Course NT504: Greek Bible and Western Mediterranean World

Professor: Dr. Shawn Craigmiles

Student: Evens Francois

William Crockett's A Celt in Rome is set in second-century Rome. Concerning the author, William V. Crockett is a novelist and professor at Alliance Theological Seminary in New York. He is deeply enthralled in his theological research. There is no theological argument of the book's authenticity however it is a story based on fiction. It is a fictionalized story giving a historical outlook of the period of the Celts and the Roman Empire. The book was published in January 2012. Several characters are presented in the book. The main character is Neeve who is on a journey through Rome. We follow her through her travels from Britannia to Rome and are soon introduced to Taranis and Vectis. Taranis, Neeve's brother, and Vectis her husband. The main character provides a personal look into the interaction between the Celts and the Romans as well as providing imagery into ancient Rome. Neeve is not estranged to Roman rule when the story begins, and she seems to have major choices on her hands. According to the author, "Neeve had been torn between her people and the man she loved."[1] The book is filled with examples of love, compassion, and politics. Many subjects are brought to life in the book that correlates to our assigned readings and several viewpoints parallel themes of the New Testament.

The book reflects many aspects regarding the conflicts concerning religious and political struggles Rome confronted. These themes allow us to return to the period in which they ruled over Jerusalem into the New Testament. Primally, the history of Rome is referred to in two time periods in the Bible. First, the second temple Judaism and the period in the New Testament in the time of King Herod up until the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Rome continued to dominate the culture and religious practices of the Jews.

[1] William V Crockett "*A Celt in Rome*" Publisher: Crockett Holdings, LLC (USA, 2012), 17.

The most important characteristic that I can relate is the birth of Jesus during the Roman rule which will bring about a religious and political crisis. According to the Jewish prophecy, a King will be born to deliver the people from the Roman empire. Subsequently, this will be the cause of the massacre of the newborn male at this time.

Culture and religion are major themes noted in A Celt in Rome. Historically, Romans significantly influenced the Celtic culture especially in the sense of religion. The Celts had their religious system and ancient gods and goddesses that they believed in. Because of Roman rule the Celts, instead of worshiping their gods, adjusted to the Romans and combined the gods of their beliefs. Roman's focused on the cultural customs of municipal life. Rome had a major influence on other cultures and modern society especially by their use of public events demonstrated by their creation of great theaters. "Neeve could never understand the Roman fascination with death. They had built their amphitheaters the world over and passed their days watching men struggle for life. Even in their chariot racing stadiums, like the great Circus Maximus, they supplemented events with executions, cruel games, and revolting life-death confrontations"[2]. In this scene, we are grappled with the strong imagery and intense feeling of the disdain of Roman's view of public spectacles and death. The Celtic people believed in the Druids as their priests and were put to death by the Romans almost as entertainment.

On the other hand, there are also political aspects to consider. During this time, politics were harsh as they were imperial. Citizens, leaders and those under Roman rule were obliged to follow Roman law and observe hierarchy imposition. The exchange between Vectis and Commodus is an example of expectations between the leaders and lower military rank. In their discussion, Vectis was careful to refer to Commodus as a "Supreme Commander" as a signal of

[2] William V Crockett "*A Celt in Rome*" Publisher: Crockett Holdings, LLC (USA, 2012), 411.

lower-ranking and respect towards him”[3]. Commodus says, "I'm in charge here, not you"[4]. And on page 301, "Vectis clamped his jaw shut, the fool standing before him with the bizarre wig was a political appointee with no military experience, but Vectis dares not remind him of it".

Hospitality is an expectation in many settings and is received differently depending on the culture. It is repeated in the new testament in a variety of ways. Hebrew 13:2, "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers…", in the book "Neeve suspected Marcellus had tried to provide a more Celtic-like atmosphere to please her."[5].

Through the passionate telling of the story, we can look into many aspects of Roman life. Especially, the political, religious and the use of power to make others submit to their rule. We find a love story based on a great controversy between Roman and Celtic culture. The book allowed a deeper understanding of personal struggles and similarities that were experienced in ancient times. The characters draw the reader to a personal understanding of how Christianity was regarded throughout the empire.

[3] William V Crockett “*A Celt in Rome*” Publisher: Crockett Holdings, LLC (USA, 2012), 300.
[4] William. “*A Celt in Rome*”,301.
[5] William.267