

“The Crown City: Smyrna”  
(Rev 2:8-11)

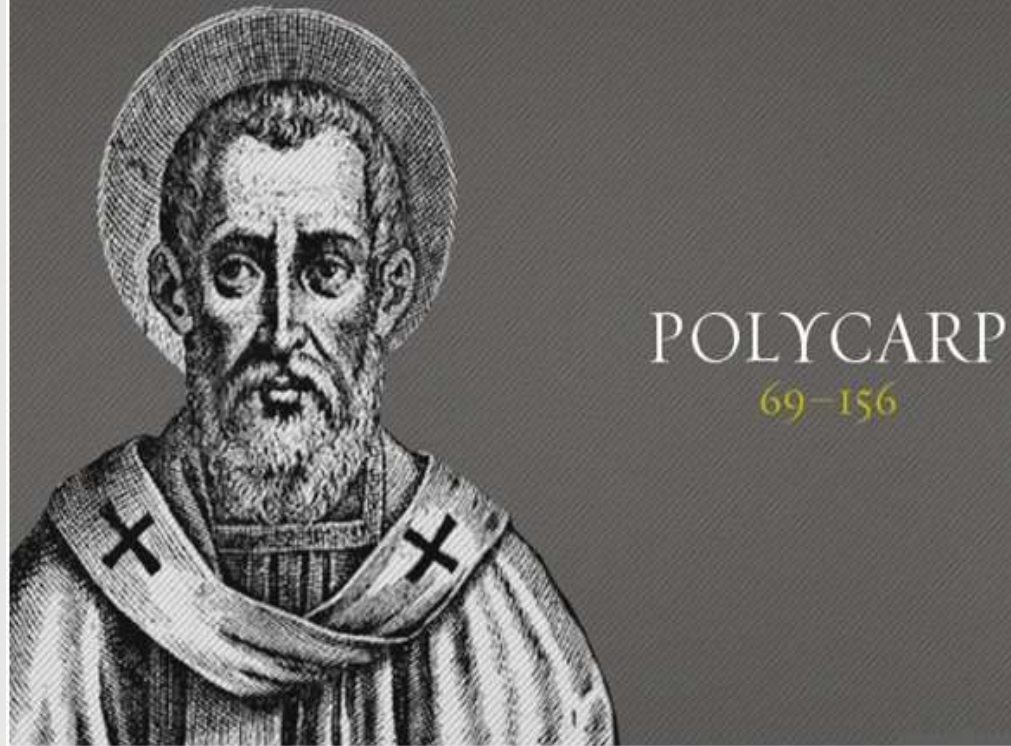


Truth Matters Church, Inc.

# Polycarp



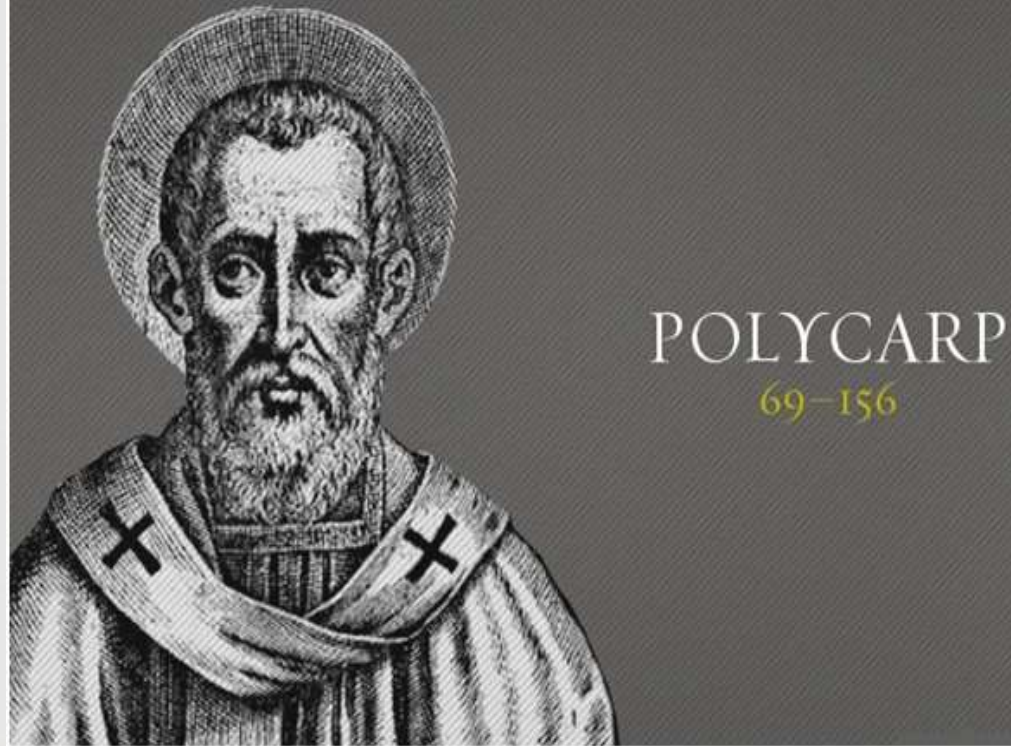
- ✧ Bishop of 2<sup>nd</sup> Century church in Smyrna
- ✧ Lived long (believed to be last survivor to have been to know and have been disciplined by John)
- ✧ Distributed Scriptures and faithfully guarded the church against heresy



# Polycarp



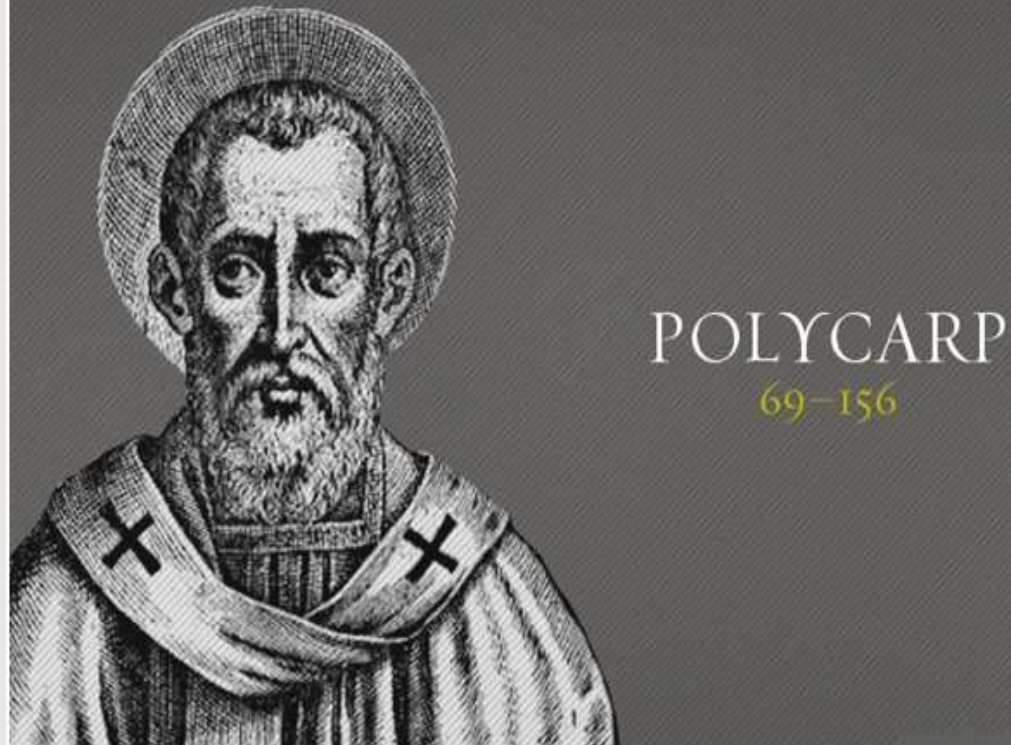
- ✧ Tradition says that Polycarp had a dream one night of his pillow catching on fire
  - ✧ Polycarp told his friends he believed God was warning him about being burned at the stake for his faith
- ✧ A few days later, Roman guards were sent to apprehend Polycarp and bring him before the proconsul



# Polycarp



- ✧ Polycarp showed the Roman guards great hospitality
  - ✧ Warmly greeted them
  - ✧ Had his servants prepare a meal for them
  - ✧ Prayed fervently where the guards heard him
  - ✧ Tradition says the guards felt guilty for taking him to custody for execution
- ✧ Tradition also says that Polycarp was asked to renounce his faith in Jesus Christ



# Polycarp



☞ Which leads to a couple of Polycarp's famous responses:

**"If you think I will  
swear by the genius  
of Caesar, then you  
don't know who I am.**

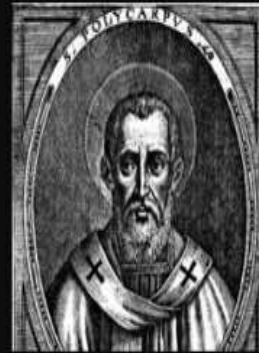
**Hear me clearly:  
I am a Christian."**

**-Saint Polycarp**

*to the Roman Proconsul Statius Quadratus  
on the occasion of his martyrdom, AD 167*



Polycarp



Eighty and six years have I served  
Christ, nor has He ever done me any  
harm. How, then, could I blaspheme  
my King who saved Me?....I bless Thee  
for deigning me worthy of this day and  
this hour that I may be among Thy  
martyrs and drink the cup of my Lord  
Jesus Christ.

AZ QUOTES

# Polycarp



- ✧ This outraged the Roman proconsul and threatened to throw him to the wild beasts, Polycarp responded “You can do whatever you want. I will not deny Jesus Christ”
- ✧ The Romans proceeded to stack up wood and made a stake to burn Polycarp to death



# Polycarp



- ❧ Legend says that a wind came along and literally swept the fire away from Polycarp and he wasn't burned
  - ❧ Reminiscent of Shadrach/Meshach/Abednego fiery furnace account
- ❧ So the guard commanded to stab Polycarp instead, and they did, and Polycarp died there as a martyr (witness) for Jesus Christ
  - ❧ Hence bringing to fulfillment Jesus's words to "Be faithful until death"
- ❧ This prophecy certainly included men like Polycarp of Smyrna



# Exposit Rev 2:10



Back to last part of v. 10

- ❧ “so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days”
- ❧ Leading up to this study, I admit that I was short sighted
- ❧ Reading it in its context, I believe that under Roman persecution, the believers in Smyrna will be arrested and thrown into prison for ten days, then executed
  - ❧ Can this also be prophetic? I think that’s a possibility
- ❧ For now I will stick to the context
- ❧ The believers in Smyrna are asked to “Be faithful until death, and [Jesus] will give [them] the crown of life”
- ❧ Let’s look at “crown of life” statement



# “crown of life”



- ☞ We covered some of this in our intro
- ☞ The crown was the symbol of the city of Smyrna
- ☞ In fact, coins minted in Smyrna often depicted emperors and even the imperial temples, so Smyrna was loyal and dedicated to the worship of the emperor and the imperial cult



# “crown of life”



- ❧ Crowns in those days was often associated with a victor in the games
  - ❧ Kind of like the Olympic medals
- ❧ Crowns were also associated with Great Festivities where everyone would wear a garland of a crown
- ❧ These early believers not only were in poverty, but did not or were not given any crowns and excluded from its festivities (they were aliens)



# “crown of life”



✧ Jesus is communicating not to worry about an earthly crown that will perish, but the crown of life which is eternal

✧ His half brother James speaks on this:

James 1:12

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the **crown of life** which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

✧ TRUTH APPLICATION: Just as the apostles and believers in Smyrna before us have suffered and endured and were faithful even unto death will be given a crown of life, so too will all believers in all time who are faithful, even if faced with death, will receive the same crown by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

✧ This is regardless of our social or economic status here on earth!

# Exposit Rev 2:11a



11a He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

☞ “He who has an ear, let him hear” this echoes Isaiah:

Isaiah 28:23

23 Give ear and hear my voice,

Listen and hear my words.

☞ On the surface, this is a catchy phrase

☞ But, it's a call or command to listen and obey OR else

☞ “what the Spirit says” – mystery of the trinity; in Revelation the embodiment of Father and Son are both seen, but not the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit is it's own Person, yet the same Spirit of the Father and the Son

# Exposit Rev 2:11b



11b He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

☞ ““He who overcomes” who is that speaking of?

☞ ROE#1 (Must use Scripture with Scripture)

1 John 5:5

Who is the one who overcomes the world, but **he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**

☞ UNIVERSAL APPLICATION: This is a promise not limited to the believers in Smyrna, but to all who believes that Jesus is the Son of God!

☞ Peter's confession upon which Christ will build His church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it!

☞ “second death” [more on this]

# “second death”



☞ We've covered this extensively in our study:

☞ Where do believers go when we die?

☞ The Keys of Death of Hades

☞ Believers go to Paradise in heaven

☞ Unbelievers go to Hades

☞ Then the lake of fire

☞ Thus believers will not experience a 2<sup>nd</sup> death, only unbelievers will

John 3:36

36 He who **believes** in the Son **has eternal life**; but he who **does not obey** [**does not believe in**] the Son **will not see life**, but the wrath of God abides on him."

# “second death”



APPLICATION: All believers who are faithful to Jesus even if faced with torture and death, will not experience a 2<sup>nd</sup> death, but instead will be given a crown of life and received into Paradise into the loving arms of the One who holds seven stars in His right hand!