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- Prelude: Forty Martyrs of Sebaste
 - Constantine defeats Licinius.
 - Constantine's edicts not created out of whole cloth.
 - The Crucifixion and the stoning of Stephen were miscarriages of Roman justice.
 - The very first Christians enjoyed protection of Roman law:
 - o Roman officials tended not to intervene in religious disputes
 - o A capital sentence was reserved to the Roman government
 - Tertullian/Justin Martyr: Pilate's correspondence with Tiberius
 - Tiberius' veto
 - Acts of the Apostles: Chapter 9 (Judea, Galilee, Samaria)
 - Martyrdom's of James the Greater and Lesser take place during the absence of Roman rule
 - Saint Paul in Corinth vs in Judea
 - Things turn dark: Nero 64 AD
 - Lactantius/Tacitus
 - After Nero, Tiberius veto lost its authority
 - Domitian 81-96
 - Nerva to Aurelius (96-161) sporadic persecution
 - Trajan's rescript
 - Martyrs of Lyon
 - Age of the Antonines
 - Septimius Severus 193-211
 - Caracalla 211-217 era of relative peace
 - Philip the Arab (Christian?)
 - Third Century Crisis: Decius—unite empire against a common enemy
 - Aurelian (wall, Sol Invictus)
 - Diocletian (284-305)
 - o Galerius is the real author of the persecutions
 - o Three edicts:
 - Destruction of churches and sacred scripture/people in positions of honor who continue to practice Christianity must be degraded
 - Imprisonment of bishops and clergy
 - Torture and imprisonment of the laity



- Review:
 - The relationship between Rome and the Church is complex.
 - Rome found herself intervening in religious disputes to preserve social order.
 - Most persecutions were local. The two that were empire-wide were Valerian and Diocletian.
 - Save Nero and Domitian, very little took place in the city of Rome.

- For us:
 - Comfort in the story of the lapsi
 - Good source of reflection when we are inconvenienced by daily life
 - Not martyrs to “religious freedom”
 - One for the Altar boys: Tarcissius

Recommended Reading:

- Marta Sordi, *Christians in the Roman Empire*
- Giuseppe Riciotti, *The Age of the Martyrs*