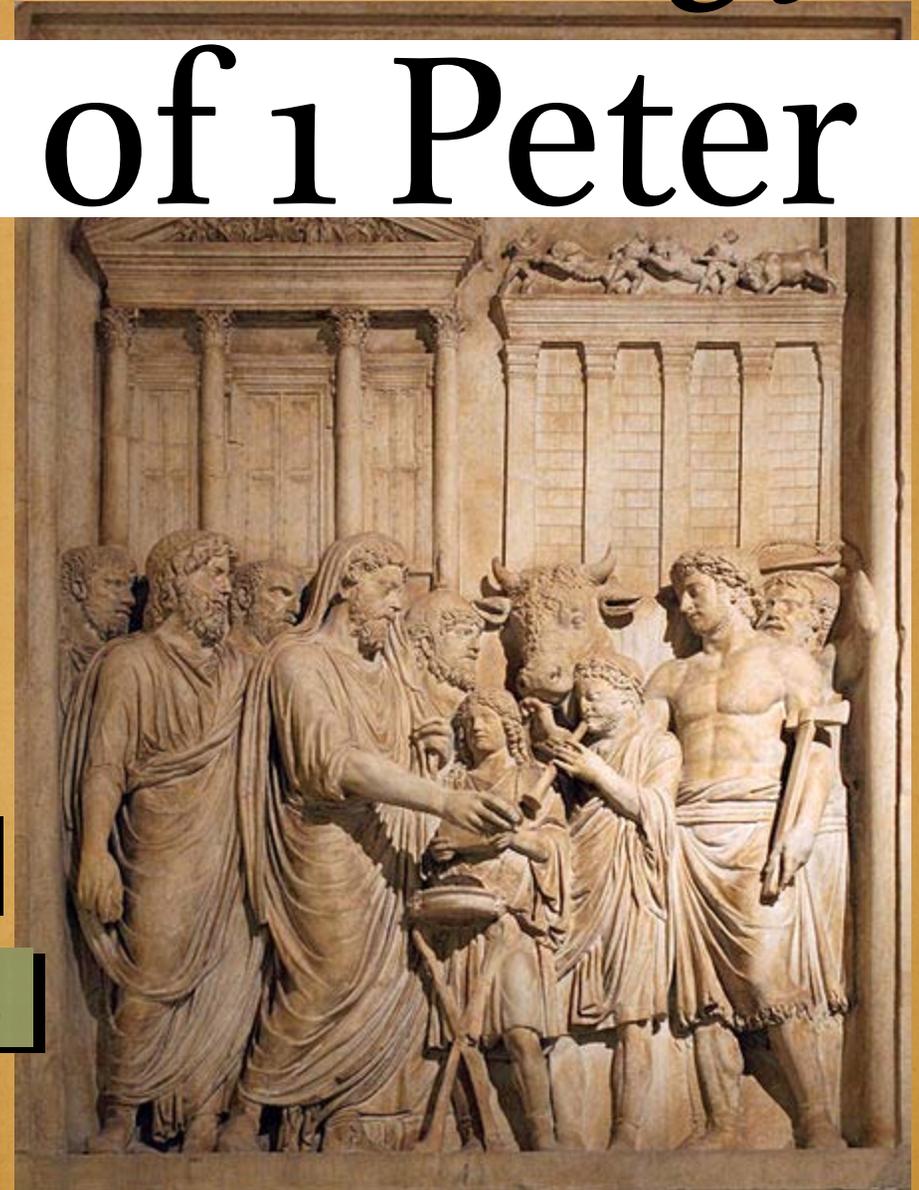
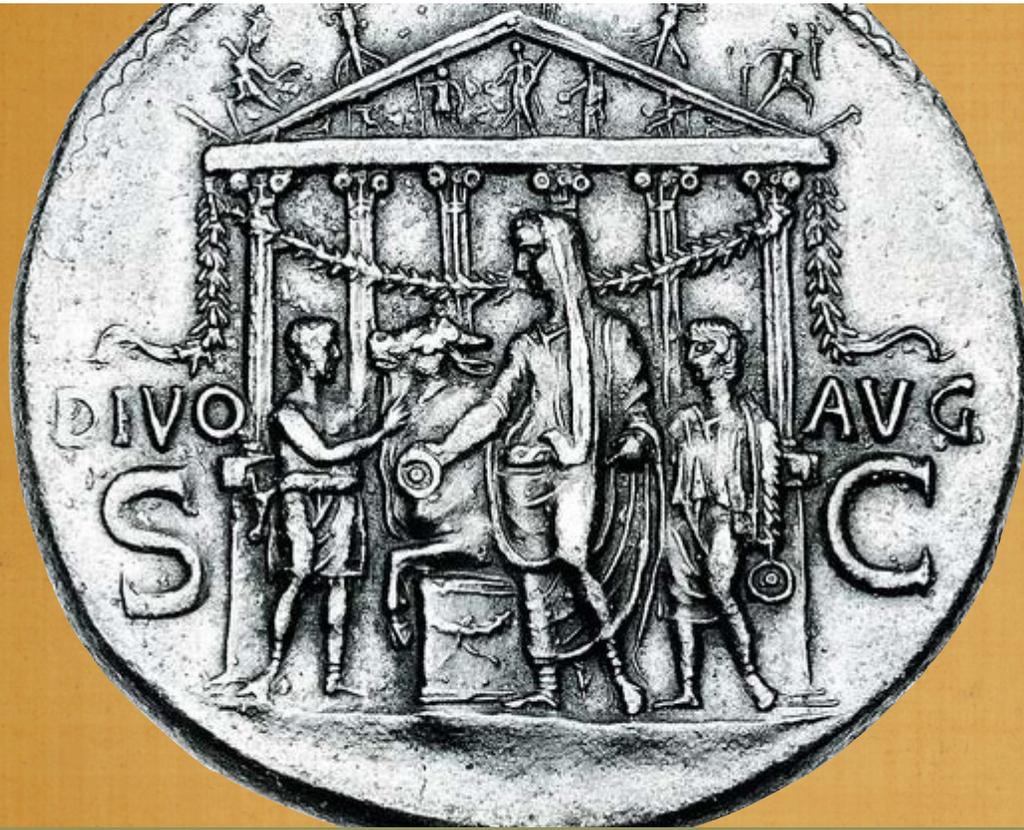


The

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

NOTICE

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

Social Strategy

IN 1 PETER

Rx

MEDICAL CENTER

① Social Situation

② Author's Formulation

DUH

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

THINK ABOUT IT

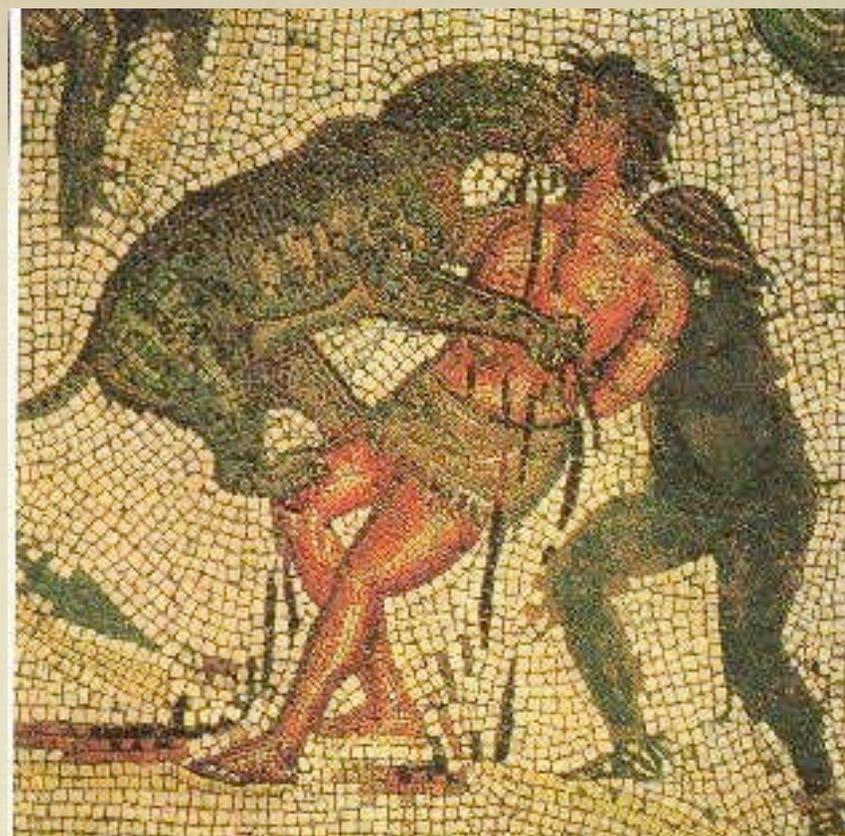
NO REALLY, THINK ABOUT IT

Interpretive

Problem



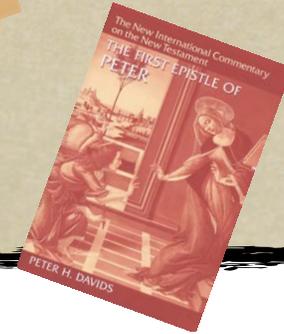
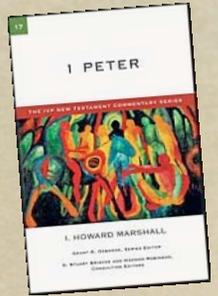
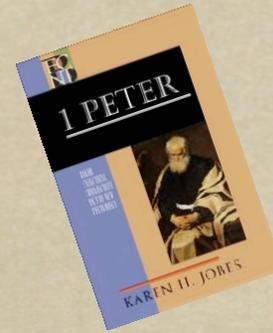
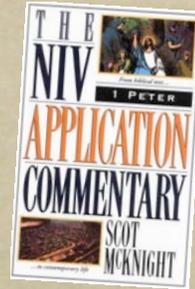
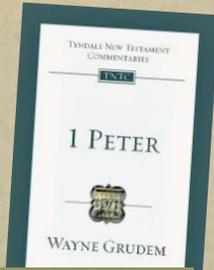
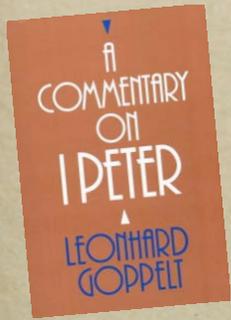
For over a century, commentators have debated the **nature** of persecution represented in 1 Peter



THE NATURE OF

Persecution

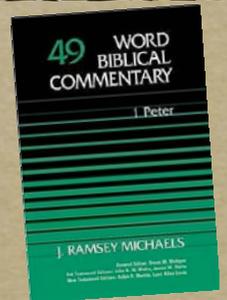
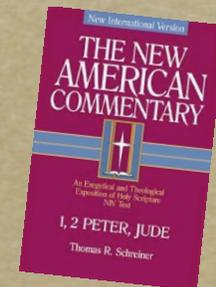
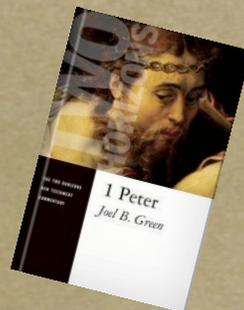
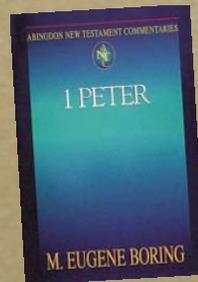
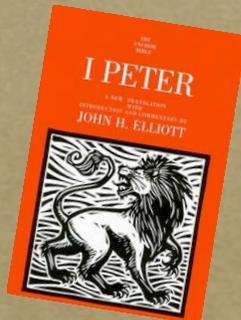
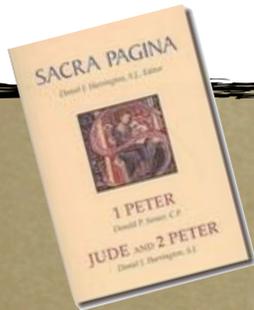
IN 1 PETER



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



The persecution was . . .

Limited to only
a few locations



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



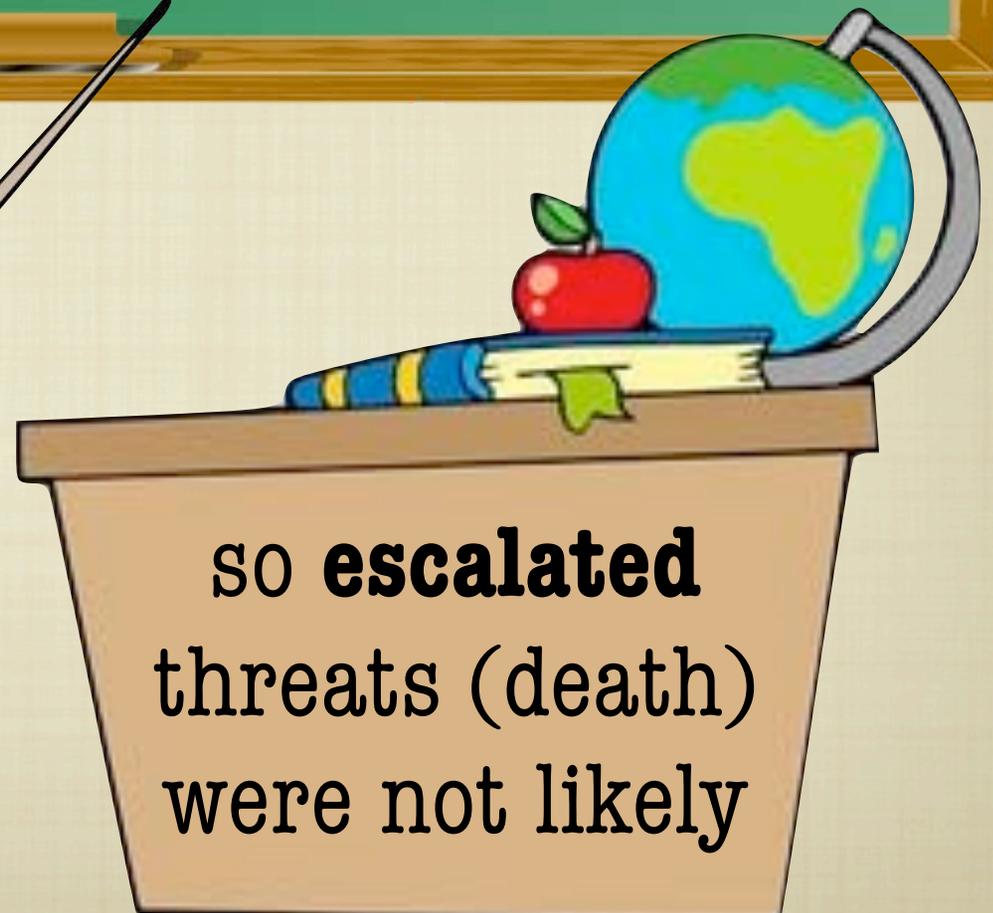
The persecution was . . .

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?*

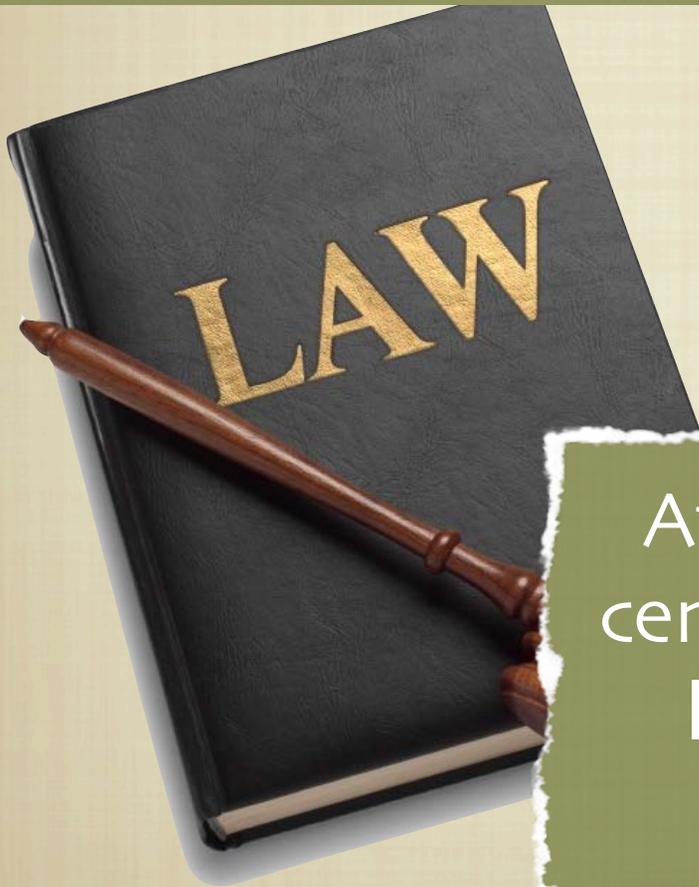
Legal

STATUS



Interpretive

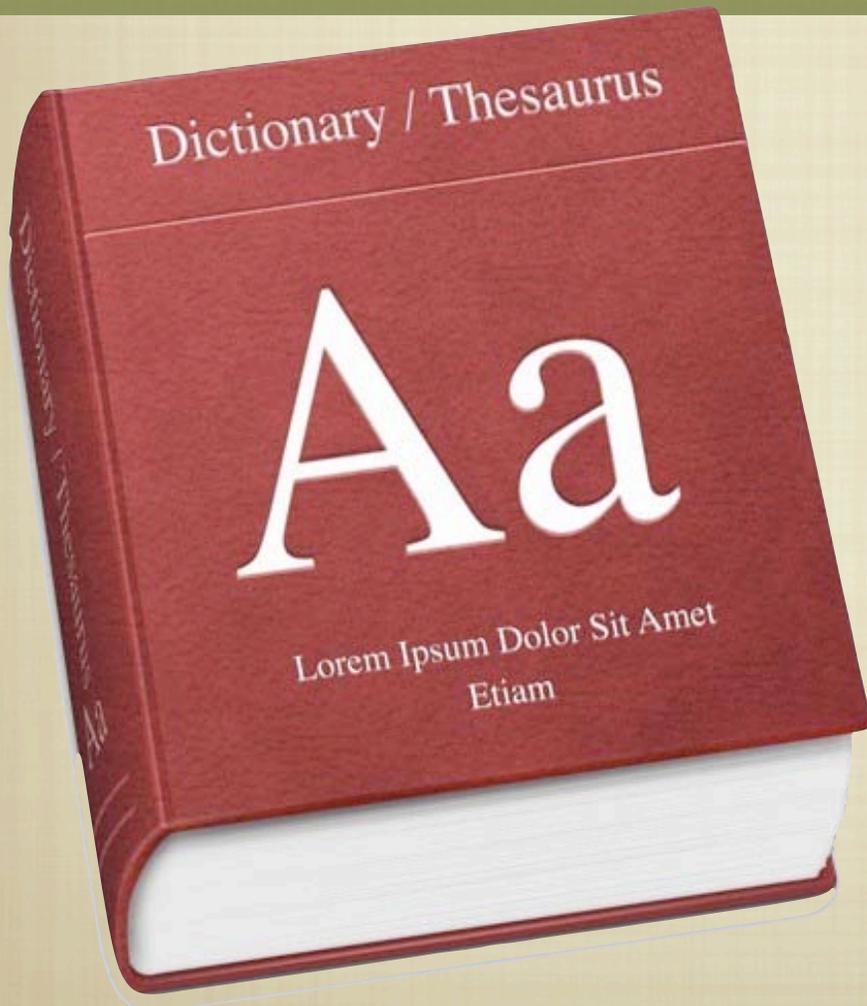
KEY



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

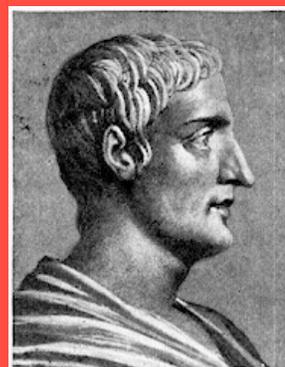
PERSECUTION

Nero
64 CE

1 Peter



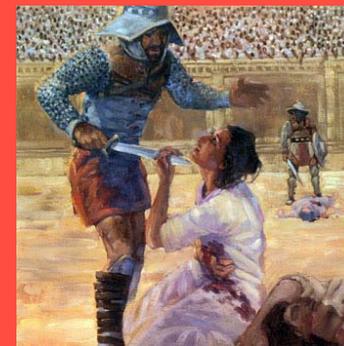
100 CE



Pliny
111/112 CE

200 CE

Perpetua
203 CE



100 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

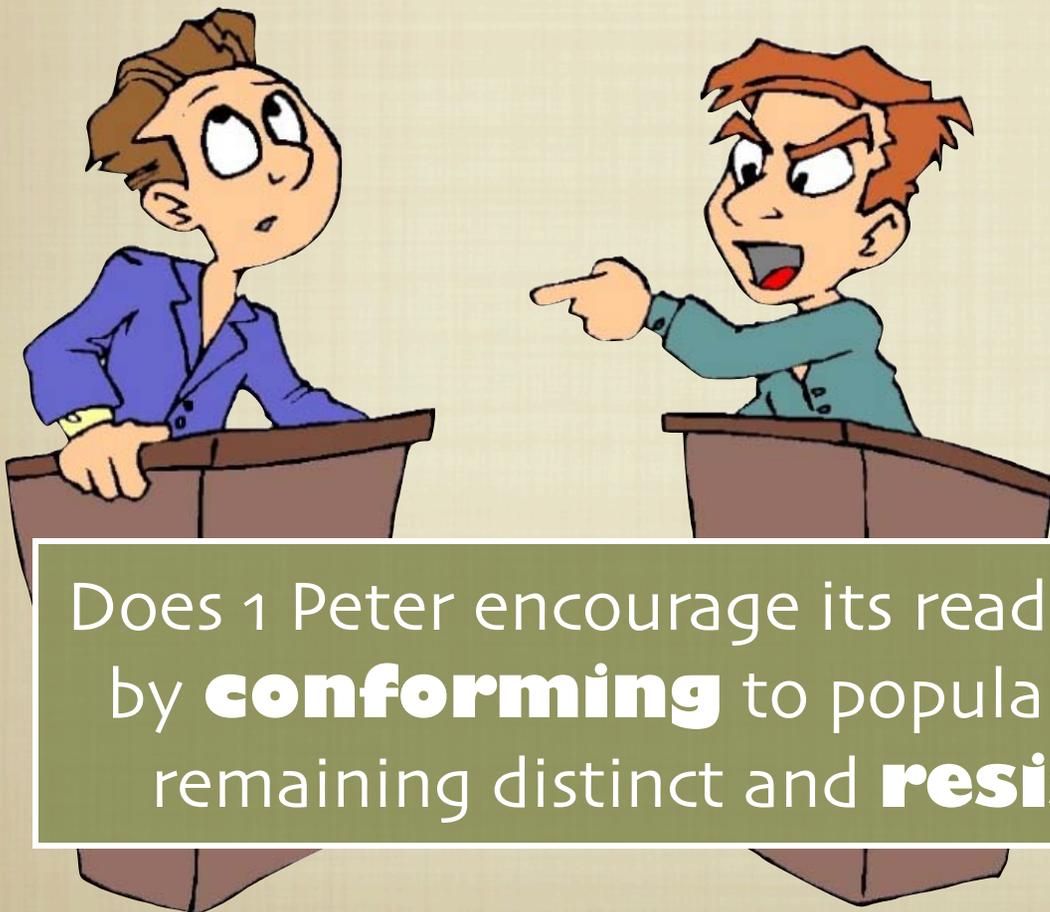
① Social Situation

② Author's Formulation

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?

Conformity

DAVID L. BALCH

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

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*

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*

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*

Important

Note



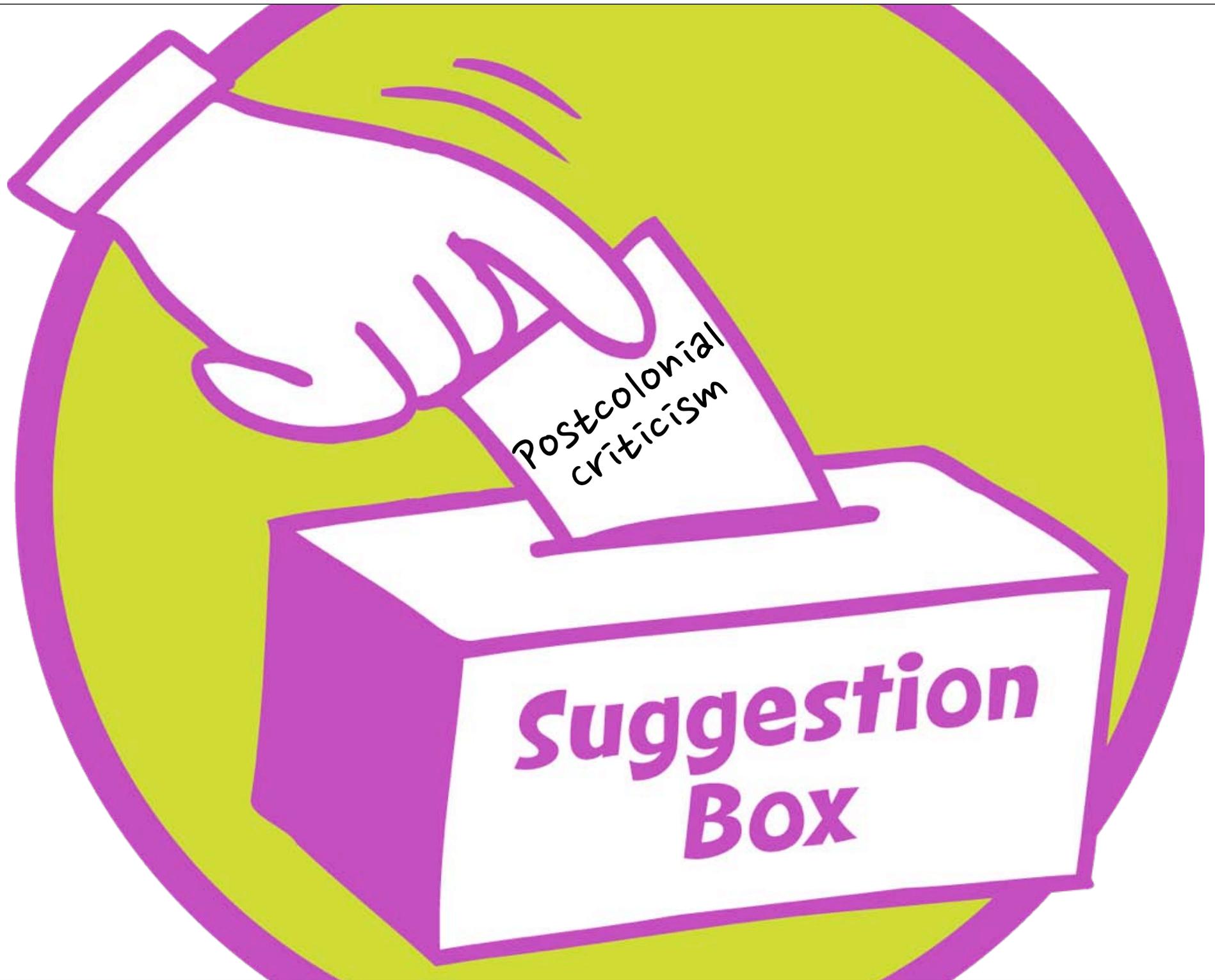
The Balch-Elliott debate (which began in 1981) set the **parameters** of the discussion on the social strategy in 1 Peter which have been followed for the last 30 years

Result

BALCHELLIOTT DEBATE



Interpretive Stalemate



Postcolonial
criticism

**Suggestion
Box**

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"

Christian

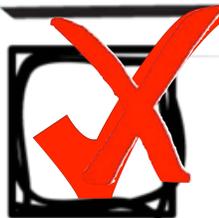
TO DO LIST



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



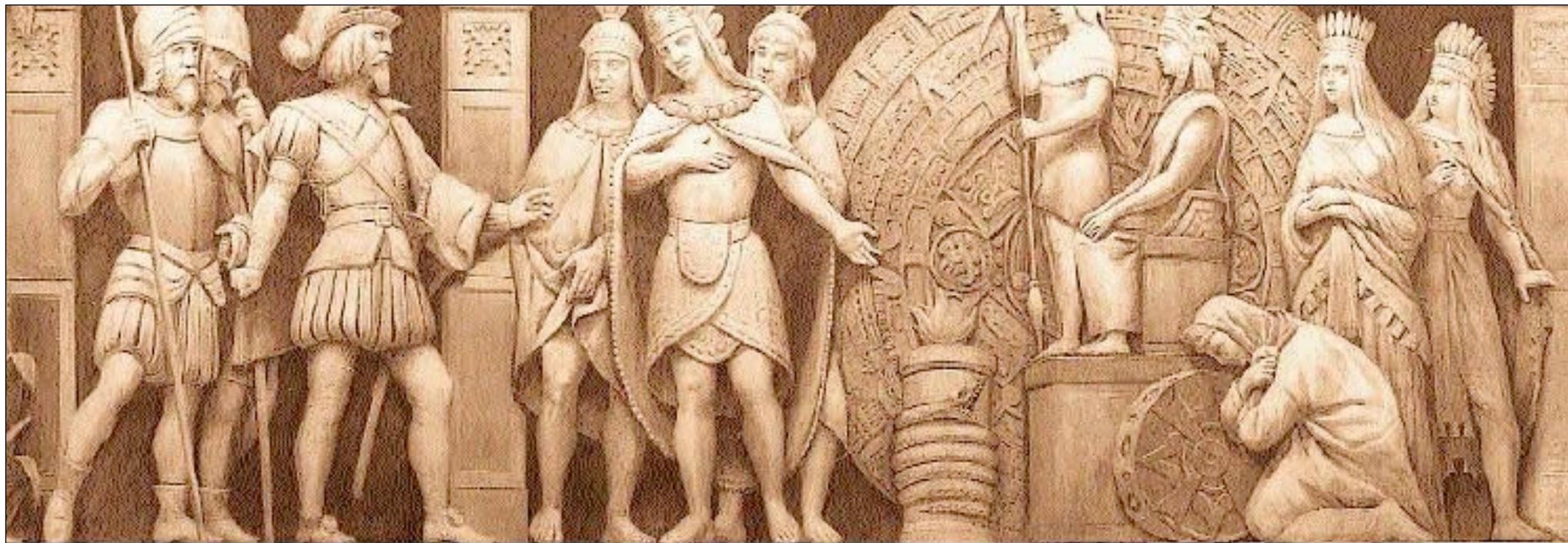
Extend appropriate worship to **gods** and emperor



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

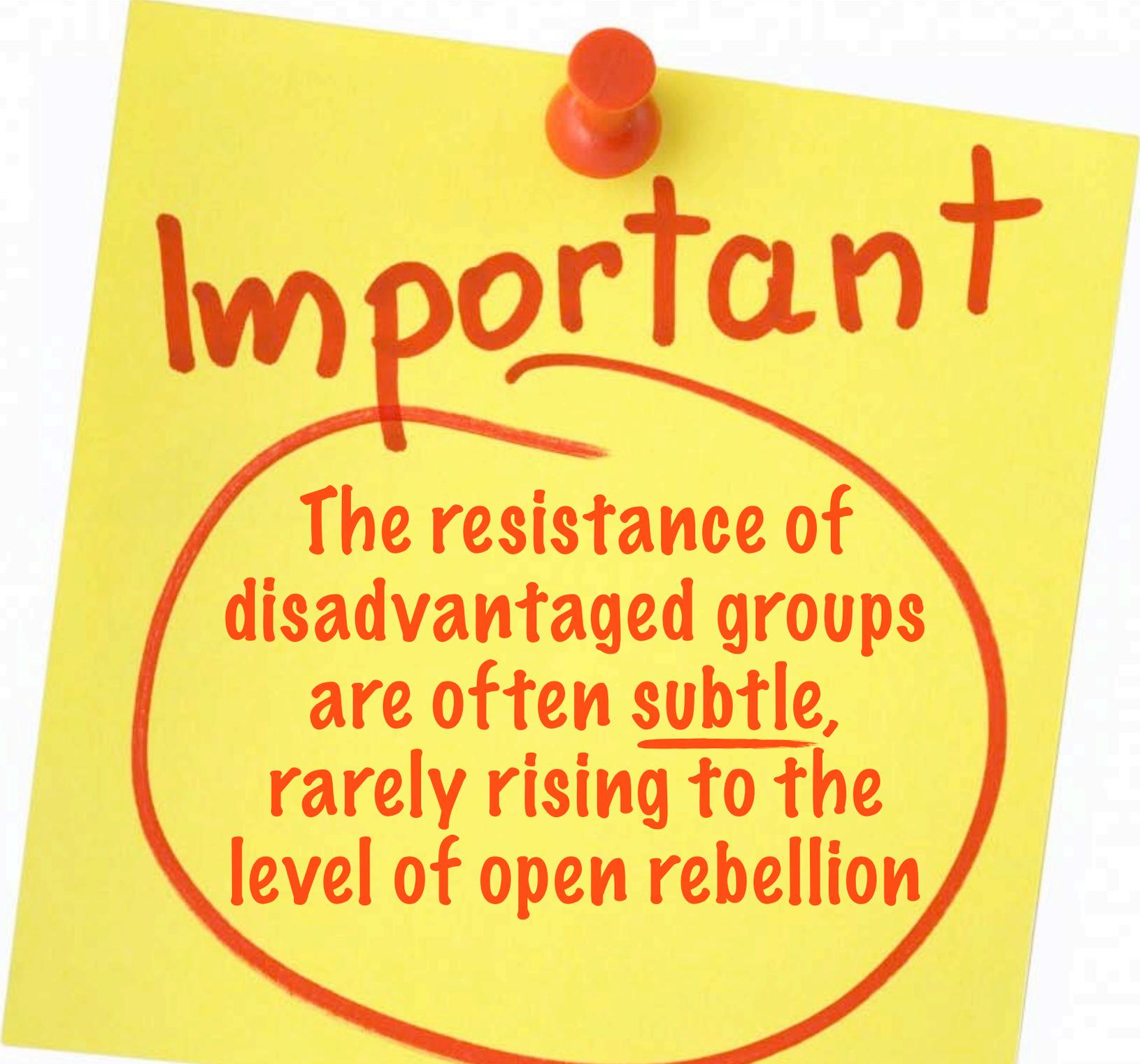


Participate in popular social **conventions**
(e.g., shows; contests)



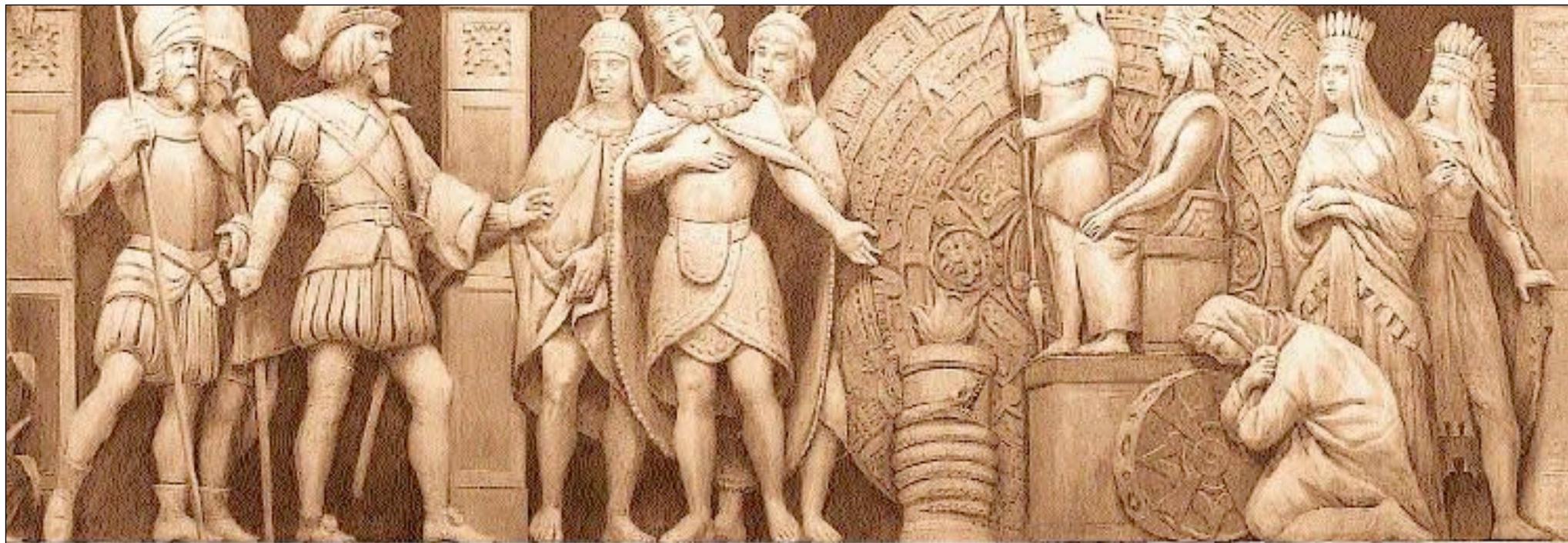
What we can **CONCLUDE** ...

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



Important

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



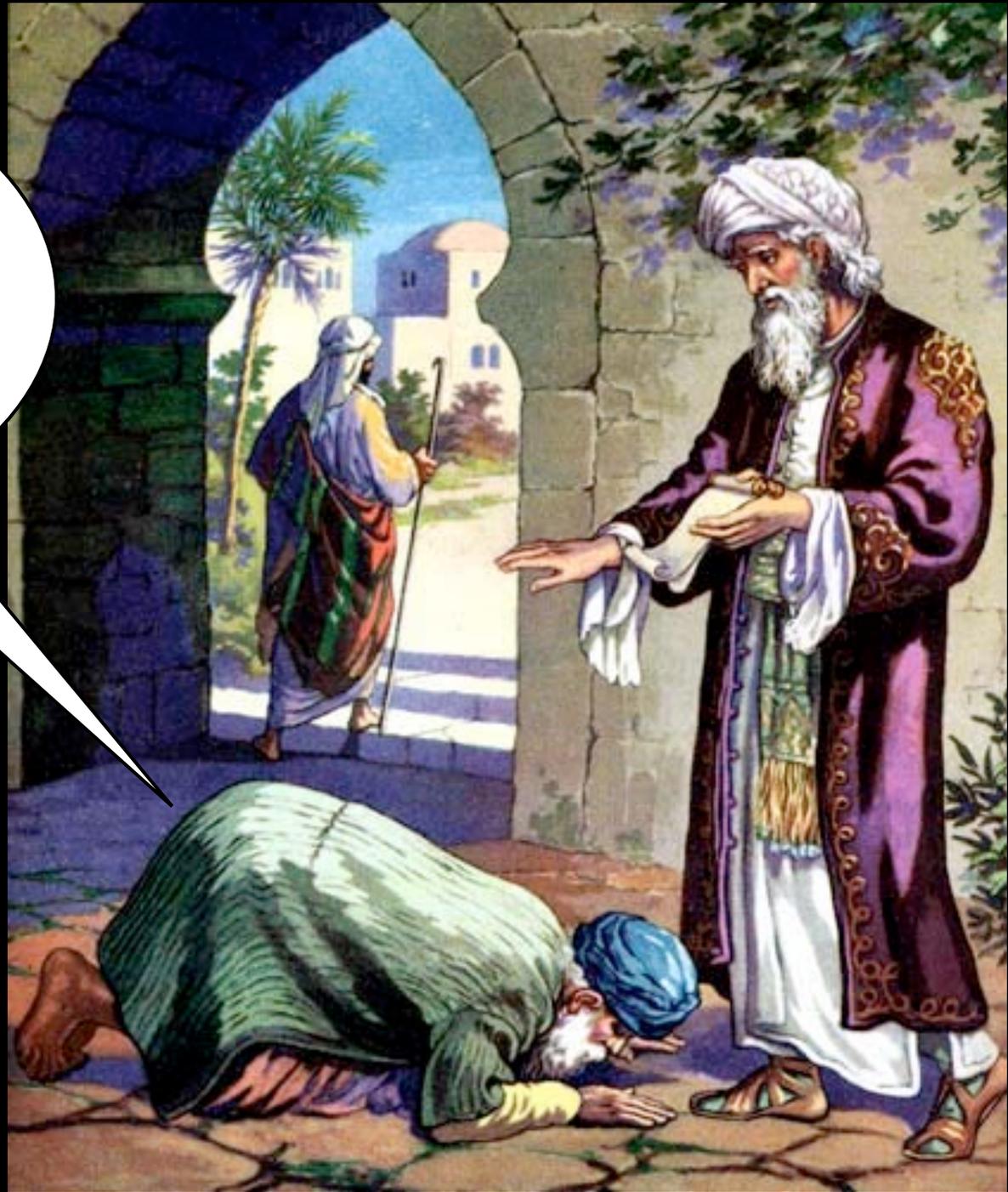
What we can **CONCLUDE** ...

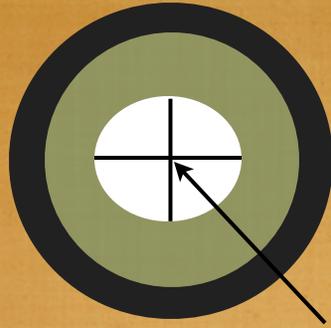
The author of 1 Peter persistently promotes a sense of cautious **resistance** by subtly **undercutting** the power-base of dominant social and political structures along with the hegemonic discourse which underlies them

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

Ethiopian Proverb

CALCULATED CONFORMITY
& CAUTIOUS RESISTANCE





QUESTION

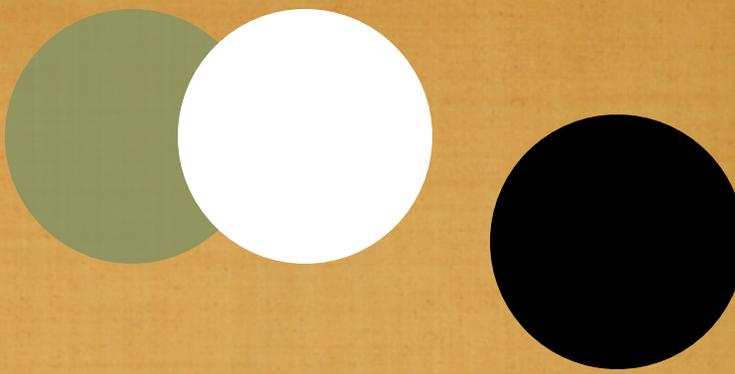
How does the author's persistent admonition to "**do good**" relate to this proposed strategy?



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

Potential

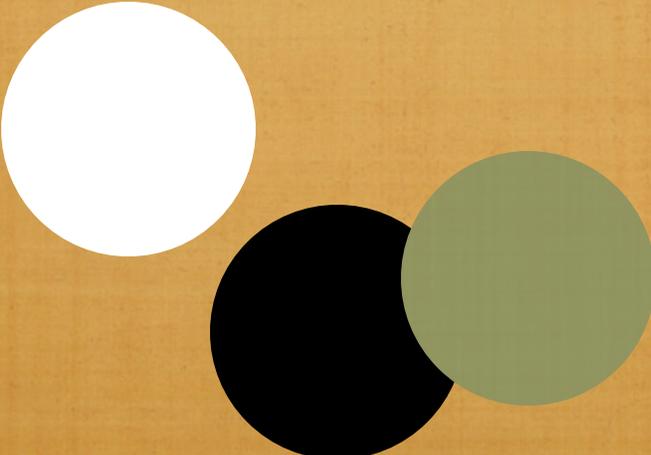
OBJECTION



Understanding

GOOD WORKS

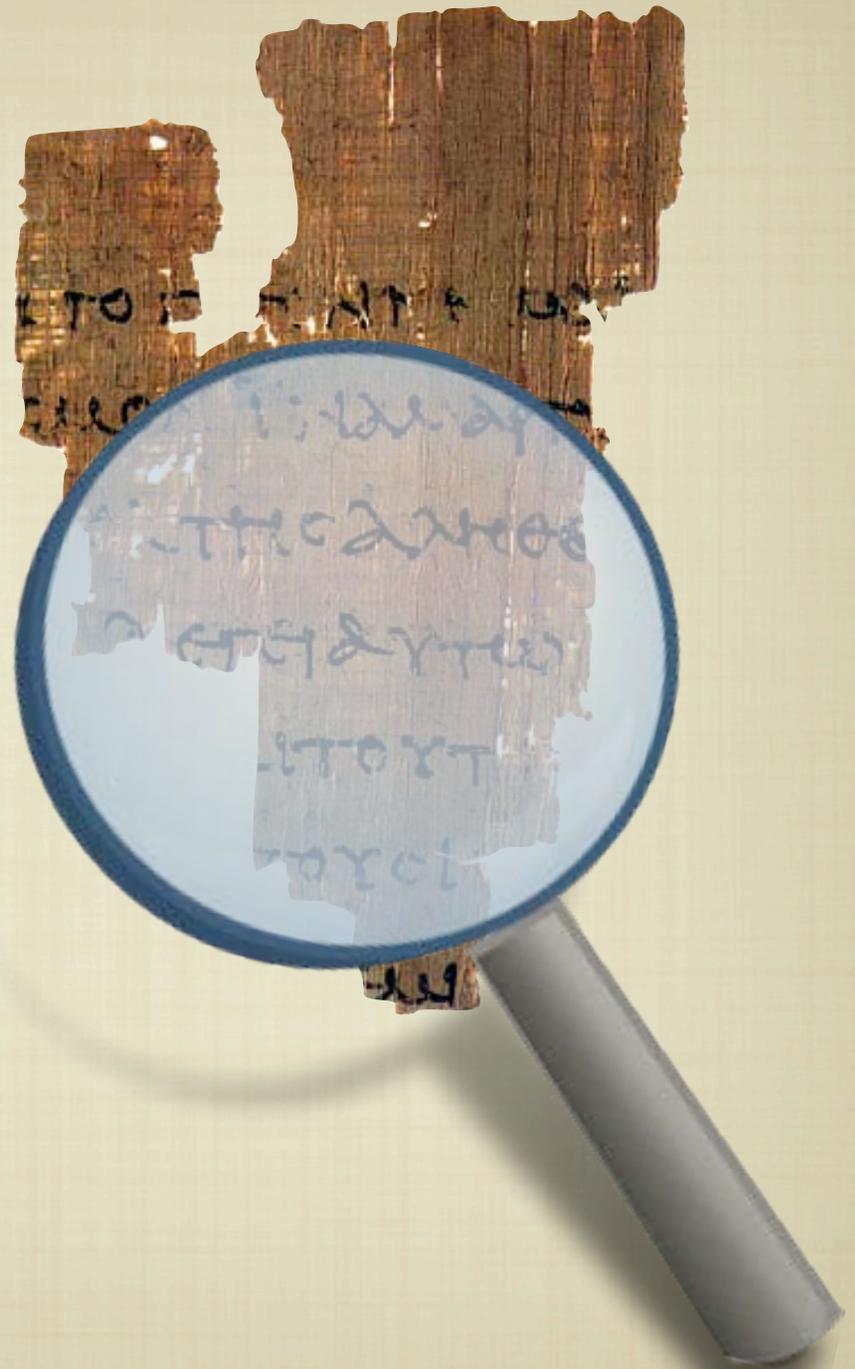
in 1 Peter



Closer

Look

The idea of “doing good” or performing “good works” is one of the **central** themes that is found throughout the letter of 1 Peter



GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER



Maintain **good** conduct 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)

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

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER

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 Peter 2:13-15)



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

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER



Let them turn away from evil and **do good**; let them seek peace and pursue it . . . Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is **good**? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed (1 Peter 3:11, 13-14)

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

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER

If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners? Therefore, 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)



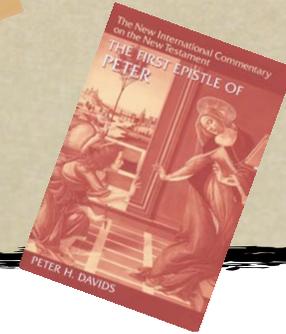
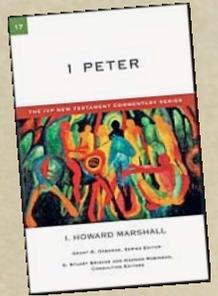
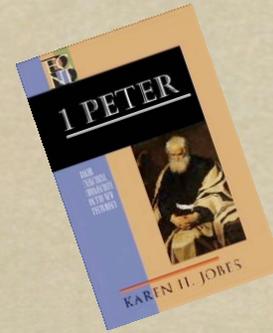
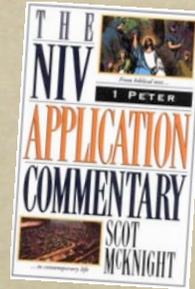
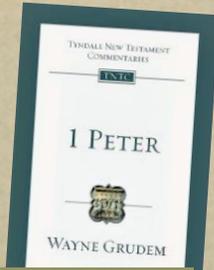
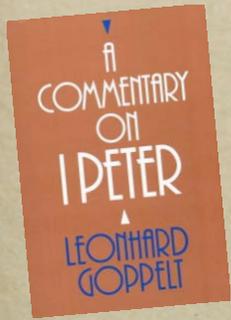
*A **central** theme in the social strategy of 1 Peter*



THE NATURE OF

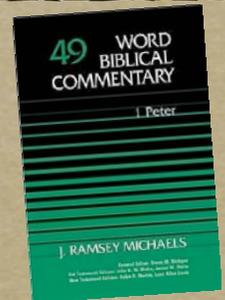
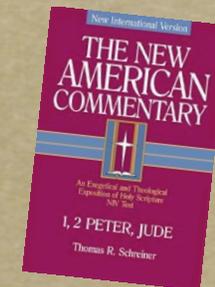
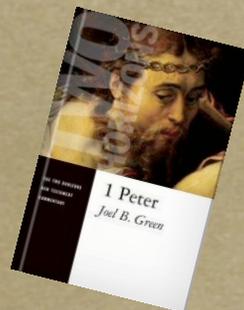
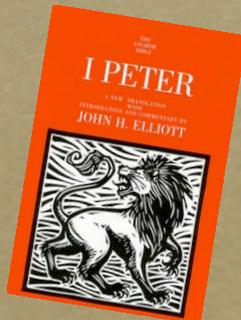
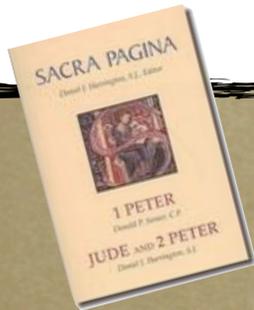
Good Works

IN 1 PETER



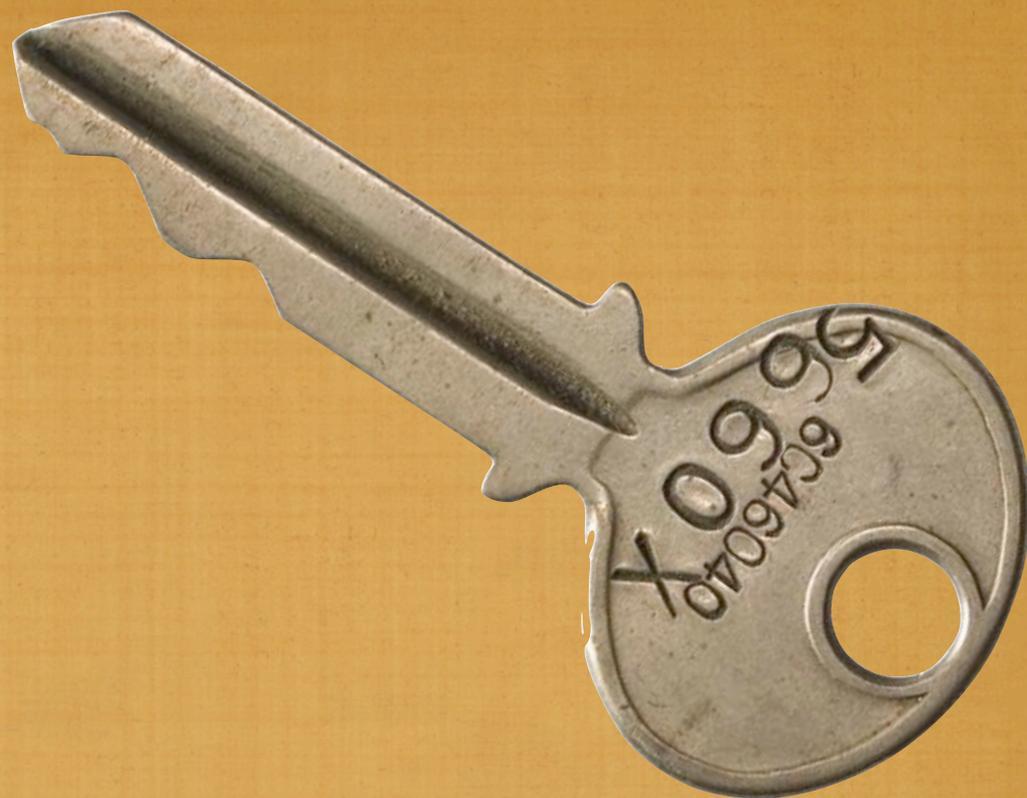
CONSENSUS

Most interpreters understand good works in 1 Peter as acts which were consistent with popular ***standards*** of conduct and which were thus ***favorably*** recognized by Greco-Roman society



Interpretive

KEY



good
works!

Even those who disagree on the larger social strategy of 1 Peter still **agree** on the nature and function of good works

Conformity

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Society of
Biblical Literature
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LET WIVES BE SUBMISSIVE
The Domestic Code in I Peter

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With a New Introduction

Resistance

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**BAD
NEWS**

**G O O D
N E W S**



THE NATURE OF

Good Works

IN 1 PETER

PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION

WARNING

PROCEED
WITH
CAUTION

Scholars who have
written on 1 Peter
have consistently
misunderstood
and therefore
misrepresented the
good works motif

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 consensus is largely built on a perceived **optimism** that doing good will abrogate the tensions with outsiders and create more positive interaction with them

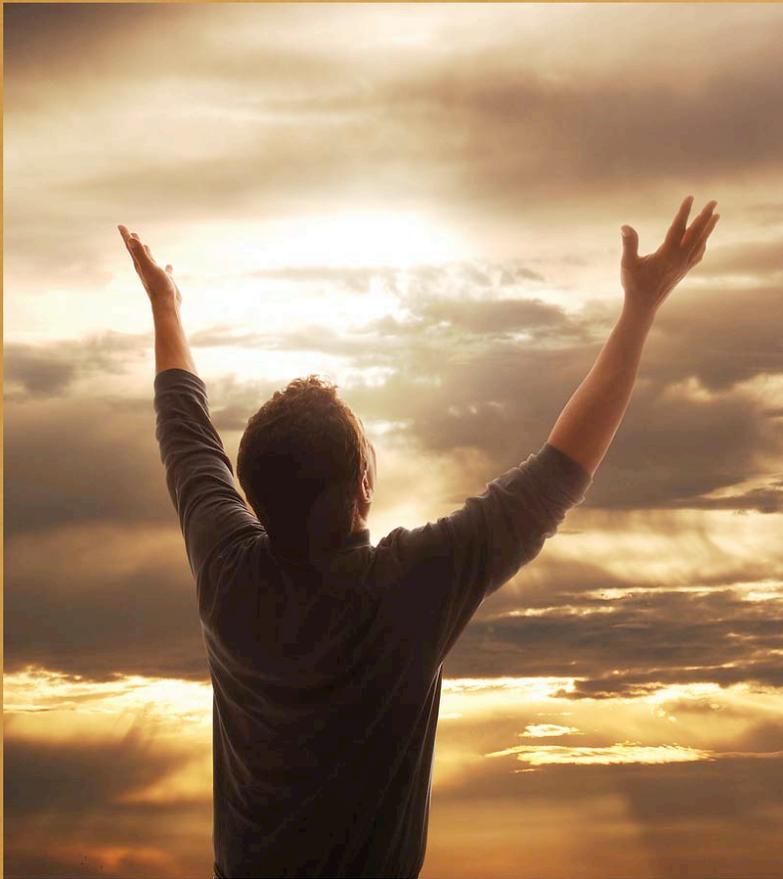


1

*Focus on the **optimism** toward good works*

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER



Maintain good conduct 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)

*Focus on the **optimism** toward good works*



Good works are . . .

favorably regarded
by pagan society

so they must be
consistent with
accepted standards
of conduct

Interpretive

Problem

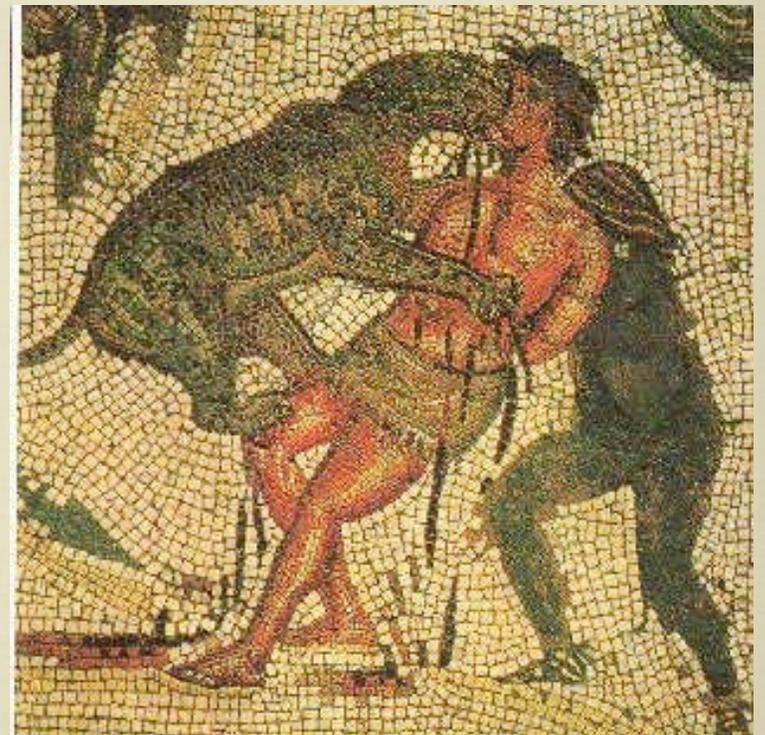
FOR THE MODERN CONSENSUS



Problems

WITH THE MODERN CONSENSUS

The optimism of 1 Peter is scarcely present; more often, the author expects that good works will be met with a **negative** response from outsiders



*Focus on the **optimism** toward good works*

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER



Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who **abuse** you for your **good** conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to **suffer** for doing **good**, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil (1 Peter 3:16-17)

*Focus on the **optimism** toward good works*

Development

OF THE MODERN CONSENSUS

Most interpret the good works motif as a **shared** value system, where do what is perceived as “good” in the sight of both God and men



2

*Focus on good works as **shared values***

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER



John H. Elliott

“The behavior of the Christians must be consistent with their distinctive identity as the elect and holy family of God while at the same time providing no actual basis for reproach on the part of their neighbors.”

John H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (New York: Doubleday, 2000) 473

Focus on good works as **shared values**

Interpretive

KEY



The convergence is only **partial**:
when the two systems of values
come into conflict (e.g., sacrificing
to the gods), the will of God takes
precedence over the will of humans

The Formula

OF GOOD WORKS



What is
pleasing to
God



(Some of)
what is
pleasing to
society



End of
conflict with
outsiders



Interpretive

Problem

FOR THE MODERN CONSENSUS



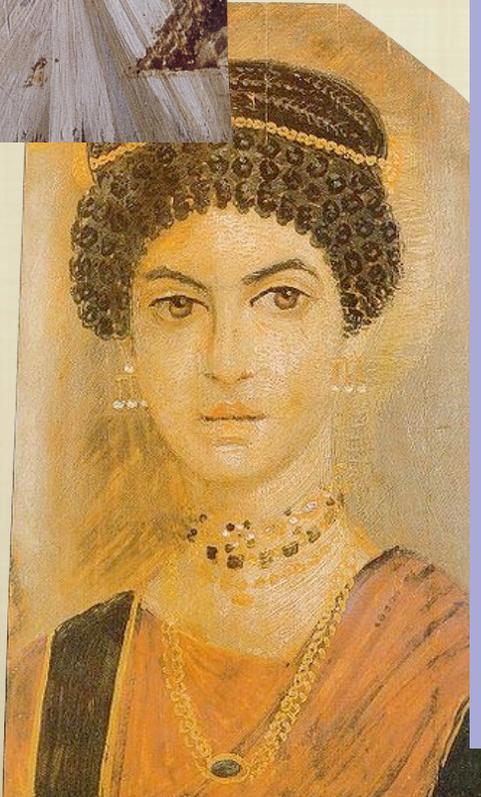
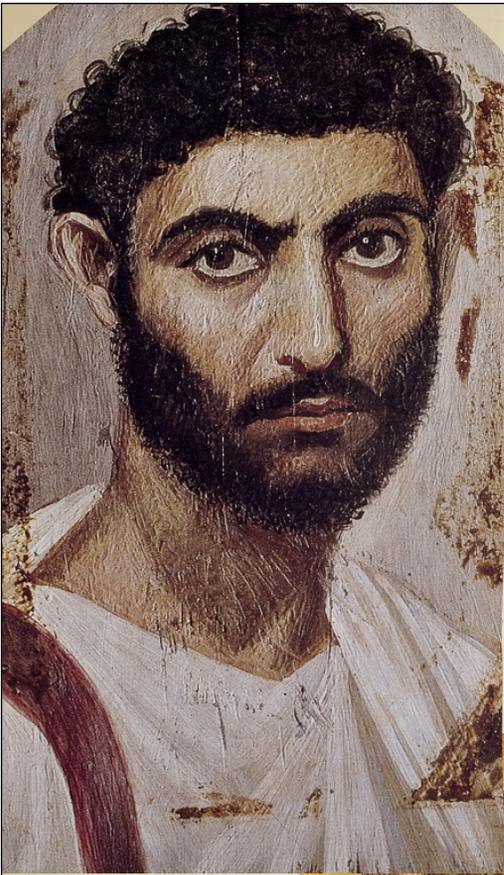
Problems

WITH THE MODERN CONSENSUS

The consensus assumes that society will respond in the exact **opposite** manner (changing from hostility to acceptance) toward the very **same** Christian actions



*Focus on the **optimism** toward good works*

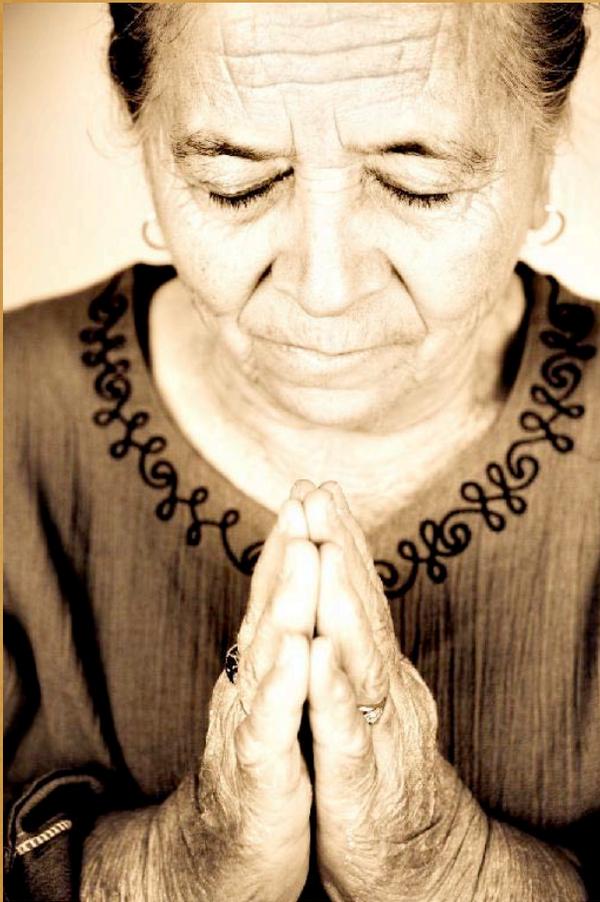


Where the responsibility of a wife is to worship and to recognize only the gods that her husband reveres, and to close the door upon strange cults and foreign superstitions

Plutarch, Advice to Bride and Groom

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER



Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of 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, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. (1 Pet 3:1-2)

He doesn't ask the wives to change their religion!

Focus on good works as **shared values**

Overturning Two

Modern Consensuses

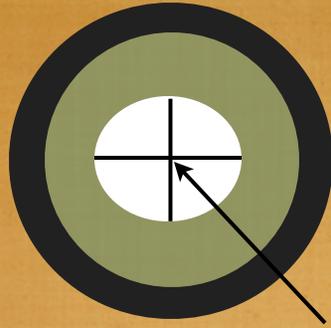


1

Nature of
Persecution

2

Function of
Good Works



QUESTION

How then do we
reconstruct the
meaning and function of
good works in 1 Peter?

“Good,
works”

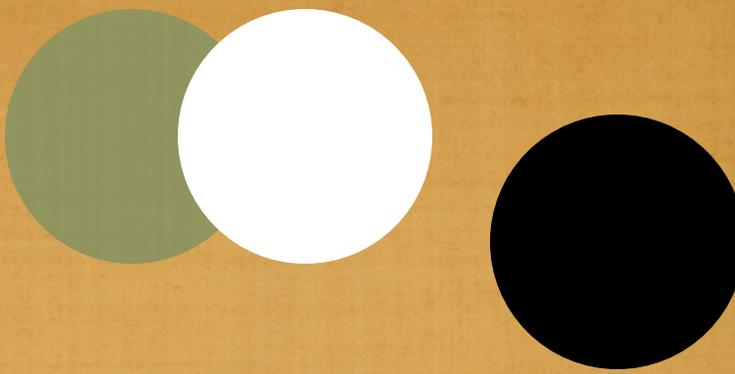
“Doing,
Good”

Question

How would the language have been heard by **those** people at **that** time?

10-minute
break



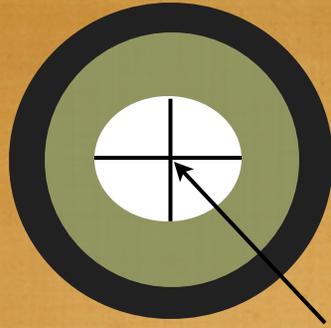


Good Works

LANGUAGE

in the Ancient World





QUESTION

How is the language
of good works used
elsewhere in the
Greco-Roman world?

CHECK LIST

Hellenistic usage

Jewish usage

1 Peter usage

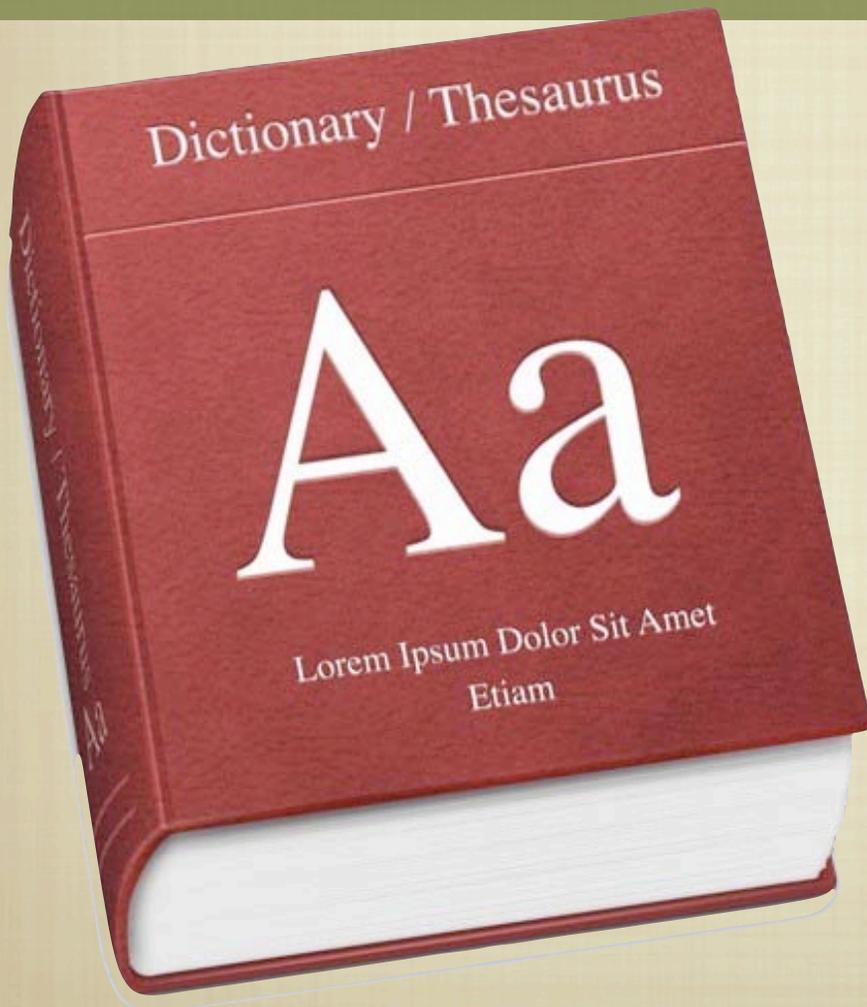
The
Hellenistic

Usage
of
Good
Works



Defining

Hellenistic



Peoples and/or cultures which were influenced by **Greek** culture following the time of Alexander the Great

Video: Kingdom of David: Book and the Sword
(24:15 - 26:22)

Asia Minor

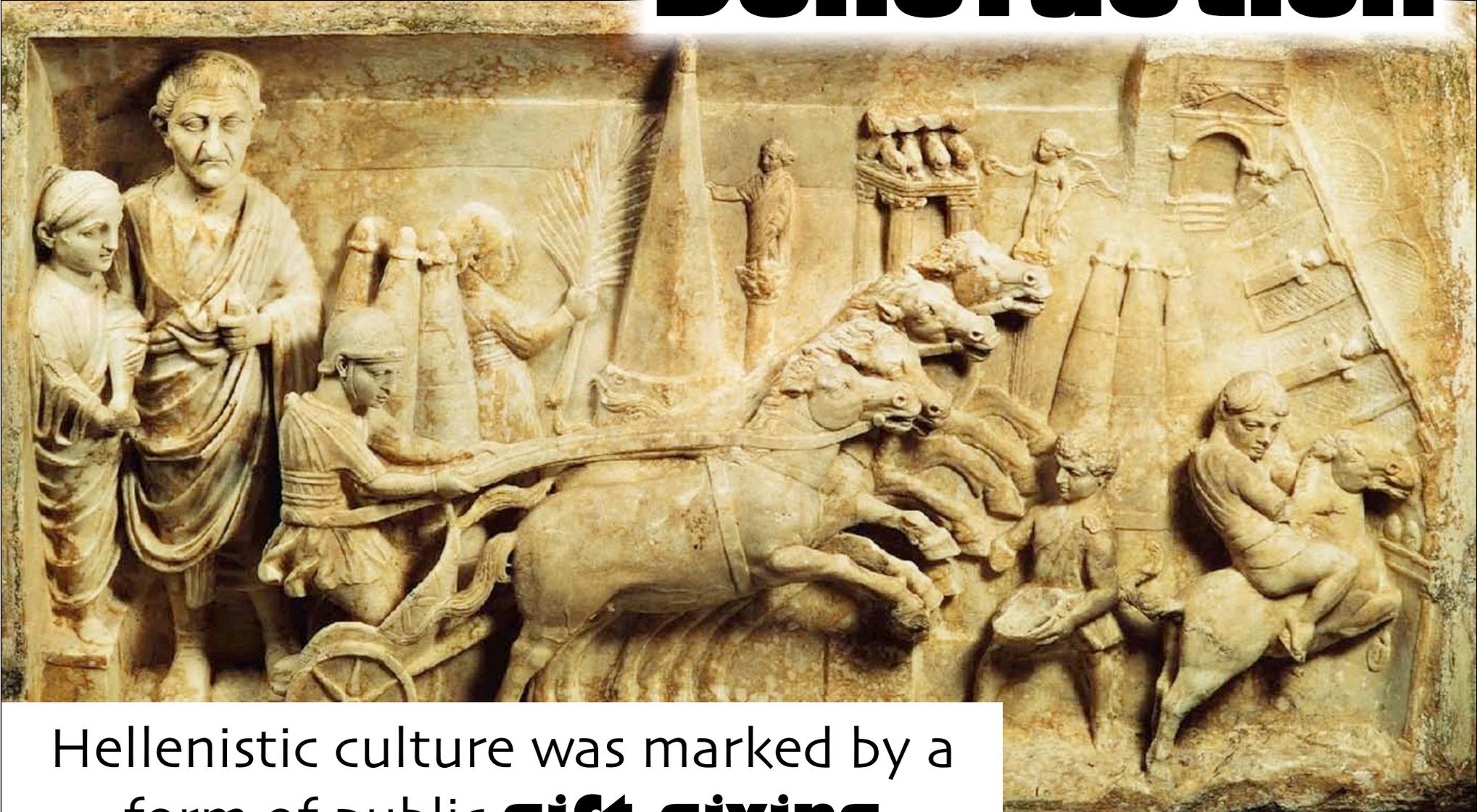


Empire

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Civic

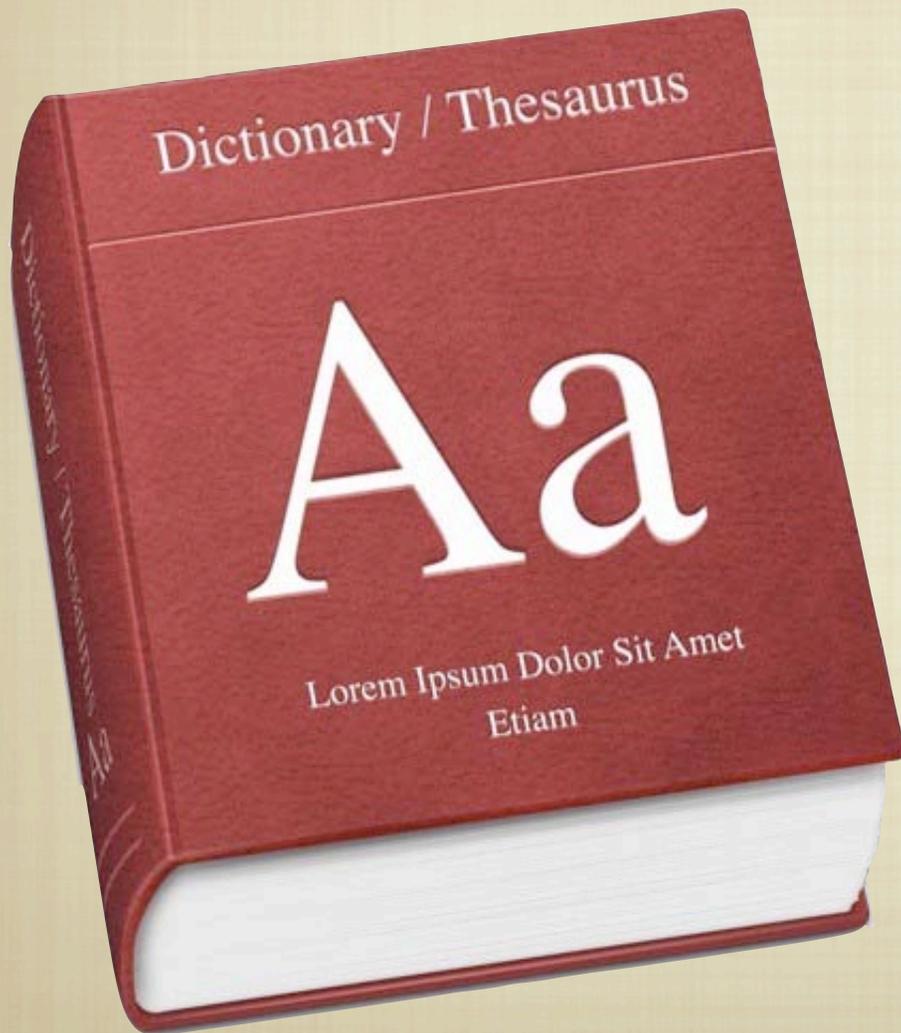
Benefaction



Hellenistic culture was marked by a form of public **gift-giving**

Civic

Benefaction



A type of gift-exchange in which a member of the local or provincial elite used his (or her) private wealth or power to **benefit** a city, its citizenry, or a group of citizens, and in return, received reciprocal **recognition** of the contribution as a benefaction

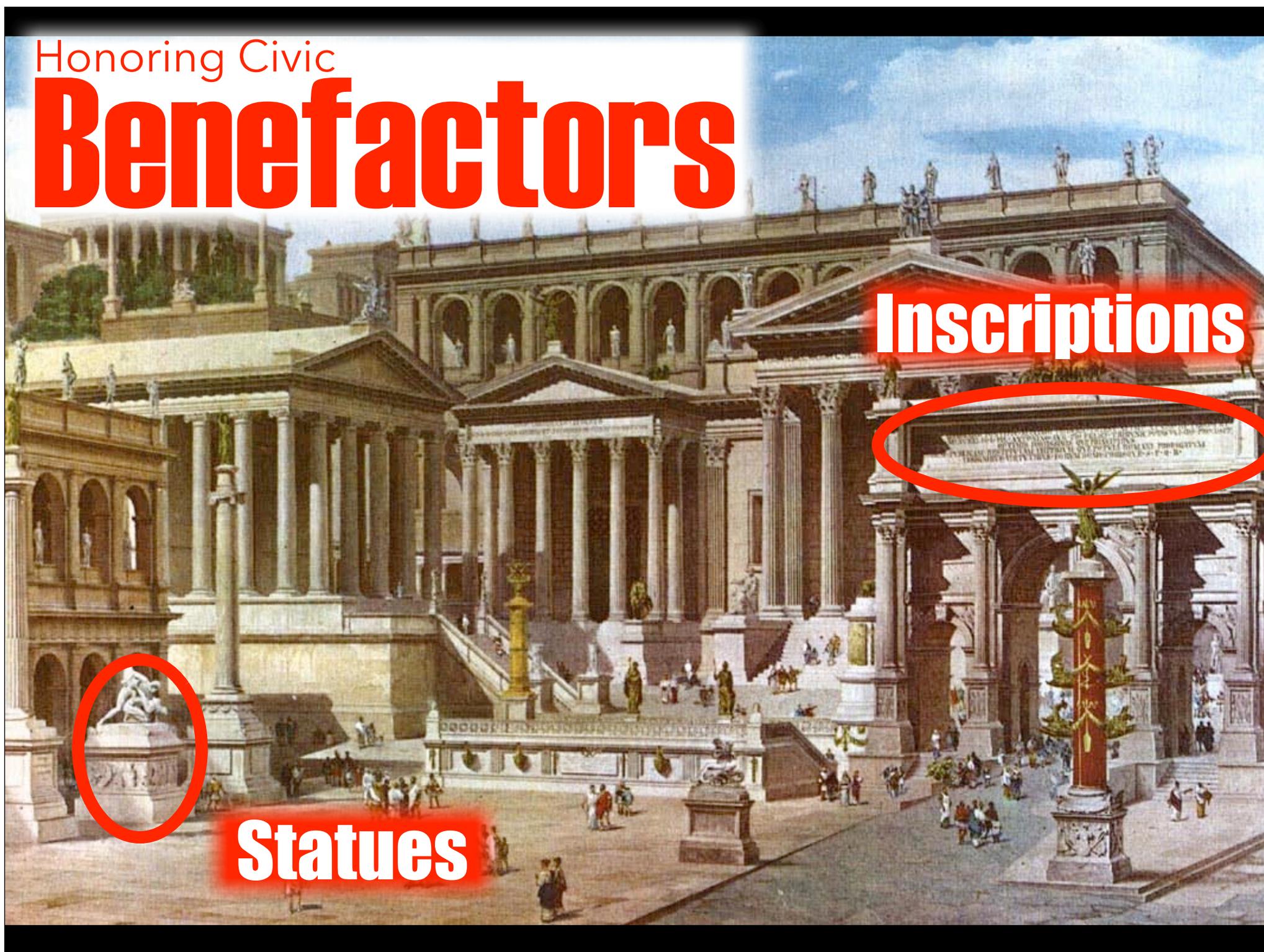
Honoring Civic

Benefactors

Inscriptions



Statues





**ELITE
CITIZEN**



**ABUNDANT
WEALTH**



**PUBLIC
BENEFACTOR**

Qualities

“NOBLE AND GOOD MAN”

INSTRUCTIONS

Take a few minutes to walk around the room and *read* some of the ancient honorary inscriptions

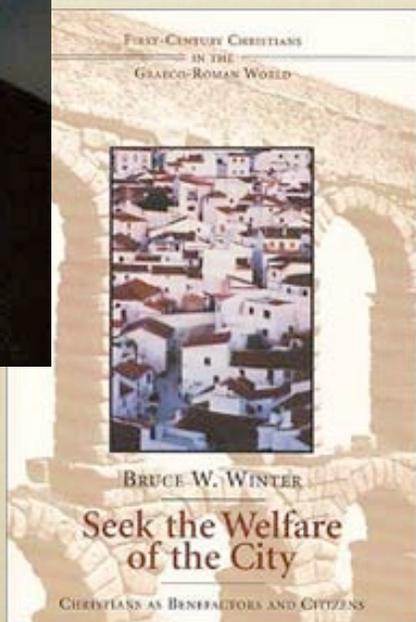
What are some of the *terms* and/or *phrases* that are repeated in these inscriptions?

Important

Note



Bruce W. Winter

A hand holding a yellow pencil, positioned as if about to write on the text below.

Because of these close **similarities** between the language used in the context of civic benefaction and in 1 Peter, some have argued that the author is encouraging public munificence

Good Works

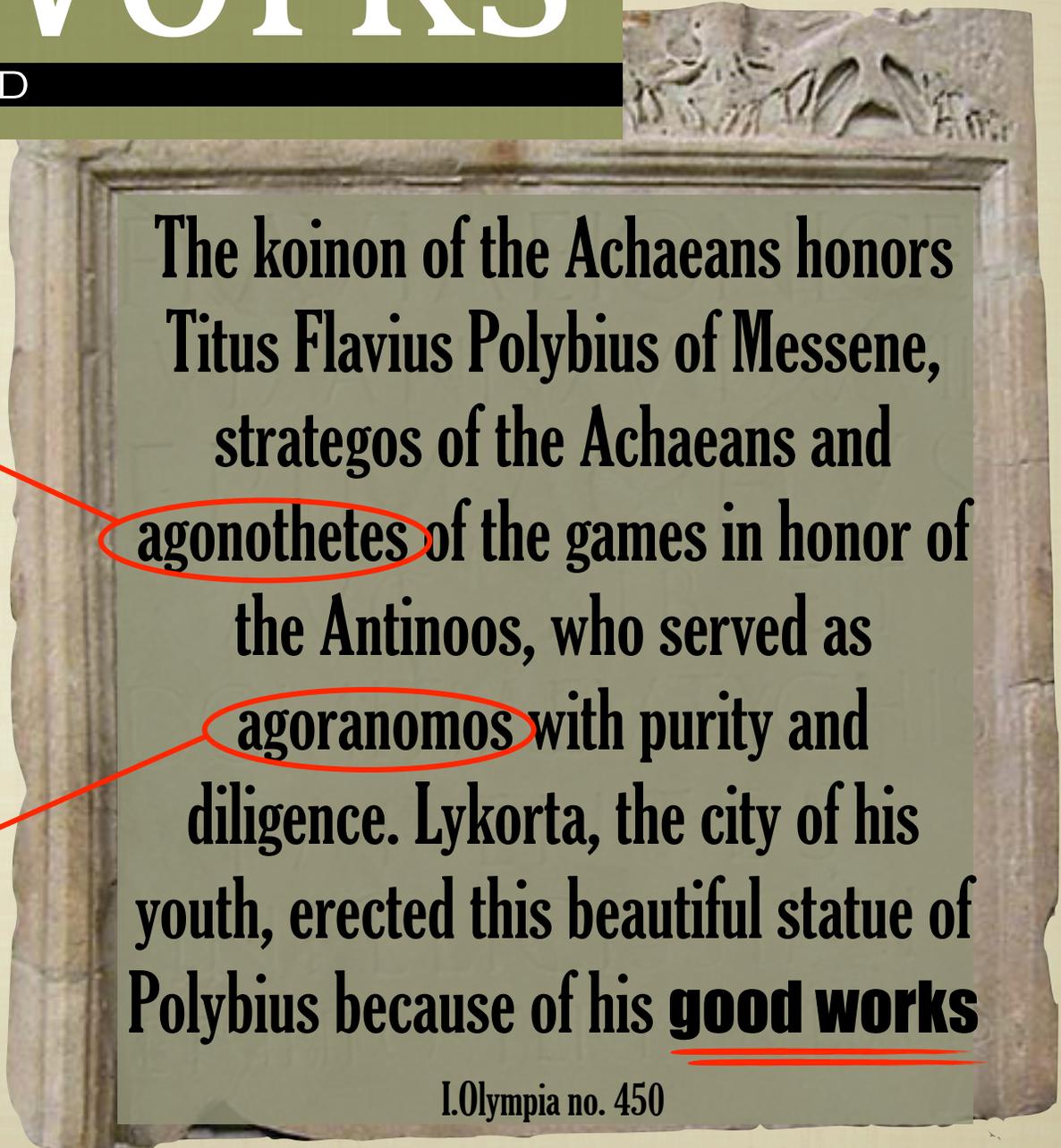
IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Role:

providing grain
below market
price during food
shortage

Role:

funding games
and contests
(e.g., gladiators,
chariot racing)



The koinon of the Achaeans honors
Titus Flavius Polybius of Messene,
strategos of the Achaeans and
agonothetes of the games in honor of
the Antinoos, who served as
agoranomos with purity and
diligence. Lykorta, the city of his
youth, erected this beautiful statue of
Polybius because of his good works

I.Olympia no. 450

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER

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



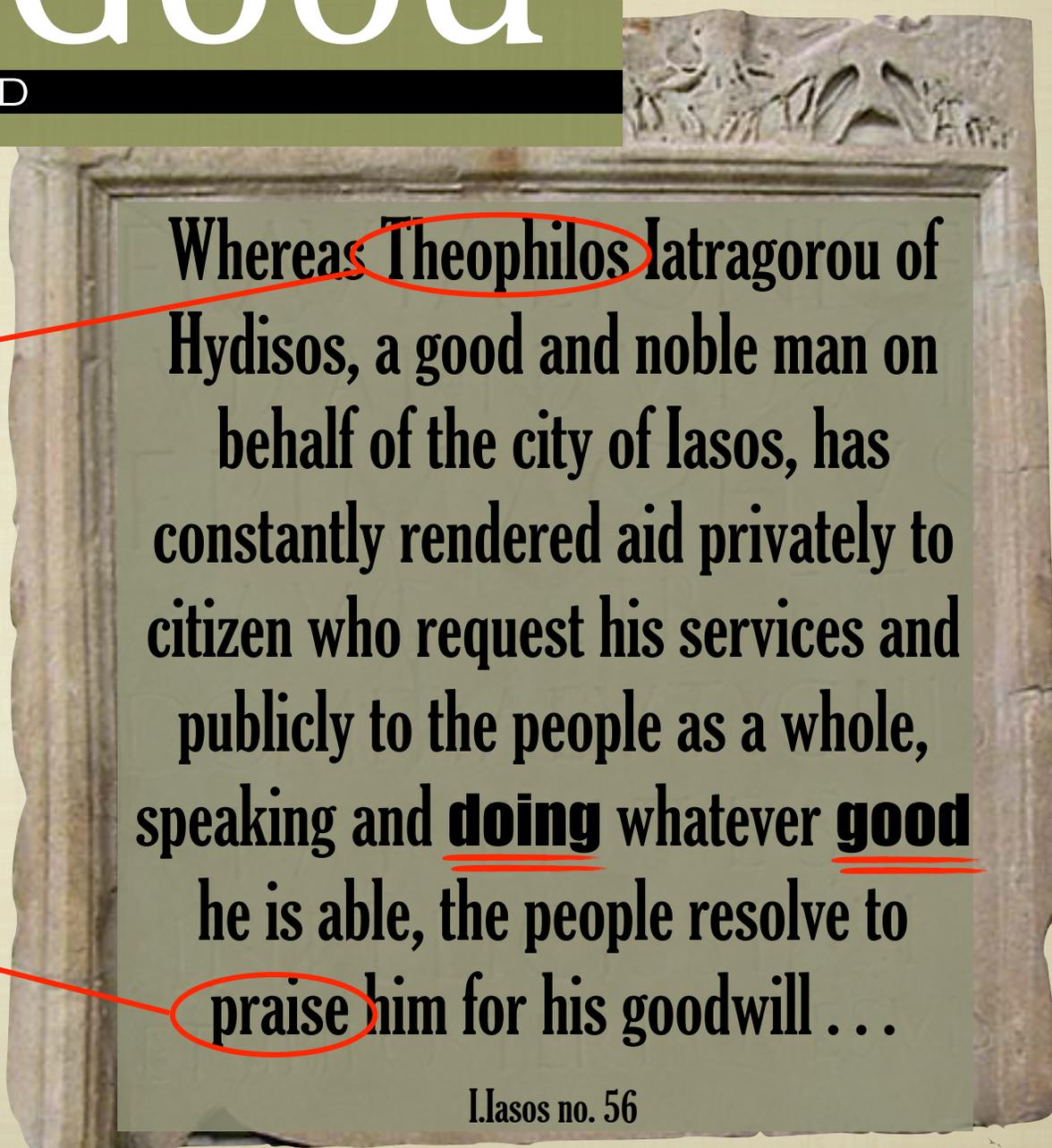
Comparing good works with civic **benefaction**

Doing Good

IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Benefactor:
doctor from
Hydisos who
aided the citizens
of lasos

Reward:
citizenship, front-
row seating at
contests, use
of harbor



Whereas **Theophilos** Iatragorou of
Hydisos, a good and noble man on
behalf of the city of lasos, has
constantly rendered aid privately to
citizen who request his services and
publicly to the people as a whole,
speaking and doing whatever good
he is able, the people resolve to
praise him for his goodwill . . .

I.lasos no. 56

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER

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 Peter 2:13-15)



Comparing good works with civic **benefaction**



There are actually even **more** examples of the popular good works language in 1 Peter than Winter realized!

Important
OBSERVATION

Noble Conduct

IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Language:
moral virtue
was attached to
wealth and
benefaction

Role:
carried out
foreign embassies
to Rome

Whereas Archilochus Aristophantos, a noble and good man, having made his **conduct** and citizenship **noble** and **honorable**, and having been appointed ambassador to Rome in order to achieve friendship and alliance, he patiently carried out the task with all diligence and care, successfully establishing a friendship and **alliance** between the Romans and the Epidaurians . . .

IG IV₂,1 no. 63

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER

Maintain **good conduct** 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)



Comparing good works with civic **benefaction**

Zeal for Good

IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

ζηλωτής
Zealous/Emulator

one who is
earnestly
committed
to something

... the archons, councilors and demos decided to praise the aforesaid man Epaminondas for the intense goodwill he has had for his ancestral city . . . so that with these things being so accomplished [viz. honors and awards] our city may appear grateful to its benefactors and many may become emulators of his **good deeds** when the previous good deeds for the city receive recognition

IG VII no. 2712

GOOD WORKS

IN 1 PETER

Now who will harm you if you are **zealous** to do what is **good**? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed (1 Peter 3:13-14)



Comparing good works with civic **benefaction**

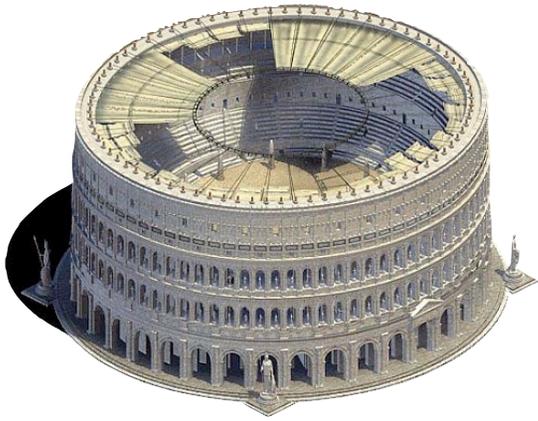


Christians should contribute to their communities monetarily in order to **offset** the conflict created by their religious beliefs!

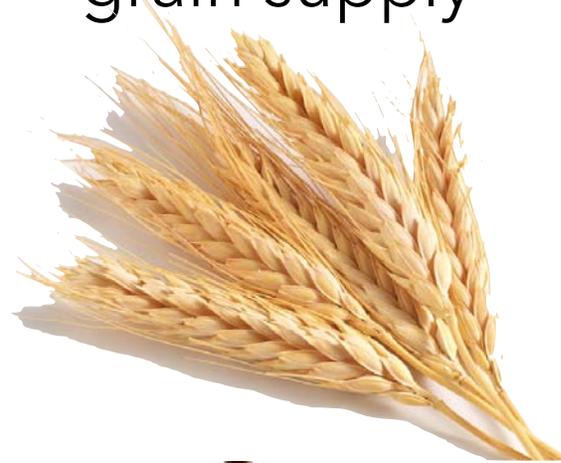
Interpretive

IMPLICATIONS

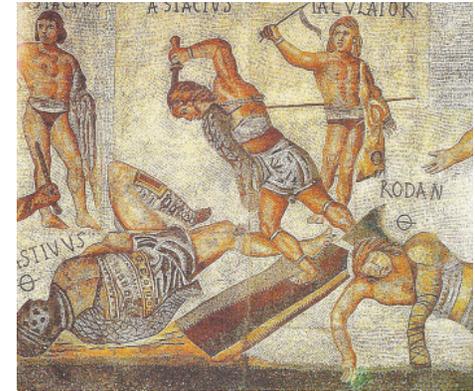
buildings



grain supply



games/spectacles



embassy to Rome



Options
for a benefactor

A man in a dark suit and light blue tie is shown from the chest up, pointing his right index finger towards a glowing, semi-transparent square on a blue background. The square has a bright light emanating from it. The background is a solid, vibrant blue.

Conformity versus Resistance **SOLUTION**

Benefaction would allow
the readers to be
different without being
in **conflict** with outsiders



Disclaimer

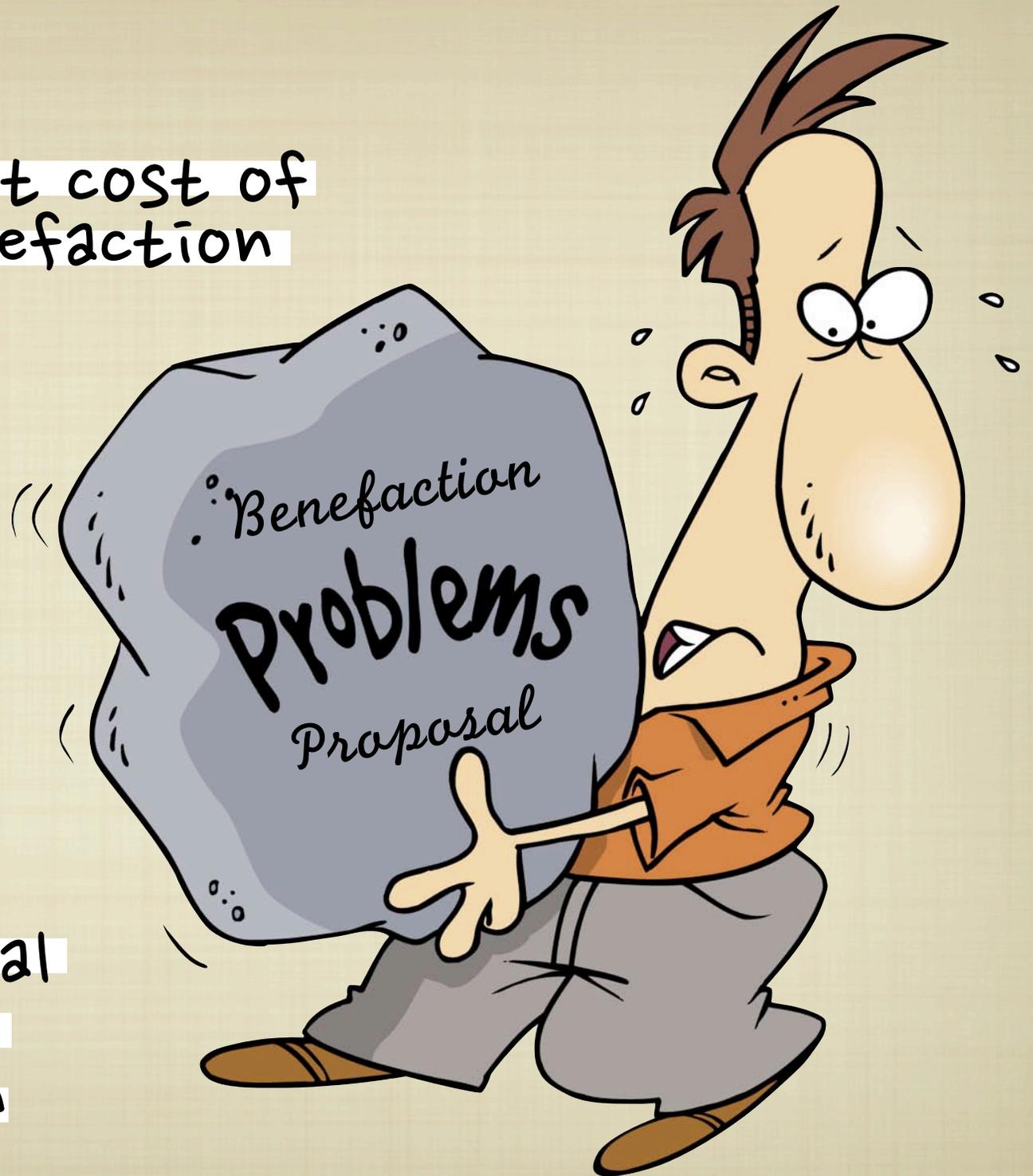
The good works language in 1 Peter is probably **not** meant to admonish the readers to perform civic benefaction



Great cost of
benefaction



Socio-political
struggle of
benefaction



Remember!

Detailed handouts on civic
benefaction in 1 Peter are on
the website

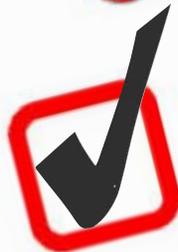
Interpretive

KEY



The close verbal similarities between the language of civic benefaction and 1 Peter will be important in understanding how the author is **using** the good works motif in the letter

CHECK LIST



Hellenistic usage



Jewish usage



1 Peter usage



The
Jewish
Usage
of
Good
Works



Hellenistic

USE OF GOOD WORKS

During the Hellenistic period, Jews were familiar with and knew how to use the good works language in a **socio-political** manner to describe the contributions of wealthy elites



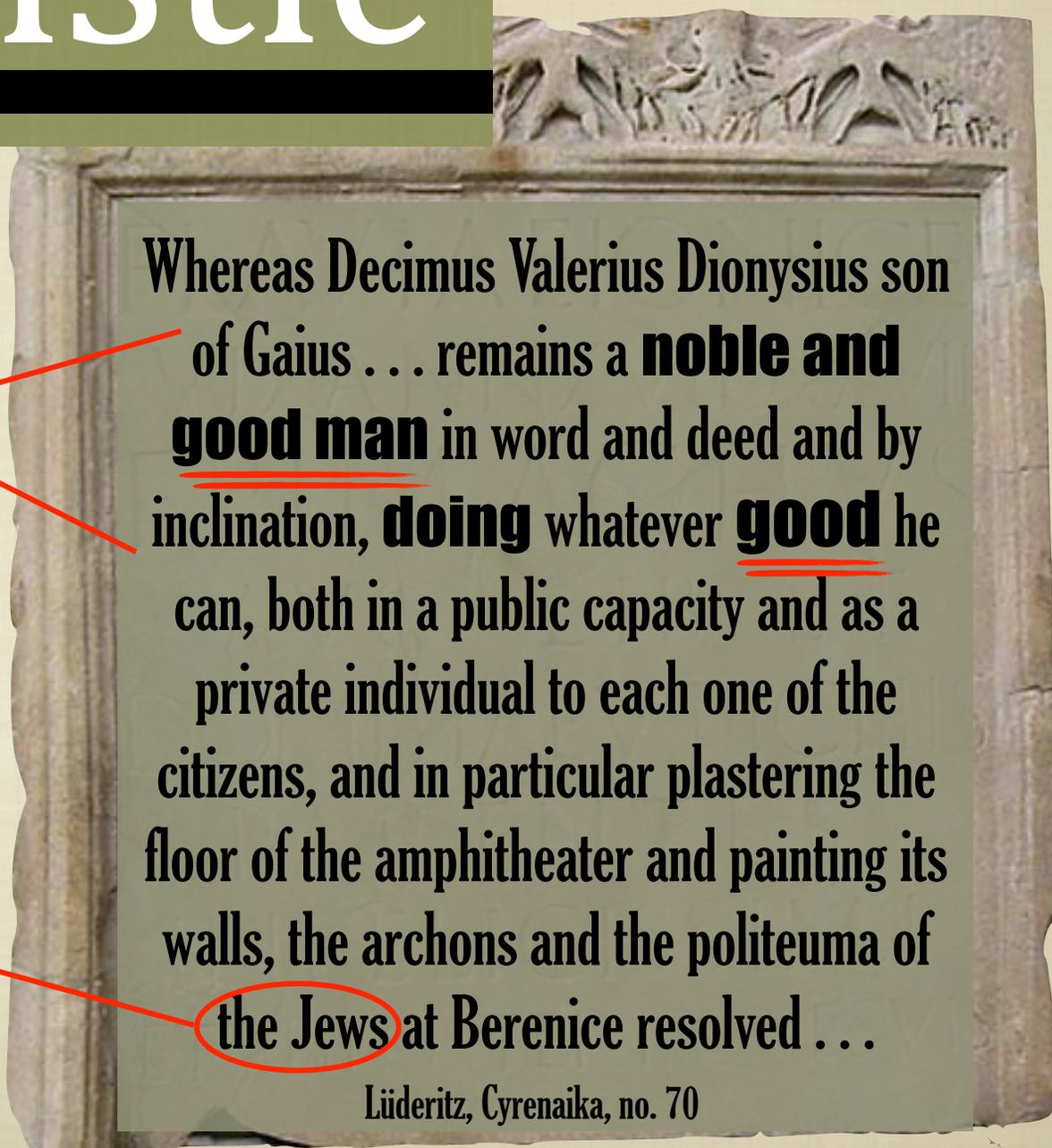
*Introducing **new** meanings to good works*

Hellenistic

LANGUAGE OF THE JEWS

Language:
same terms
used by others
in the Hellenistic
world

Participants:
the group
issuing praise
is Jewish



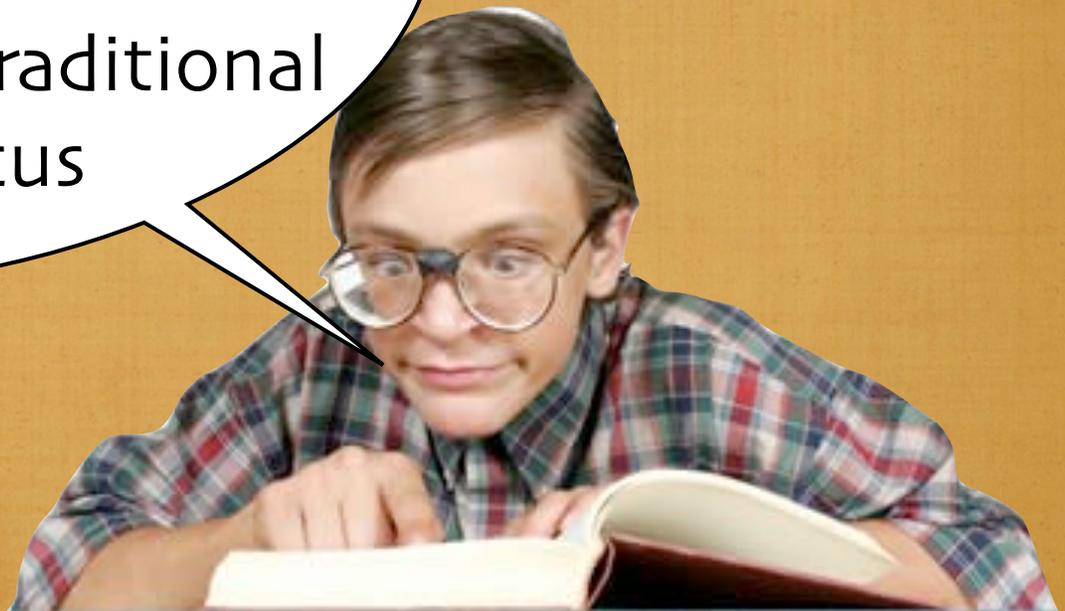
Whereas Decimus Valerius Dionysius son
of Gaius . . . remains a **noble and
good man** in word and deed and by
inclination, **doing** whatever **good** he
can, both in a public capacity and as a
private individual to each one of the
citizens, and in particular plastering the
floor of the amphitheater and painting its
walls, the archons and the politeuma of
the Jews at Berenice resolved . . .

Lüderitz, Cyrenaika, no. 70

Interesting

Tidbit

Jewish authors during the Hellenistic period began to apply a **theological** dimension to the language of good works which departs from its traditional socio-political focus



Theological

USE OF GOOD WORKS

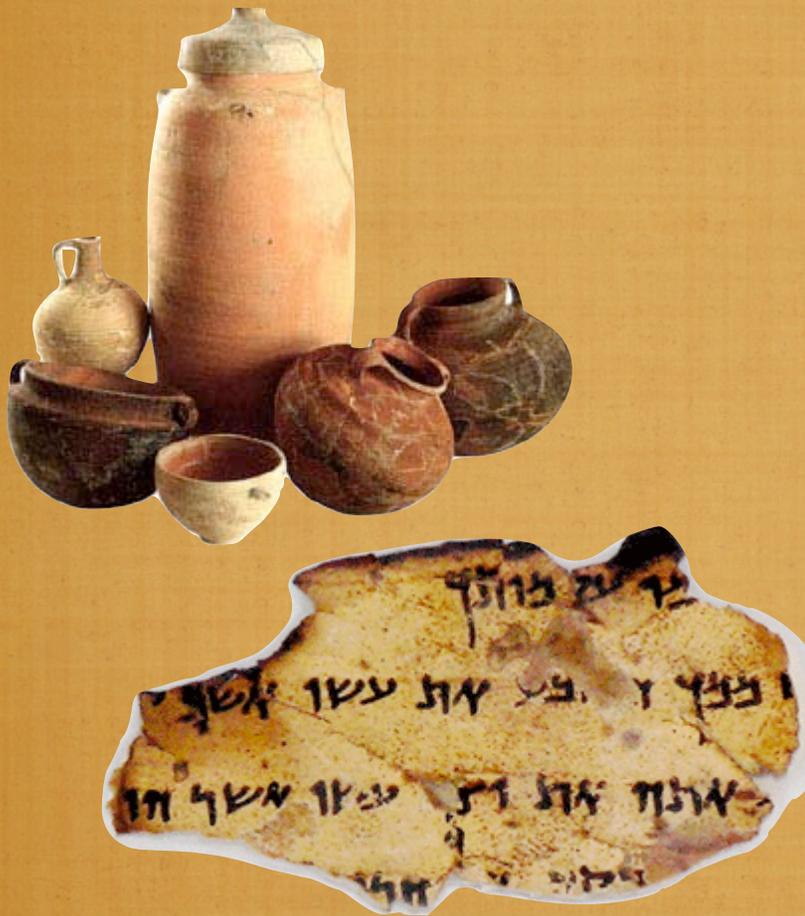
Prior to 1 Peter's composition, many Jewish writers used the good works language in a theological sense, wherein the **measure** of goodness was assessed according to God's standards not society's



*Introducing **new** meanings to good works*

THEOLOGICAL

USE OF GOOD WORKS



A text belonging to [the Instructor, who is to teach the Ho]ly Ones how to live according to the book of the Yahad's Rule. He is to teach them to seek God with all their heart and with all their soul, to **do** that which is **good** and upright before Him, just as He commanded through Moses and all His servants the prophets. He is to teach them to love everything He chose and to hate everything He rejected, to distance themselves from all evil and to hold fast to all **good works** (1QS 1:1-5)

*Changing the **standard** of Good Works*

THEOLOGICAL

USE OF GOOD WORKS

It is good to conceal the secret of a king, but to acknowledge and reveal the works of God, and with fitting honor to acknowledge him.

Do good and evil will not overtake you. Prayer with fasting is good, but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness (Tobit 12:7-8)



*Changing the **standard** of Good Works*

Important

Note



I THOU SHALT HAVE
NO OTHER GODS
BEFORE ME
II THOU SHALT NOT
MAKE UNTO THEE
ANY GRAVEN IMAGE
III THOU SHALT NOT
TAKE THE NAME
OF THE LORD THY
GOD IN VAIN
IV REMEMBER THE
SABBATH DAY,
TO KEEP IT HOLY
V HONOUR THY FATHER
AND THY MOTHER

VI THOU SHALT
NOT KILL
VII THOU SHALT NOT
COMMIT ADULTERY
VIII THOU SHALT
IX
X

“Doing good” in Jewish literature often refers keeping the **Mosaic Law**, an act which affected one’s standing before God - either in the present life or at the eschatological judgment

DATING

Good works



200 BCE

100 BCE

100 CE



Socio-Political Use

Theological Use

CHECK LIST



Hellenistic usage

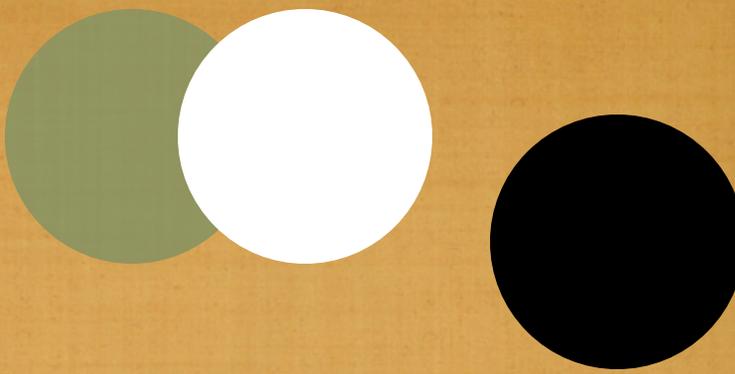


Jewish usage



1 Peter usage

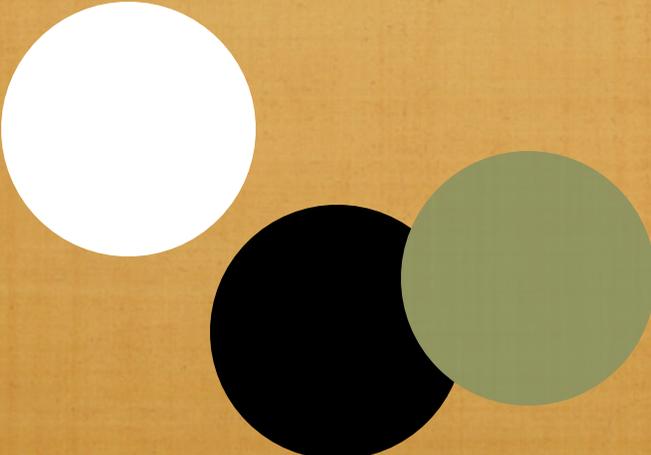


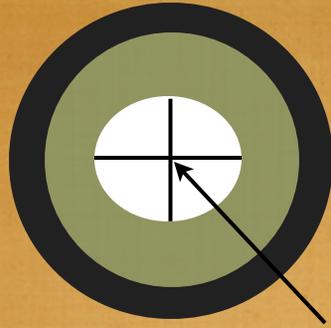


Good Works

FUNCTION

in 1 Peter





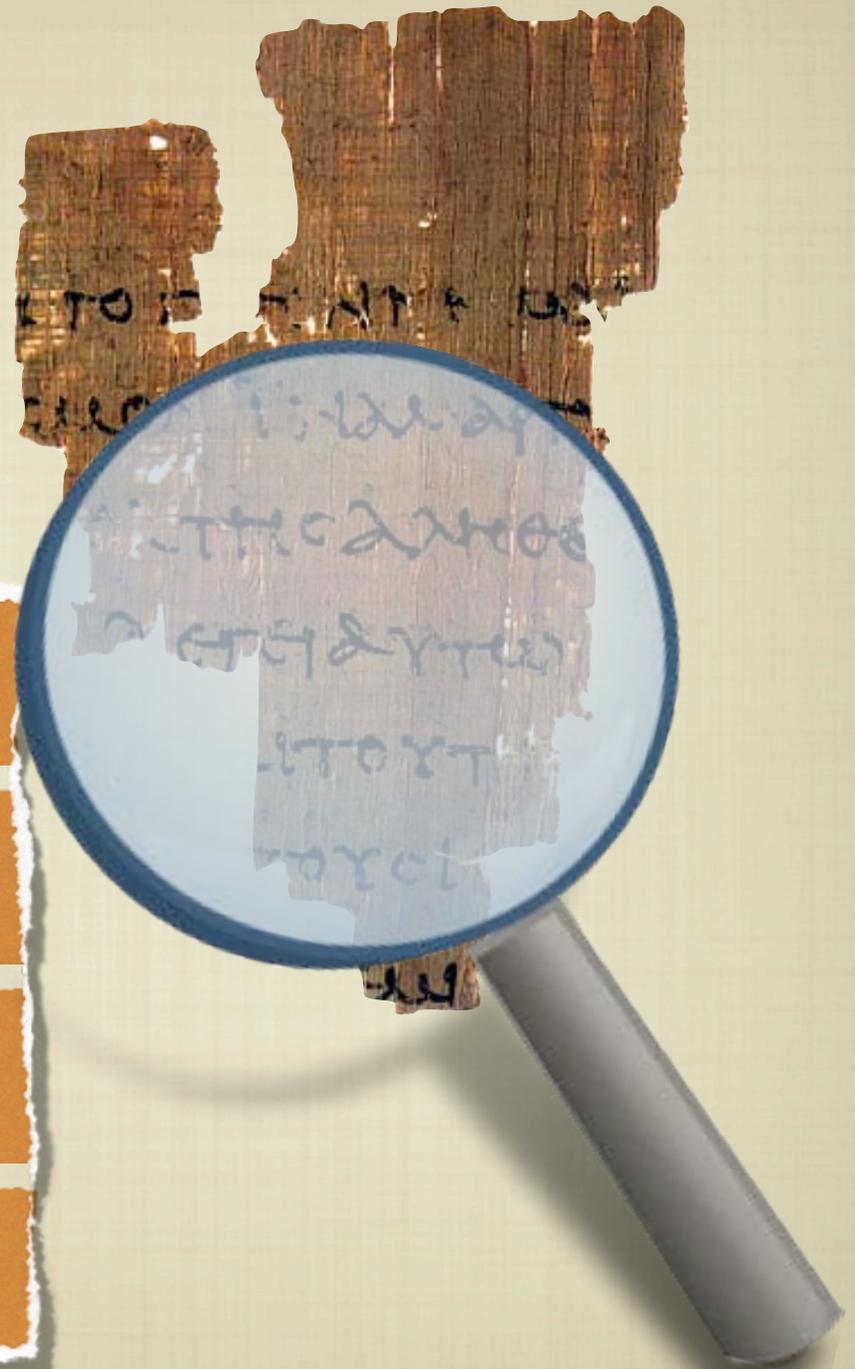
QUESTION

What social affect(s) does the author of 1 Peter hope to **achieve** by encouraging his readers to “do good”?

Closer

Look

Drawing from the Hellenistic (socio-political use) and Jewish (theological use) evidence, we will show how good works in 1 Peter are meant to address both (a) the **situation** of conflict (external) and (b) the readers' damaged social **identity** (internal)



The
External
Function
of
Good
Works





How is the good works motif meant to affect the conflict **situation** in which the readers find themselves?

Important

QUESTION

Interpretive

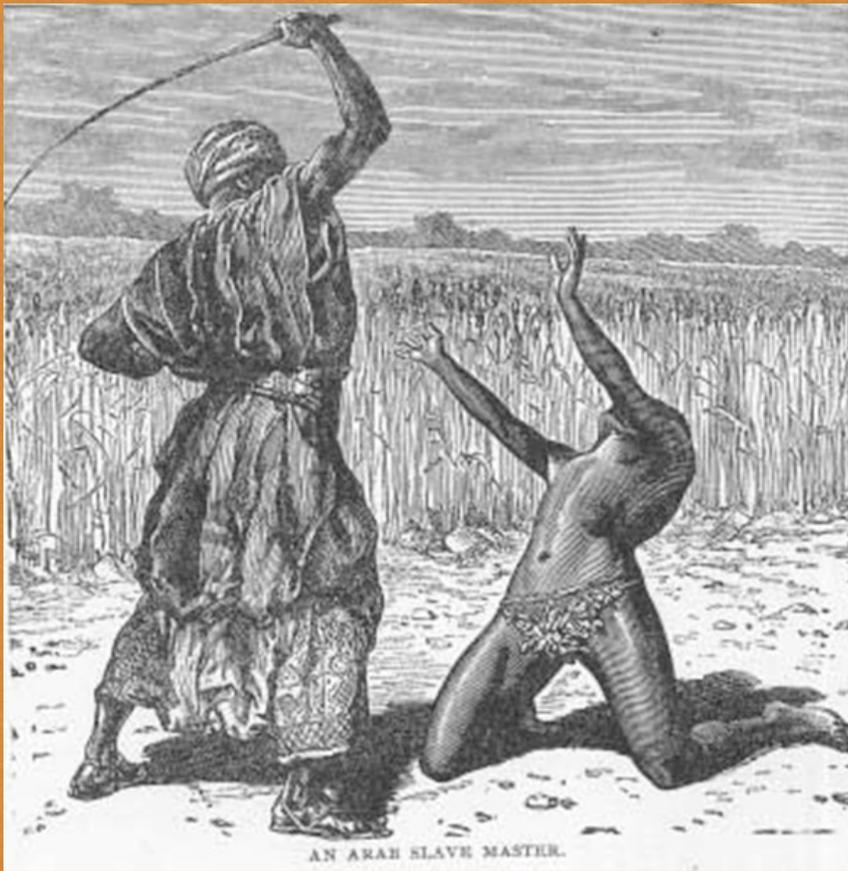
KEY



In 1 Peter, the good works motif encapsulates the sense of cautious **resistance** which the author promotes throughout the letter

Oppressed

GROUP

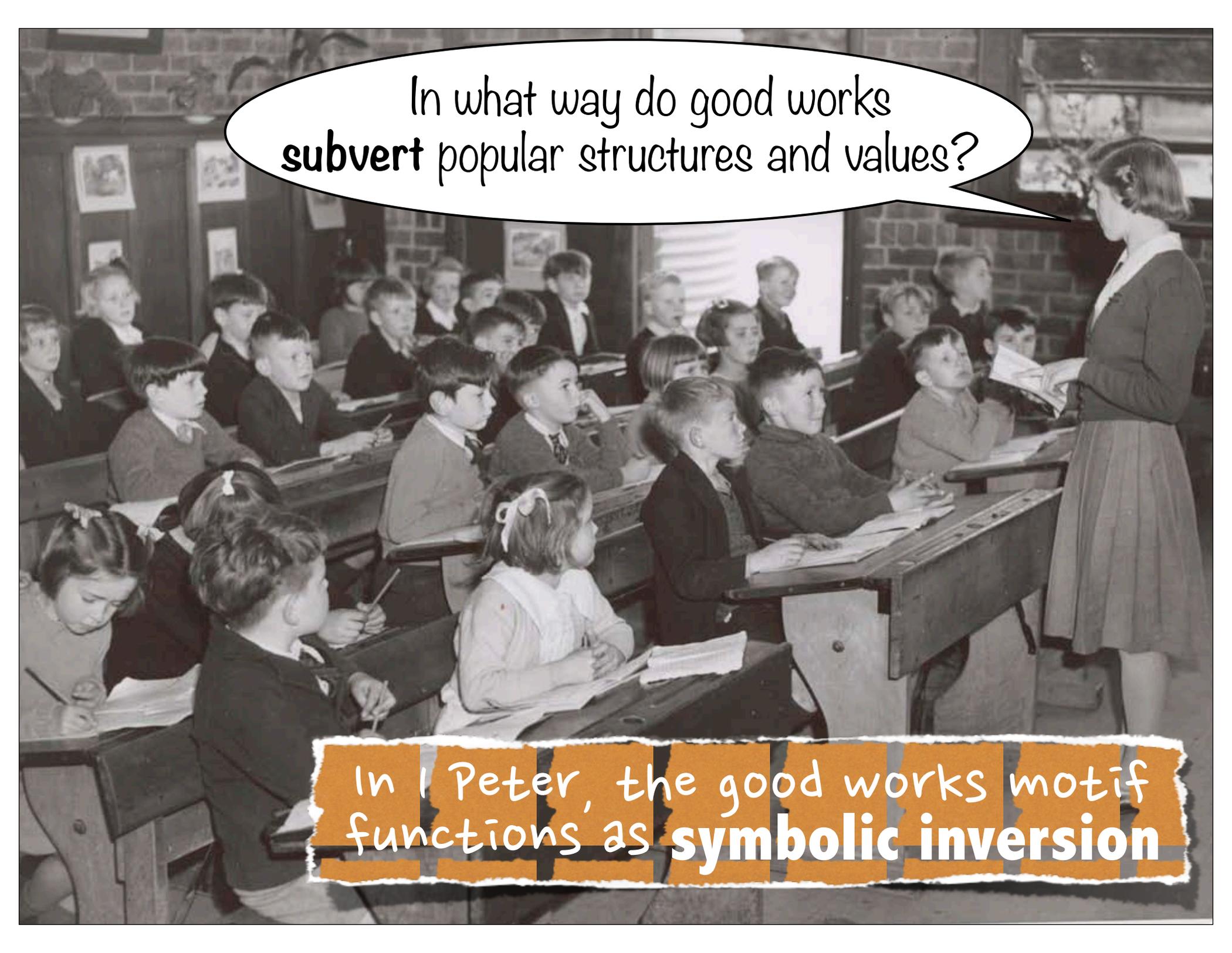


+

The koinon of the Achaeans honors Titus Flavius Polybius of Messene, strategos of the Achaeans and agonothetes of the games in honor of the Antinoos, who served as agoranomos with purity and diligence. Lykorta, the city of his youth, erected this beautiful statue of Polybius because of his good works

Language

OF ELITES

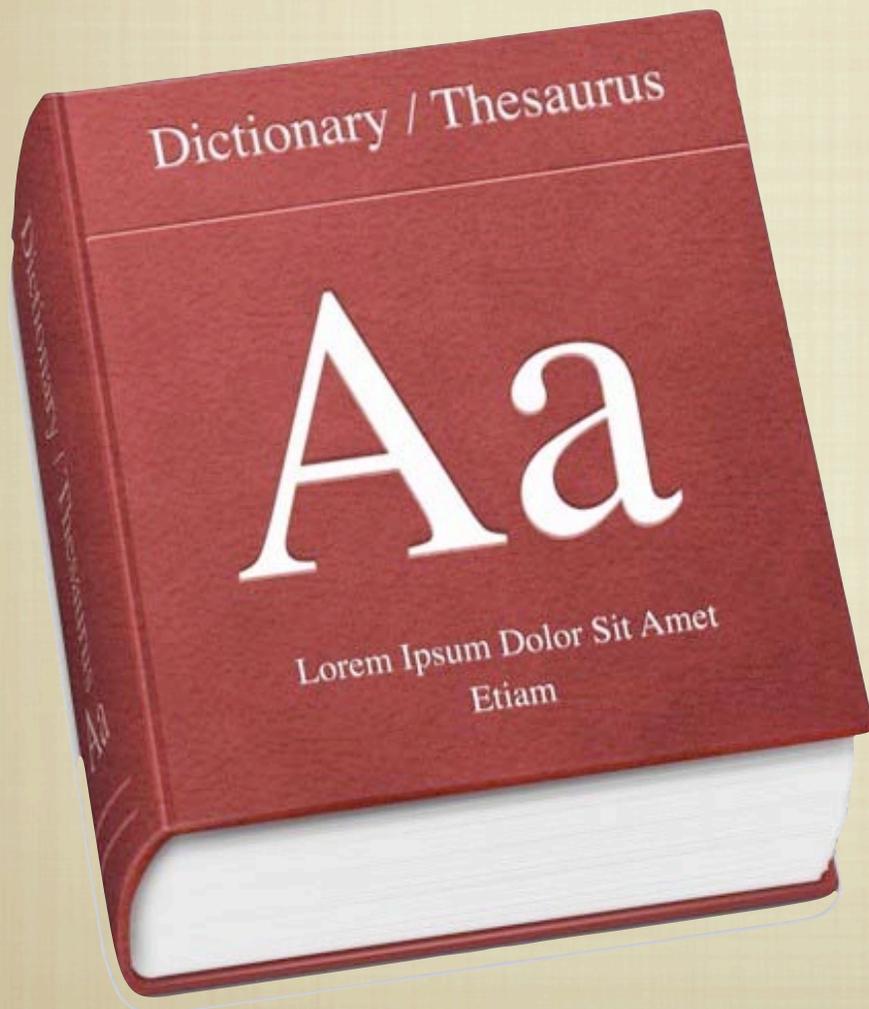
A black and white photograph of a classroom. A female teacher stands on the right side of the frame, facing a group of young students seated at wooden desks. The students are looking towards the teacher. The classroom has a brick wall and some framed pictures on the wall.

In what way do good works
subvert popular structures and values?

In 1 Peter, the good works motif
functions as **symbolic inversion**

Symbolic

Inversion



any act of expressive behavior which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an **alternative** to commonly held cultural codes, values, and norms, be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, or social and political

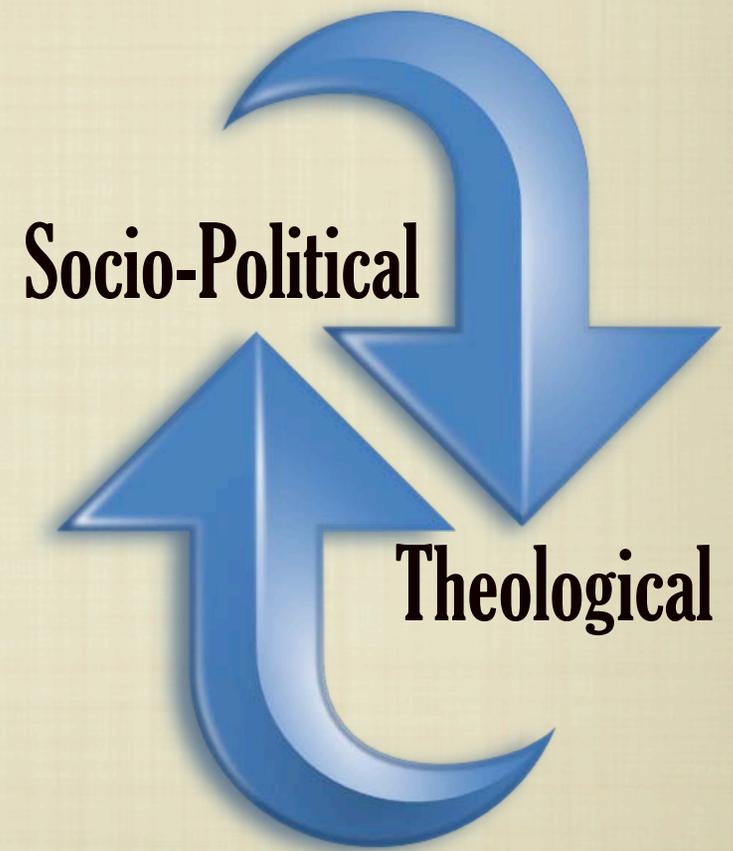
Barbara A. Babcock, "Introduction," in *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society* (1978), p. 14

Video: Elmer Season
(0:35 - 1:13)

Subversive

USE OF GOOD WORKS

1 Peter appropriates the language of wealth and social privilege and **reinscribes** it with new meaning, thus articulating a competing discourse which **challenges** dominant social structures and the hegemonic ideology which underlies them



*The social **strategy** of good works*

Hellenistic

LIFE RULES

Instructions for life

**Health
determines honor
and prestige**

HOW DO WE

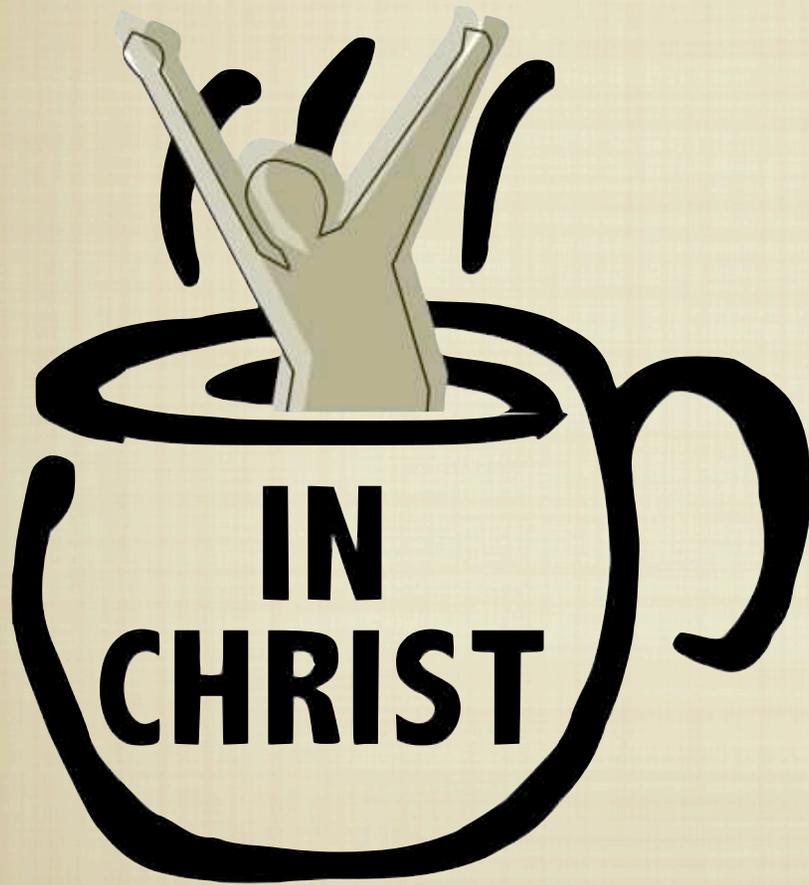
KNOW?



The theological value assigned to good works

GOOD WORKS

AS RESISTANCE



Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your **good conduct in Christ** [lit. good-in-Christ-conduct] may be put to shame. (1 Peter 3:16)

1

*Christ as the **pattern** of Good Works*

Important

NOTE

Following Jesus,
not society



Good works receive their **definition** and **form** from Christ, not social standards

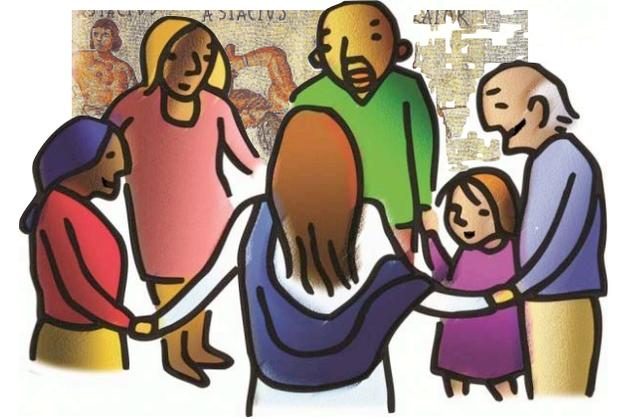
hospitality



grain supply



gamescope a teacher



use of spiritual gifts



Options for a Christian

Interpretive

KEY



MEASURE MAGNET

Cup = Fluid OZ = TBSP = TSP = Milliliter

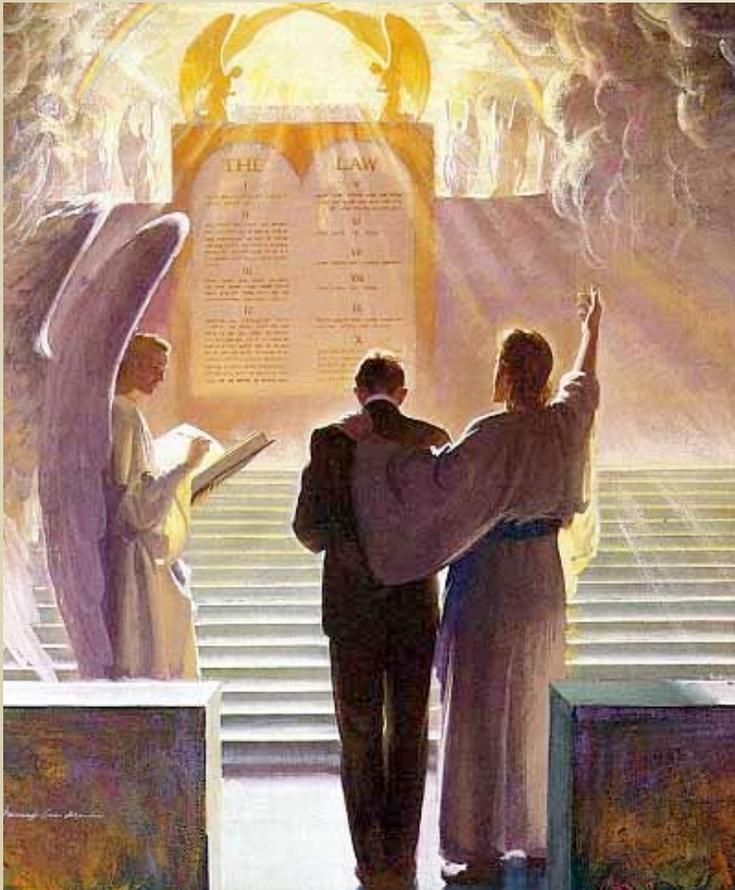
1 C	8 oz	16 Tbsp	48 tsp	237 ml
3/4 C	6 oz	12 Tbsp	36 tsp	177 ml
2/3 C	5 ¹ / ₃ oz	10.6 Tbsp	32 tsp	158 ml
1/2 C	4 oz	8 Tbsp	24 tsp	118 ml
1/3 C	2 ² / ₃ oz	5.3 Tbsp	16 tsp	79 ml
1/4 C	2 oz	4 Tbsp	12 tsp	59 ml
1/8 C	1 oz	2Tbsp	6 tsp	30 ml
1/16 C	1/2 oz	1Tbsp	3 tsp	15 ml

Voortman
Cookies

By changing the **standard** of measurement of good works, Christian behavior did not have to accord with society's standards to be considered "good"

GOOD WORKS

AS RESISTANCE



If you invoke as Father
the one who judges all
people impartially
**according to their
deeds**, live in reverent
fear during the time of
your exile (1 Peter 1:17)

2

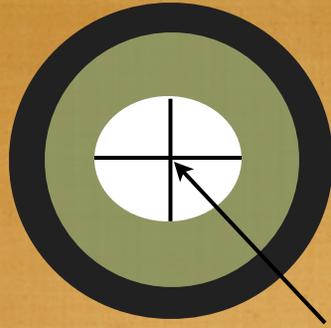
Assessing the “goodness” of Good Works

Important

Note



The author **relocates** where good works will be assessed, assigning this task to the **heavenly** realm where it is God's responsibility



QUESTION

How do we know that the
Petrine author wants his
readers to understand
good works as a
subversive maneuver?

HOW DO WE

KNOW?



Good works are portrayed as a cause of conflict

GOOD WORKS

AS RESISTANCE



Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who **abuse** you for your **good** conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to **suffer** for doing **good**, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil (1 Peter 3:16-17)

Negative *Responses from Outsiders*

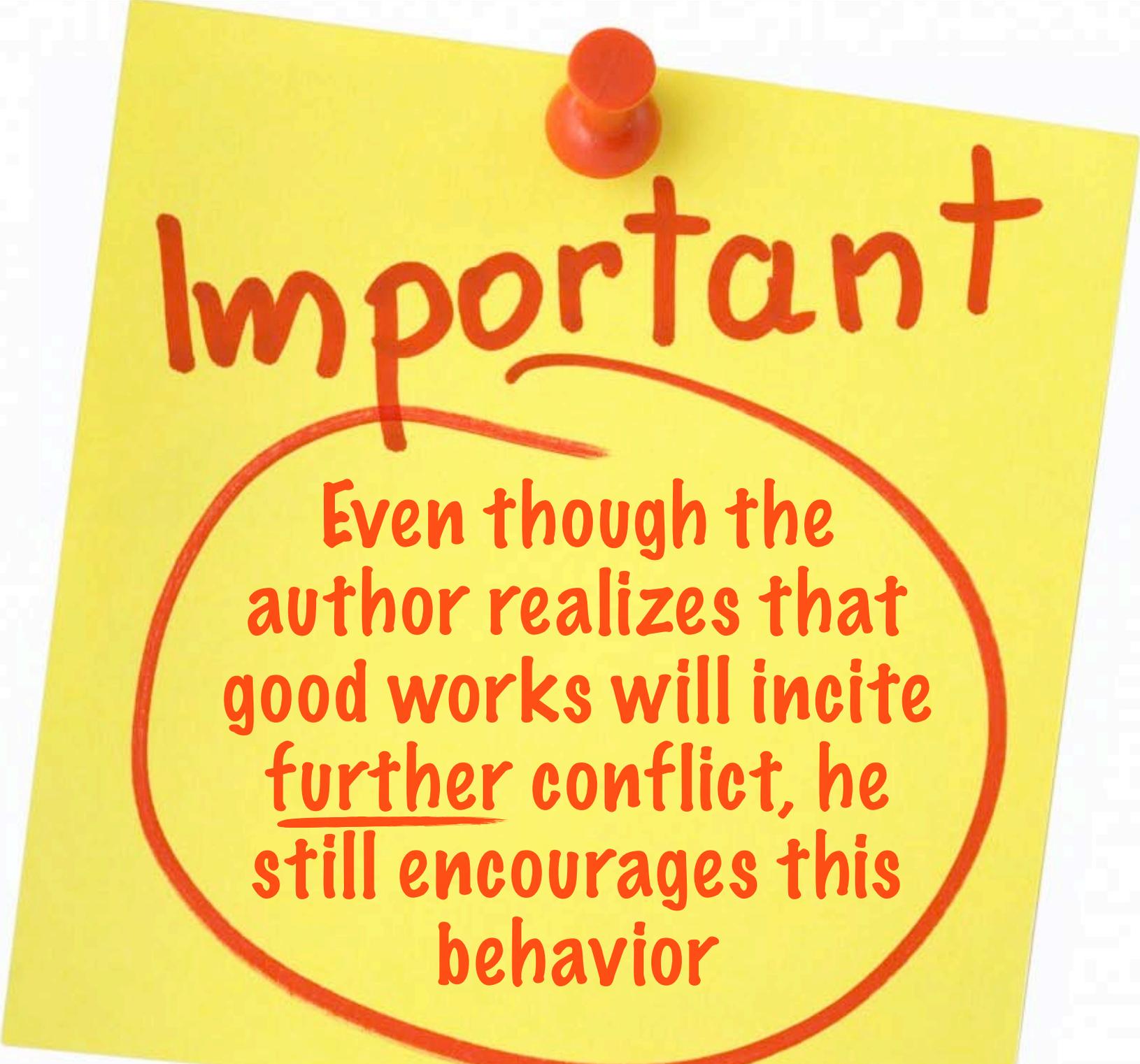
GOOD WORKS

AS RESISTANCE

[Instruction to slaves:] If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you **do good** and **suffer** for it, you have God's approval (1 Peter 2:20)



Negative *Responses from Outsiders*



Important

Even though the author realizes that good works will incite further conflict, he still encourages this behavior

This type of “resistance” looks very **different** from that in Revelation, where the author openly and defiantly criticizes the Empire!



Potential

Objection

GOOD WORKS AS RESISTANCE

CAUTION

The consequences of this cautious resistance are just as *dangerous* as the potential repercussions from the more open and defiant criticisms found in the book of Revelation



In 1 Peter the language of good works is another example of the author's attempt to cautiously **resist** the standards and expectations of Greco-Roman society

Conclusion
external function

The
Internal
Function
of
Good
Works





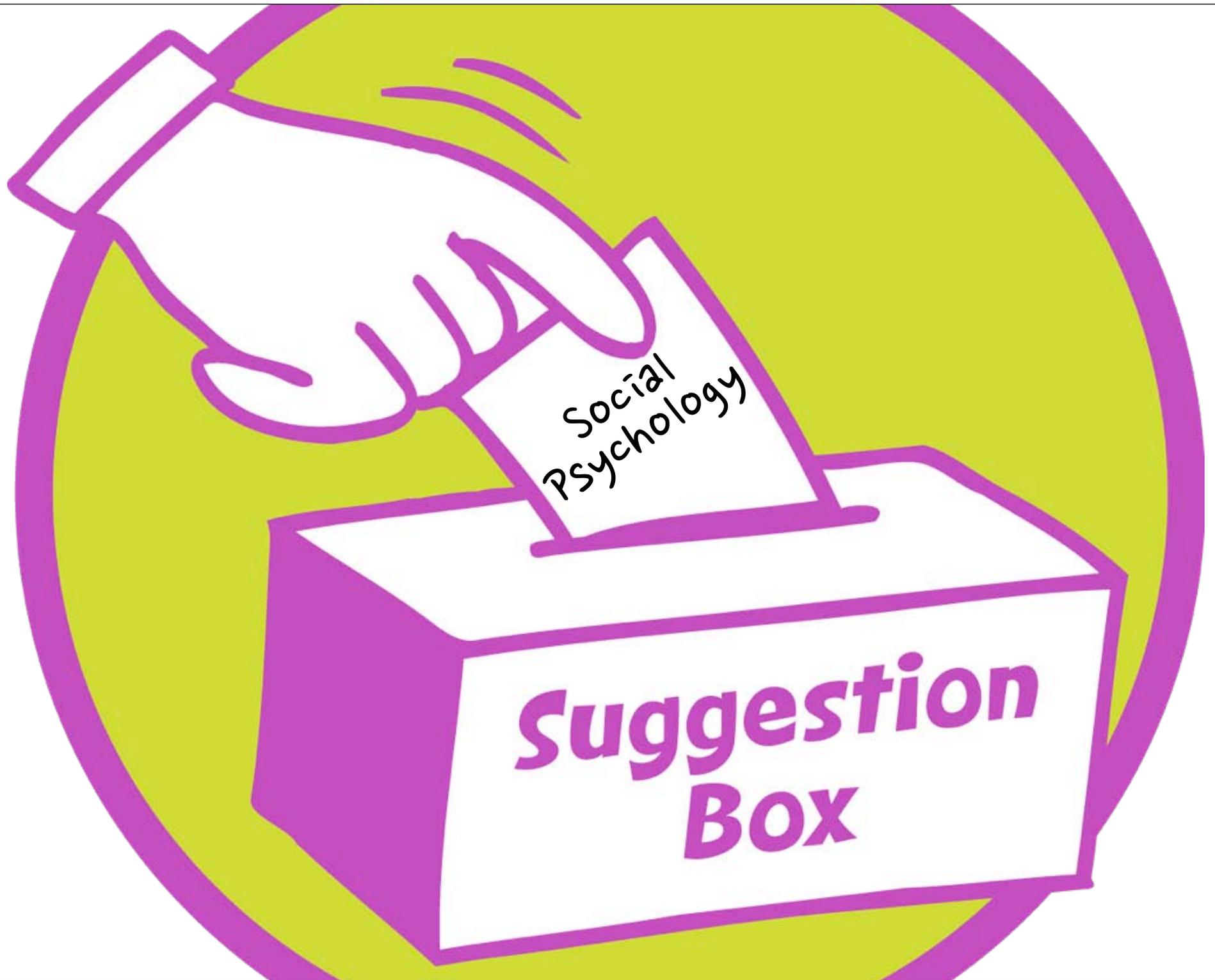
How is the good works motif meant to affect the **readers** who find themselves in the midst of persecution?

Important

QUESTION

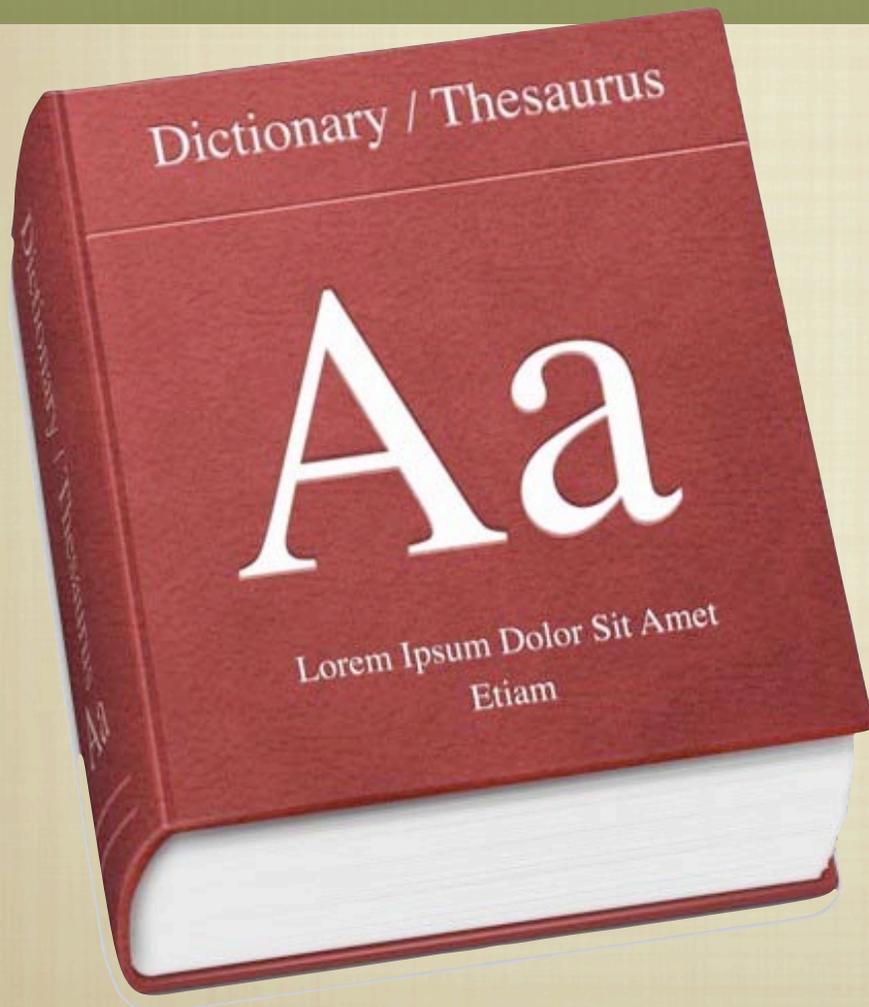


Tools for Understanding How the Disadvantaged Cope



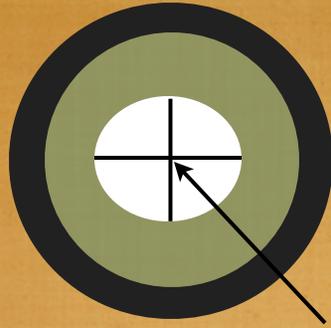
Social

Psychology



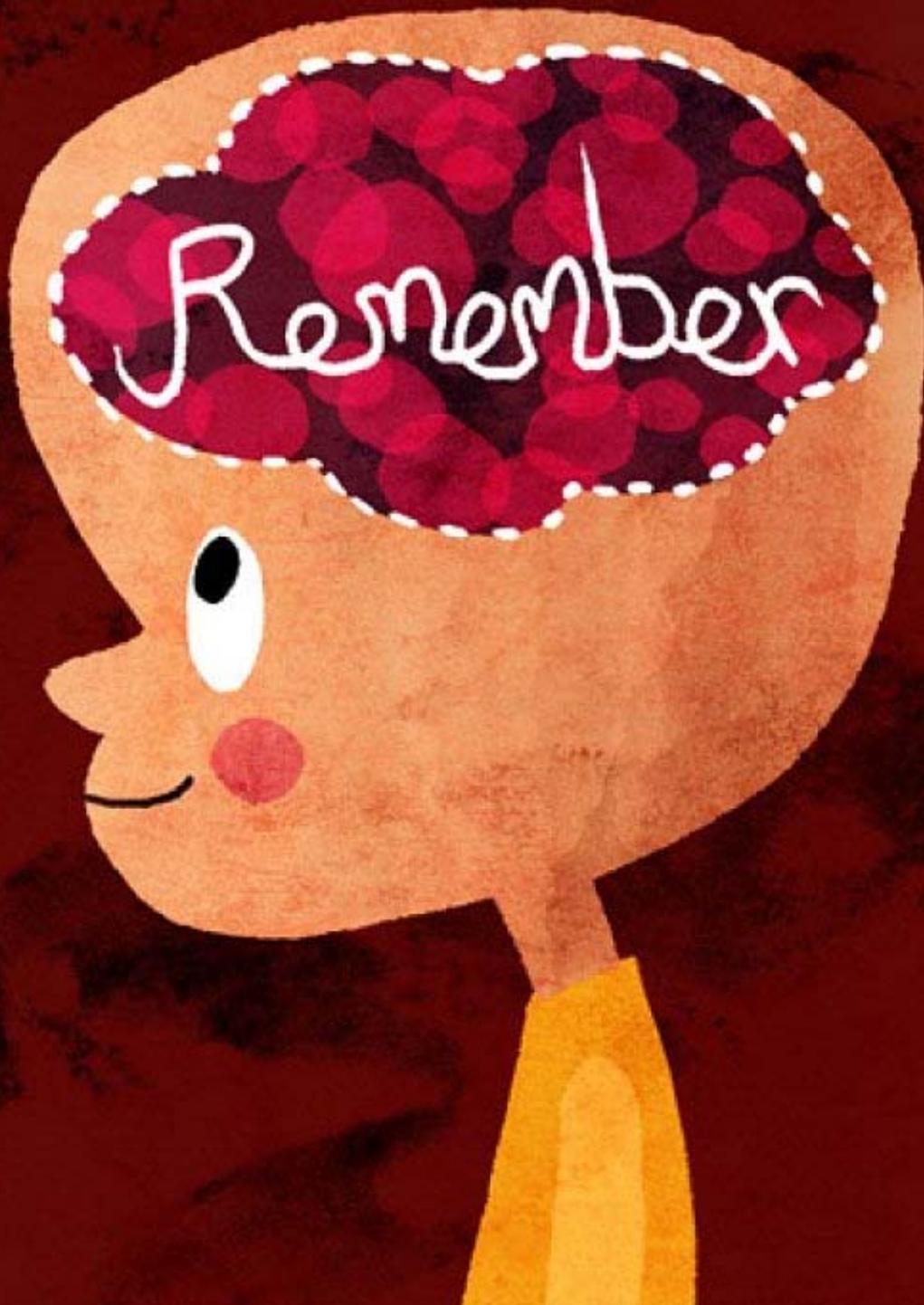
The scientific study of how the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of individuals are **influenced** by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others

G.W. Allport, "The Historical Background of Social Psychology," in *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (1985), p. 3



QUESTION

How might social psychology help us **diagnose** the function of good works in 1 Peter?



1 Peter addresses a beleaguered group who may be **questioning** their commitment to the faith



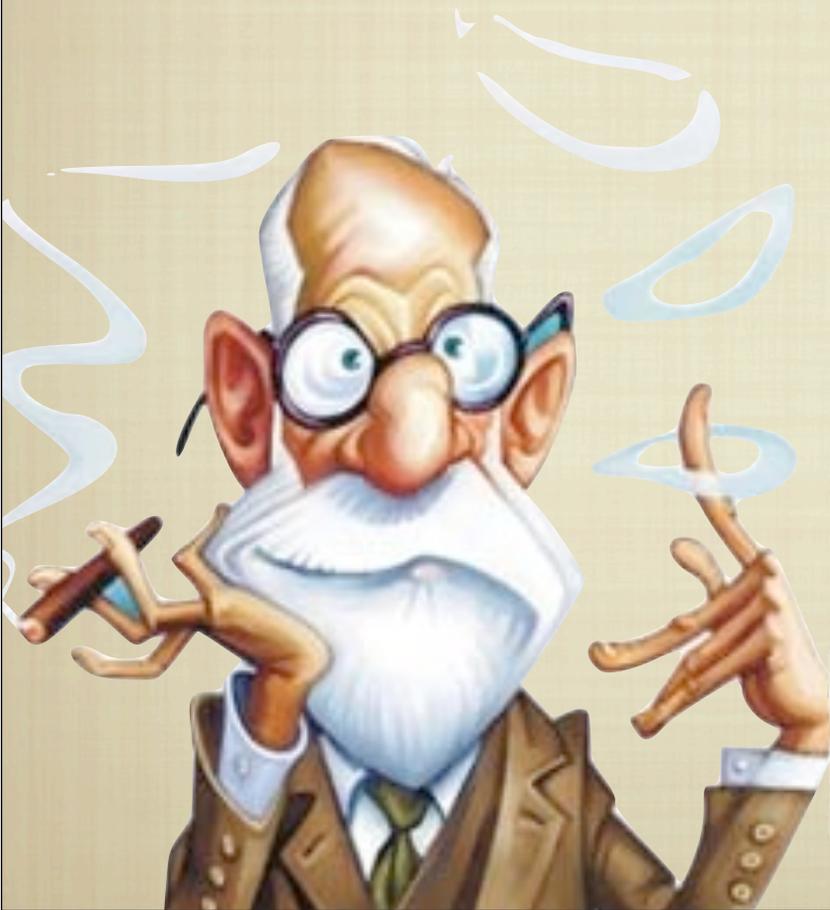
Coping Strategies of

Targets

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Important

Note



Scholars previously thought that prejudice had a **detrimental** affect on its target, but now we have discovered that there are ways of **coping** which allows them equal or greater self-esteem than non-stigmatized persons

Coping Strategies



Emotion focused



Avoidance



Problem focused

Video: Stuart Smalley - Daily Affirmations
(0:00 - 0:47)

Internal

FUNCTION OF GOOD WORKS

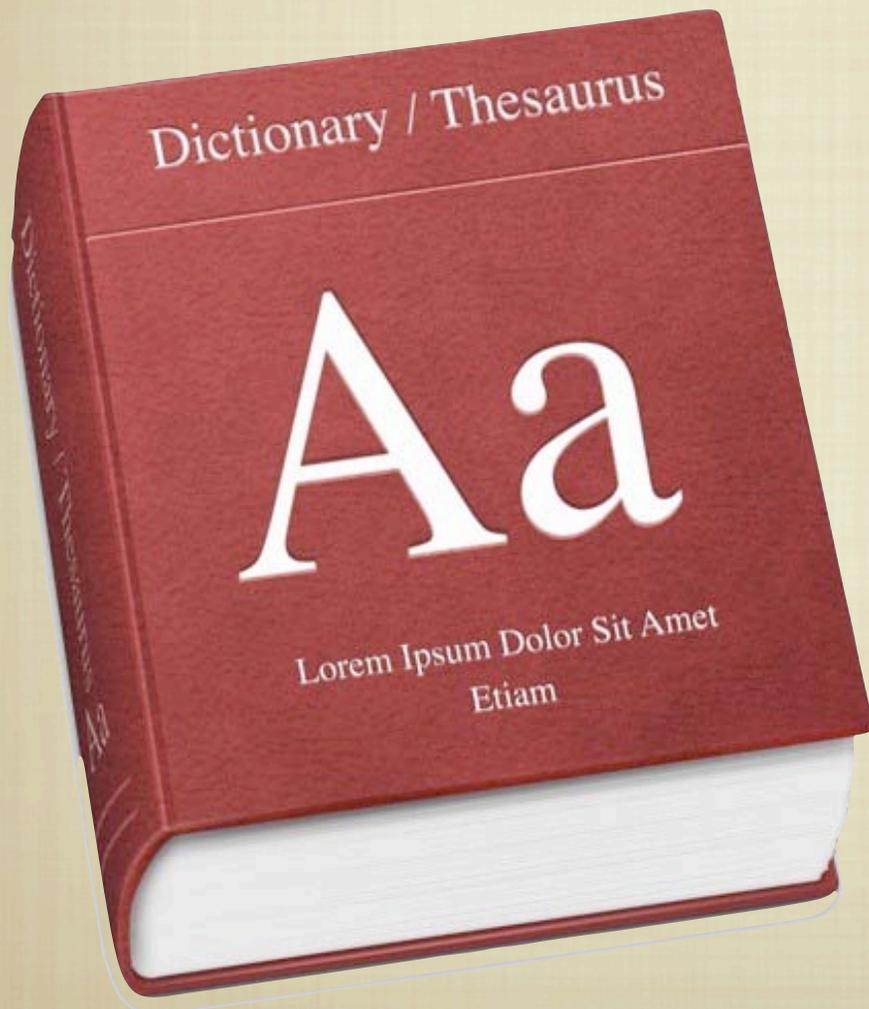
The author of 1 Peter helps his beleaguered audience **cope** with their marginalized position in society by rebuilding their self-perceptions through a strategy of **disidentification**



*The social **strategy** of good works*

Defining

Disidentification



The selective **devaluing** of domains in which disadvantage (i.e., negative external feedback or outcomes) is experienced in order to maintain individual or collective self-esteem

I'm an **athlete**
not a **scholar!**



Example

DISIDENTIFICATION

BIG



idea

By transforming the language of wealth and social privilege into a designation which facilitated a person's relationship with God, the author **devalues** the social and political realm (where his readers were negatively evaluated) and simultaneously introduces a **substitute** value domain (where they could achieve honor and prestige)

Popular standards



God's standards



Relocating the Source of

Self-Esteem

Christian

TO DO LIST



Machines in politics ~~provide~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~best~~
the federal ~~proth~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~st~~ ~~ur~~ ~~"~~ ~~sy~~



A ~~res~~ ~~ec~~ ~~ca~~ ~~pi~~ ~~es~~ ~~ge~~ ~~by~~ ~~us~~ ~~in~~ ~~g~~ ~~ne~~ ~~it~~ ~~pe~~ ~~ri~~
spec ~~if~~ ~~ic~~ ~~ac~~ ~~ti~~ ~~o~~ ~~n~~ ~~s~~ ~~on~~ ~~the~~ ~~ca~~



APPROVED





That's all Folks!

