

Suffering in First Peter



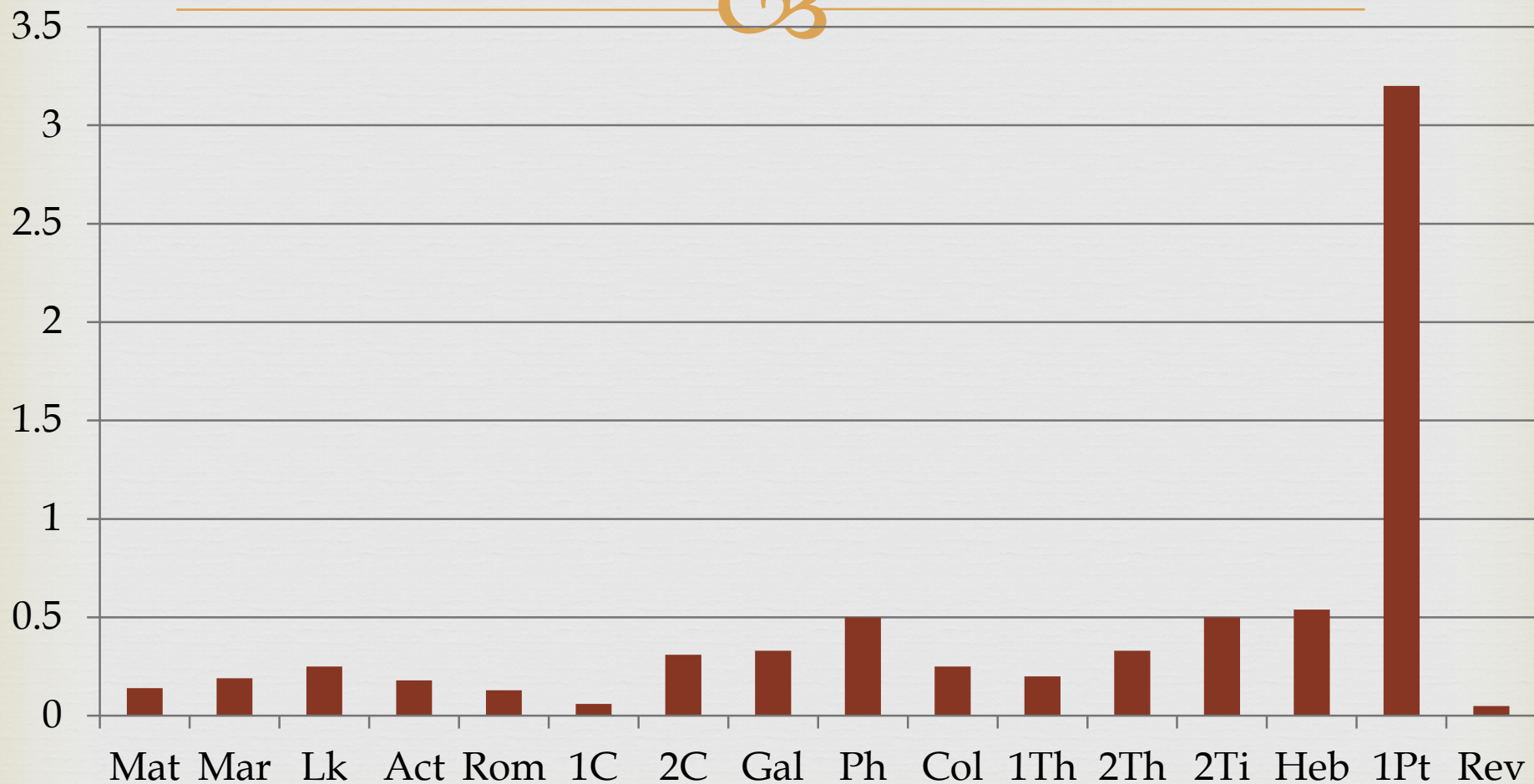
Monday Night Meeting

Tonight



- ❧ Does Peter's teaching on suffering have application for our lives?
- ❧ **Interpretive Principle:** "Whenever we share comparable particulars (i.e. similar specific life situations) with the first century hearers, God's Word to us is the same as His Word to them." (Fee & Stuart 75)

“pascho” (to suffer) and “pathema” (suffering)
Average number of uses per chapter in NT books.



Definition






☞ **Pascho (to suffer) & pathema (suffering):** Its basic meaning in the Greek world is “to experience something”. Generally, it means “having to suffer misfortune, blows of fate, the disfavor of men or gods ...it is the term at hand when the Greek or Hellenistic world wants to express or discuss the problem of suffering” (TDNT 5:905).

The Theological Context of Suffering in 1 Peter



Introduction

-  Scripture presents human suffering as being entirely consistent with the justice, holiness, omnipotence and goodness of God.
-  The Bible provides a very clear and direct answer to the problem of human suffering and it does so by the 3rd chapter in Genesis. Suffering is God's judgment for sin. Suffering is universal because sin is universal.
-  The real problem related to suffering in Scripture is the problem of righteous suffering. If suffering is the consequence of sin, why do the righteous suffer?

The Theological Context of Suffering in 1 Peter



☞ *Why do the Righteous Suffer?*

☞ Who are the righteous? The righteous are those who are in a right relationship with God.

☞ Book of Job

☞ Who is man to question God's purposes?

☞ It serves to display the power of God's redemption.

☞ Psalm 73

☞ There is a bigger picture.

☞ Good is redefined.

The Theological Context of Suffering in 1 Peter



☞ *Summary*

- ☞ The OT presents suffering as universal. We cannot escape suffering. We have no real control over how we suffer. We might suffer from war, illness, natural disaster, bad relationships, etc.... We do have a choice about one thing: whether we suffer as being righteous or as being wicked.
- ☞ Peter is not concerned to distinguish between one type of suffering or another (i.e. sickness vs. persecution), but rather he distinguishes between the suffering that comes to us as a consequence of our own sin and the suffering that comes to us because we are identified with Jesus Christ and lead holy lives.



MOESIA

BLACK SEA

THRACE

BITHYNIA AND PONTUS

GALATIA

ASIA

CAPPADOCIA

COMMAGENE

PAMPHYLIA

LYCIA

CILICIA

SYRIA

CYPRUS

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

AEGEAN SEA

CRETE

The Historical Context of Suffering in 1 Peter



☞ *Who are the Recipients?*

- ☞ Are the recipients Jewish, Gentile, or Jewish-Gentile?
 - ☞ Some have argued for a Jewish audience based on the many quotes from the OT.
 - ☞ Others have argued for a Gentile audience based on references to their pagan background. (1:18; 2:9-10; 4:3)
- ☞ It is most likely that the congregations of these regions were mostly Gentiles with perhaps a Jewish element.

The Historical Context of Suffering in 1 Peter



What are They Suffering?

- They are experiencing the onslaught of fleshly lusts against the soul. (1:11)
- They are being slandered (1:12, 15; 3:9, 16; 4:4, 14)
- Some are being physically abused (2:20)
- Some are living with relational tension (3:1)
- There is the temptation to fear (3:6, 14; 5:6)
- They are experiencing the devil's attack (5:8)

The Historical Context of Suffering in 1 Peter



☞ *Why are They Being Slandered?*

☞ **Cultural Reasons**

- ☞ Church and State Together Instead of Separated
- ☞ Polytheism Instead of Monotheism
- ☞ Tolerance Instead of Intolerance

The Historical Context of Suffering in 1 Peter

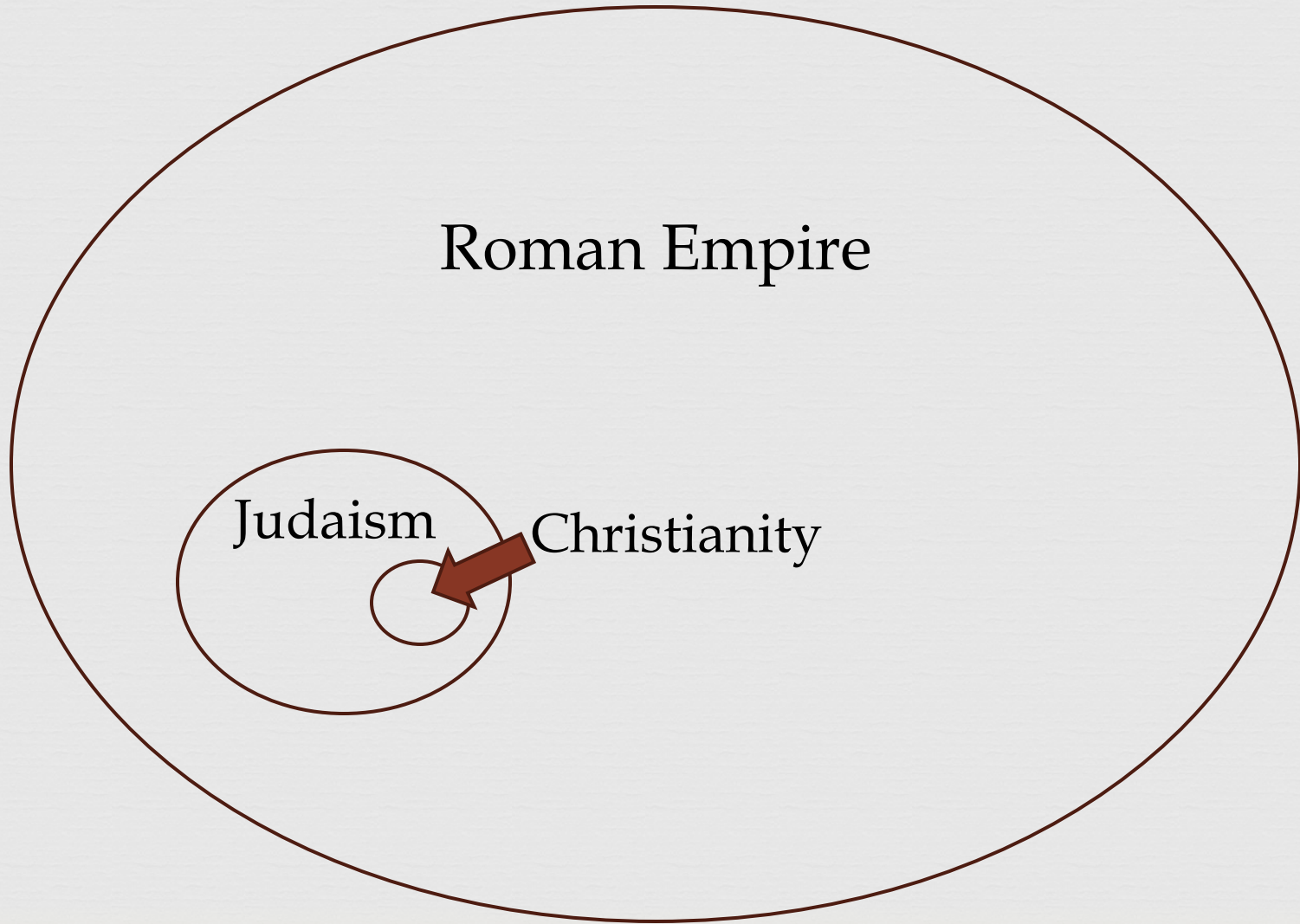


☞ *Why are They Being Slandered?*

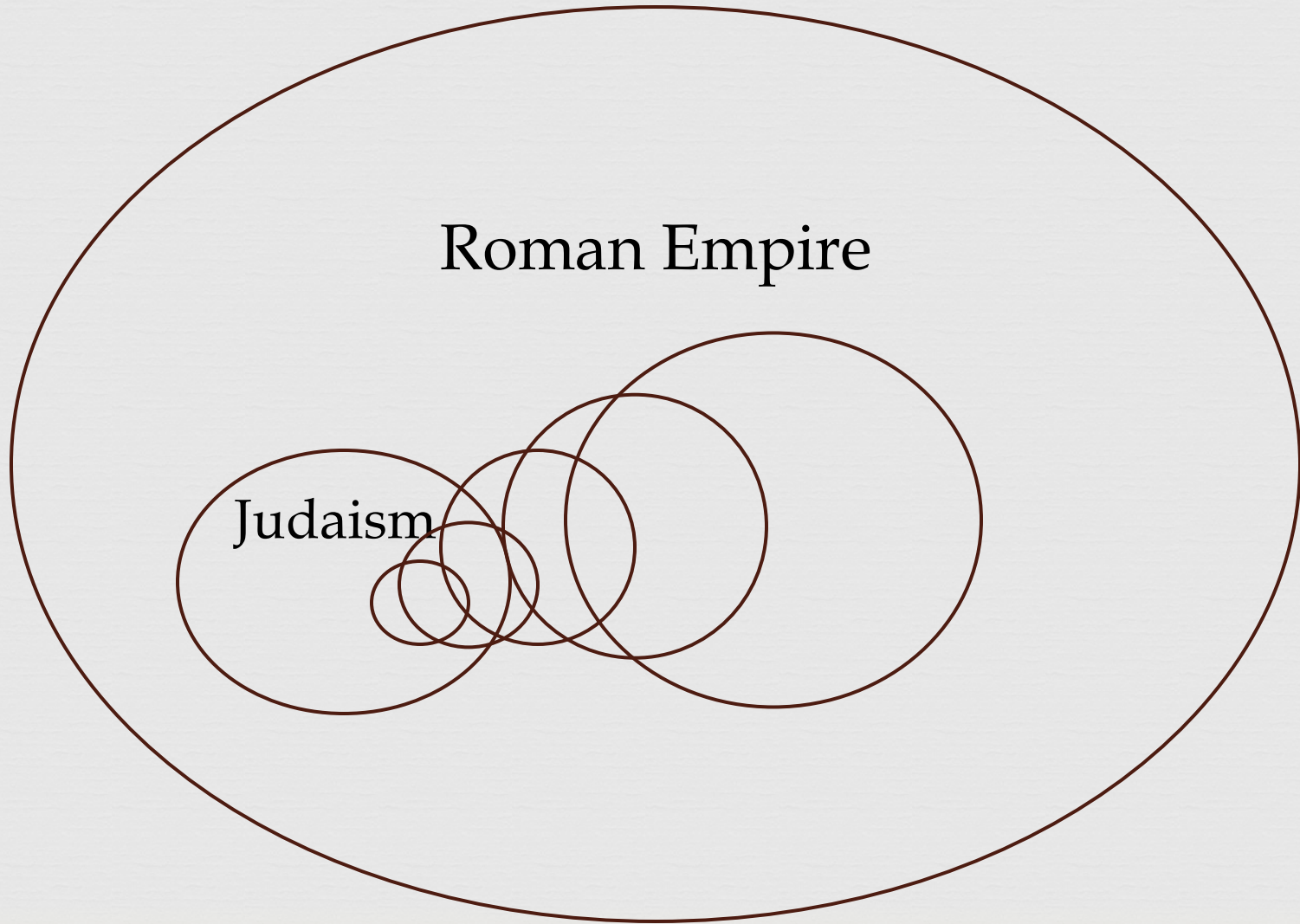
☞ **Historical Reasons**

- ☞ When Christianity first spread throughout the Roman Empire, churches were considered to be an offshoot of the Jewish synagogues. Christians were lumped together with Jews and largely ignored.
- ☞ A shift occurred in the late 50s and early 60's. Christianity was increasingly singled out as a separate movement. This drew more attention both from the general populace as well as government officials.

30's & 40's AD



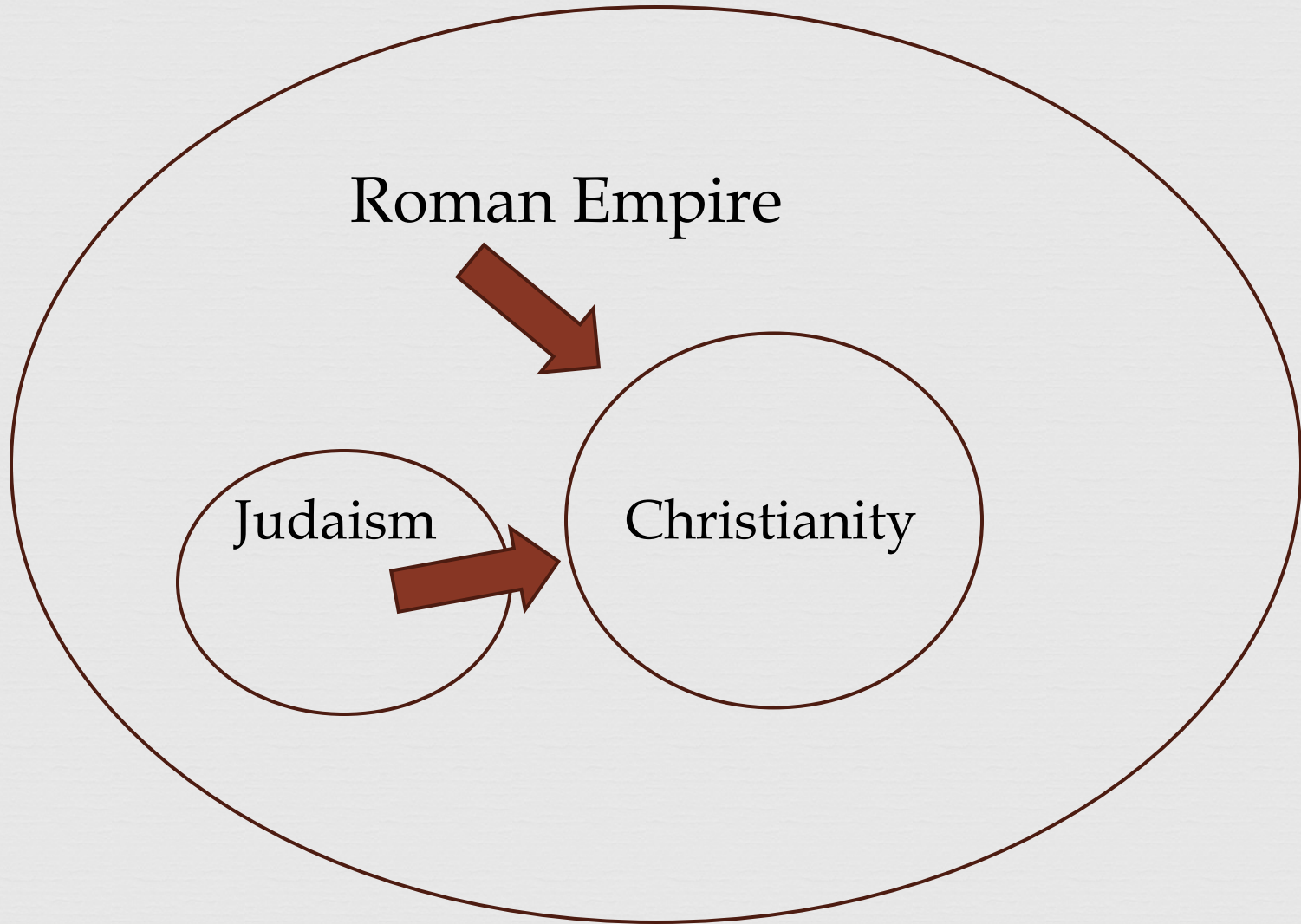
50's & 60's AD



Roman Empire

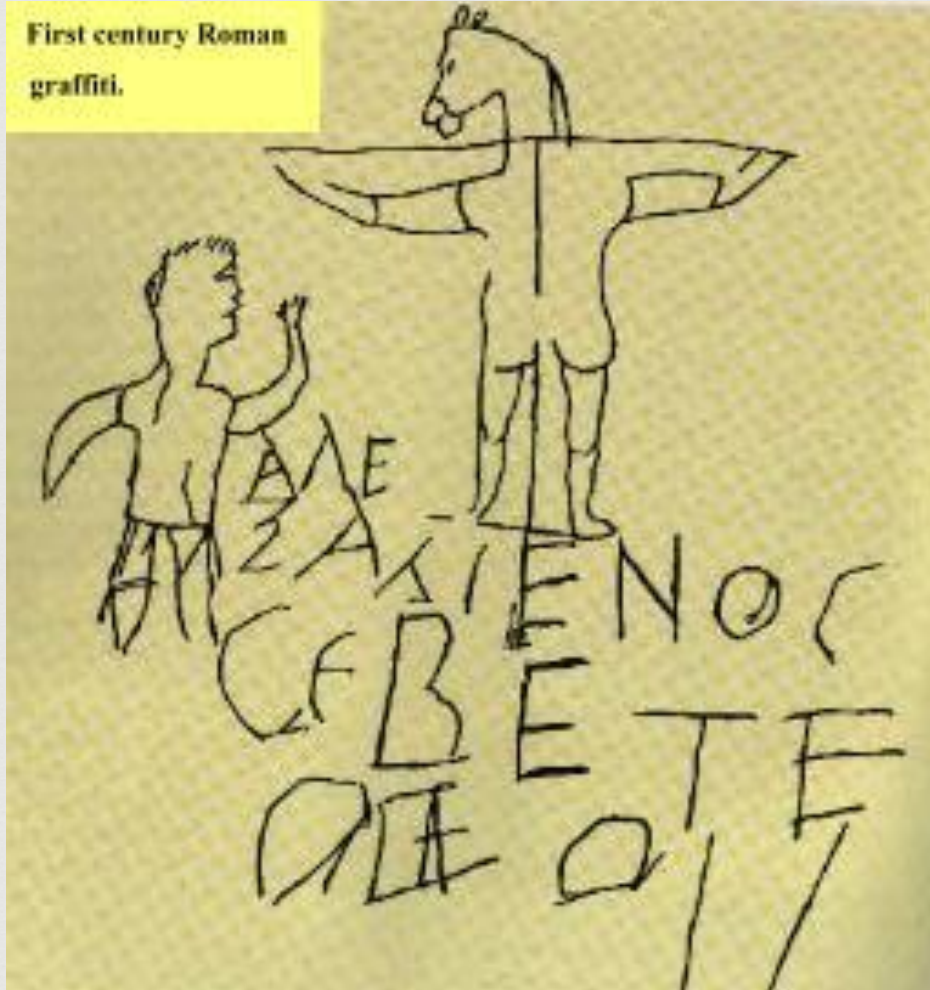
Judaism

60's AD



Anti-Christian Graffiti

First century Roman graffiti.



Alexamenos
worships his God!

Tacitus (Annals 15.44)



☞ “Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. ...Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind.”

Conclusion



- ❧ Does Peter's teaching on suffering have application for our lives?
- ❧ YES, if...
 - ❧ We are in a right relationship with God
 - ❧ We are seeking to lead holy lives

Question for next week



❧ The word “salvation” is used 3 times in 1 Peter 1:1-12. How does Peter use this word? How is this different from the way we normally use it?