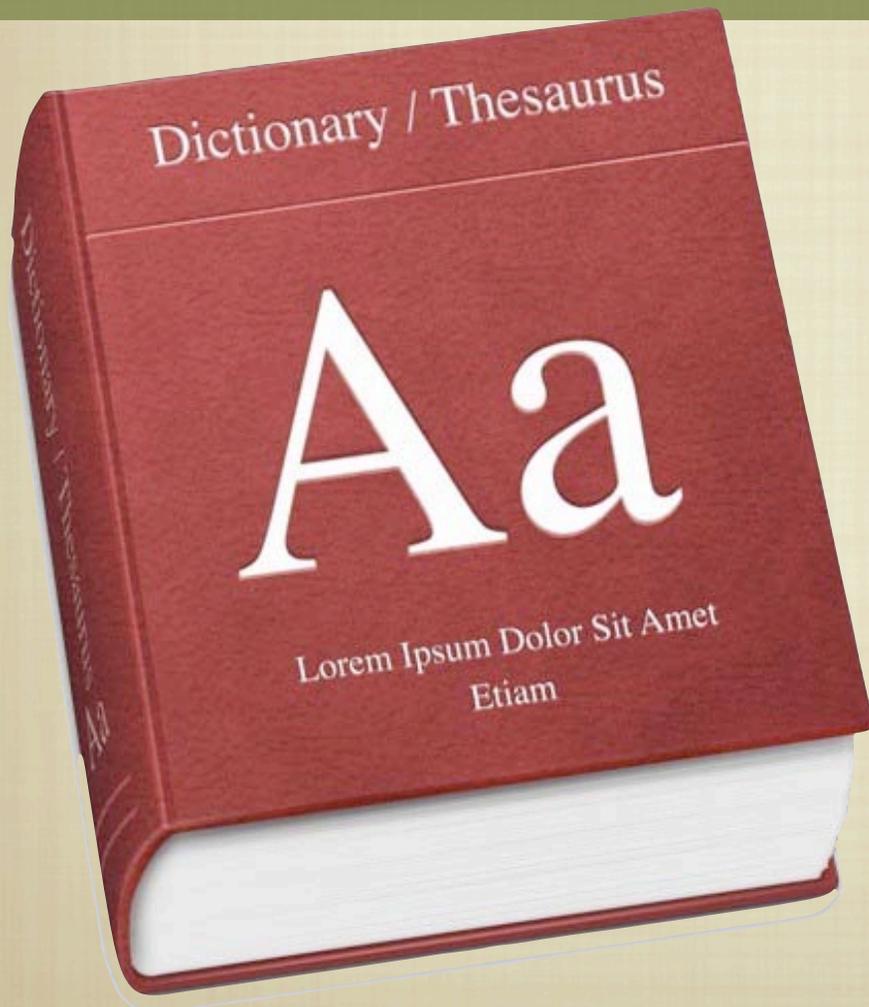
# Preview

THEOLOGIAN-IN-RESIDENCE

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

*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

# NOTICE

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

# Theological

APPROACH



**Question**

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

**Question**

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



# Sociological

APPROACH

# Social Strategy

IN 1 PETER

Rx

MEDICAL CENTER

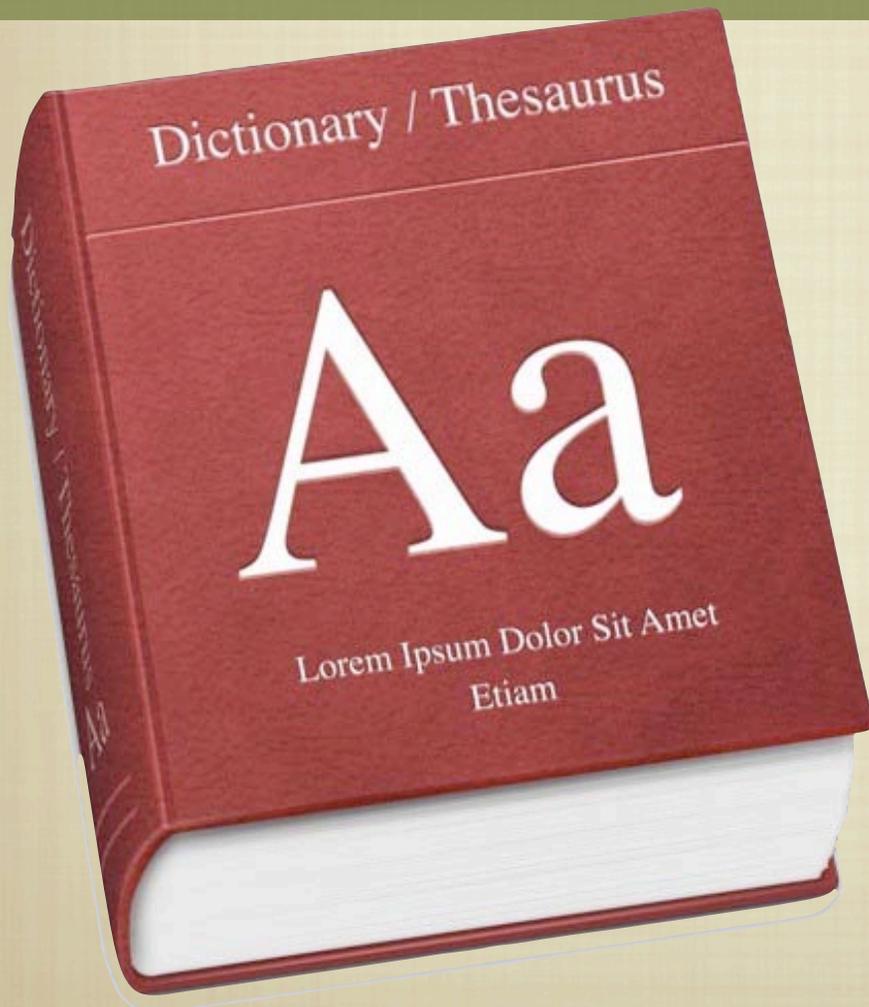
① Social Situation

② Author's Formulation

*Social*

# Situation

1 PETER



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

# DUH

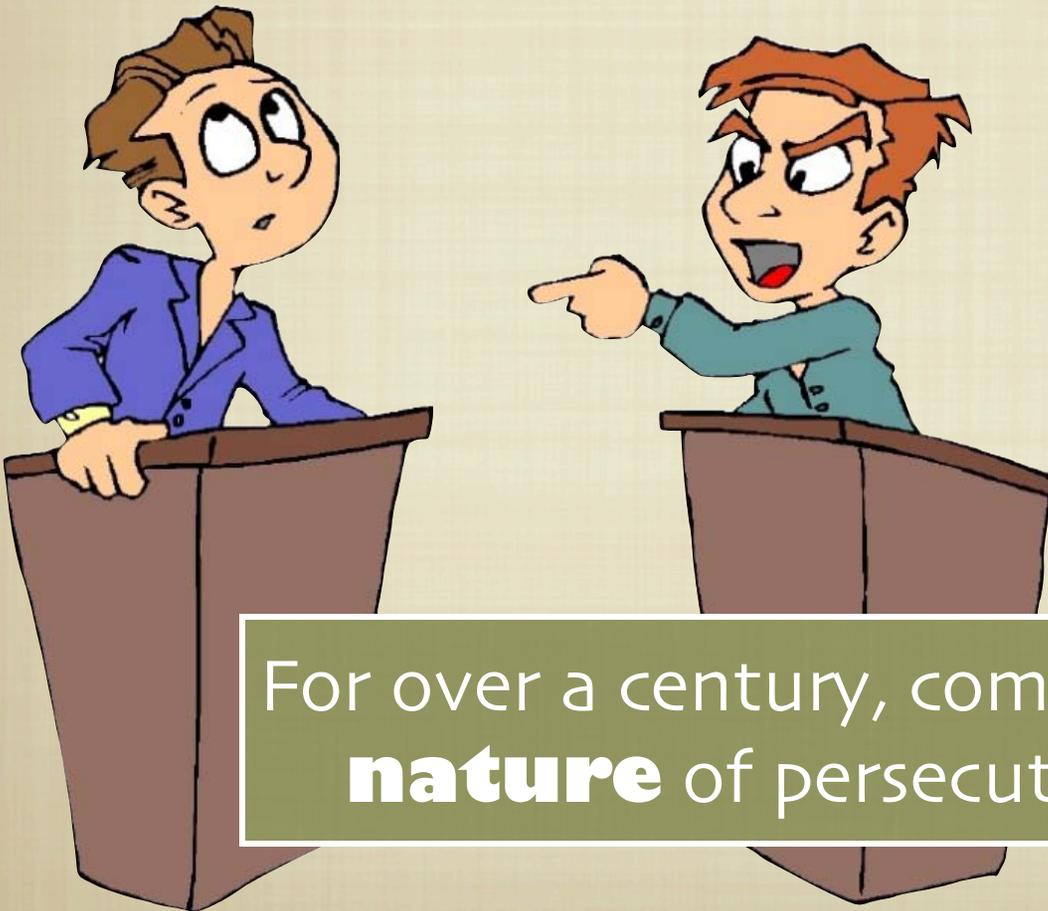
All modern scholars  
agree that the letter  
of 1 Peter is all  
about persecution

THINK ABOUT IT

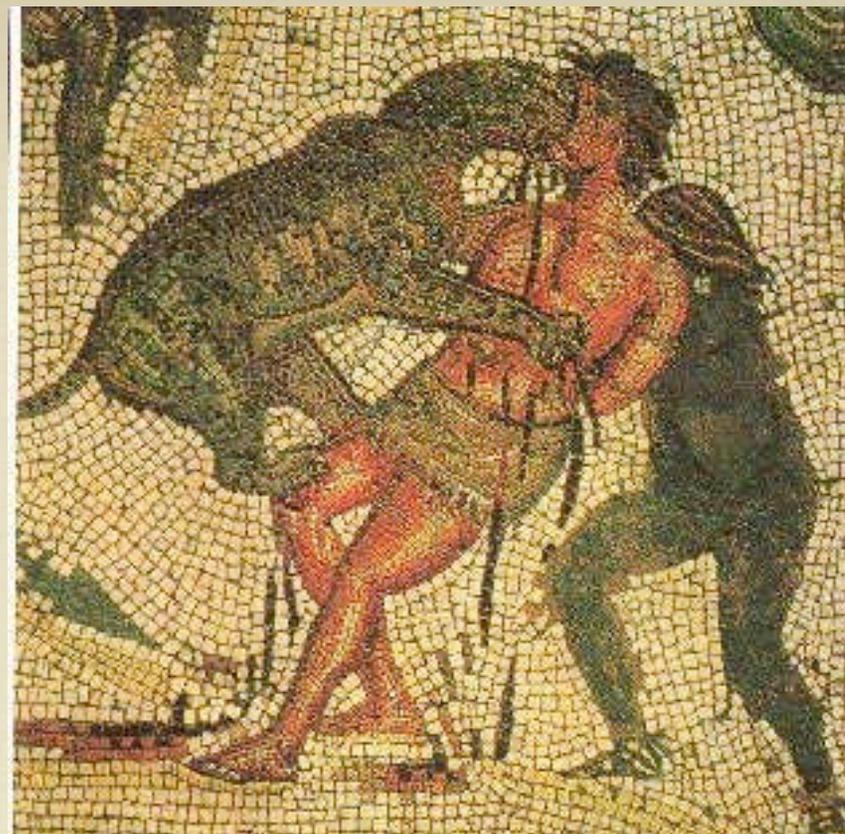
NO REALLY, THINK ABOUT IT

*Interpretive*

# Problem



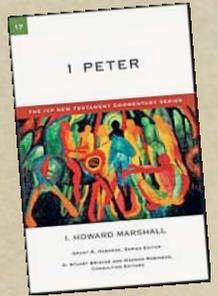
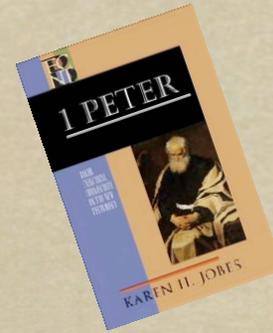
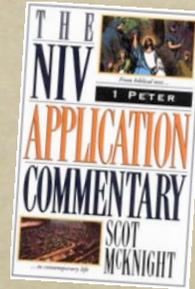
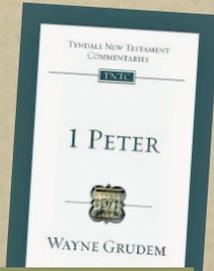
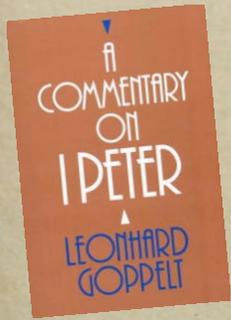
For over a century, commentators have debated the **nature** of persecution represented in 1 Peter



THE NATURE OF

# *Persecution*

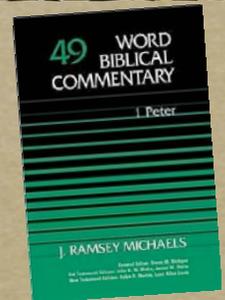
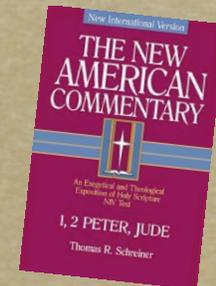
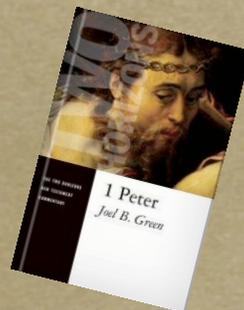
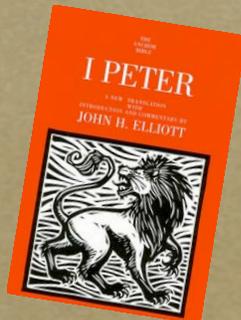
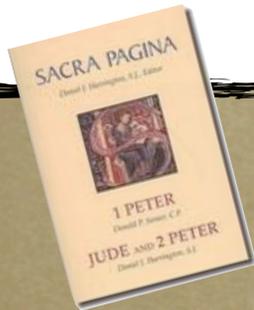
IN 1 PETER



# 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



# CONSENSUS

Nero  
64 CE



100 CE

100 CE

200 CE

200 CE

Decius  
250 CE



Unofficial

Official

The persecution was . . .

Limited to only  
a few locations



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



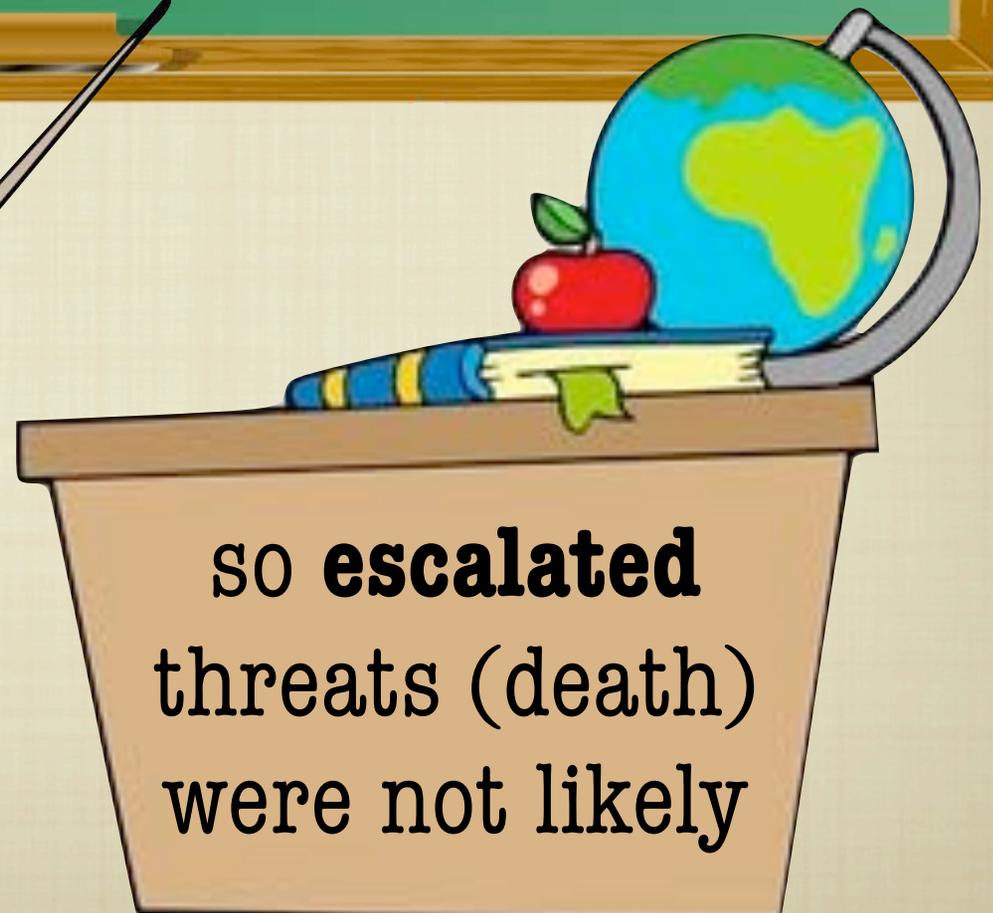
The persecution was . . .

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



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 persecution

PROCEED  
WITH  
CAUTION

PROCEED  
WITH  
CAUTION

# CONTRIBUTING

## *Factors*

#1

ONE OF THE CAUSES  
OF PERSECUTION WAS

**Behavioral**

#2

ONE OF THE CAUSES  
OF PERSECUTION WAS

**Legal**

# Behavioral

CAUSE



SOCIAL

# Withdrawal



One of the reasons why the recipients of 1 Peter were experiencing social conflict is because they refused to **participate** in many of the social activities of the Greco-Roman world (cf. 1 Pet 4:3-4)

*What were the readers (**not**) doing?*

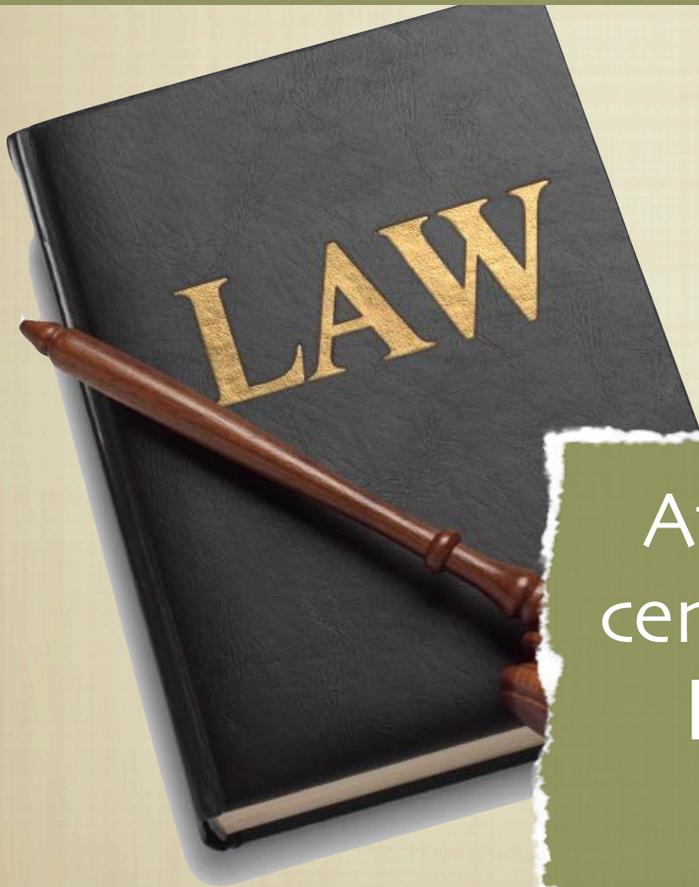
# Legal

STATUS



*Interpretive*

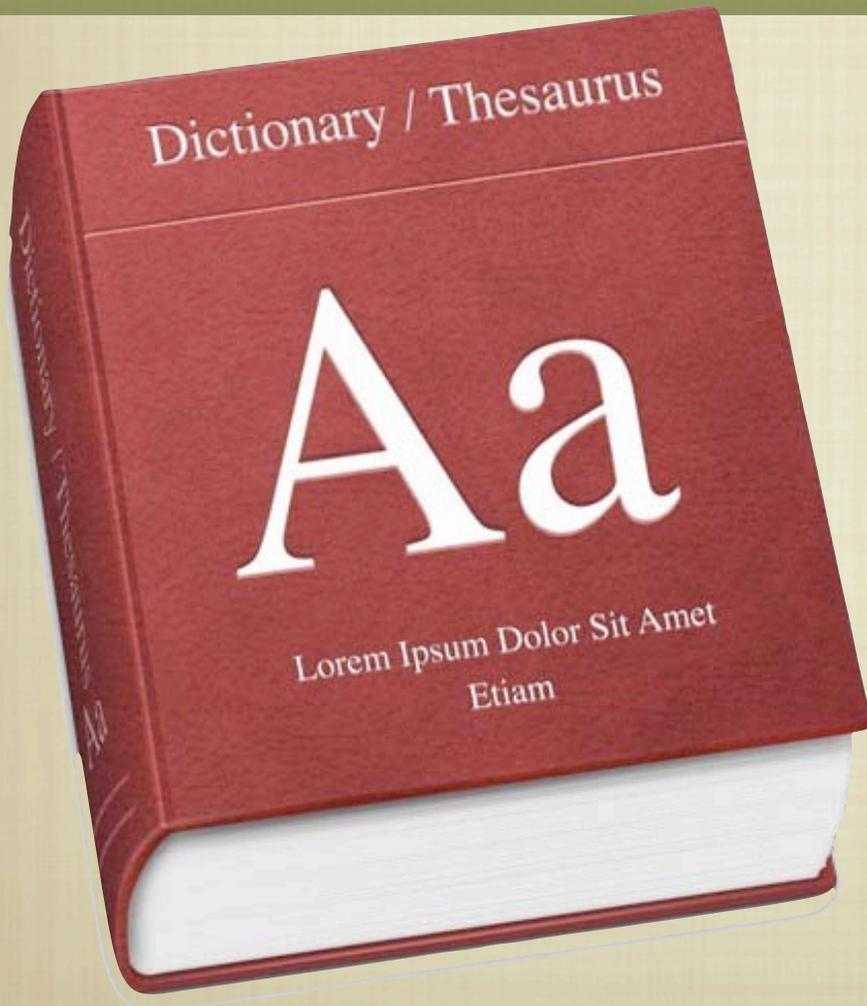
# KEY



At some point during the first few centuries, a change took place in the **legal status** of Christianity, making it effectively illegal

*Effectively*

# Illegal



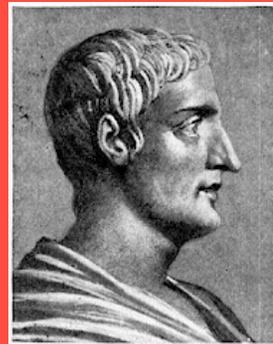
The seemingly contradictory legal status of early Christians wherein there were no **laws** outlawing the religion, but one could be tried and **killed** simply for being a Christian

# SOLUTION

Nero  
64 CE



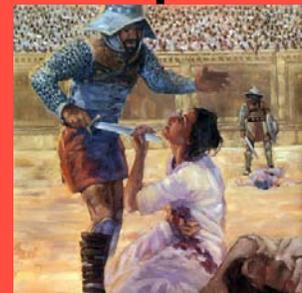
100 CE



Pliny  
111/112 CE

200 CE

Perpetua  
203 CE



200 CE

Dangerous

Effectively Illegal

*Interpretive*

# Implications

LEGAL STATUS



Following the persecution of Nero, Christians readers of 1 Peter were in a very dangerous predicament, but this situation did not necessarily lead to **constant, escalated** persecution

# Social Strategy

IN 1 PETER

Rx

MEDICAL CENTER

① Social Situation

② Author's Formulation

*Important*

# Note

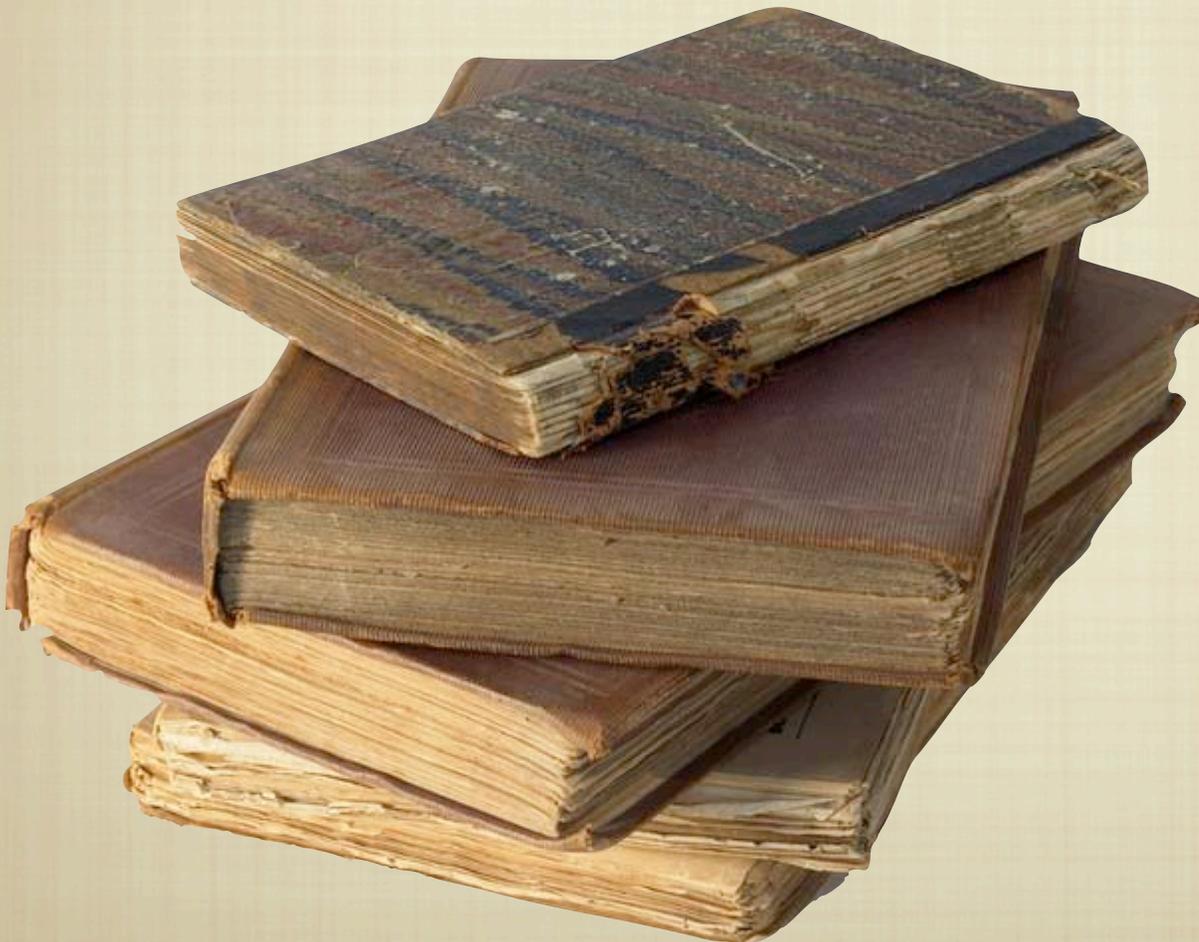


Our focus in this lecture series will be on how the Petrine author's interaction with and understanding of his surrounding world **affects** the instructions he gives to his readers regarding the way they should believe and act

*Exploring*

# Resources

ON 1 PETER



1

Printed Resources

2

Online Resources

*Interpretive*

# Question

UNDER DEBATE



Does 1 Peter encourage its readers to respond to persecution by **conforming** to popular standards of conduct or by remaining distinct and **resisting** “pagan” influence?

# Question

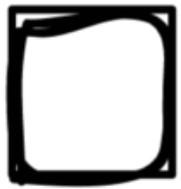


How do the readers **navigate** the social world of the Roman Empire, given their new Christian faith?

Christian

# TO DO LIST

to avoid  
persecution . . .



Support **political** establishment  
(e.g., no rebellion; pay taxes; etc)

---



Extend appropriate **worship** to gods and emperor

---



Maintain regulated system of social **hierarchy**  
(e.g., household roles)

---



Participate in popular social **conventions**  
(e.g., games/contests; dinner parties)

---

# INSTRUCTIONS

Take a few minutes to read the biblical passages on the handout

Does 1 Peter encourage *accommodation* toward or *resist* to the expectations of Greco-Roman society?

*Social*

# STRATEGY

*in 1 Peter*

# Conformity

DAVID L. BALCH

(Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary)

Society of  
Biblical Literature  
*Monograph Series*

**LET WIVES BE SUBMISSIVE**  
The Domestic Code in I Peter

David L. Balch

# A HOME FOR THE HOMELESS



A Social-Scientific Criticism  
of I Peter, Its Situation  
and Strategy

**JOHN H. ELLIOTT**

*With a New Introduction*

# Resistance

JOHN H. ELLIOTT

(University of San Francisco)

# Conformity

IN 1 PETER?



David L. Balch

Balch contends that the author encourages his readers to **conform** to a widely-recognized ethic of household management (1 Peter 2:11-3:12) in order to **alleviate** the tensions with outsiders

*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*

A STRATEGY OF

# CONFORMITY

**Slaves**, submit to your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh . . . **Wives**, in the same way, submit to your 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 2:18; 3:1)



*Debating the* **social strategy** *of 1 Peter*

# HISTORICAL

## ELEMENT



In the reconstruction of Balch, focus is placed on the **similarities** between the household duties prescribed in 1 Peter and those practiced in Greco-Roman society

*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*



Wives submit  
to husbands

GRECO-ROMAN

# Household Code



Slaves submit  
to masters

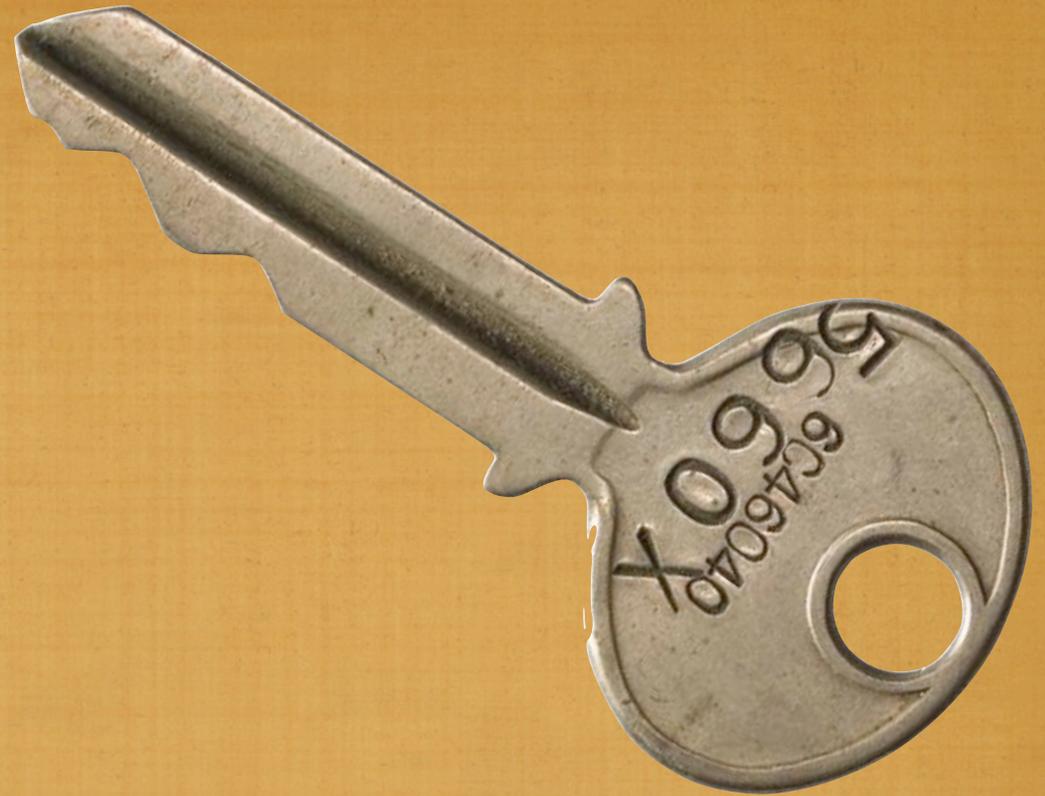
Children submit  
to parents



Video: Four Sisters in Ancient Rome  
(0:12 - 8:25)

*Interpretive*

# KEY



For Balch, the overlap in household management duties signifies that the author of 1 Peter has become **complicit** with the social expectations of popular culture

# THEORETICAL

## ELEMENT



Drawing on social-scientific studies of how minority groups variously **adapt** to a wider society and culture, Balch argues that 1 Peter encourages accommodation to the world's standards in order to reduce tensions

*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*

A STRATEGY OF

# CONFORMITY

For the Lord's sake submit to every human creature, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should **silence** the ignorance of the foolish (1 Peter 2:13-15)



*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*

# Resistance

IN 1 PETER?



John H. Elliott

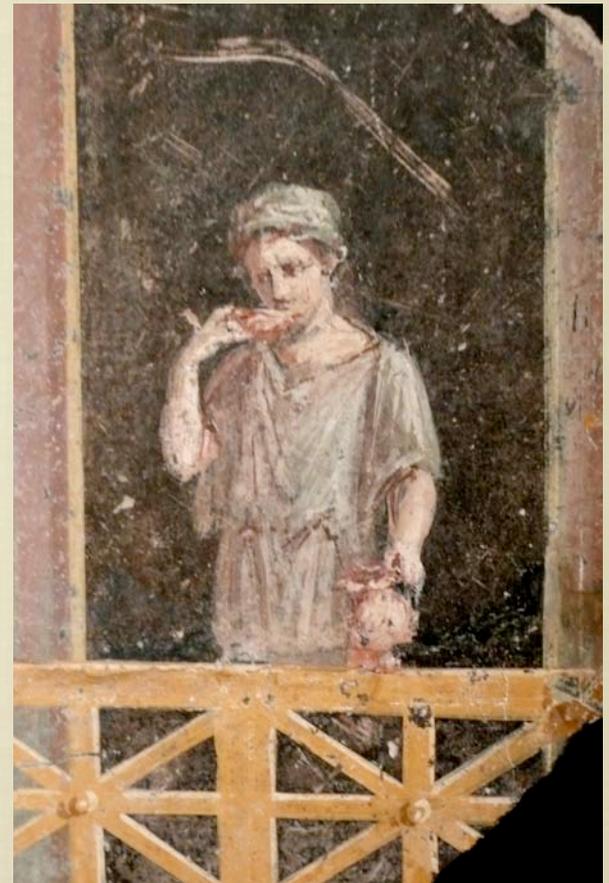
Elliott maintains that the author encourages his readers to **resist** the influence of “pagan” culture by reinforcing a **distinctive** sense of Christian identity among the readers

*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*

# HISTORICAL

## ELEMENT

Elliott attempts to reconstruct the social **location** of “aliens” and “strangers” in the Greco-Roman world, showing that they were a disadvantaged group with few benefits



*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*

A STRATEGY OF

# RESISTANCE

To the **exiles** of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, . . . Beloved, I urge you as **aliens** and **exiles** to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul (1 Pet 1:1; 2:11)



*Debating the* **social strategy** *of 1 Peter*

# THEORETICAL

## ELEMENT



To help diagnose the the strategy of 1 Peter, Elliott draws on social-scientific studies of modern religious **sects**, particularly those which view the world as an evil to be **avoided**

*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*

A STRATEGY OF

# RESISTANCE

You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you **no longer join them** in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. (1 Peter 4:3-4)



*Debating the* **social strategy** *of 1 Peter*

# Restored Identity

---

*From marginal to chosen*

A STRATEGY OF

# RESISTANCE

But you are a **chosen** race, a **royal** priesthood, a **holy** nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)



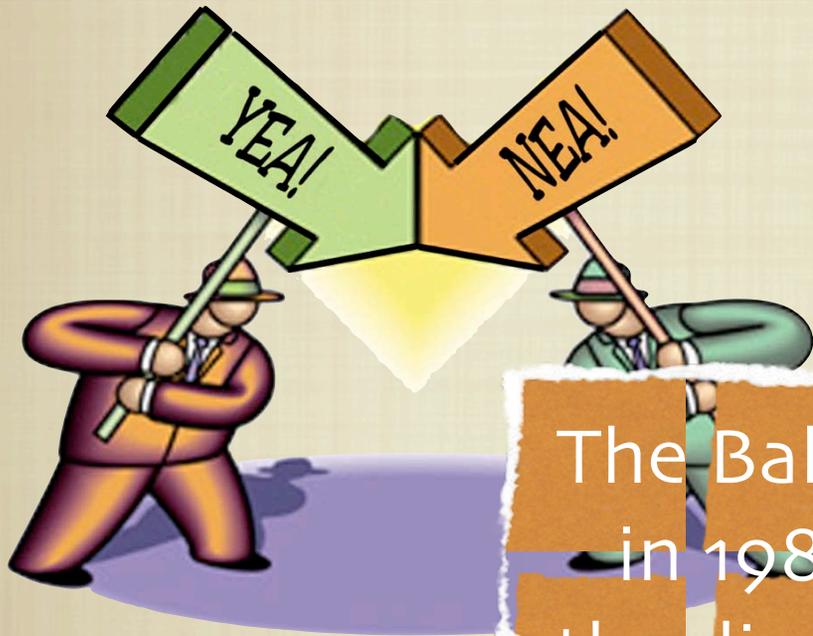
*Debating the **social strategy** of 1 Peter*

Remember!

A detailed handout on the  
Balch-Elliott debate is on  
the website

*Important*

# Note



The Balch-Elliott debate (which began in 1981) set the **parameters** of the discussion on the social strategy in 1 Peter which have been followed for the last 30 years

# Result

BALCHELLIOTT DEBATE



*Interpretive Stalemate*



## **WHAT WE NEED...**

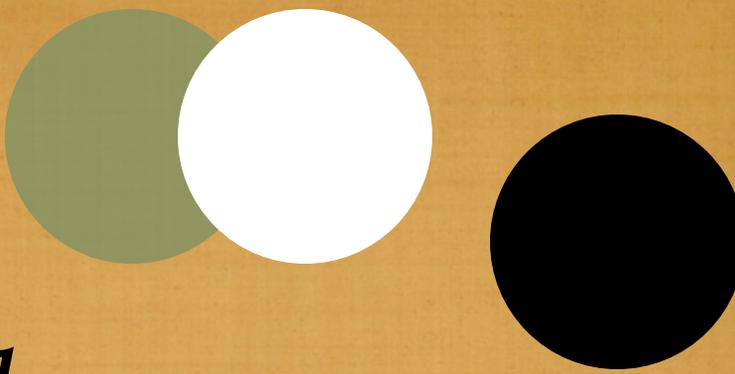
A **fresh** appraisal of  
accommodation and resistance  
in the Greco-Roman world

How do we **reconcile** the letter's (seemingly contradictory) encouragement towards accommodation and conformity, on the one hand, and its focus on resistance and distinctiveness, on the other?



# Issue

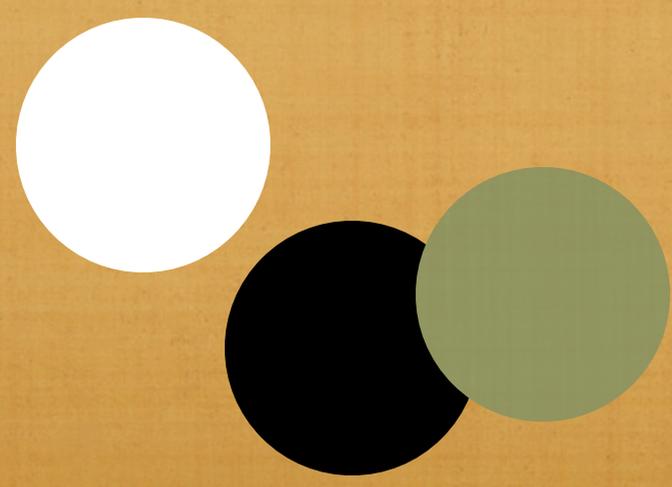
SOCIAL STRATEGY



*New Approaches to the*

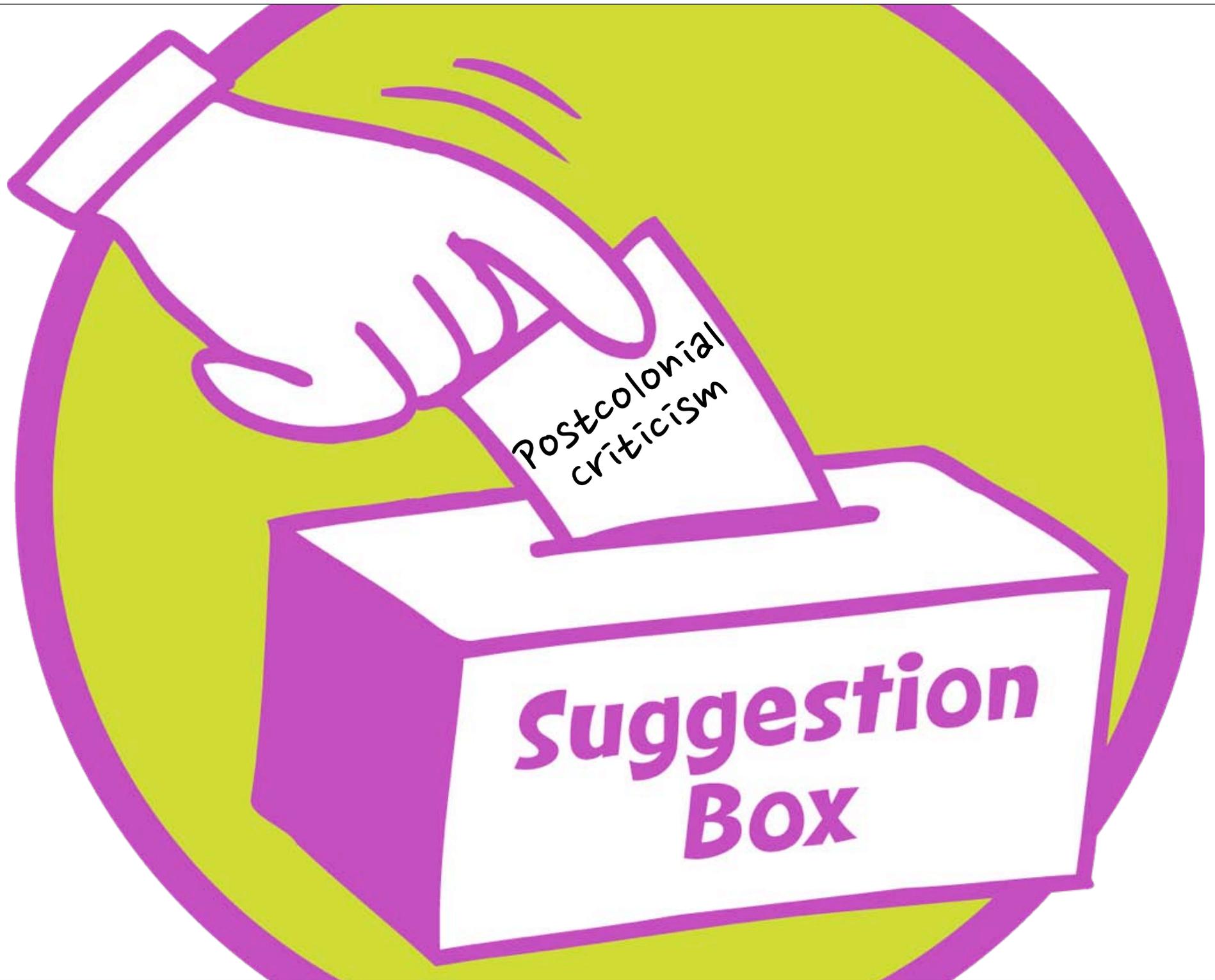
# STRATEGY

*of 1 Peter*





Tools for Understanding the Situation of Disadvantage



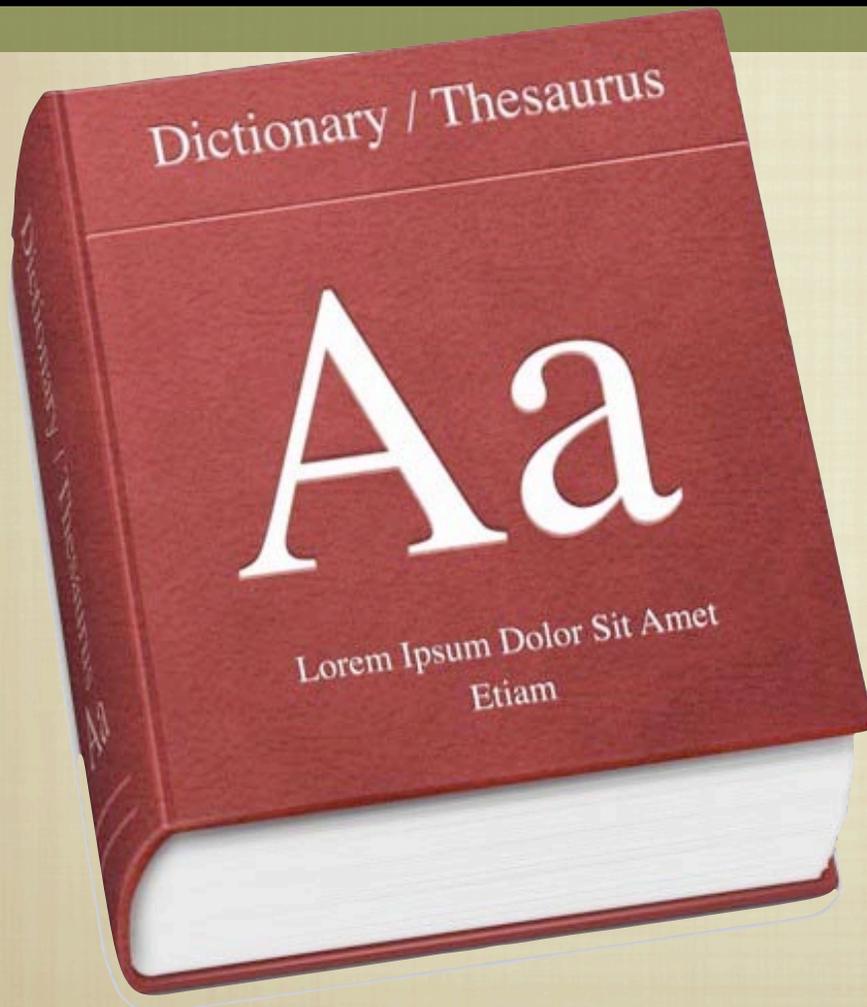
Postcolonial  
criticism

**Suggestion  
Box**

*Definition*

# Postcolonial

Criticism



A critical theory of interpretation which seeks to understand and expose the uneven and complex **power** relations that result from imperialism, colonialism, and other forms of marginalization

SITUATION OF

# COLONIZATION



**Colonizer**

Dominator

**Colonized**

Dominated

# Two Key Ingredients



The dominant **control** of a colonized people through the use of force and hegemony

In order to control a colonized people, the colonizers seek to shape not only their **behavior** but also their ways of **thinking**



Targets

**Education**

**Language**

**Religion**

# Two Key Ingredients



**Response** of subordinates  
toward the colonizers, both  
in conforming to colonial  
rule as well as resisting it

*Interpretive*

# KEY



If we can understand the ways that marginalized groups **negotiate** their disadvantaged position, we can more accurately diagnose the strategy of 1 Peter

*Aim of*

# Postcolonial

CRITICISM

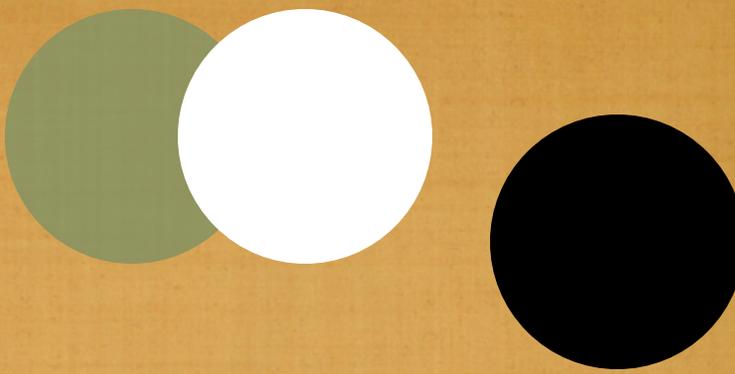
to investigate how the Petrine author (and his audience) was **influenced** by and **responded** to the marginalization which resulted from Roman imperialism and Christian conversion



READING 1 PETER "FROM BELOW"

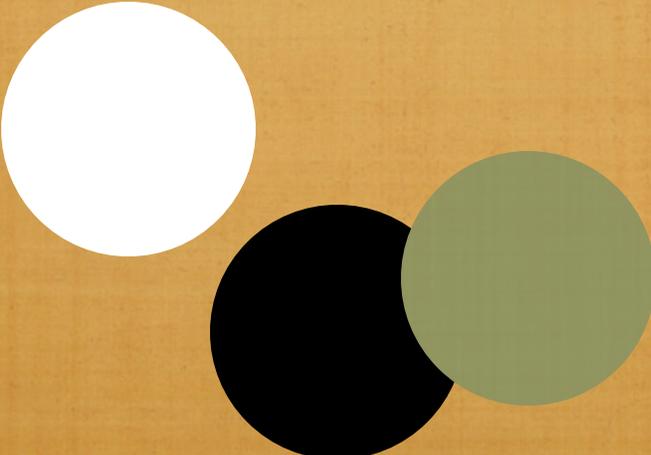
10-minute  
break





# MAPPING

*Conformity & Resistance*



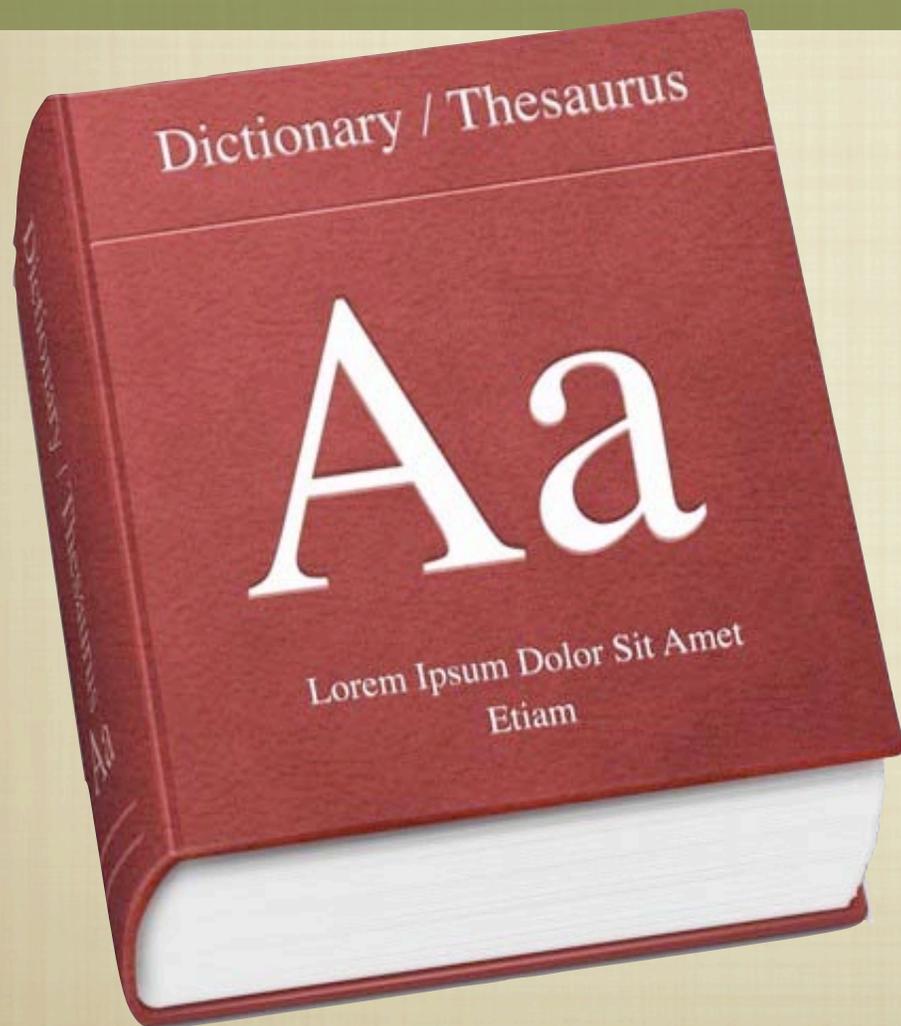


*Social*

**CONFORMITY**

Defining

# Conformity



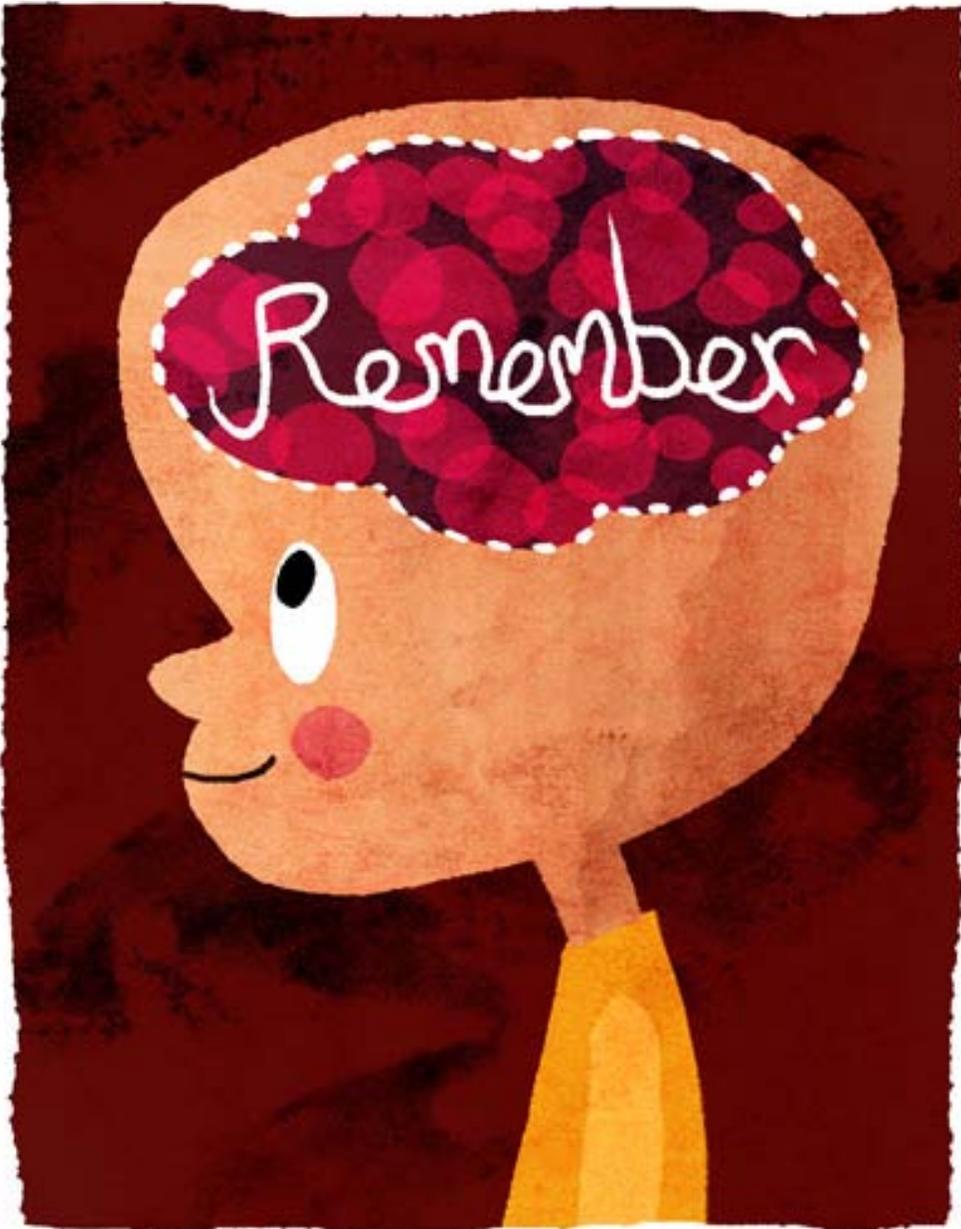
Aligning one's thoughts and behaviors to the standards and practices of **others** in society as a result of real or perceived pressure, when one would not have otherwise thought or acted as such

remember

remember

remember

REMEMBER



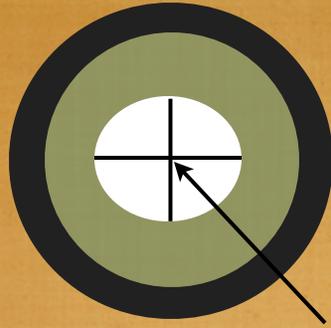
The Petrine readers are being persecuted (in part) because they **refuse** to conform to their behavior to the **expectations** of Greco-Roman society

remember

remember

remember

REMEMBER

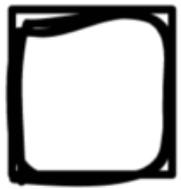


# QUESTION

In what ways could a Christian **accommodate** Greco-Roman society so that the conflict might lessen or even cease?

Christian

# TO DO LIST



Support **political** establishment  
(e.g., no rebellion; pay taxes; etc)

---



Extend appropriate **worship** to gods and emperor

---



Maintain regulated system of social **hierarchy**  
(e.g., household roles)

---

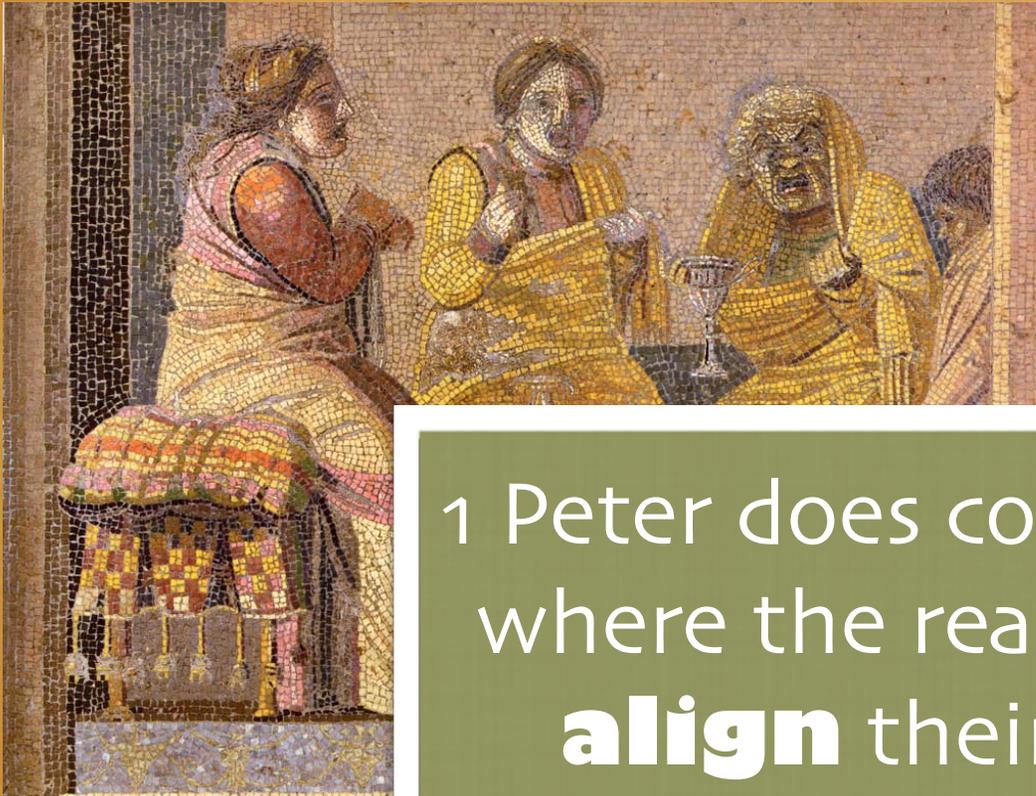


Participate in popular social **conventions**  
(e.g., games/contests; dinner parties)

---

*Interpretive*

# KEY



1 Peter does contains some examples where the readers are instructed to **align** their behavior with the standards or norms of society

Taking a



Look

Characteristics of  
**Conformity**

# Conformity in 1 Peter

## DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

### Characteristic #1

The Petrine readers  
find themselves in a  
**subaltern** position  
with few rights of  
refusal

# CONFORMITY

IN 1 PETER



**Slaves**, submit to your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh . . . If you endure when you are **beaten** for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. (1 Peter 2:18)

1

*Subaltern position of Petrine readers*



**Important**

**Constraining  
influences and choice  
of refusal must be  
considered when  
judging conformity to  
social expectations**

run away



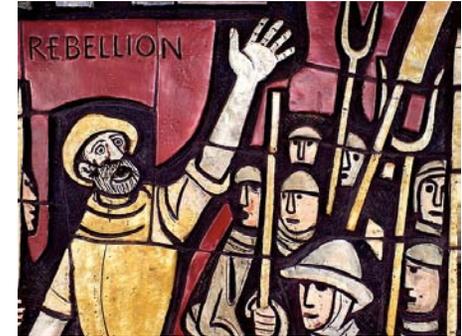
become insolent



steal from master



encourage others toward rebellion



**Options**  
for a slave

# Conformity in 1 Peter

## DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

### Characteristic #2

The prescribed conformity only represents the **minimum** level of compliance required for a powerless social group in the Roman empire

# CONFORMITY

IN 1 PETER



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, having seen the purity and reverence of your lives (1 Peter 3:1)

2

*Conformity represents **minimum** compliance*



Wives submit  
to husbands

GRECO-ROMAN

# Household Code



Slaves submit  
to masters

Children submit  
to parents



Looking

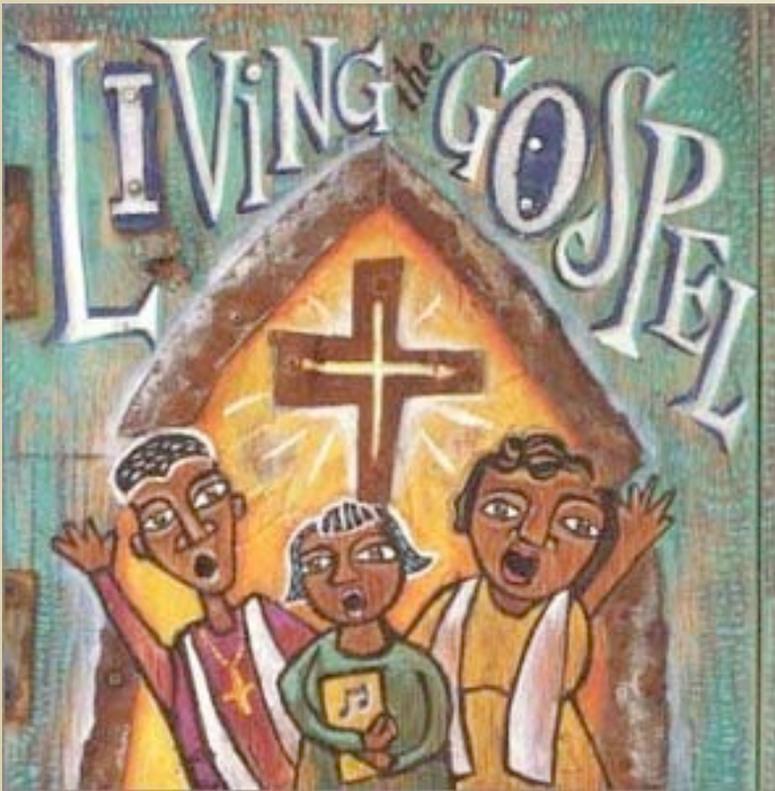
# Closer

1 Peter instructs wives to submit to their husbands, but note the **restrictions**: who makes the final decision regarding her **religion**?



# CONFORMITY

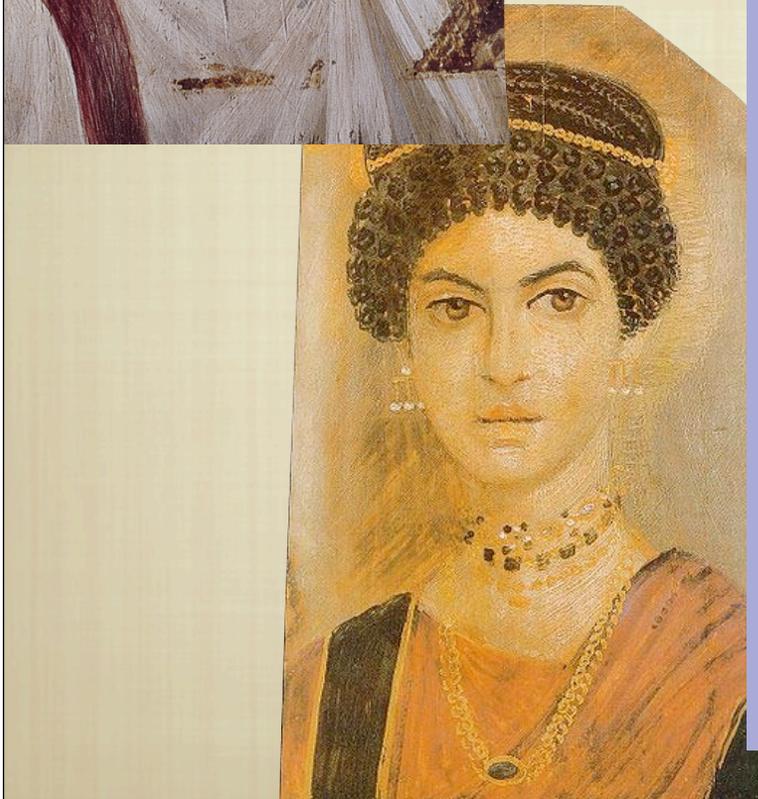
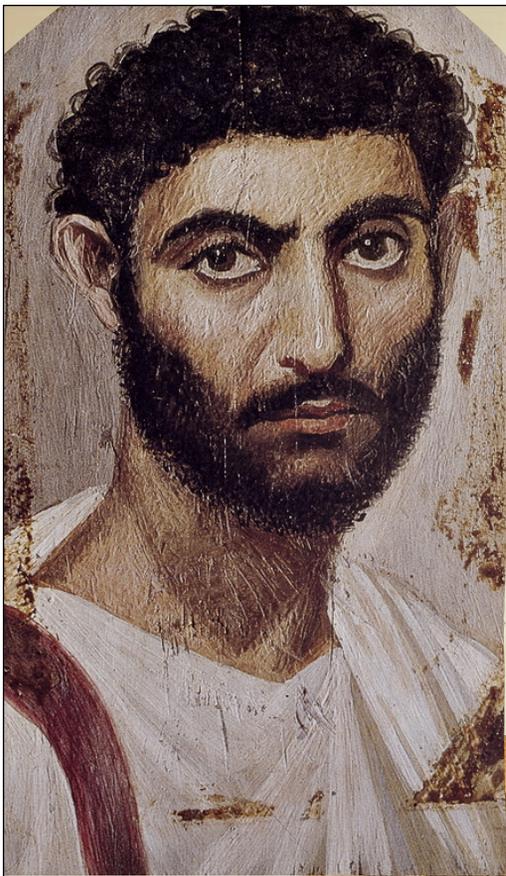
IN 1 PETER



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, having seen the purity and reverence of your lives (1 Peter 3:1)

2

*Conformity represents **minimum** compliance*



Where the responsibility of a wife is to worship and to recognize only the gods that her husband reveres, and to close the door upon strange cults and foreign superstitions

*Plutarch, Advice to Bride and Groom*

*Important*

# NOTE



The author confirms the wives' **freedom** to choose their own religion

# Conformity in 1 Peter

## DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

### Characteristic #3

Each time that conformity is encouraged, it is **relativized** by (seemingly) small qualifications which represent cautious resistance

# CONFORMITY

IN 1 PETER

Honor everyone.  
Love the family of  
believers. Fear  
God. **Honor  
the emperor**  
(1 Peter 2:17)



Coin of Nero

3

*Conformity is **relativized** by qualifications*

# Rewriting Scriptural Quotations



My child, **fear** the LORD and the king,  
and do not disobey either of them.

**Proverbs 24:21**

Honor everyone. Love the family of believers.  
**Fear** God. **Honor** the emperor.

**1 Peter 2:17**

*Conformity is **relativized** by qualifications*

Christian

# TO DO LIST



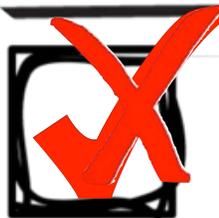
Support **political** establishment  
(e.g., no rebellion; pay taxes; etc)

---



Extend appropriate worship to **gods** and emperor

---



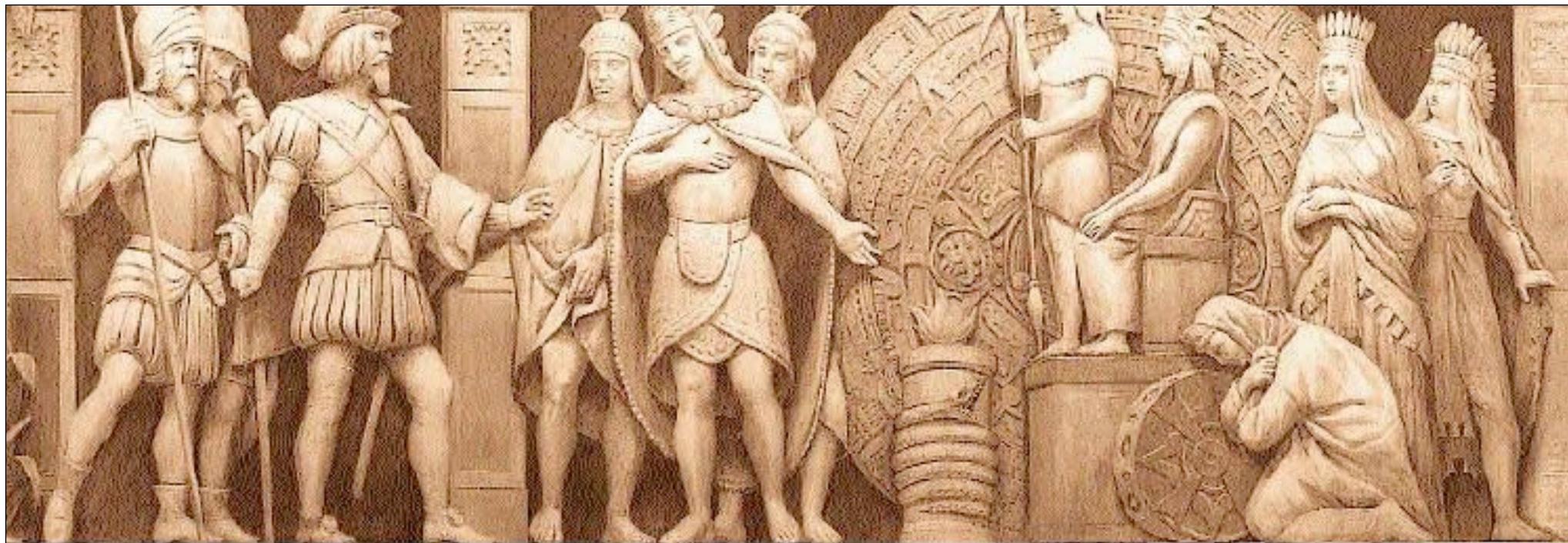
Maintain regulated system of social **hierarchy**  
(e.g., household roles)

---



Participate in popular social **conventions**  
(e.g., shows; contests)

---



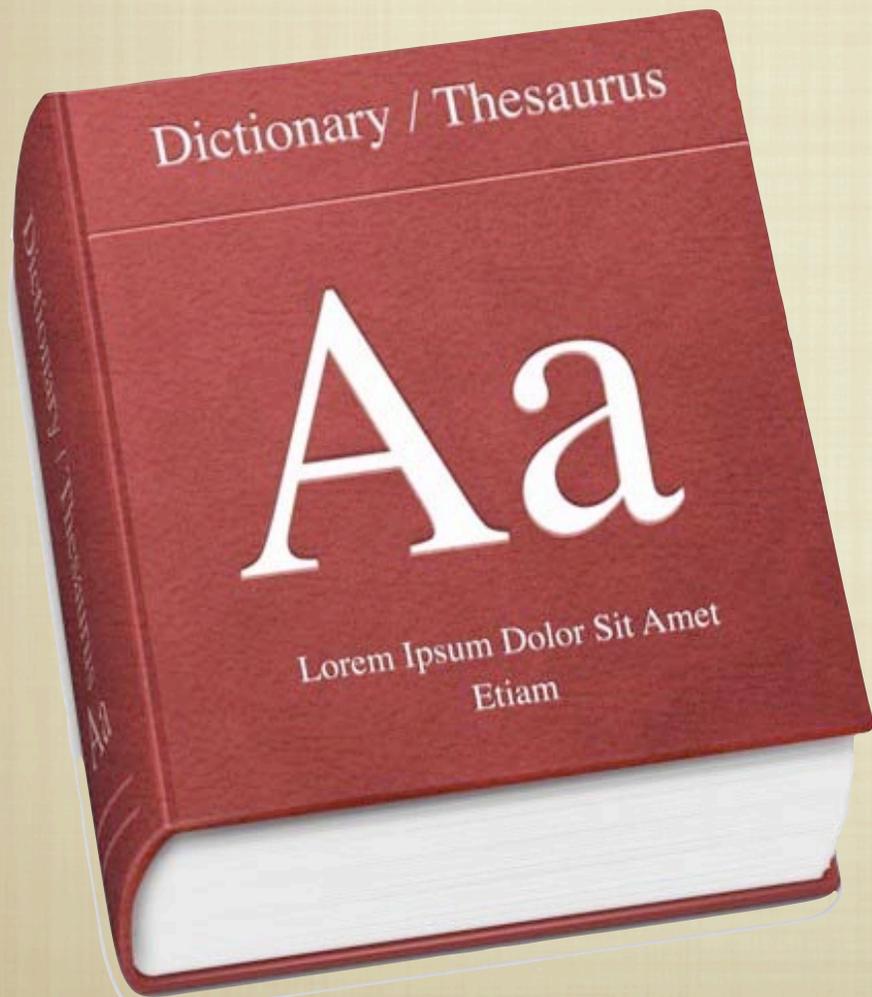
## What we can **CONCLUDE** ...

The constraining powers of the empire forced the Petrine author to advocate a **minimum** level of compliance with social norms; yet, in each case, these powers are **relativized** by (seemingly) small qualifications which amount to cautious resistance

De la  
Luz  
Al  
Fuego

*Defining*

# Resistance



Any intention or concrete action within a power relationship which **opposes** a hegemonic institution or system of domination or which seeks to challenge conditions within such an environment

# CAUTION

The strong, defiant attitude which the book of **Revelation** exhibits toward the Roman Empire often *colors* the way that people interpret forms of resistance in other New Testament documents

*Important*

# Note

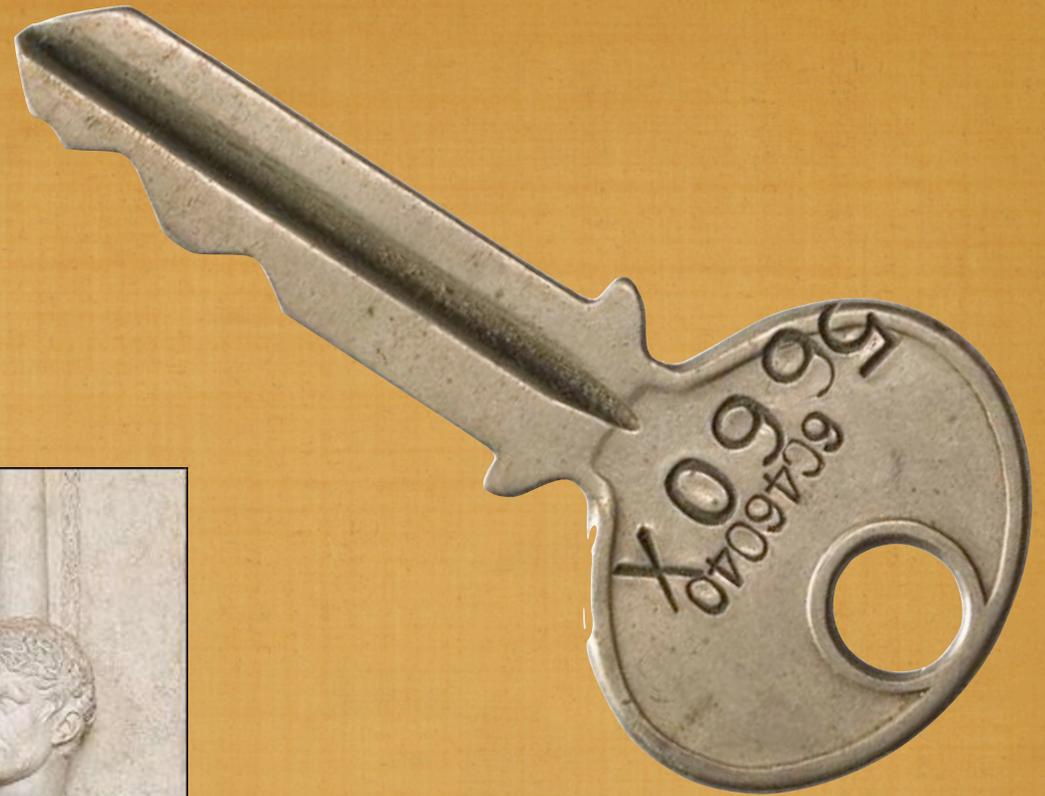


The book of Revelation and 1 Peter were written around the same **time** and to Christians in the same general **area**

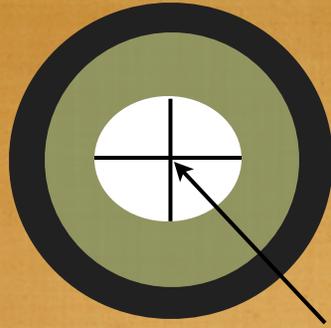


*Interpretive*

# KEY



To a large extent, the authors of Revelation and 1 Peter are addressing the **same** question: How should Christians navigate their social world?



# QUESTION

How does the book of Revelation encourage its readers to **navigate** their social world?

# Resistance

IN REVELATION

Revelation's message to its readers is clear: to **disassociate** from the social, economic, religious, and political dimensions of the Roman empire



*Understanding the **message** of Revelation*

Video: Bible Mysteries - Revelation  
(14:13 - 21:55)

*Important*

# NOTE

Revelation's  
message of  
**resistance** is  
strongly defiant



# RESISTANCE

IN REVELATION



Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great **whore** who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk." (Revelation 17:1-2)

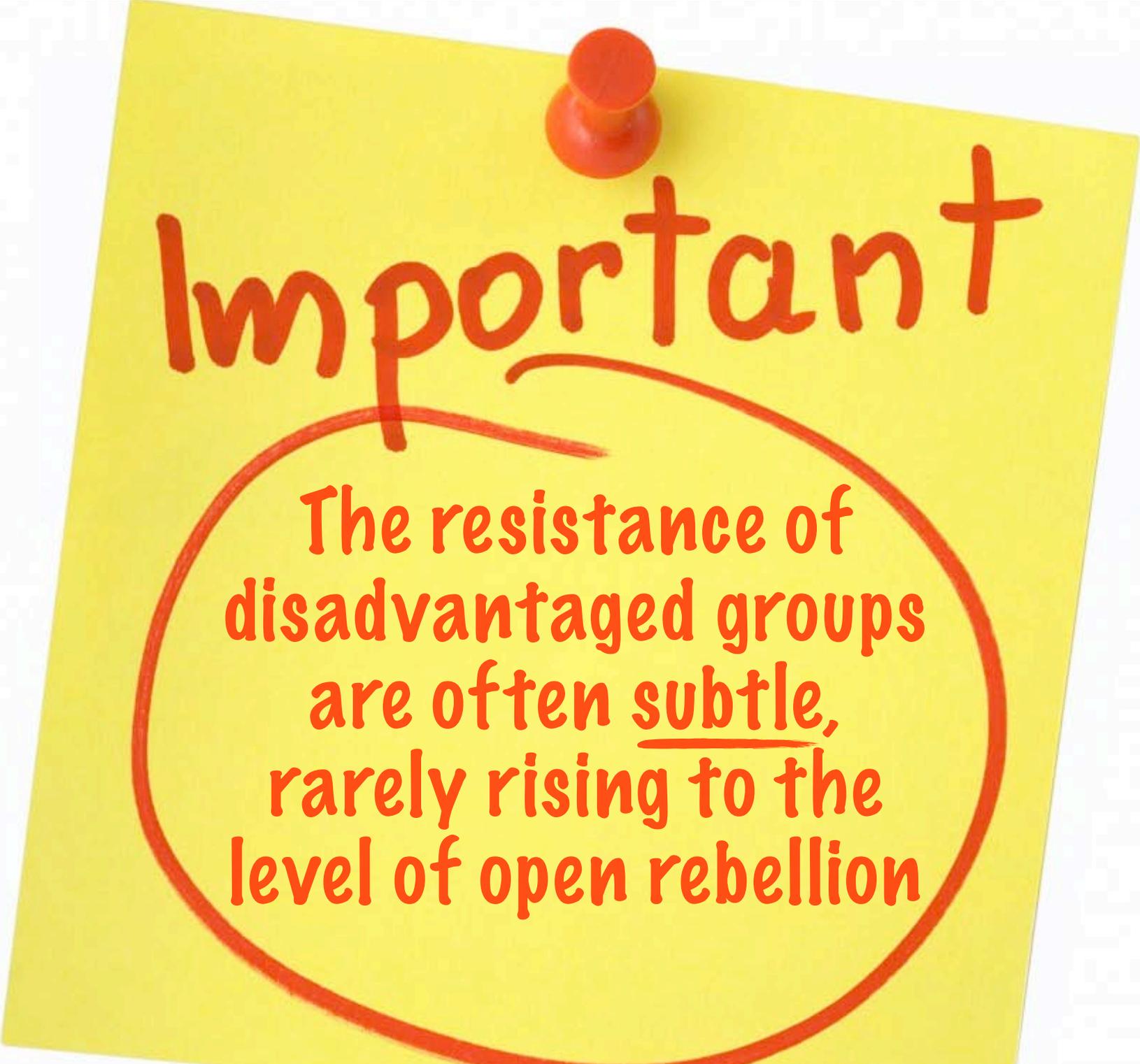
**Open and Defiant** *Opposition toward Rome*



The message of Revelation is **resistance** to Roman cultural expectations, while 1 Peter encourages accommodation and **conformity**

COMMON

*Claim*



Important

The resistance of disadvantaged groups are often subtle, rarely rising to the level of open rebellion



“Everyday” forms  
of Resistance

**Foot Dragging**

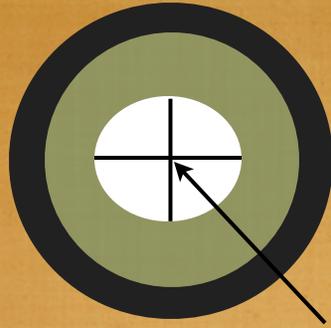
**Feigned Ignorance**

**Ambiguous Gestures**

**Everyday  
Resistance**

The persistent thoughts and actions  
by which subordinate groups subtly  
**oppose** their oppressors

Video: Monty Python and the Holy Grail  
(0:00 - 2:52)



# QUESTION

Is there any indication that 1 Peter might be advocating **resistance** against the Empire or against popular values?

# Resistance

IN 1 PETER

The author challenges the discourse of Roman hegemony by **clarifying** the ontological make-up of the Roman emperor



Statue of Augustus

1

*Clarifying the **ontology** of the emperor*

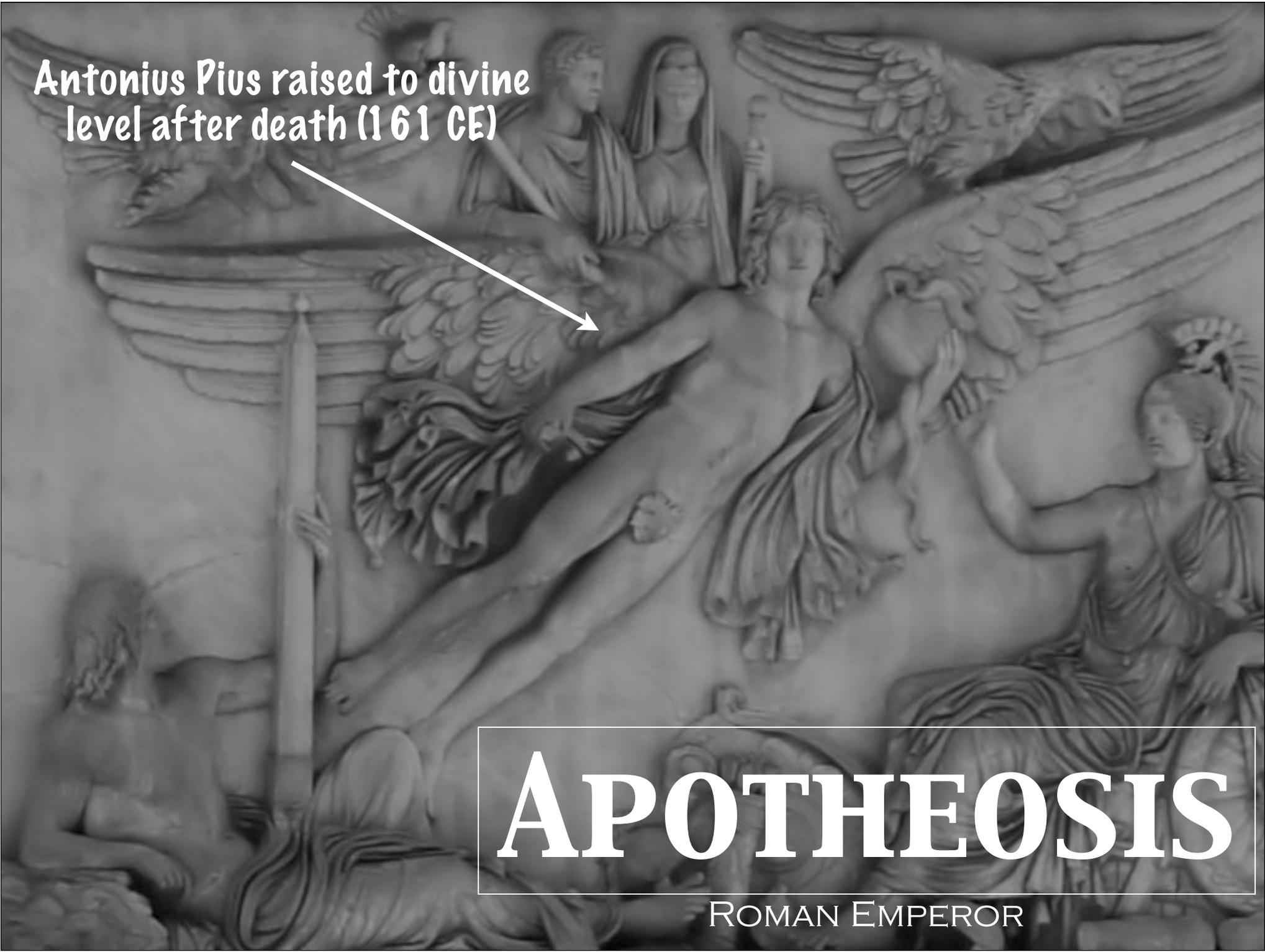
Video: Emperor's Cult  
(0:00 - 1:00)

Antonius Pius raised to divine level after death (161 CE)



# APOTHEOSIS

ROMAN EMPEROR



*Important*

# NOTE

## READING

THE DIVINE  
NERO  
AUGUSTUS



ΘΕΟΣ

Even **living** emperors were worshipped  
as gods in the Roman provinces

*Interpretive*

# KEY

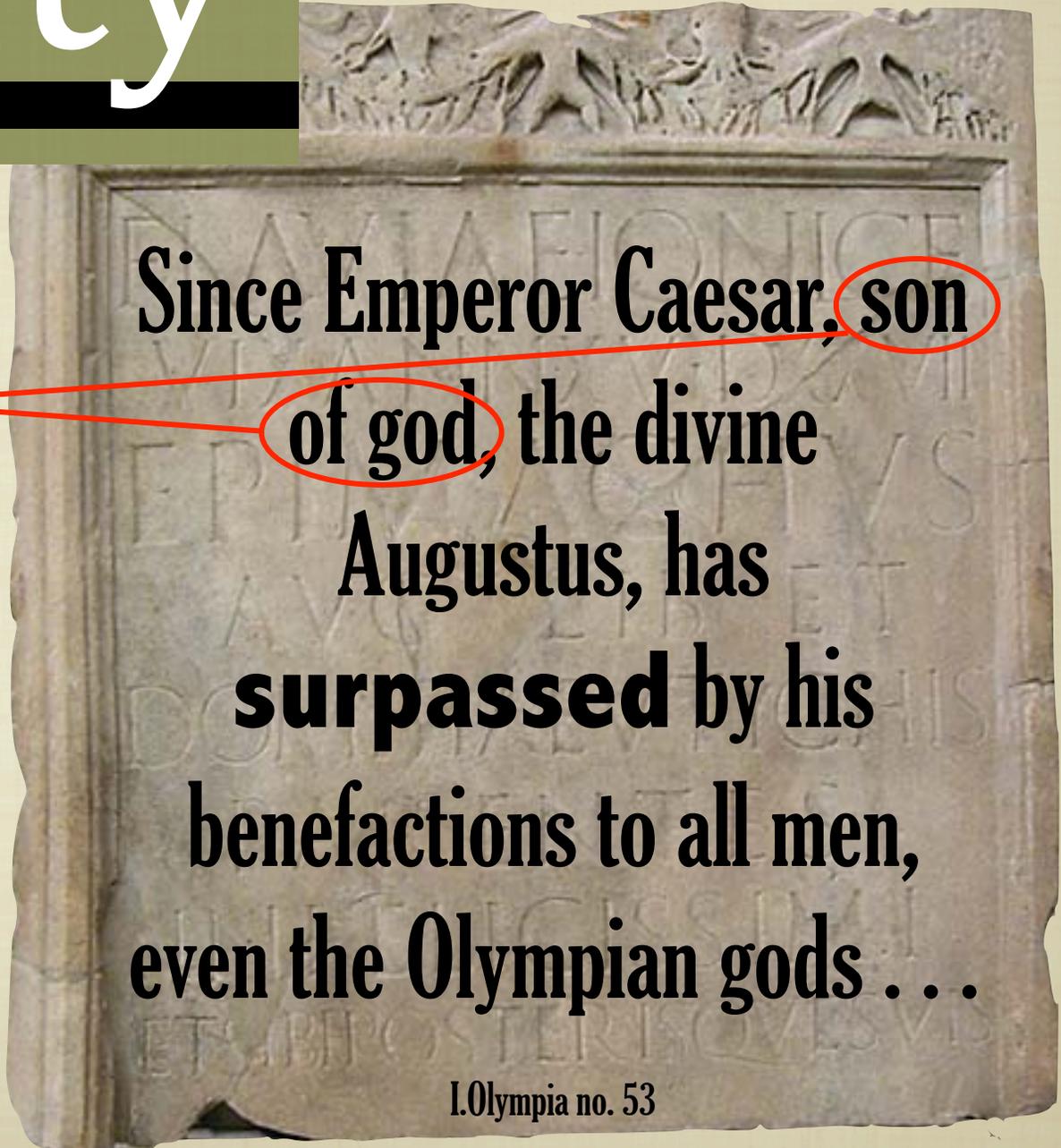


In the Roman world, the ascription of divinity to the emperor was primarily an indicator of **status** not **ontology**

# Divinity

OF THE EMPEROR

**Note:**  
the competitive  
nature of the  
Christian  
message



Since Emperor Caesar, **son**  
**of god**, the divine  
Augustus, has  
**surpassed** by his  
benefactions to all men,  
even the Olympian gods . . .

I.Olympia no. 53

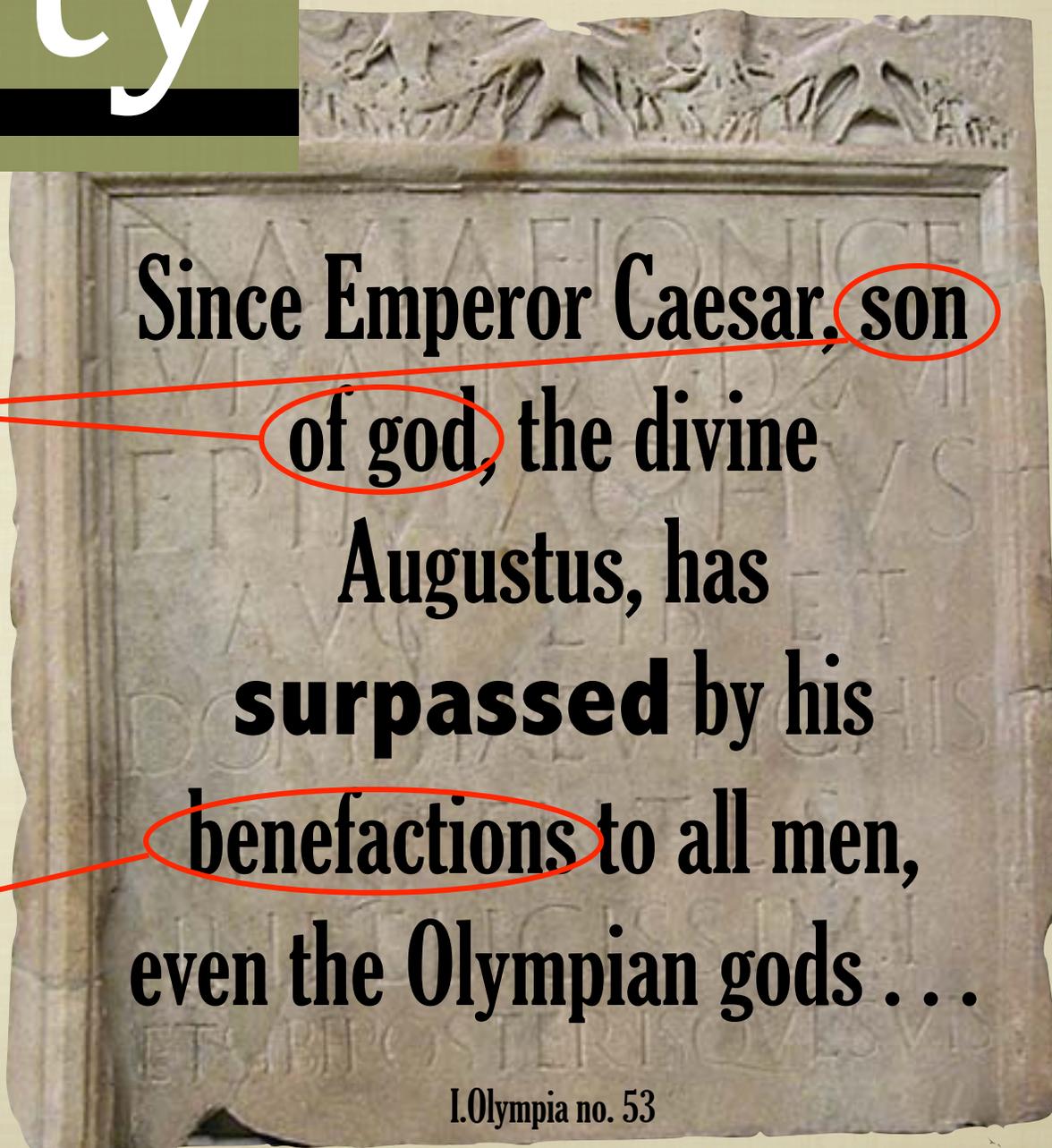
Video: From Jesus to Christ (Part 1)  
(4:18 - 6:02)

# Divinity

OF THE EMPEROR

**Note:**  
the competitive  
nature of the  
Christian  
message

**Note:**  
the basis of  
the emperor's  
worship/divinity



Since Emperor Caesar, **son**  
**of god**, the divine  
Augustus, has  
**surpassed** by his  
**benefactions** to all men,  
even the Olympian gods . . .

I.Olympia no. 53

# RESISTANCE

IN 1 PETER



Coin of Domitian

For the Lord's sake submit to the authority of every **human creature**, whether to the emperor as supreme, or to governors who are as sent by him to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good (1 Peter 2:13)

*Clarifying the **ontology** of the emperor*

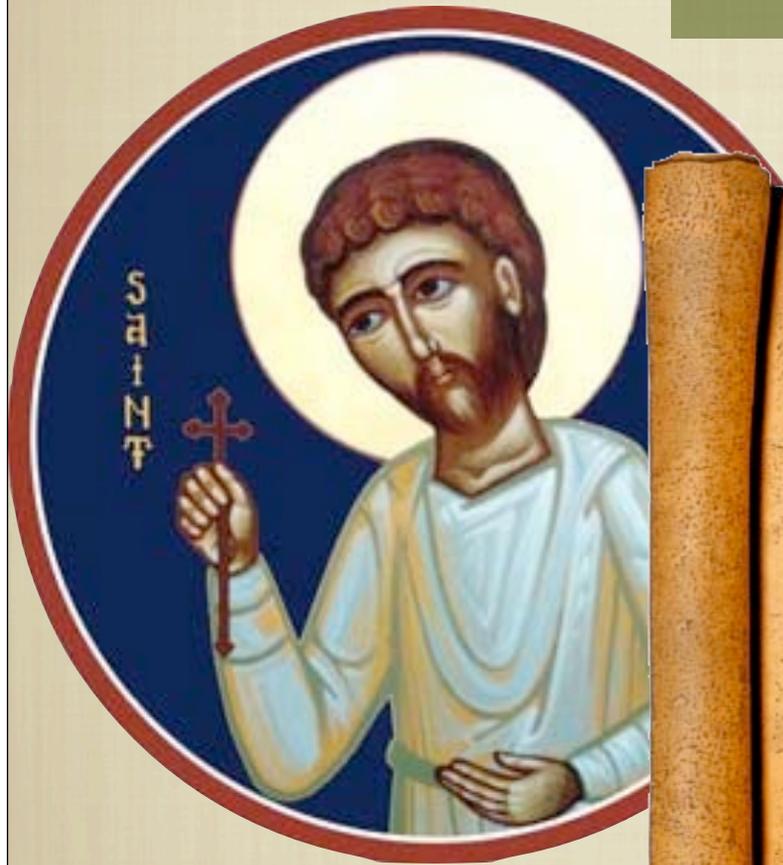


# 1 Peter

This **innovative** clarification deeply impacted the social strategy of later Christians

*Ontology of the*

# Emperor



**The emperor is to be honored but not worshipped, “for he is not a god (θεός) but a man (ἄνθρωπος) appointed by God”**  
(Theophilus, *Autol.* 1.11)

# Resistance

IN 1 PETER

The author challenges imperial judgments about Christianity by adopting and reappropriating the **designation** Χριστιανός (“Christian”), a label which the empire condemned



2

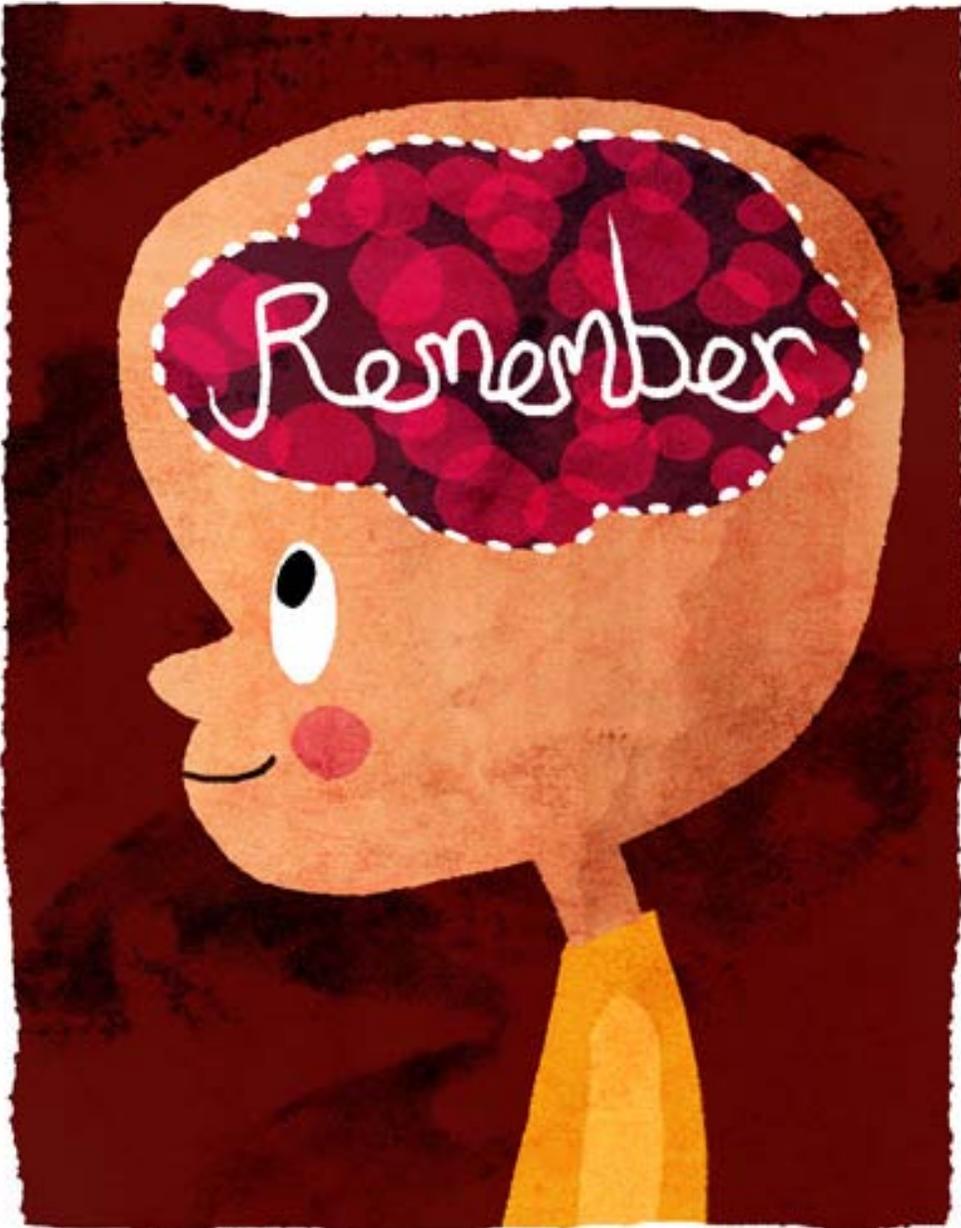
*Embracing the **designation** of deviance*

remember

remember

remember

REMEMBER



Following the persecution of Nero, the name "Christian" was effectively criminalized so that the mere confession of the name made one prone to **death**

remember

remember

remember

REMEMBER

*Bearing the name*

# CHRISTIAN



After Urbicus (Roman consul) sentences Ptolemaeus (a Christian) to execution for confessing Christianity, Lucius (an innocent bystander) asks, "What is the reason for this sentence? Why have you brought a conviction against this man who is not an adulterer or a fornicator or a murderer or a thief or a robber, nor has performed any misdeed at all, but only **confesses** to bear the name Christian?" (Justin, 2 Apology 2.16)

# RESISTANCE

IN 1 PETER



Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a **disgrace**, but **glorify** God because you bear this name. (1 Peter 4:15-16)

*Embracing the **designation** of deviance*

*Important*

# NOTE

BUTCH HOMOSEXUAL BEAR FAIRY QUESTIONING LEZ  
BULL-DAGGER DRAG QUEEN ZEGAY VERSATILE HOMO  
STRAIGHT-ACTING LIPSTICK TWO-SPIRIT BISEXUAL  
LEATHER DADDY FEMME TRANS\* INTERSEX BABY DYKE  
BOTTOM CROSS-DRESSER MARY TWINK NANCY BOY  
LADY-BOY FRUIT PRE-OPDYKE LGBT QTOP FLAMER  
DOM HOMO SWISH HOTTER PANSY QUEEN FAG CHASER

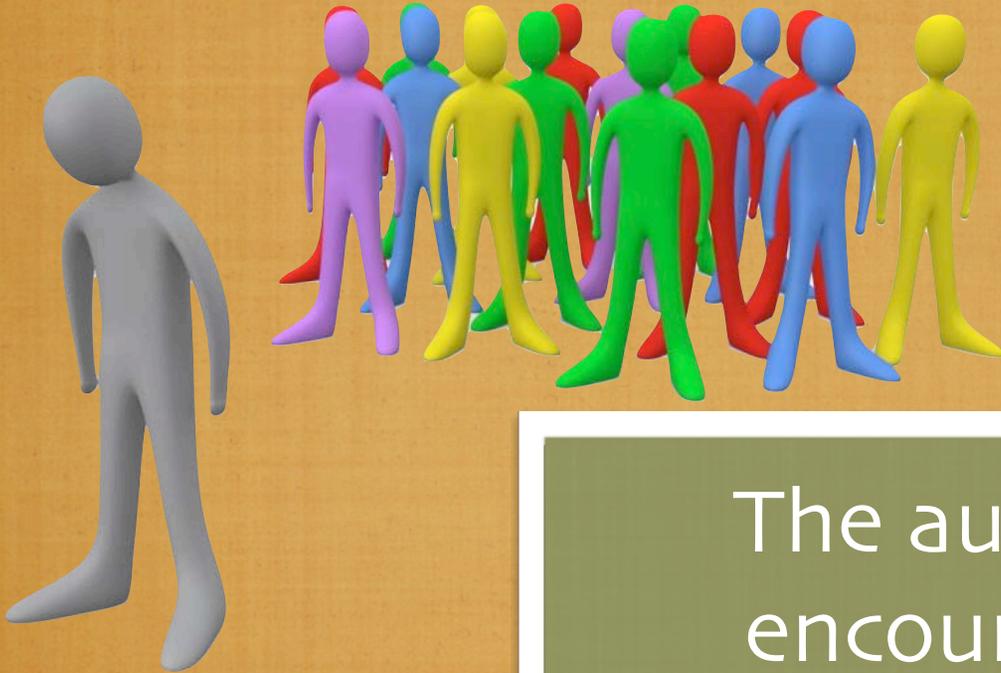
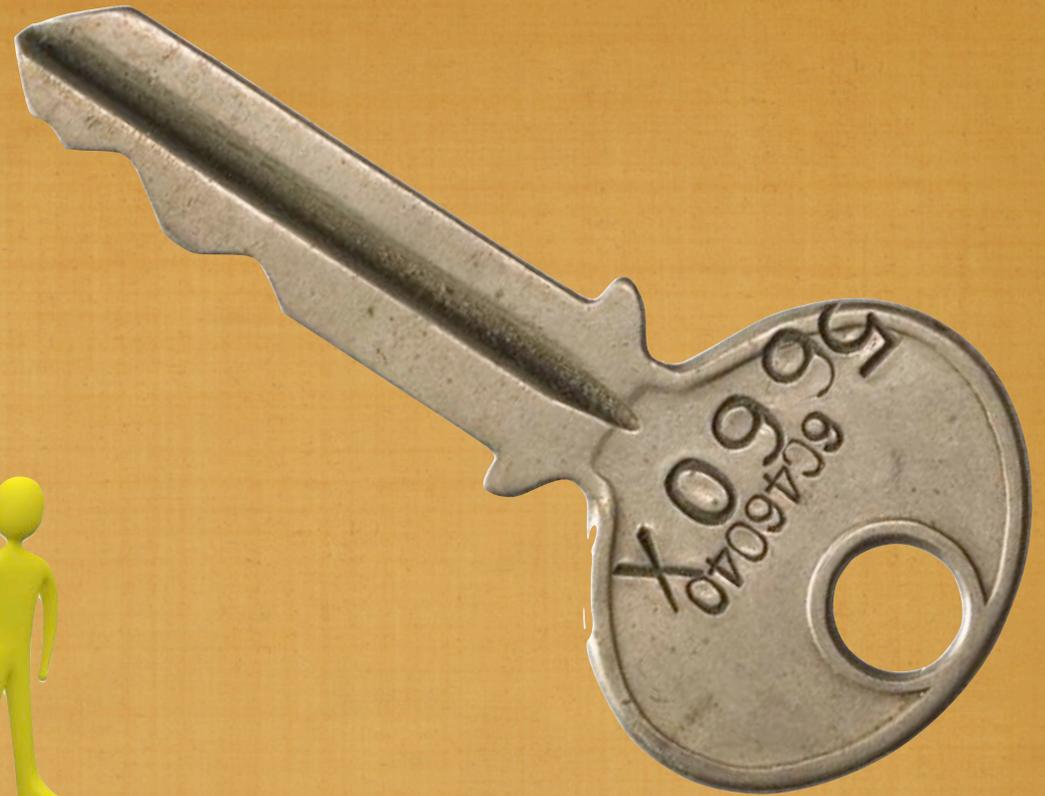
# QUEER



The author's strategy represents an example of **social creativity**

*Interpretive*

# KEY



The author's instructions encourage his readers to **embrace** their outcast status rather than to simply to "fit in"

# Resistance

IN 1 PETER

The author directly challenges the entire imperial enterprise by employing the derogatory cipher "**Babylon**" when referencing his location in **Rome**



3

*Labeling the **oppressive** power of Rome*

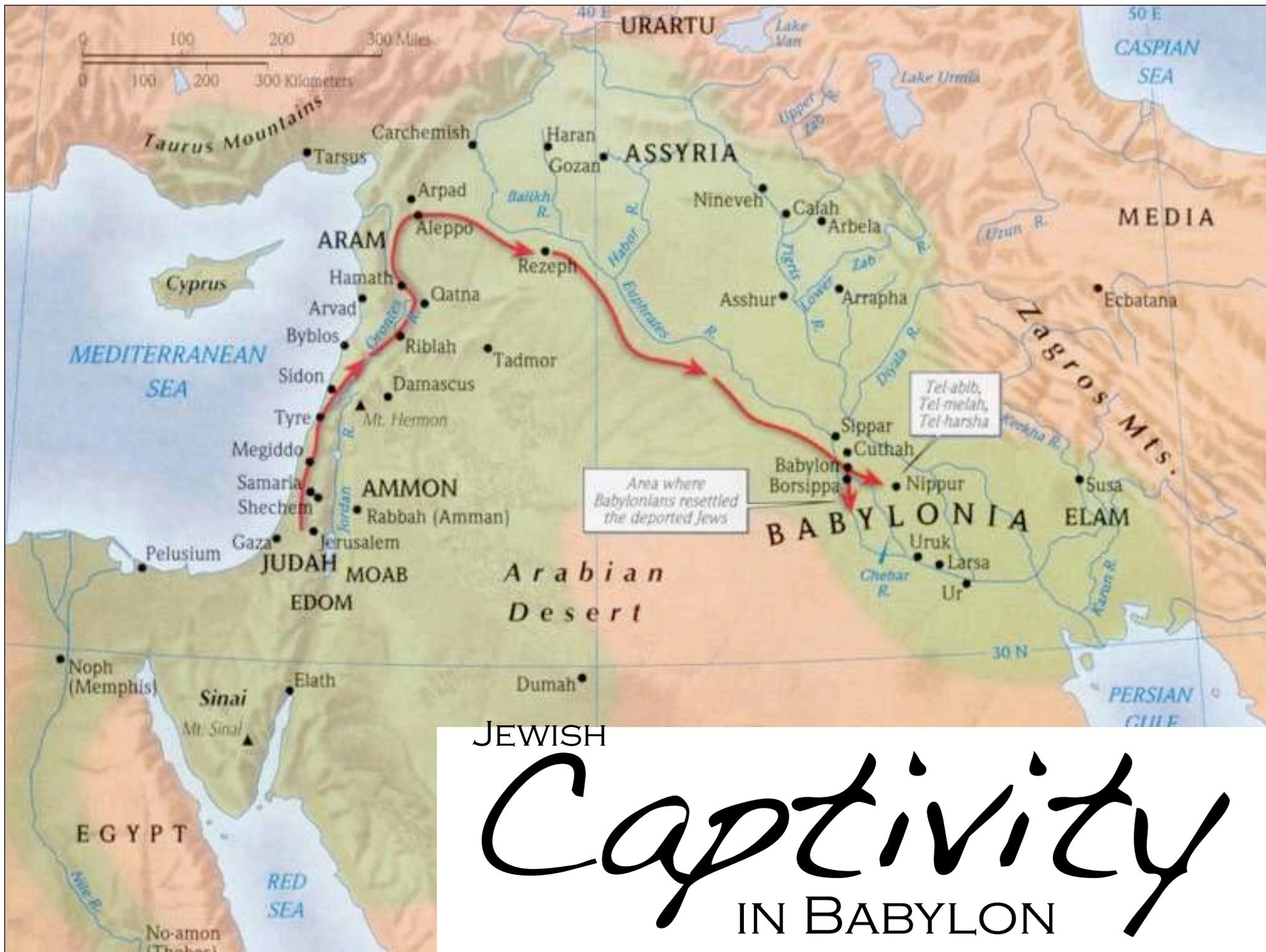
# RESISTANCE

IN 1 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)

*Labeling the **oppressive** power of Rome*



JEWISH

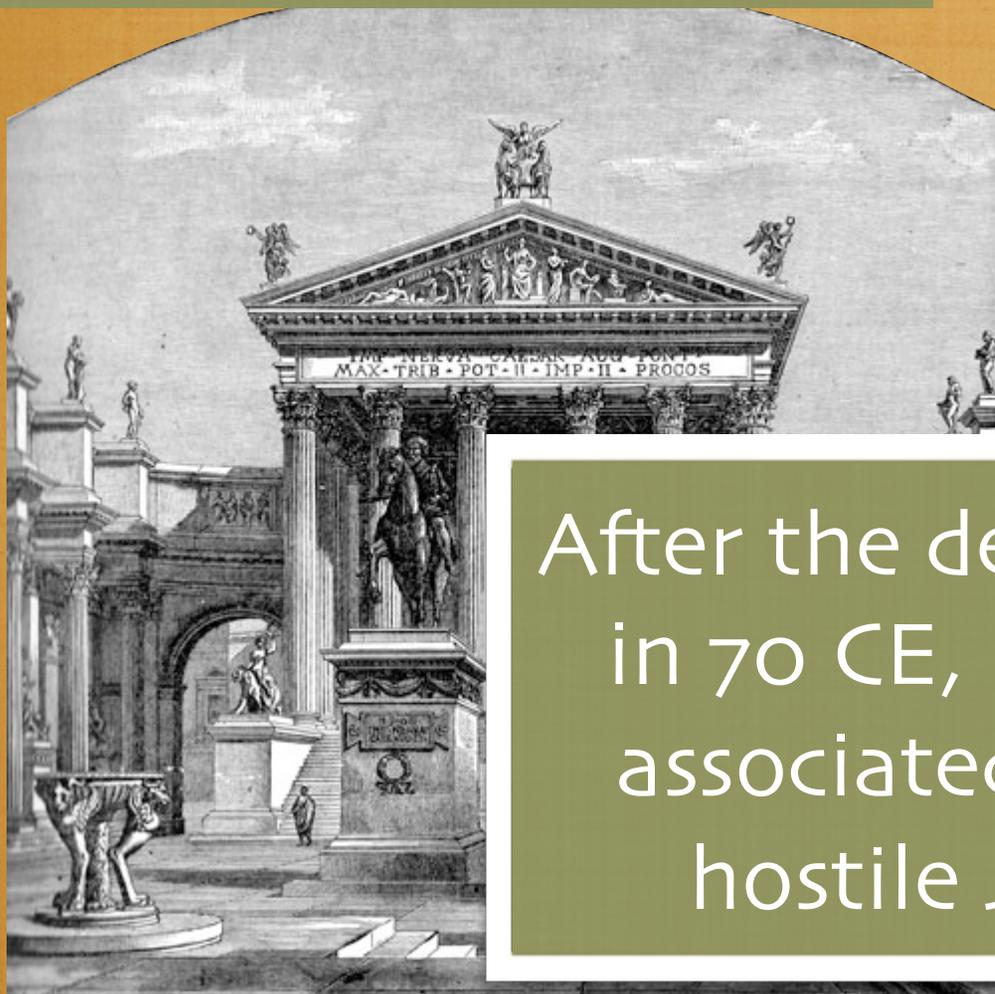
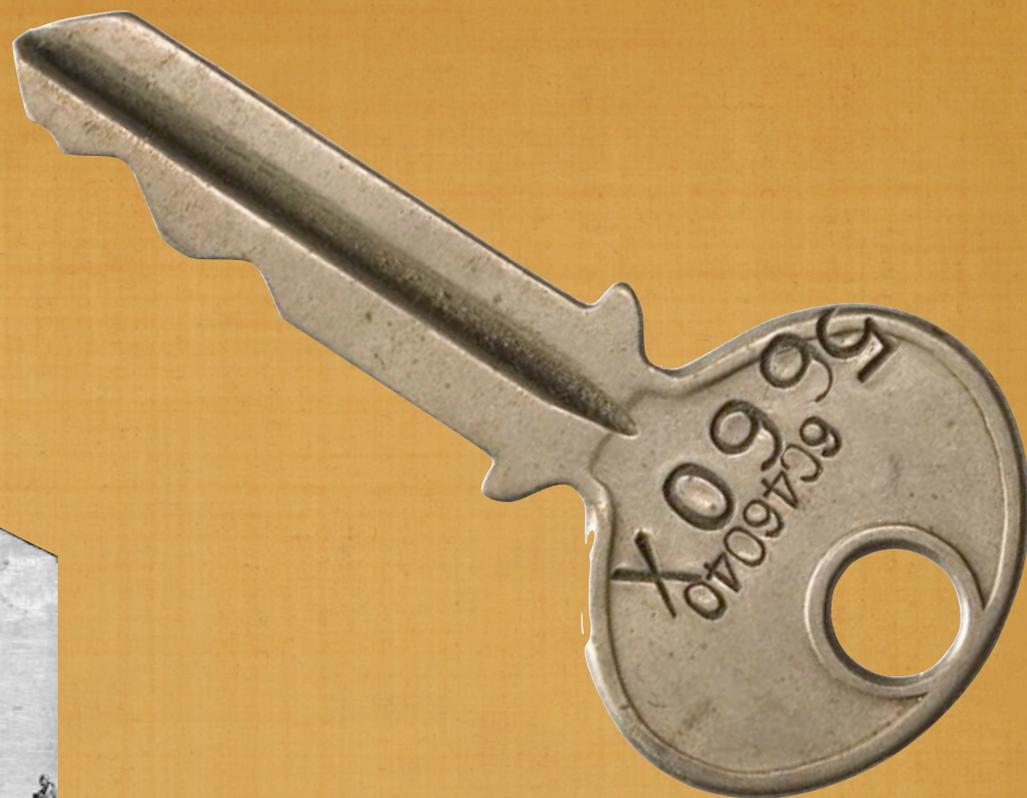
# Captivity

IN BABYLON

Video: Arch of Titus - Drive Thru History  
(1:52 - 5:33)

*Interpretive*

# KEY



After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, Rome was commonly associated with **Babylon** by hostile Jews and Christians

# Locating

BABYLON

Rome



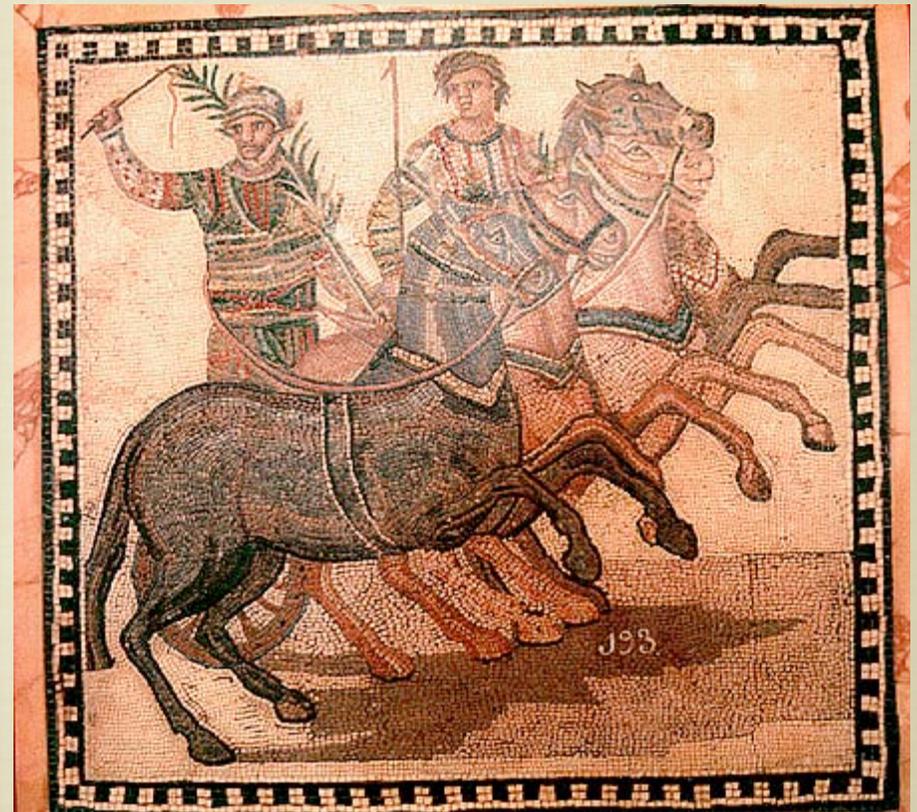
Babylon

Fallen, fallen is **Babylon** the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. (Revelation 14:8)

# Resistance

IN 1 PETER

At some places, the author offers a not-so-subtle **critique** of social and cultural norms that were operative in the Greco-Roman world



4

*Renouncing **Social** and **Cultural** Norms*

# RESISTANCE

IN 1 PETER



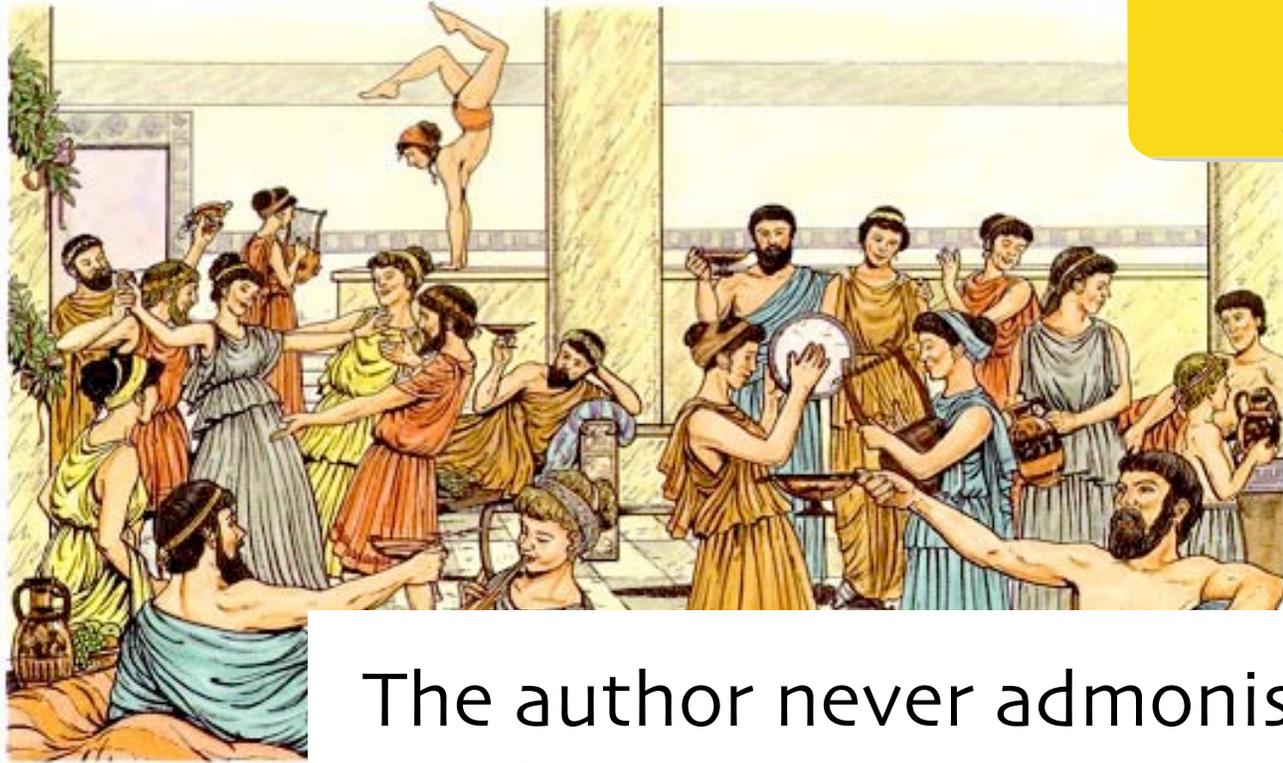
You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same flood of **wickedness**, and so they blaspheme. (1 Peter 4:3-4)

*Renouncing **Social** and **Cultural** Norms*

*Important*

# NOTE

**CAUTION**  
**KEEP**  
**AWAY**



The author never admonishes the readers to **return** to their former practices; he asks them to stay away, despite the consequences

# Resistance

IN 1 PETER



The author attributes the present conflict to **satanic** forces (working through the imperial gov't and the general public), and encourages his readers to resist

5

*Resisting **Satanically** - Inspired Opposition*

# RESISTANCE

IN 1 PETER

Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the **devil** prowls around, looking for someone to devour.

**Resist** him, steadfast in your faith (1 Peter 5:8-9)



*Resisting **Satanically** -Inspired Opposition*

*Important*

# NOTE

Convicted criminal

**Damnatio ad bestias**



"Roaring"  
lion

The threat which the author has in mind is both **spiritual** (apostasy) and **physical** (death)



## What we can **CONCLUDE** ...

The author of 1 Peter persistently promotes a sense of cautious **resistance** by subtly **undercutting** the power-base of dominant social and political structures along with the hegemonic discourse which underlies them



*Calculated*

# Conformity

**Meets**

*Cautious*

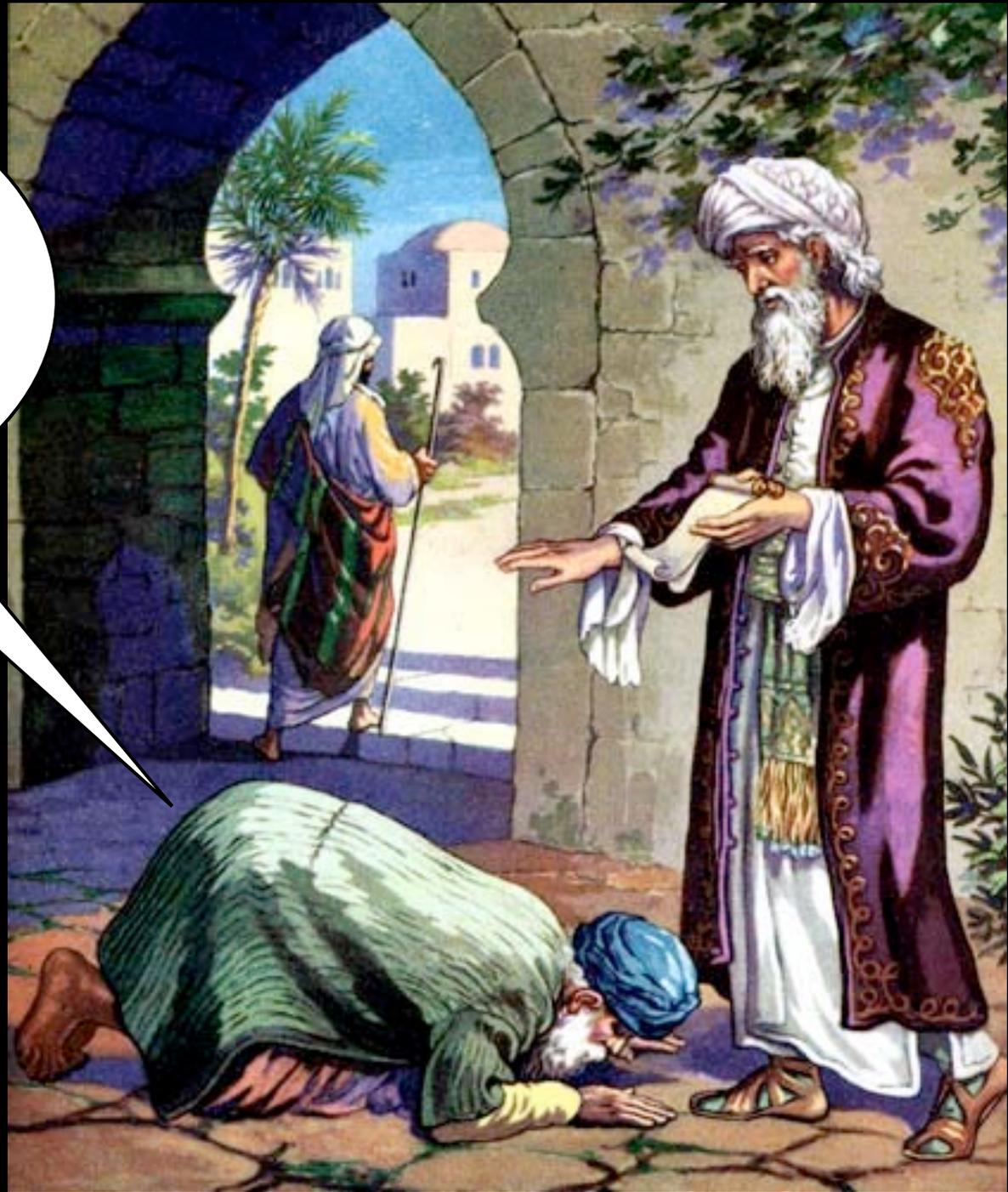
# Resistance

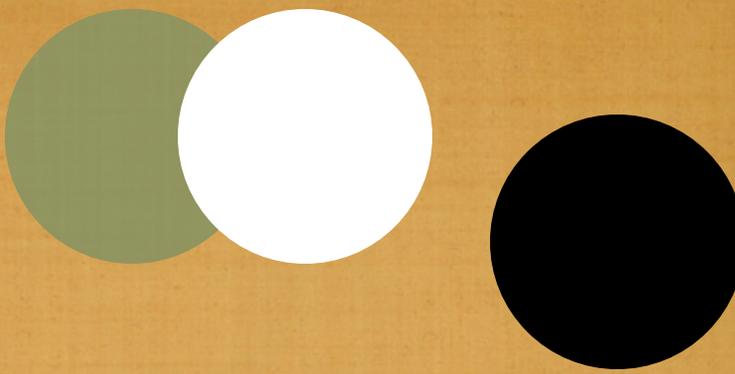


When the great lord  
passes, the wise  
servant bows deeply  
and farts silently

# Ethiopian Proverb

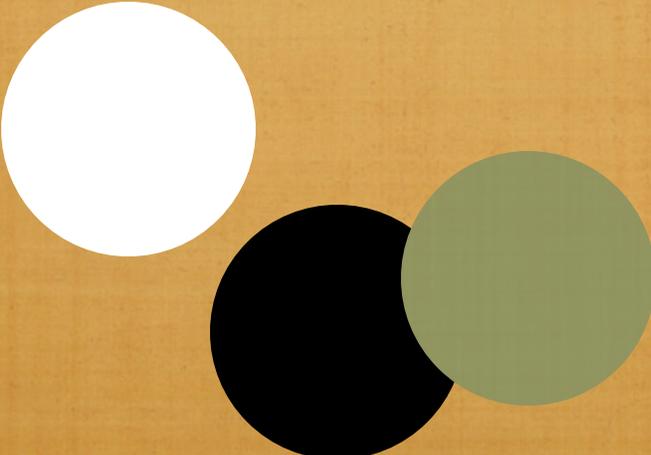
CALCULATED CONFORMITY  
& CAUTIOUS RESISTANCE

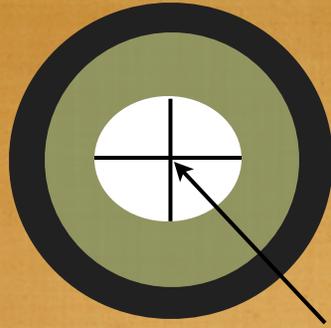




# IMPLICATIONS

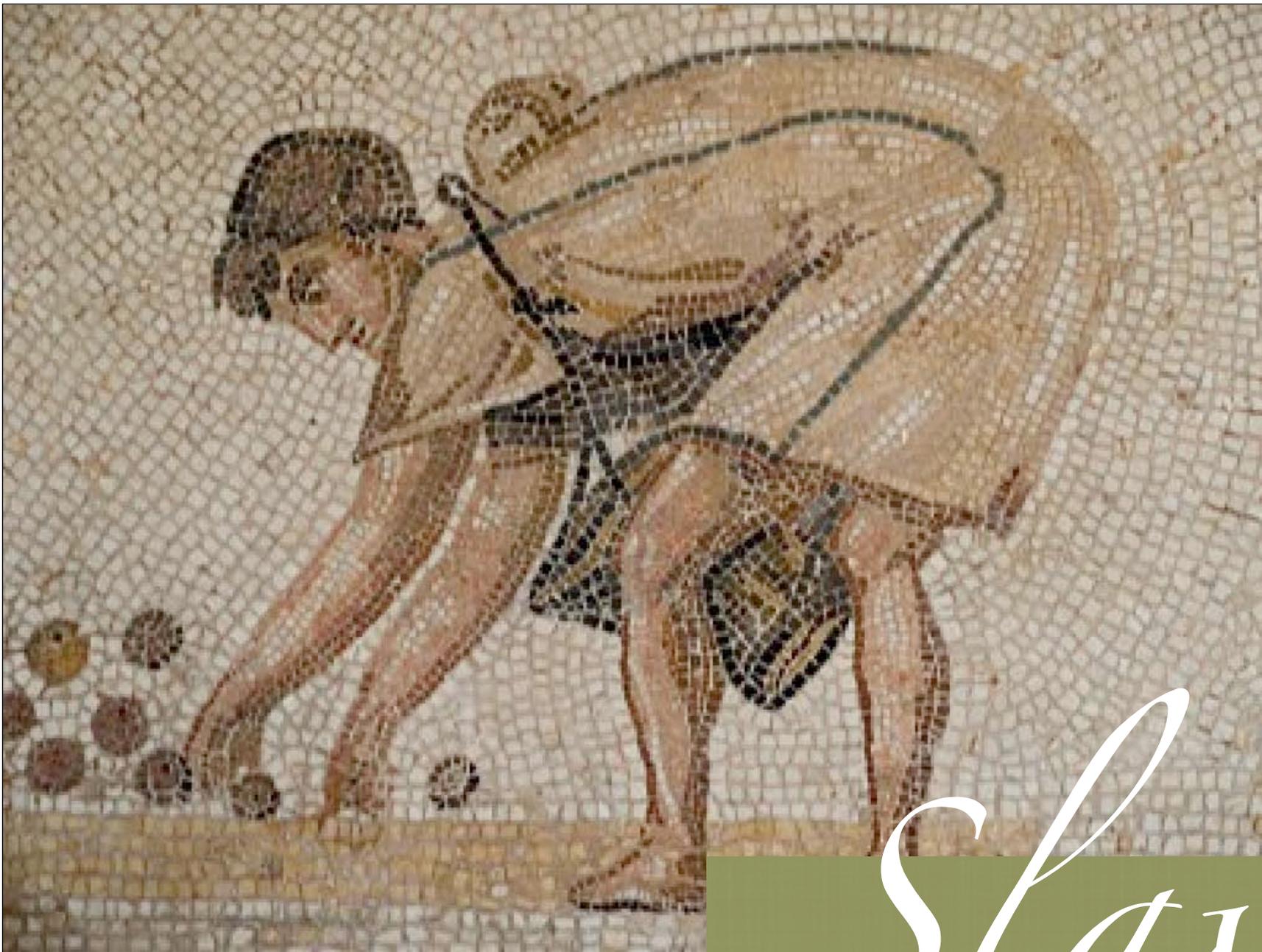
*Social Strategy*





# QUESTION

What **impact** would the social strategy of 1 Peter have in the lives of the audience?



*Slave*

EUPHEMOS

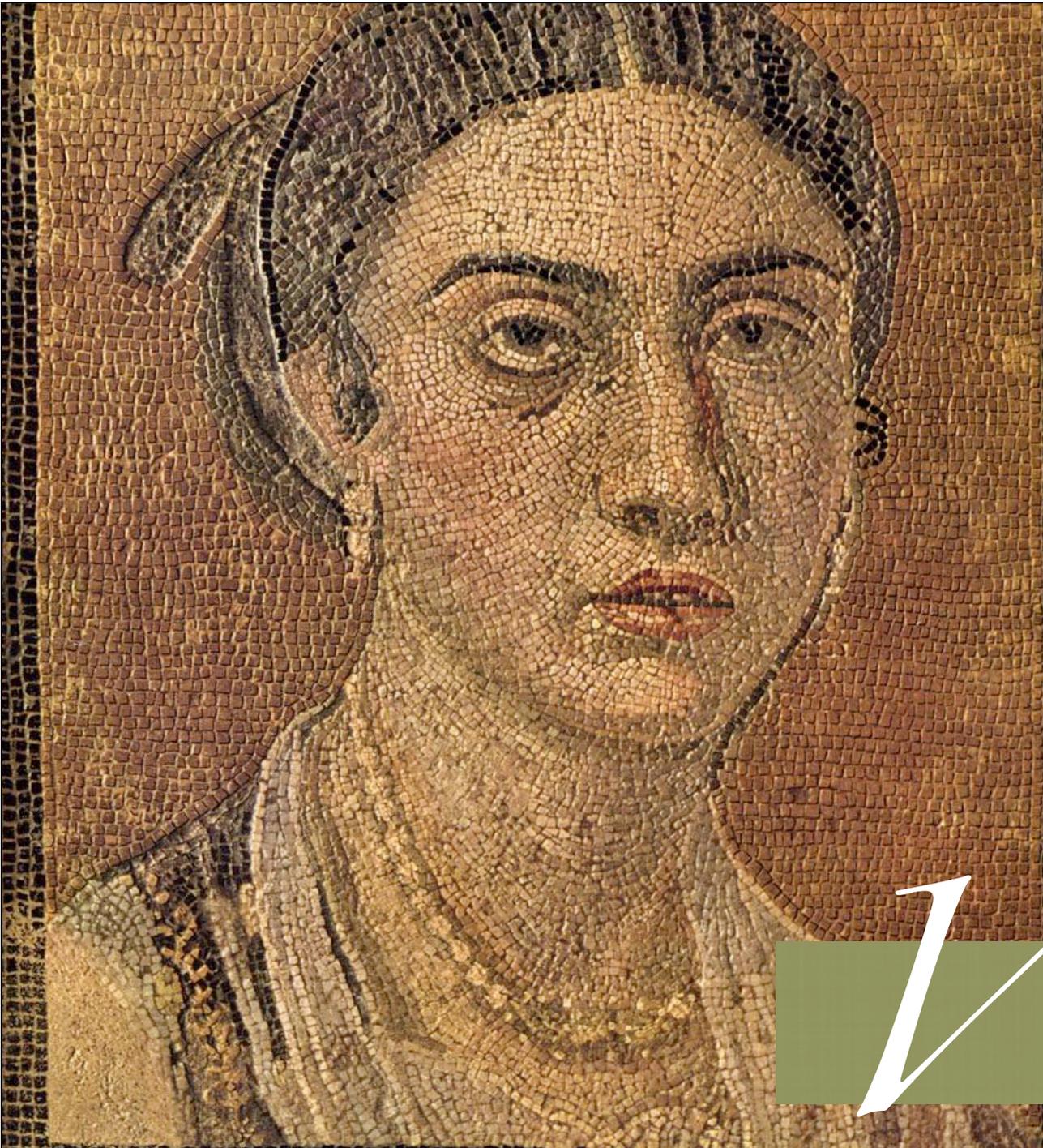
# CONVERSION

SLAVE



Euphemos worked to transport crops from the field of his master and when he joined the Christian group, he was **beaten** repeatedly for not continuing his deceitful business practices

**Differentiating** the Persecution Experience of Early Christians



*Wife*  
JUNIA

# CONVERSION

WIFE OF AN UNBELIEVER

Junia was married to an unbeliever who made her life a nightmare, **abusing** her both verbally and physically, including forcing her to worship his gods



**Differentiating** the Persecution Experience of Early Christians



# *Baker*

ALEXANEMOS

# CONVERSION

SMALL BUSINESS OWNER



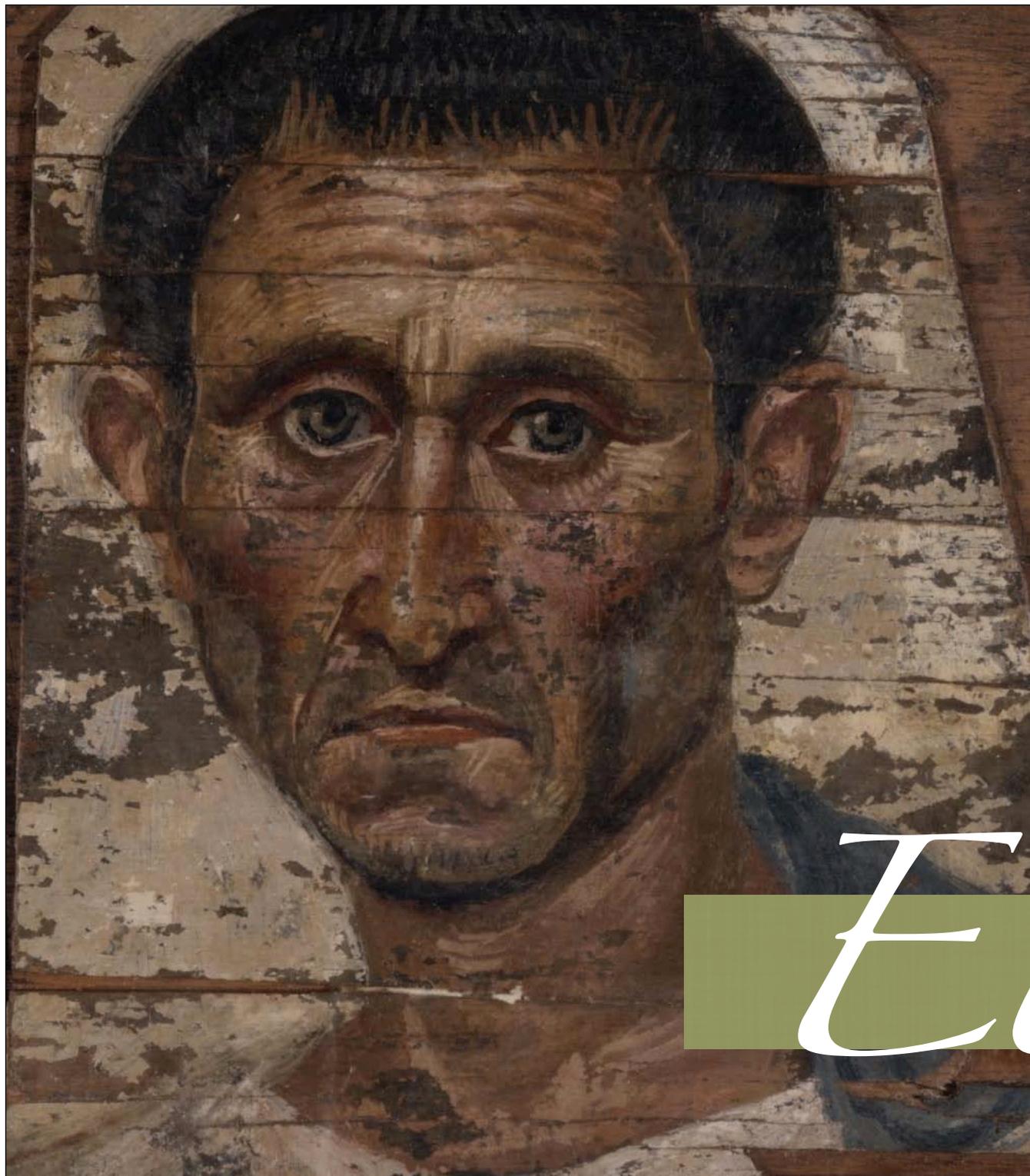
Apartment

persecution

Shops

Alexander was a baker whose business was nationalized and boycotted after he joined the Christian community

**Differentiating** the Persecution Experience of Early Christians



*Elder*

DEMETRIUS

# CONVERSION

CIVIC COUNCIL

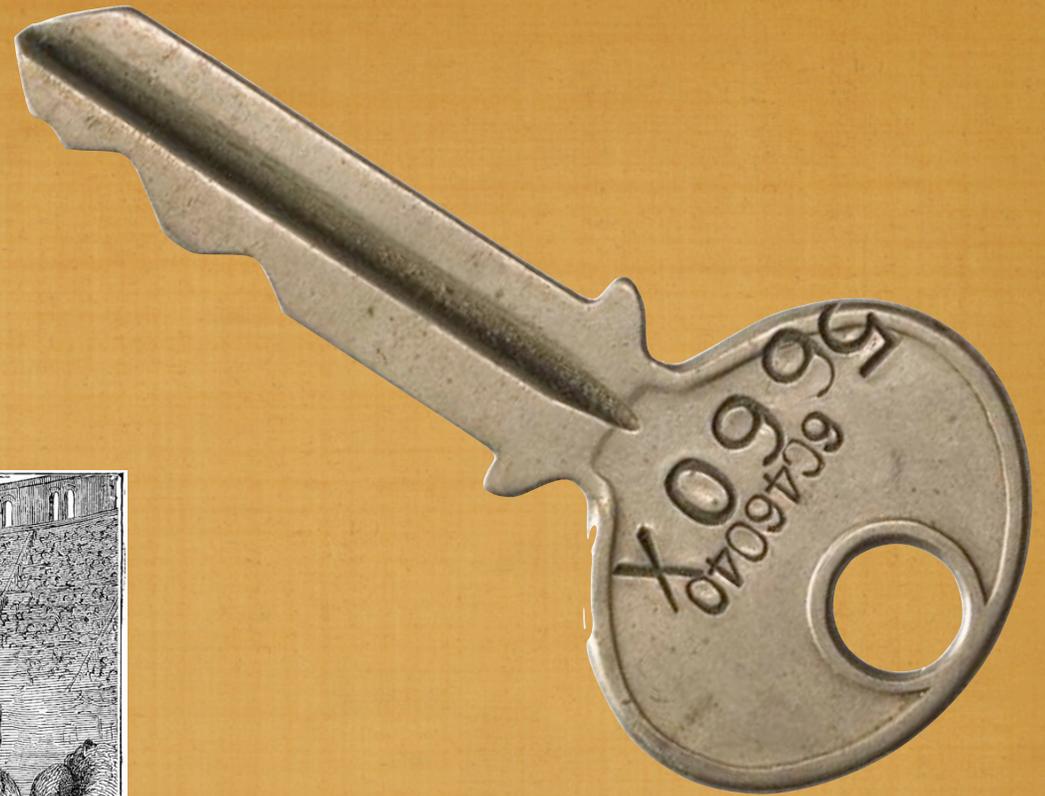


Demetrius was a member of the local **council** in the city of Ancyra (Galatia) and an elder in the church, who was charged in a Roman court for being a Christian

**Differentiating** the Persecution Experience of Early Christians

*Interpretive*

# KEY



In each case, the author's social strategy would have only further **compounded** (not solved) the problem of persecution

How does this proposed strategy relate to the author's primary and persistent admonition to his readers is to **"do good"**?

*One Final*

# Hurdle

PROPOSED STRATEGY OF 1 PETER



# 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 Pet 2:12) For the Lord's sake submit to the authority of every human creature, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who **do good**. For it is God's will that by **doing good** you should silence the ignorance of the foolish (1 Pet 2:12-15)

*Diagnosing the **Social Strategy** of 1 Peter*

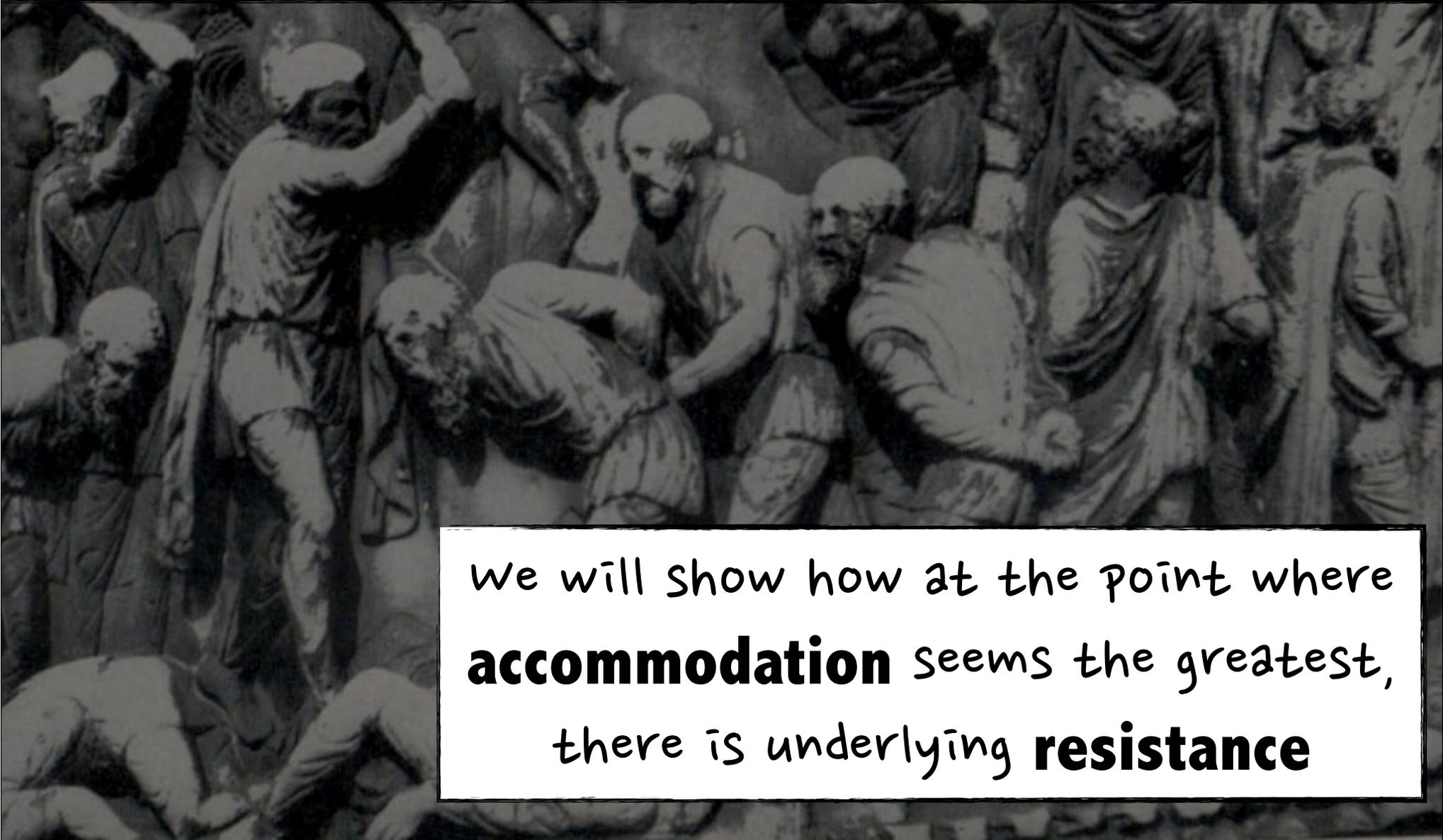


Everyone interprets 1 Peter's  
good works language as an  
attempt to **accommodate**  
Greco-Roman society and  
thereby to lessen social  
hostility . . .

*Potential*

OBJECTION

# Next Time



We will show how at the point where **accommodation** seems the greatest, there is underlying **resistance**

# WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

- 1 Read handout by Horrell (“Resistance/Conformity”) on a postcolonial approach to 1 Peter

- 2 Read handout by Winter (“Christian Benefactors”) on “doing good” in 1 Peter

