

Revelation

Religion



Insert Introduction It is a fact that the first two hundred years were characterized by an intense persecution of the Christian Church. This development would stop in 311 and 313 AD, with the effecting of the Edict of Toleration and Milan, respectively. It is within this period of time when Perpetua and Felicity are persecuted and finally executed, particularly in 203 AD.

In the martyrdom of Perpetua and her companions, there are points of convergence and departure. In the martyrdom of Perpetua and her companions and that of Abraham, God's will surpasses man's comfort, desires and aspirations. For instance, God makes it plain for Perpetua and her companions in a vision [where God reveals Himself to Perpetua as a feeding Shepherd] that it was God's will that He delivers them from the persecution, but through martyrdom. This idea of God using not-so-pleasant experiences, circumstances and occurrences is also exemplified in Genesis 15: 12-16. In His relationship with Abraham, God reveals that Abraham's descendents are to be oppressed as slaves in another land [Egypt] for 430 years (Class notes, 45).

In both cases [Perpetua's and Abraham's], there are very unfortunate circumstances that God permits, for purposes only He can understand. This is in total contrast to what some modern day televangelists tout in their 'name-it-claim-it' doctrine, to the effect that all Christians should have a good life, health and ample financial repository as long as they had faith.

Perpetua's martyrdom and the revelation that God gives Abraham concerning his descendants suffering in Egypt echo St. Paul's charge that those who will live godly lives shall suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3: 12).

Again, the revelations in the martyrdom of Perpetua and her companions

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and in God's relation with Israel in the wilderness also find a point of similarity. Contrary to the wrongful postulation of the average mind, Even as God allows Perpetua and her companions to undergo martyrdom, He is still a Shepherd to Perpetua and her companions. The intimation herein is that with God as the Shepherd, He delivered Perpetua through [and not from] the persecution (Natgeotv. com, 32nd minute and Class notes, 2).

Therefore, God's deliverance and care surpasses man's idea of deliverance. Even as someone like Perpetua is tortured, she is given grace, divine resolve and protected, just as Jesus promises that not even a strand of His children's hair shall be lost during persecution. The same is similar to the revelation God gives to the Israelites in the wilderness. He is a Shepherd, Provider and Preserver to them throughout the 40-year wilderness period. This can be seen in Deut 8: 4, 29: 5 and Nehemiah 9: 21. Even the Psalmist sums this well in Psalms 77: 20, Psalm 95, 105: 40-41.

Personal Experience

At one point, I wondered at how God came to choose the line of Judah over Joseph and Reuben. At first, I first considered grace as God's motivation for His actions for leaving out Joseph for Judah, yet the former was morally impeccable and faithful to a far greater and unparalleled extent than the latter. As time went by, I became convinced that it was not grace that solely informed the choosing of Judah over Joseph, since if that was the case; Reuben may have been extended this grace too. In fact, both Reuben and Judah are guilty of nearly the same sin, incest. Over time, I came to the realization that both grace [Judah does not clearly merit the Messiah's lineage] and sovereignty of God had come into play, in Judah's selection. This to me was an insight and not a revelation.

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Works Cited

Class notes. God's Covenant with Israel, p. 45. Print

Class notes. The Martyrdom (Passion) of Saints Perpetua and Felicity, p. 2.

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