

# Social- Economic Context

How class and money  
affected life in the  
New Testament era  
and today



# REVIEW: Intertestamental Period

1. This time period is also called the "\_\_\_\_\_ " years.
2. One prominent family of this period was the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The biggest challenge of secularization came from \_\_\_\_\_ culture.
4. T or F The "synagogue" is another name for the Temple.

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# Social-Economic Context



- Population
- Languages
- Social Life



# The NT World was Agrarian

**How would this affect:**

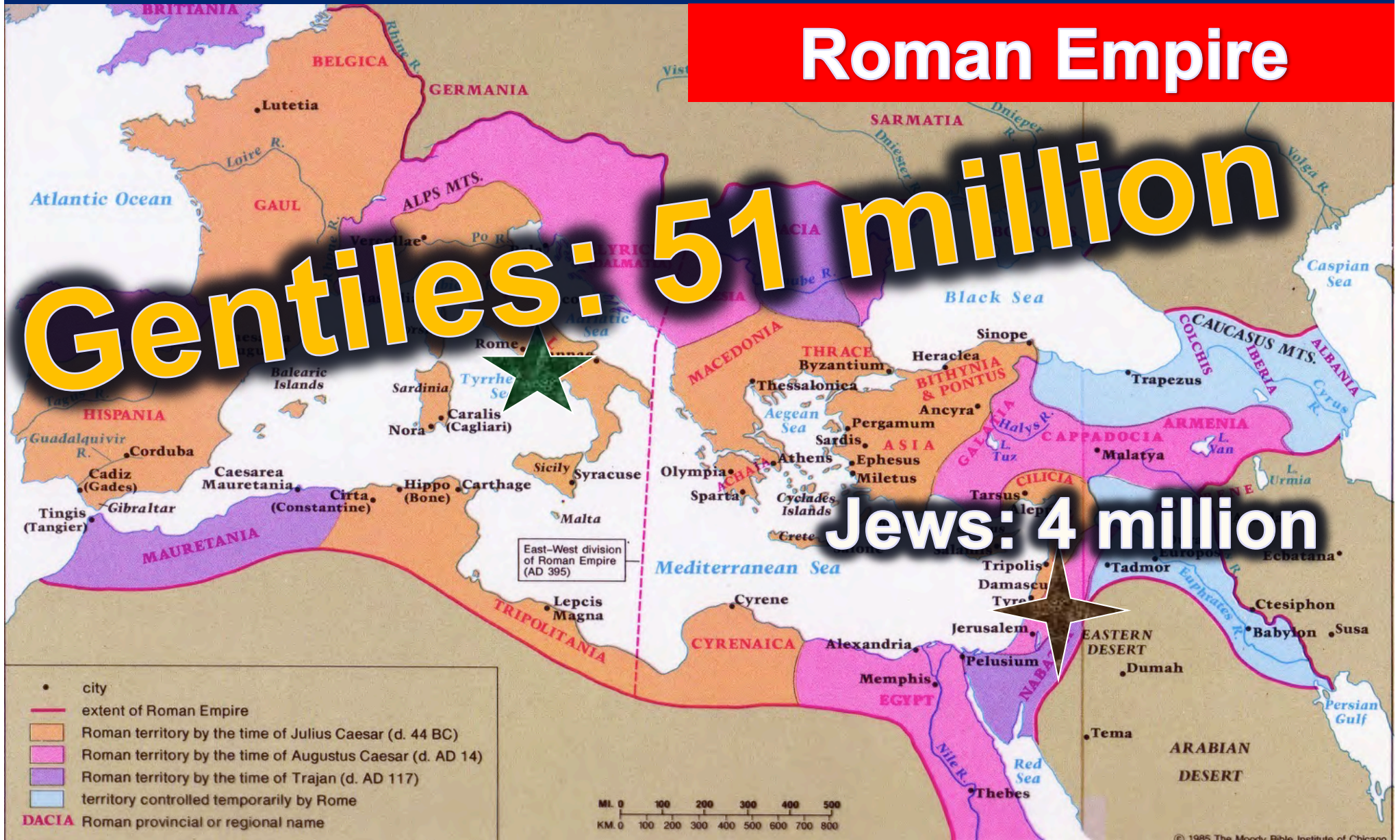
**social structure, economy,  
and religious life?**

# Population of Empire = 55 Million

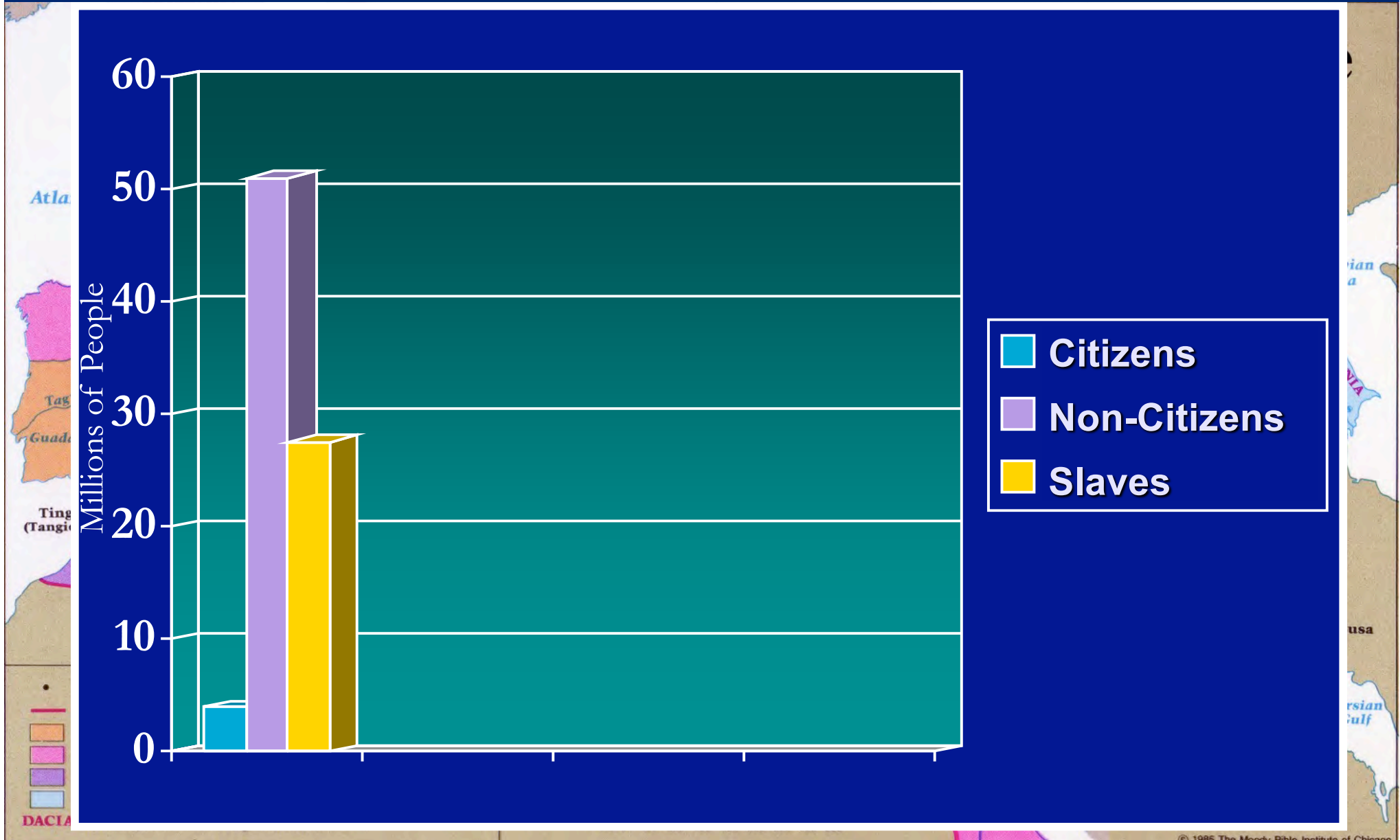
## Roman Empire

# Gentiles: 51 million

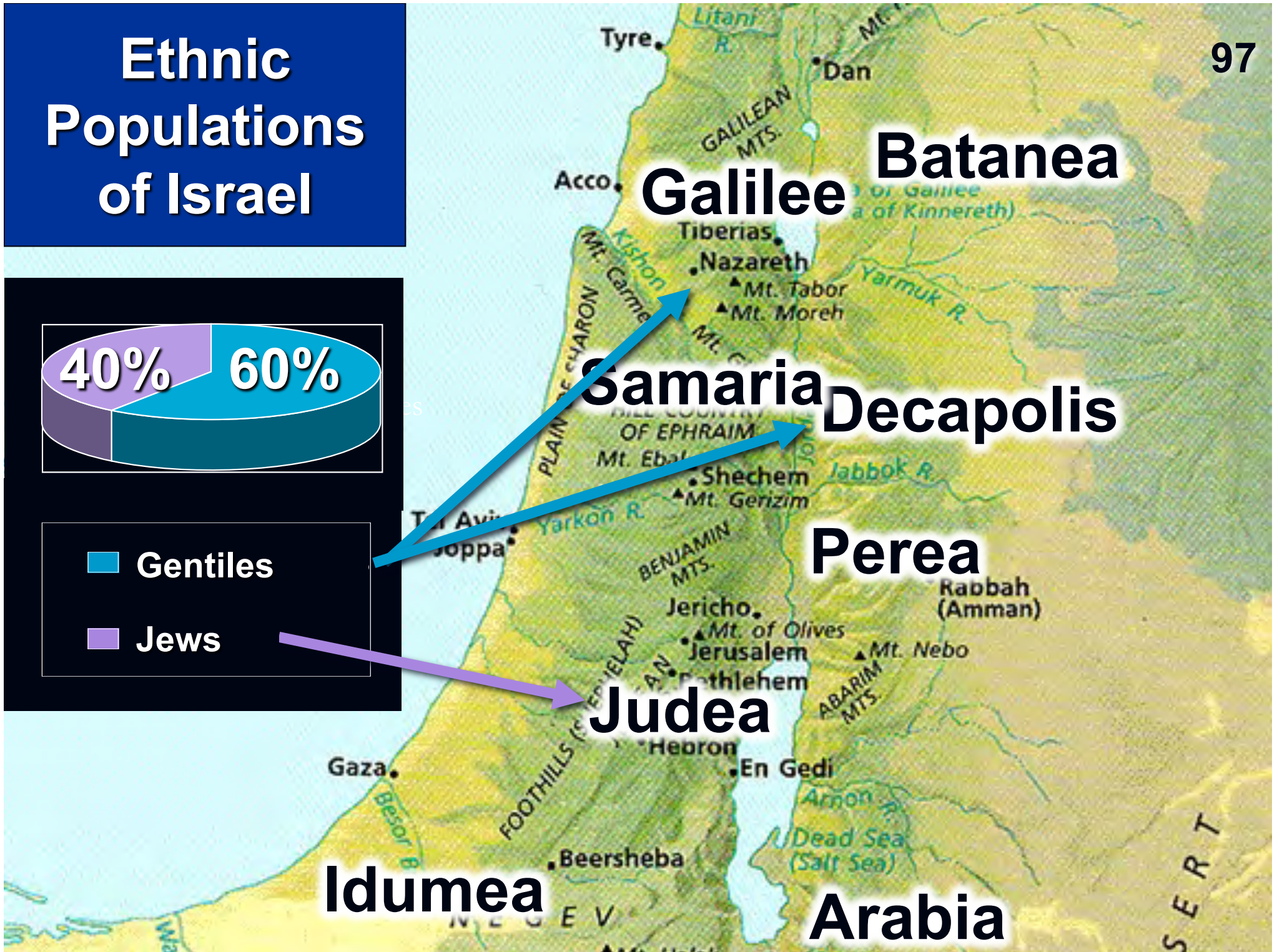
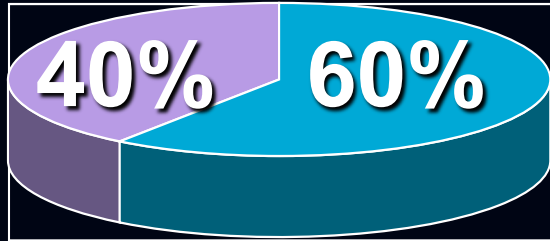
# Jews: 4 million



# Population Groupings



# Ethnic Populations of Israel



# Languages of the Empire

Roman Empire

Latin

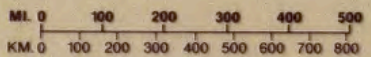
Greek

Aramaic

Hebrew



- city
- extent of Roman Empire
- Orange box: Roman territory by the time of Julius Caesar (d. 44 BC)
- Pink box: Roman territory by the time of Augustus Caesar (d. AD 14)
- Purple box: Roman territory by the time of Trajan (d. AD 117)
- Light blue box: territory controlled temporarily by Rome
- DACIA: Roman provincial or regional name

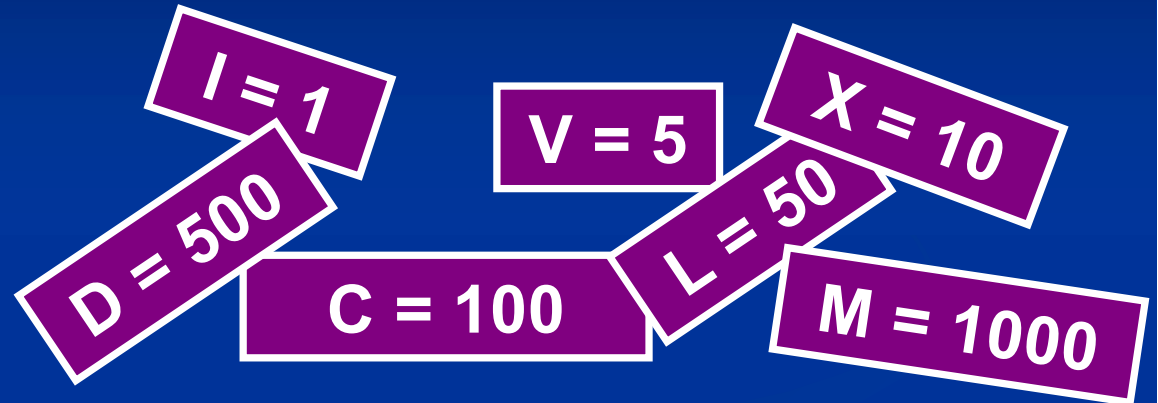


# Latin: The Legal Language

- 23 Letters from Latium, Italy



- Numerals Based on Letters



Quiz: Add these numbers:

LXXXVIII

+ XII

Answer:

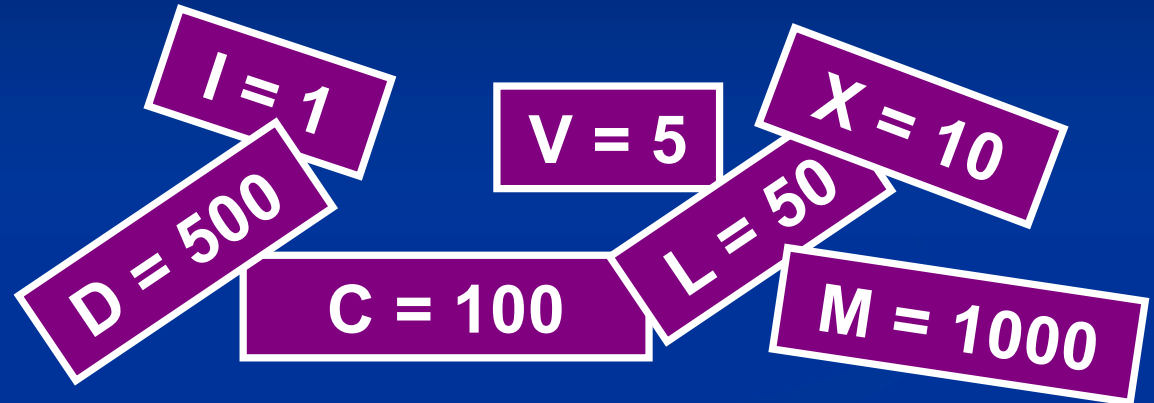
C

# Latin: The Legal Language

- 23 Letters from Latium, Italy



- Numerals Based on Letters



Quiz: Add these numbers:

88

LXXXVIII

+ 12

+ XII

100

Answer:

C

Latin is a language  
As dead as dead can be.  
It killed the ancient Britons  
And now it's killing me!  
(Old British school chant)

# What does this say?

- MR PIGS
- MR NOT PIGS!
- OSAR  
CM PENS?
- LIB  
MR PIGS!

# What does this say?

- MR PIGS
- MR NOT PIGS!
- OSAR
- CM PENS?
- LIB
- MR PIGS!
- Them are pigs
- Them are not pigs!
- Oh, yes they are!
- See them pens?
- Well I'll be!
- Them *are* pigs!
- *Peter had an accent too!*

# Aramaic in Palestine



"After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.'"

(Matthew 26:73)



# Hebrew in Palestine?

- Previously thought virtually unknown
- Recent studies say it was common

# Social Life

DESTINATION ROME

**Hadrian's Wall**  
A 70-mile (112 km) stone and earth wall built in A.D. 122–28. This wall has small forts called milecastles placed at intervals of one Roman mile. It marks the northern limit of the empire.

- Social Classes
  - Roman Social Institutions
  - Ethnic Groups
  - Racial Prejudice
- } Next Class Session

Alexandria 1,000,000  
Constantinople 300,000  
Ostia 100,000  
Augusta Treverorum 80,000  
Londinium 30,000

AFRICA

800 km  
540 Roman miles  
(500 modern miles)

CYRENAICA (Libya)  
AEGYPTUS (Egypt)

Alexandria

**Greece**  
Before the Romans, the last major civilization in the Mediterranean area belonged to the Greeks, who reached their height of power around 400 B.C. The Romans have been their rulers since 146 B.C. and have learned much from them.

**Constantinople**  
In A.D. 330 Emperor Constantine made the old Greek city of Byzantium the new capital of the Roman world. It is now called New Rome, or Constantinople.

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# Four Roman Social Classes



Emperor Augustus  
(27B.C.–A.D. 14)



Emperor Valerian  
(A.D. 253–60)



Emperor Nero  
(A.D. 54–68)



Emperor Domitian  
(A.D. 81–96)



Emperor Trajan  
(A.D. 98–117)



Emperor Aurelian  
(A.D. 270–75)



Emperor Hadrian  
(A.D. 117–38)

## ■ Equestrians (Patricians)



## ■ Plebians



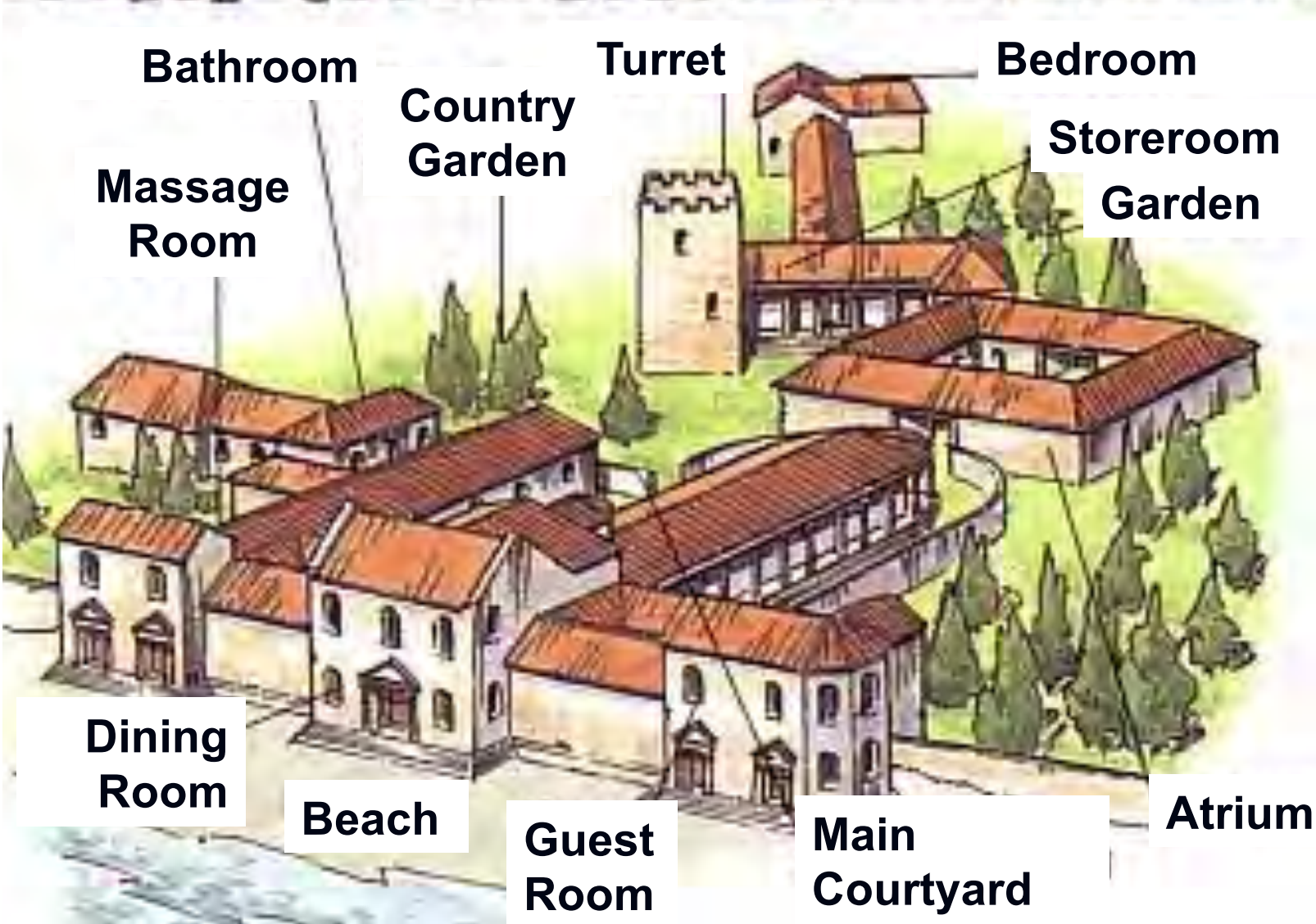
## ■ Freedman



## ■ Slaves

# Social Classes

## ■ Equestrians (Patricians)





**Seven steps to heaven, the Caracalla way**

**The Caracalla: Roman Luxury**



**What is Proper Etiquette at a Roman Feast?**

# THREE-COURSE BANQUET



## FIRST COURSE (*gustatio*—starter)

Freshly caught shellfish and oysters drizzled in garlic sauce, snails, cooked in their shells, sliced boiled eggs, lettuce, olives, figs, and honeyed wine



## SECOND COURSE (*caput cenae*—main dish)

Whole roast boar, filled with sausages and egg yolks, followed by stuffed dormice in honey, peacocks, fish and shellfish, sauces, cabbage, and scented wine



## THIRD COURSE (*secunda mensa*—dessert)

Fresh figs, pears, apples, grapes, olives, nuts, jam, pastries and sweet wine

# A ROMAN DINNER PARTY

If you are invited to a dinner party at the home of a Roman citizen, be sure to follow these standard rules of etiquette. You do not want to offend your host!



Remove outdoor shoes and put on sandals. A slave will wash your hands and place a crown of flowers on your head. At the table, lie on a couch, resting on your left elbow. Eat with your fingers.

It is good manners to throw up between courses, to make room for more food. Bring a feather to tickle your throat.

Stay for games and songs, before collecting your shoes and leaving.

# Social Classes

## Praetorian Standard

The standard of the Praetorian Guard differs from most—it has portraits of the emperor inside its disks.

### Officer in charge

The centurion marches at the head of his troops. The sideways crest across his helmet is a sign of his rank.

Wooden staff, called *vitis*, used to punish disobedient soldiers

Metal leg guards called *greaves*

Hobnailed leather boots called *caliga*



■ Centurions were Wealthy

# Wealthy Roman Women



# A DAY AT THE RACES

Illustrated by ANGUS MCBRIDE



# Equestrian High Priests



**Illegal**  
**Illegal**  
**Illegal**

■ Annas

■ Caiaphas

■ Sanhedrin

**Annas & Caiaphas  
both conducted  
illegal trials of Jesus**

# Social Classes

■ Equestrians



■ Plebians



■ Freedman



■ Slaves



**TIME OFF:** Stop at a bar for a rest and a tasty hot snack.

# Regular Plebeian Priests Wore Plain White Linen



# Plebian Artisans (Blacksmith)

98



# Jewish Carpenters were Plebians



**Freedman  
were  
former  
slaves of  
various  
classes**

# Social Classes

■ **Equestrians**



■ **Plebians**



■ **Freedman**



■ **Slaves**

"But one day some men from the Synagogue of Freed Slaves [Freedman, NIV], as it was called, started to debate with [Stephen]."

(Acts 6:9 NTL)

Freedman were also called "friends"

## Social Classes

"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's **friends**.<sup>14</sup> You are my **friends** if you do what I command.<sup>15</sup> I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my **friends**, since I have told you everything the Father told me" (John 15:13-15).

98  
■ Equestrians



■ Plebians



■ Freedman



■ Slaves

# Social Classes

## New Slaves Just In

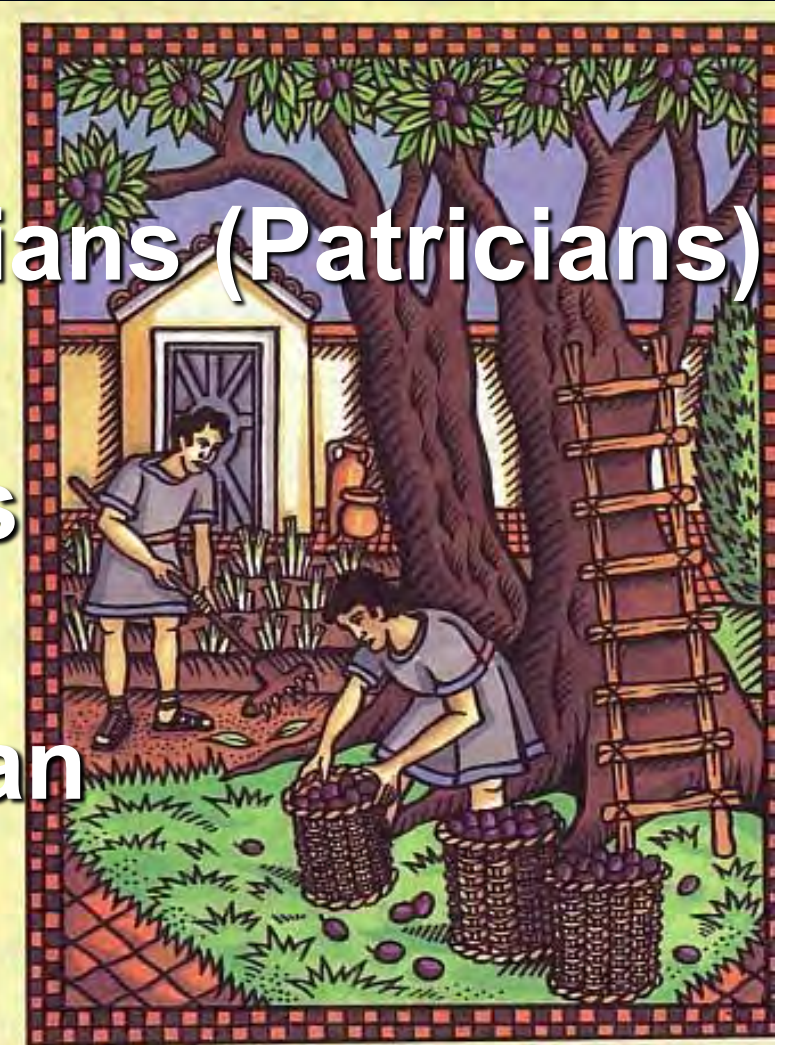
\* Prisoners of war – from all corners of the Empire, and beyond! Educated Greek slaves, strong barbarians from Germany and Britain, also slaves from Egypt, Africa, and India.

\* New batch of criminals – most have been reserved by the government to work in the mines, sweep the roads, and perform other public duties, but some are available for private buyers.

All of our slaves have their age and condition clearly listed. And we guarantee to warn you of any limps, varicose veins, or other sicknesses.

THE SLAVE MARKET,  
TRAJAN'S FORUM, ROME

- Equestrians (Patricians)
- ↓
- Plebians
- ↓
- Freedman
- ↓
- Slaves



**HARD-WEARING:** Strong fit slaves are useful for the hundreds of heavy jobs around the house and yard.

# Slavery in the Roman Empire



## *Features of Slavery during Roman Empire*

- ◆ **Entry into Slavery**
  - Roman military conquests
  - Natural reproduction
  - Rescue from exposure
  - International trade
  - Piracy
  - Sold themselves into slavery for various reasons



# Slavery in the Roman Empire

**"The slave was absolutely at his master's disposal; for the smallest offence he might be scourged, mutilated, crucified, [or] thrown to the wild beasts"**

**(J. B. Lightfoot,  
*Saint Paul's Epistles to the  
Colossians and to Philemon, 321*)**

## ***Features of Slavery during Roman Empire***

**When Romans conquered the Mediterranean, they took millions of slaves to Italy. The Italians were major importers of slaves with slaves accounting for 40 percent of the population!**

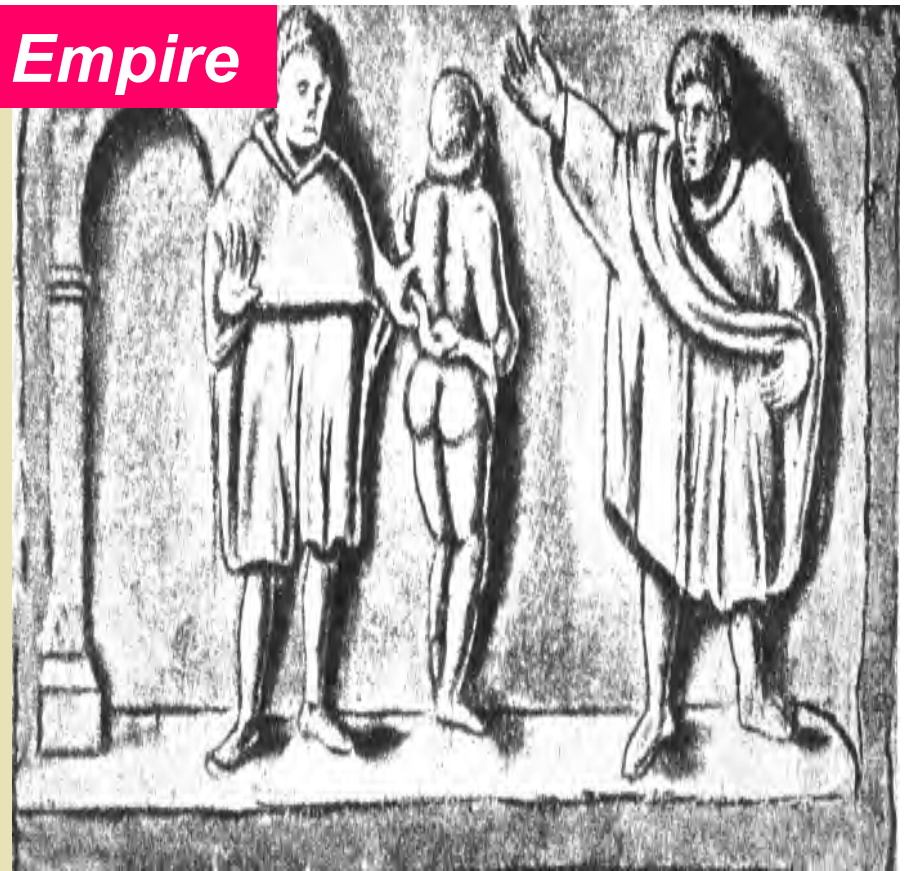
**Laws which promoted or restricted the Roman slave system:**

**Lex Poetelia (326 BC)**

**Lex Aelia Sentia (AD 4)**

**Lex Fufia Caninia (AD 2)**

**Lex Iunia Sorbana**



**Slave sold in Roman slave trade**



# Roman Social Institutions

98  
ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ

A Jewish boy celebrates his bar mitzvah, reading from the Torah scroll, at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.



- Voluntary associations were clubs that anyone could join—unlike the Jewish ones closed to outsiders

# Roman Social Institutions

# Koinonia <sup>98</sup>



- Roman voluntary associations

# *Roman Social Institutions*

# *Koinonia*

98



**The house  
church  
movement  
today is  
reviving  
some of  
these NT  
concepts**

## **Koinonia Small Groups**

# Members of the City Community<sup>98</sup> could appeal to the Forum of Rome




# Citizenship referred to being a citizen of either Rome or Israel

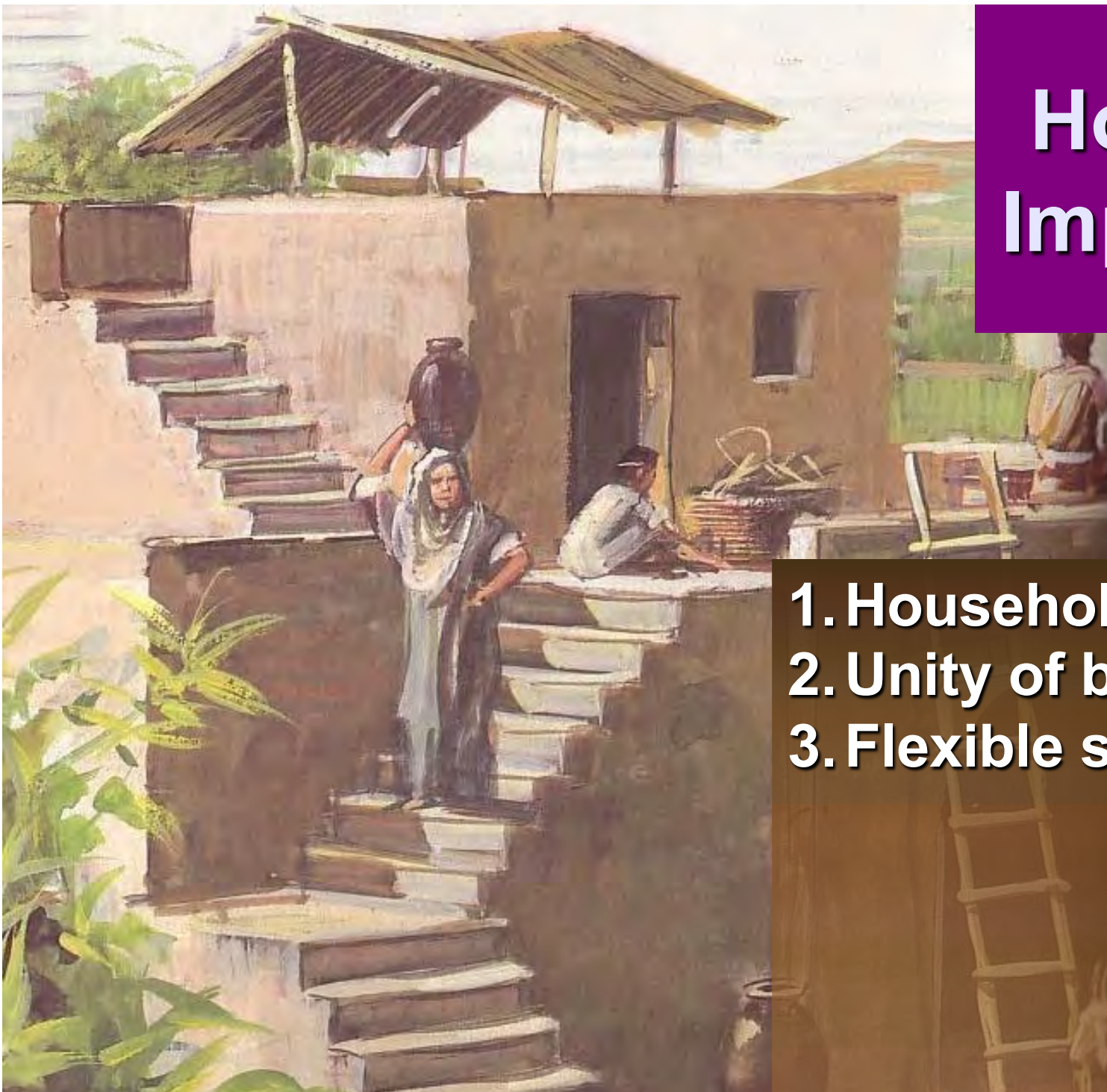
Acts 22:28 (NAU) "The commander answered, 'I acquired this **citizenship** with a large sum of money.' And Paul said, 'But I was actually born a citizen.'"

Eph. 2:12 (NAU) "Remember that you [Gentiles] were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the **commonwealth** [citizenship NLT] of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

# Characteristics of the Household Community

- 
1. Same Biological Source on Same Estate
  2. Hierarchy of Authority
  3. Freedmen and Slaves
  4. Common Religion

# Household Implications

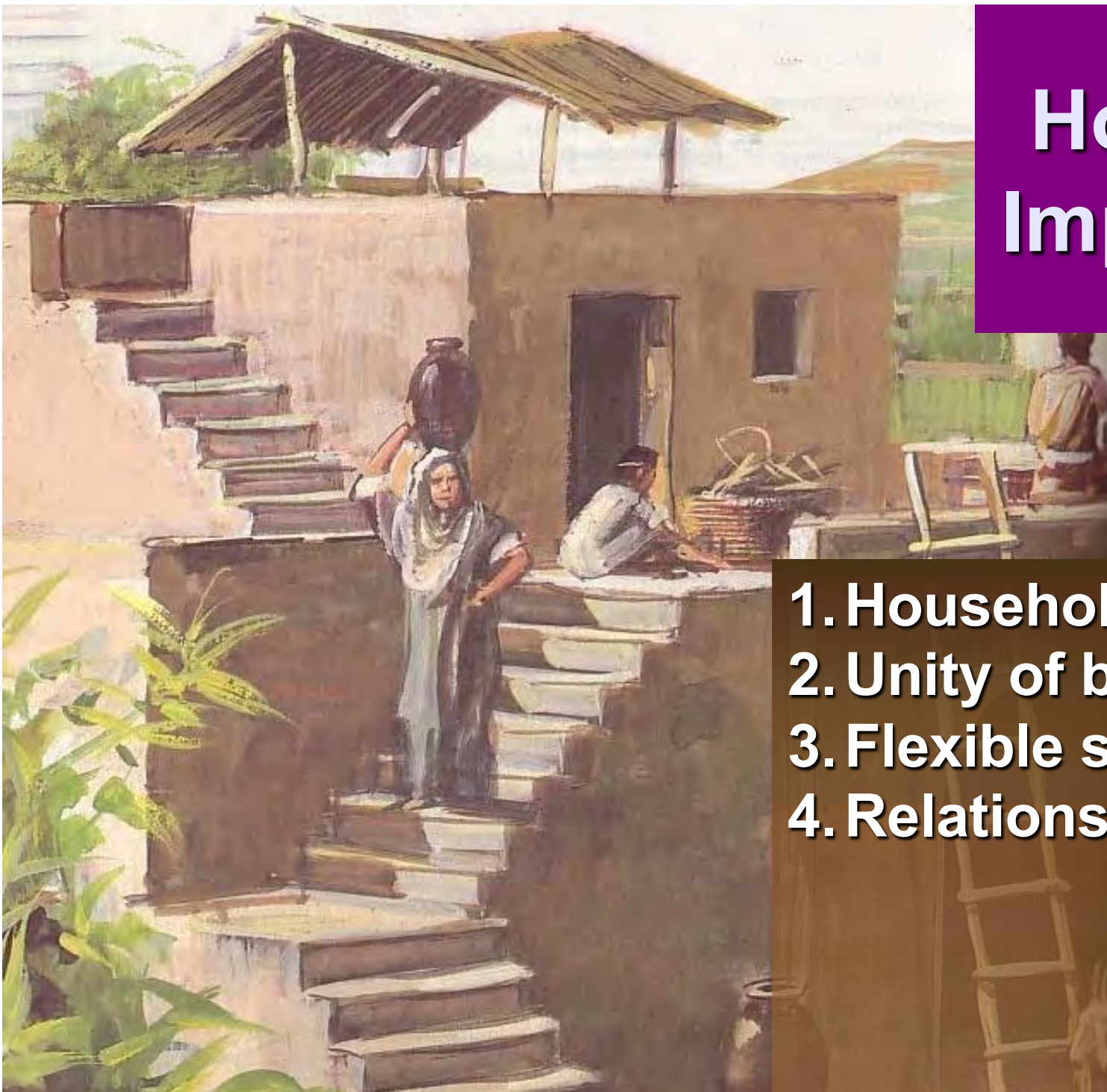


1. Household conversions
2. Unity of body of Christ
3. Flexible structure

**The church is  
an organism  
more than an  
organization**



# Household Implications

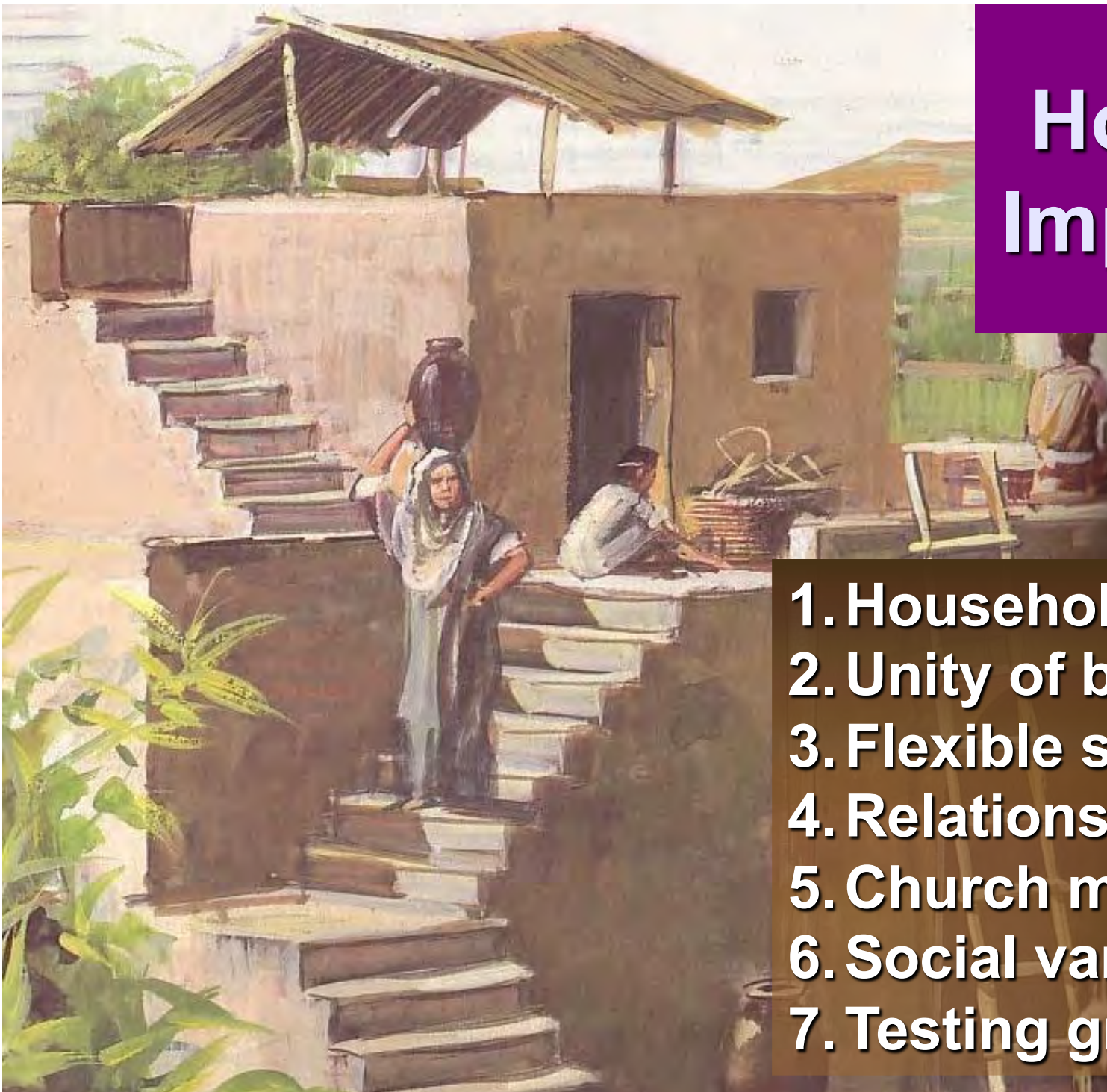


1. Household conversions
2. Unity of body of Christ
3. Flexible structure
4. Relationships

A high-angle photograph of a group of people, mostly women, holding hands in a circle. They are wearing professional attire, including blouses and a lab coat. The scene is set on a dark carpeted floor. The text "People lack relationships today" is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

**People lack  
relationships  
today**

# Household Implications

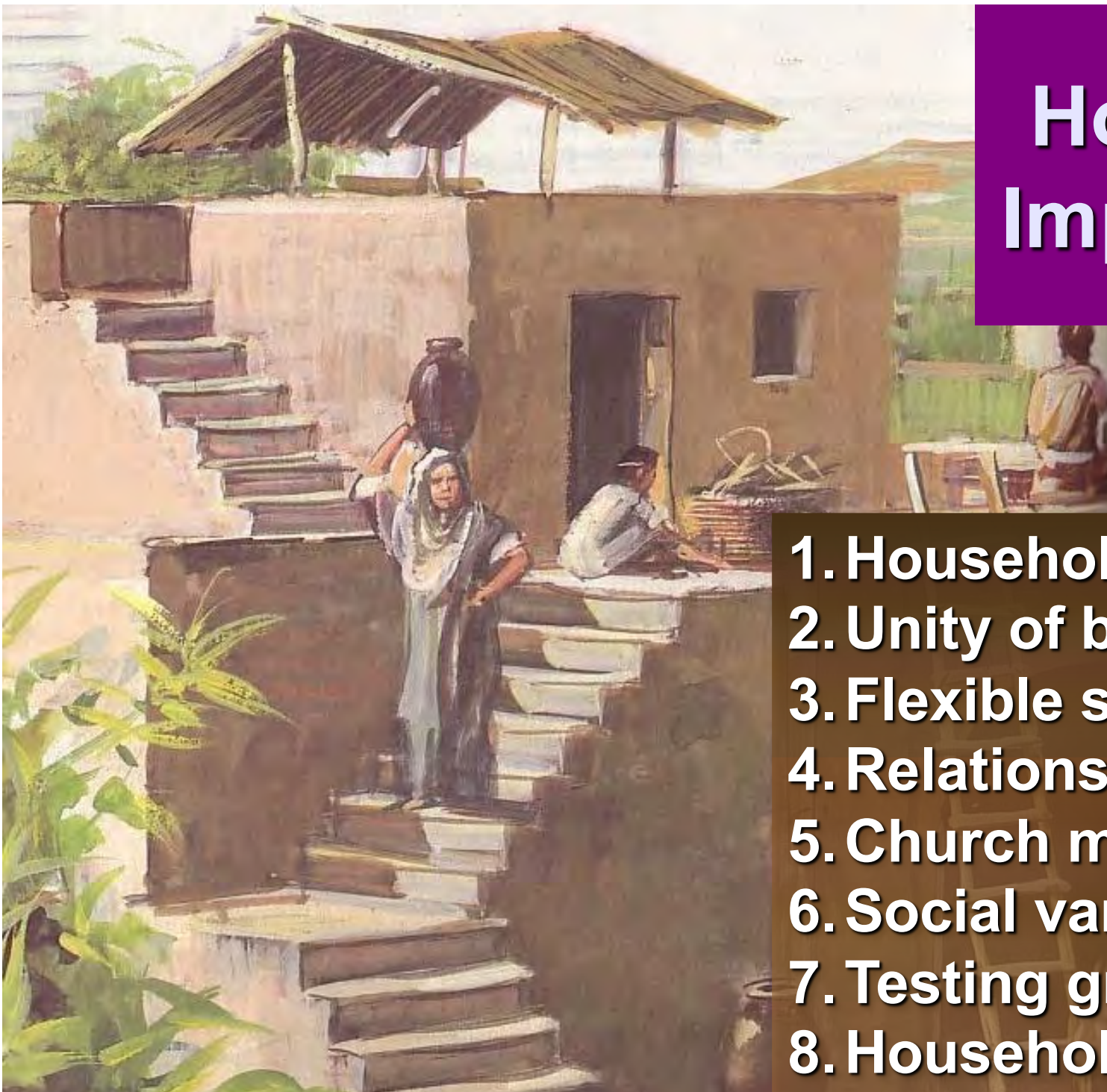


1. Household conversions
2. Unity of body of Christ
3. Flexible structure
4. Relationships
5. Church meeting place
6. Social variety
7. Testing ground

# Households Tested Faithfulness

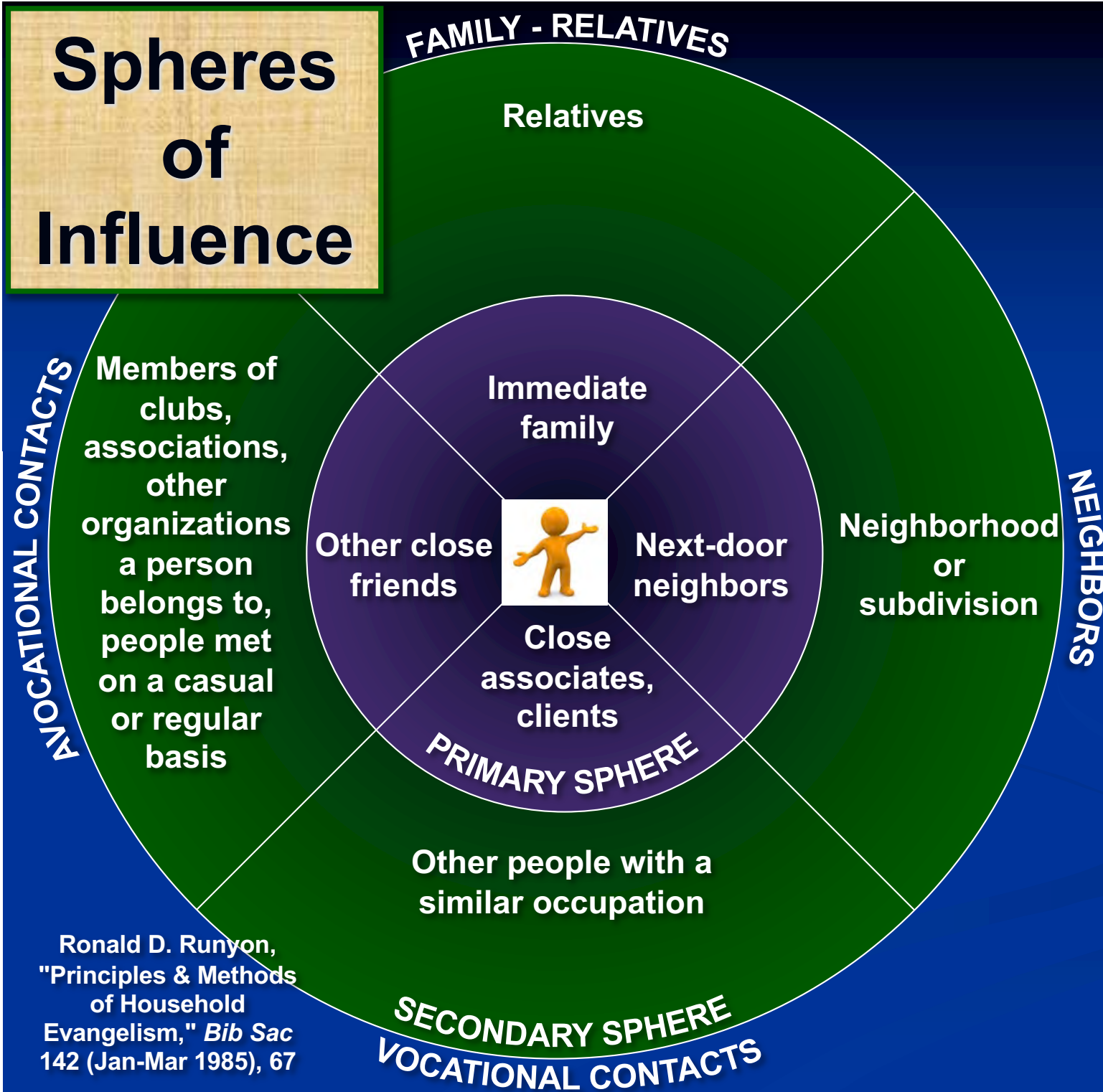


# Household Implications



1. Household conversions
2. Unity of body of Christ
3. Flexible structure
4. Relationships
5. Church meeting place
6. Social variety
7. Testing ground
8. Household evangelism

# Spheres of Influence



In summary, a Christian's *oikos* or personal sphere of influence includes his family, friends, and associates in his neighborhood, work, and recreational activities. This personal sphere of influence is to be a primary target of a believer's personal evangelistic

Ronald D. Runyon,  
 "Principles & Methods  
 of Household  
 Evangelism," *Bib Sac*  
 142 (Jan-Mar 1985), 67

# Household Applications

1. Share how Christ **transformed** your life
2. **Pray** for your *oikos*
3. **Proclaim** the Word
4. Use **varied** methods



# Vary Your Method!

100

- **Prepared** people need a simple presentation



# EVANGELISM

# Vary Your Method!

100

- **Prepared** people need a **simple** presentation
- **Secular** people need **repeated** exposures



# Vary Your Method!

100

- **Prepared** people need a simple presentation
- **Secular** people need repeated exposures
- Those in life **transitions** are especially open



# Household Applications

1. Share how your life was **transformed**
2. **Pray** for your oikos
3. **Proclaim** the Word
4. Use **varied** methods
5. Use your **home**



# Home Evangelism: Individual Activities



# Home Evangelism: Group Activities



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