

The Witness of the State Execution of Polycarp



The Twenty-One Witnesses

Books of Instruction

The Witness of Two Ways of Life and Death

The Witness of Two Paths of Light and Darkness

The Witness of The Twelve Apostles

Book of Christ

The Witness of Jesus

Books of Teaching

The Witness of the Barren Woman

The Witness of Rome's Letter to Corinth

The Witness of the Jewish Scriptures

Books of Visions

The Witness of the Four Visions

The Witness of the Shepherd

Books of Ignatius, Disciple of Apostles

The Witness of Ignatius: Ephesus

The Witness of Ignatius: Magnesia

The Witness of Ignatius: Tralles

The Witness of Ignatius: Rome

The Witness of Ignatius: Philadelphia

The Witness of Ignatius: Smyrna

The Witness of Ignatius: Polycarp

Books of Polycarp, Disciple of Apostle John

The Witness of Polycarp

The Witness of the State Execution of Polycarp

Books of Philosophers

The Witness of Aristides (Greek)

The Witness of Quadratus (Greek)

The Witness of Justin (Samaritan)

THE WITNESS OF THE STATE EXECUTION OF POLYCARP

Compiled by
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Front cover image – A sixth-century depiction of Polycarp.

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Scriptures of Unconditional Love

They are called Scriptures of Unconditional Love because GOD is Unconditional Love (1 John 4:16) and these Scriptures will help us to walk in the ways of Unconditional Love. We should live by Unconditional Love because Moses commanded it (Leviticus 19:18) and so did Jesus the Christ (Matthew 22:37-39). There are an initial thirty of these books to be published. Some are still in process but should be ready by the end of 2026. Once they are completed, more will be added.

The Twenty-One Witness books have been updated from their previous titles and translations using the South-London English that I grew up with. I also replaced the word “church” with “community of GOD’s people” and “Lord” with “RULER” as these are more accurate translations. These twenty-one were chosen because they do not contradict the Old or New Testaments in any way but rather provide us with a means to interpret the Holy Bible more accurately and with additional knowledge and understanding.

Nobody had ever told me what was going to happen when I submitted my life to Christ on a South-London Street in February 1974, aged 13. I had a physical Holy Spirit experience as an “atomic bomb of joy” exploded in my being. As I walked along the street, it was like I was floating three feet off the ground. That evening, a Spirit person visited me and wrote these words in my heart with light and fire, “Do not rebuke the church”. The end result of this encounter are these Scriptures of Unconditional Love.

The Four Gospels-In-Advance

The Gospel of Isaiah

The Gospel of King David

The Gospel of Moses

The Gospel of The Prophets

These are the books of Written Miracles. Ancient prophecies and predictions scattered throughout the Holy Bible's Old Testament concerning the appearance of Christ. These prophecies were made hundreds, some over a thousand, years before Christ appeared. They were all miraculously fulfilled with pin-point accuracy by Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth. There are so many of them that they could only have been put there by Holy Spirit. Certain Jewish scholars, who did not want Jesus to be their Messiah or Christ, started deleting the more obvious prophecies. You can find some of them restored in the books of the twenty-one witnesses. It is best to read the Gospels of Isaiah and King David first as they will strengthen your faith so that your heart can be prepared to receive the teachings and testimonies of the twenty-one witnesses.

The Twenty-One Witnesses

It is like we have twenty-one new witnesses presenting themselves before a court with new evidence and testimonies that GOD is real, and Christ is knowable. Some of these witnesses might have come forward from the era of 'Belonging to the Way' which was from AD 33 (Jesus's physical and spiritual resurrection from the dead) to AD 47 after which time those 'Belonging to the Way' were first called Christians. Most of the other witnesses belong to the pre-church era of the Original First Christians. This era spanned from AD 47 to AD 155 when Polycarp, the Disciple of John the Apostle, was executed for being a Christian by the Roman Empire. The Roman Church filled the vacuum with their own authority and 'brand' and were a powerful influence in starting the new 'church age'. Eventually, the twenty-one witnesses were banned from the New Testament in the fourth century by Emperor Constantine's Roman Church of Christendom, even though these scriptures were originally treasured by Christians of the first and second centuries. Fearing persecution, holders of the books managed to hide them and keep them safe. One thousand two hundred and fifty years later they began to be rediscovered again. Silence broken. Christianity unrestricted. Let them speak. Let us listen.

If they had been allowed to speak and were given their rightful place in the New Testament, they would have acted as salt and light to have a purifying effect on the religious authorities down the centuries. The world would not have experienced the abuses of zealous misguided religious powers. There would have been no crusades, no inquisitions, no witch hunts, no public burnings and no religious persecutions. There would have been no need for European colonialism either as the colonised nations would already be worshipping Christ, having destroyed their gods. The world would have been a better place as the unconditional love of Christ became the new currency that replaced cruelty. The Good Confession would have united the community of GOD's people and all the gods would have been annihilated. There would also have been no need for GOD to send the Qur'an. Having said that, the church has done a vital job in helping to get rid of many gods by either destroying or absorbing them. My hope is that these twenty-one witnesses will serve to destroy the remaining gods in the world leaving Devil Satan, who has won the right to remain here, as the sole survivor from the original sin rebellion. Hindus and similar, must abandon all their gods and worship Krishna alone. You can read the books of enlightenment when they have been published, to understand more about this. It is also now time for those churches that have absorbed pagan gods and practices, to get rid of them.

The church's shortcomings can be traced all the way back to AD 154 when Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, refused to accept the Nisan 14 Passover date that Polycarp, disciple of apostle John, and the other apostles observed, regardless of the day of the week it landed on. Anicetus instead kept to what we now know as the Easter dates which should be abandoned in favour of Nisan 14.

The twenty-one witnesses reveal to mankind that all the books of the Holy Bible should be read in the context of GOD versus the gods. In this war, each one of us finds ourselves at one of five stages.

Stage One: Individuals abandon their god(s). It is better to practice secular atheism than to worship demons.

Stage Two: Acknowledge GOD but don't agree with GOD. Presenting oneself regularly before GOD, either in a church or some other similar gathering will help your case with your Creator.

Stage Three: Agree with GOD but don't obey.

Stage Four: Try your best to obey GOD.

Stage Five: Full submission to GOD. This is perfection.

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The Twenty-Second Witness

The Witness of The Qur'an

The Witness of The Qur'an was delivered between AD 609–632. It was delivered by Angel Gabriel to Muhammad because both the Jewish and Church systems and authorities had become corrupt. It's rather like GOD opened another front in the war to destroy GOD's enemies who were the gods. Many of the gods were fallen angels, demigods and demons being worshipped by mankind.

Books of Enlightenment

Philip's Testimony

Enoch – Before Noah's Flood

The History of the Spirit World

Enlightenment

The books of enlightenment explain the war that has been, currently is and will be raging in heaven and on earth until it is won by Christ. They also provide a whole lot more information, which when combined with the knowledge of the twenty-one witnesses, helps the reader to understand life, the universe and everything a whole lot better.

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Introduction

This is the seventh book of EHYEH's witnesses. There are twenty-two in all. It is like we have twenty-two new witnesses presenting themselves before a court with new evidence and testimonies that GOD is real, and EHYEH is knowable. Some of these witnesses might have come forward from the era of "Belonging to The Way" which was from AD 33 (Jesus's physical and spiritual resurrection from the dead) to AD 47 after which time "Belonging to The Way" were first called Christians. Most of the other witnesses belong to the pre-church era of the Original First Christians. This era spanned from AD 47 to AD 155 when Polycarp, the Disciple of John the Apostle, was executed for being a Christian by the Roman Empire.

Polycarp is a powerful witness because he knew the Apostle John who was the favourite disciple of Jesus. Polycarp could easily have saved his own life by reciting the words, "Caesar is Lord", followed by burning incense to Caesar as a sign of worship and then cursing Christ. So why didn't he save himself by doing this? Because he knew the truth – that Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth was the real Christ who had been prophesied about in the ancient Jewish Scriptures. Polycarp was not going to abandon Christ, instead, he was resolute to fight in this contest and overcome the evil ruler of this wicked world. Polycarp knew that he would one day

be resurrected, as Jesus was, and live for ever in Christ's Kingdom and rule with Jesus over this world.

The Prayer of Jesus

Come near and draw close to GOD and GOD will draw near to you – (James 4:8).

The Spirit of Jesus is EHYEH ASHER EHYEH which is the Name GOD told Moses when asked (Exodus 3:14).

Jesus told us to use these words when talking to GOD:

***“Our Father in Heaven,
May your Name be kept Holy,
Your Kingdom come,
Your Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.***

***Give us enough bread to eat today.
Forgive us our sin as we have forgiven those who
have sinned against us.
Do not allow us to be tempted, but deliver us from
the Evil One.
Yours is the power and the glory forever and ever.”***

The Witness of The Twelve Apostles.

The SoUL Song



EYEH ASHER EYEH

IHU KARAITI

EGO SUM QUI SUM

I AM WHO AM

EYEH ASHER EYEH

I AM THE WAY

I AM THE TRUTH

I AM THE LIFE

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE LIGHT

I AM THE DOOR

I AM THE GOOD

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE SHEPHERD

I AM THE BREAD

I AM THE VINE

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE RESURRECTION

I AM THE START

I AM THE END

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE ALPHA

I AM THE OMEGA

I AM WHO AM

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

IHU KARAITI

EGO SUM QUI SUM

I AM WHO AM

Introduction To: The Witness of the State Execution of Polycarp

When was it written?

AD 155. The date of the execution was either 23 February 155 or 22 February 156. My preference is 23 February 155, because on the 23 February I received a visitation from heaven.

Where was it written?

Smyrna.

Who wrote it?

The community of GOD's people at Smyrna.

Why was it written?

To honour all those who have shared in the sufferings of Jesus the Christ and to encourage those who will do so in the future.

What authority does it have?

The community of GOD's people at Smyrna want all Christians everywhere to read this letter.

Irenaeus had a copy of the letter which Gaius copied.

Socrates from Corinth copied it from Gaius and Pionius in turn copied it from him.

Eusebius quotes extensively from it and introduces the letter as follows:

“During this period of great persecution hitting Asia, Polycarp finished his life by being executed as GOD's witness. I believe it is of vital importance that his martyrdom should be kept as a historical record. We still have a written account of it with us today.

“There is a letter, written in the name of the community of GOD's people, over which he himself controlled, to the community of GOD's people in Pontus. It contains details of the events that he faced and went through as follows...”

How was it rediscovered?

It was rediscovered during the years 1633 and 1645 and published in 1672 by the French scholar, Jean Cotelier.

Interesting points

- It is the earliest in-depth account of Christian martyrdom.
- There are many similarities to Jesus the Christ's crucifixion.
- The date of Polycarp's martyrdom is the second and only other day that Christians are to observe, apart from the Passover date which is the eve of the fourteenth day of Nisan regardless of which day of the week it falls on.

THE WITNESS OF THE STATE EXECUTION OF POLYCARP

To the community of GOD's people that live temporarily in Philomelum from the community of GOD's people who live temporarily in Smyrna, and to all the communities of GOD's people that live everywhere. May there be great measures of mercy, peace and love given to you from GOD the Father and our RULER Jesus the Christ.

We are writing to you brothers about what happened to those who were executed by the Roman Empire because of their witness for GOD, and particularly Polycarp who ended the persecution by his execution and witness as if he were placing his own seal upon it. All the events that led up to it happened so that the RULER could show us another example of an execution of one of his witnesses that had similarities to what happened in the Good News account. He had waited around expecting to be given away, just as the RULER had done, in order for us also to become imitators of him by not thinking of ourselves only but thinking of our neighbours too. It is the mark of true and consistent unconditional love that a person desires all their brothers to be saved and not just themselves alone.

Blessed and heroic therefore are all the witnesses that have been executed in accordance with the will of GOD, for we

ought to be rightfully respectful and recognise that GOD has power over everything that happens. For who could not admire their heroism, patient endurance and loyalty to their Master? Seeing that some of them were torn so badly by the scourging whips, the anatomy of their bodies to the inner veins and arteries were exposed for everyone to see. They endured with such patience that even those looking on had pity on them and shed tears. Some of them reached such heights of bravery that they never even cried or moaned, showing us that whilst undergoing torture, Christ's witnesses were no longer in their bodies, or more accurately, the RULER himself was standing next to them conversing with them.

Giving themselves over to the grace of Christ they despised the tortures of this world, purchasing for themselves in a single hour freedom from eternal punishment to be awarded everlasting life. They found the fire of their cruel torturers cold, because they kept before their eyes the fact that they had escaped from the eternal fire which never goes out. Simultaneously, and with the eyes of their heart, they looked up towards the good things reserved for those who had endured patiently, things, *"Which no ear has heard and no eye has seen and no person's heart has imagined"*. but they were being shown them by the RULER because they had now ceased to be men but had already become angels. Likewise, those that were condemned to be killed by killer beasts endured horrible tortures, some being made to lie down on sharp shells and continually attacked with other

kinds of tortures, so that, if possible, Devil-Satan could get them to deny their faith through continuous torture. Devil-Satan had invented many such evil strategies against them. But give thanks to GOD because Devil-Satan did not win against any of them.

The righteous and heroic Germanicus encouraged them to conquer their cowardice by his own example of patient endurance as he fought against killer beasts with brave distinction. Even when the Proconsul tried to persuade him otherwise because he was so young, he immediately pulled the killer beast onto himself using force in his eager desire to be freed quickly from their unjust and evil way of life. The whole crowd were so amazed to see such a brave GOD-loving witness die in this way and at the courage of the Christians generally, that they all started shouting out together:

The Crowd: *Kill the atheists! Get Polycarp!*

But one of them called Quintus, a Phrygian recently arrived from Phrygia, turned coward when he saw the killer beasts. He was the one who forced himself and persuaded others to go forward voluntarily. The Proconsul made a number of appeals to him and eventually persuaded him to swear the oath and offer incense. For this reason, brothers, we do not praise those who freely surrender themselves, because the Good News does not teach us to do that.

Now the most highly regarded Polycarp was not bothered in the slightest when he first heard the news and wanted to remain in Smyrna. However, most of his community persuaded him to withdraw. So he withdrew to a small farm not far from Smyrna, and there he stayed with a few companions and did nothing else except pray night and day for everyone and for all the communities of GOD's people throughout the world as he was in the habit of doing. While he was praying, he fell into a trance three days before he was captured and saw his pillows burning with fire. He turned towards his companions and told them:

Polycarp: It is necessary for me to be burned alive.

Those after him were very persistent and so he moved to another farm. Immediately after leaving, his pursuers arrived at the farm where he had been. When they couldn't find him they seized two slave boys and, after torturing them, one of them confessed. It was really impossible for him to remain hidden though, because those who betrayed him belonged to his own household. The Chief of Police, whose name happened to be Herod, was keen to take Polycarp to the stadium quickly. This happened so that Polycarp would become a partner of Christ and fulfil his appointed destiny. His betrayers however received the punishment of Judas himself. So, having the slave-boy with them on the Friday at around tea-time, the mounted authorities went out with their usual equipment, hurrying as if they were chasing a robber.

Late in the evening they all arrived as one body of men and found him resting in bed in an upstairs room of a cottage. Though he could have escaped to somewhere else he refused to, saying:

Polycarp: *GOD's will be done.*

Upon hearing their arrival, he came downstairs and talked to them while those who looked on stood in awe at his composure, wondering why they were so keen to arrest an old man like him. Right away he ordered as much food and drink to be served to them as they wanted. He also asked them to give him an hour of undisturbed prayer. They agreed to this, and he stood and prayed. Being so full of the grace of GOD, he could not stop praying for a full two hours and those who heard him were amazed. Many were sorry that they had come for such a Christ-like man. After remembering everyone he had ever met both small, great, high, low and the universal community of GOD's people throughout the world, he finished his prayer. The time had come for him to leave, and they sat him on a donkey and took him into Smyrna on a high Sabbath day. The chief official Herod and his father Nicetes met him and transferred him to their carriage. Sitting by his side they attempted to persuade him by saying:

Herod & Nicetes: *What harm is there in saying 'Caesar is Lord' and offering incense and therefore saving yourself?*

They also said other words to this effect. At first Polycarp said nothing but as they kept persisting, he responded:

Polycarp: *I am not going to do what you want me to do.*

They gave up trying to persuade him, swore at him and made threats instead. They pushed him out of the carriage so quickly that he injured his shin getting down. Without even turning around he carried on walking quickly as if he was not hurt. He was then taken to the stadium where there was such a loud din that nobody could hear anyone else speak.

As Polycarp entered the stadium a voice from heaven said:

Heaven: *Be strong Polycarp and be the man.*

Nobody saw who spoke, but the voice was heard by those of our people who were present. When he was brought forward, the crowd roared loudly when they found out that Polycarp had been arrested.

He was brought before the Proconsul:

Proconsul: *Are you Polycarp?*

Polycarp: *Yes.*

The Proconsul then tried hard to get him to deny his faith.

Proconsul: *Have respect for your age. Swear by the divinity of Caesar, change your mind and say, "Away with the atheists".*

He also said other such things that are usually expressed on these occasions. But with a grave and serious expression on his face, Polycarp looked at the crowd of lawless unbelievers, waved his hand over them, looked up to heaven and groaned:

Polycarp: *Away with the atheists.*

The Proconsul continued to try and persuade him by coming on strong. Proconsul: *Take the oath and I will let you go. Curse Christ!*

Polycarp: *If you think that I would swear by the divinity of Caesar, as you refer, with me pretending not to know who I am, then listen to me closely; I am a Christian and if you would like to know about the teachings of Christianity then name a day and let me tell you about it.*

Proconsul: *Try and persuade the people.*

Polycarp: *I would have considered you worthy enough to be taught about it, for we have been told to honour rulers and others in authority in a respectful manner because they have been appointed by GOD, that is, providing it does us no harm. But as for these people, I do not consider them worthy enough for me to have to defend myself before them.*

Proconsul: *I have some killer beasts and if you don't change your mind I will throw you to them.*

Polycarp: *Bring them on! We are not allowed to change our mind from good to bad, but to change from wrong to right is a good thing.*

Proconsul: *If you are not worried about the killer beasts then I will have you burned instead if you do not change your mind.*

Polycarp: *You are threatening me with a fire that burns for a short time and then dies out. Yet a fire that you know nothing about awaits the wicked in the judgement to come for their everlasting punishment. But why wait any longer? Go ahead and do what you want.*

Whilst saying these things and more, he was filled with courage and great joy. His face became so full of grace that not only did he not flinch in alarm at the threats made, but the Proconsul himself was astounded. He sent his own herald into the middle of the stadium three times to proclaim:

The Herald: *Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian!*
Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian!
Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian!

When the herald had finished proclaiming this fact, the whole crowd, which was made up of both non-Jews and

Jews living in Smyrna, started shouting at the top of their voices with uncontrollable rage:

The Crowd: This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians and the destroyer of our gods who tells us not to sacrifice or worship.

They all carried on shouting and demanded that Philip the Asiarch let a lion loose on Polycarp. He told them that it was illegal to do this because he had officially brought the sports to a close. They responded by shouting out with one voice in unison that they should burn Polycarp alive. The vision of the burning pillow which Polycarp saw when praying had to be fulfilled. This was when he turned to the faithful who were with him and told them prophetically, *"I must be burned alive"*. Events then unfolded rapidly. The mob quickly gathered together logs and faggots from the workshops and baths. The Jews showed their usual zeal in doing this. When the pyre had been built, Polycarp took all his outer clothing off, lowered his belt and began taking off his shoes. He was not used to doing this because all the faithful were eager to be first to touch his bare flesh. As a result of the good life he led, he was treated with great honour even before he had begun to go grey. When they were about to nail him in place he said:

Polycarp: Leave me be. The One who enables me to endure the fire will also enable me to remain in it without moving, even without the security that you desire from nails.

So they did not nail him but tied him instead. They tied his hands behind his back and bound him like the superior ram chosen from a large flock for the offering, a whole burnt sacrifice, prepared and acceptable to GOD. Then he looked up to heaven and prayed:

Polycarp: Almighty RULER GOD, Father of your dearly loved and blessed Son, Jesus the Christ, through whom we have received knowledge of you, GOD of angels, powers and all creation and of the whole race of the righteous who live in your presence. I bless you because you have considered me worthy of this day and hour, which I might share amongst GOD's witnesses who have suffered in the cup of Christ for the resurrection to eternal life of both soul and body in the incorruptibility of the Holy Spirit. May I be welcomed among them today in your presence as a rich and acceptable sacrifice that you have prepared and revealed in advance and have now fully accomplished. You are the faithful and true GOD. For this reason, I praise you for all things, I bless and glorify you through the everlasting high priest, Jesus the Christ, your dearly loved Son through whom is the glory to you and Holy Spirit now and for all the ages to come. Let it be.

As soon as he had finished praying by saying, "Let it be", the men in charge of the fire lit it. A great flame flared up and we who were privileged to witness it saw a miracle. We have been kept safe in order to tell everyone else about what happened. The fire became like a room and shaped like a

ship's sail full of wind, it made a wall around the body of GOD's witness inside it. There it was in the middle, not burning as flesh does but looking like a loaf of bread in an oven or like gold and silver being refined in a furnace. We also caught a sweet smell of fragrance like frankincense or some other precious spice. In the end when the lawless mob had seen that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go and stab him with a dagger. When this happened, such a large amount of blood gushed out that it extinguished the fire. The crowd were amazed at the great difference between the ignorant and GOD's special people. Among the number of GOD's special people was this man, the most admirable and heroic Polycarp, who in our own time was an apostolic and prophetic teacher, chief overseer of the community of GOD's people in Smyrna. Every word that came out of his mouth either happened as he said it would or was going to happen in the future as he said it would.

But when the jealous and malicious Evil One, The Adversary of the race of the righteous, saw the majesty of his witness, his blameless life from the very beginning, his crowning with the crown of immortality and realised that he had won a prize that could never be challenged, he saw to it that we could not even take away his body and touch his holy flesh as many wanted to do. So he prompted Nicetes, father of Herod and brother of Alce, to plead with the magistrate not to let his body go in case,

Nicetes: They might abandon the crucified one and begin to worship this man.

They said this because of the persistent prompting of the Jews who were watching closely when we were about to take the body from the fire.

They were ignorant of the fact that we could never at any time abandon Christ who suffered for the salvation of those who are being saved throughout the whole world, the blameless for the sinners, and neither could we ever worship another. We worship and adore this one, the Son of GOD, but the witnesses who were killed as disciples and imitators of the RULER we deservedly reverence because of their unequalled loyalty to their own King and Teacher. Let GOD grant that we become partners and fellow disciples with them also.

When the centurion saw the opposition raised by the Jews, he put it into the centre and cremated it, which was their custom to do. Afterwards we took his bones which are more precious than gems and more valuable than gold and laid them in an appropriate place.

The RULER willing and when possible, we will all come together with happiness and joy to celebrate the anniversary of his execution as GOD's witness and to remember all those who have fought in the contest and for the training and preparation of those who will fight in the future.

This is the account of what happened to the blessed Polycarp who was executed as GOD's witness in Smyrna along with eleven others who had come from Philadelphia. He alone though is held in people's memories and spoken about everywhere. Even the ignorant spoke about him as being not only a distinguished teacher but also an outstanding witness, killed for GOD. Everyone desires to imitate his martyrdom because it happened according to the model in the Good News of Christ.

By his patient endurance he defeated the unrighteous ruler and subsequently received the crown of immortality. Now he rejoices with the apostles and all just men and glorifies our Almighty GOD and Father, and blesses our RULER Jesus the Christ, the Saviour of our souls, Governor of our bodies and Shepherd of the universal community of GOD's people throughout the world. You did request the events that happened should be reported to you in greater detail, but for the moment we have only reported them through our brother Marcion as a summary. When you have all been informed of these things, send them onto our brothers elsewhere so that they also will glorify the RULER who likes to choose certain individuals from out of all his servants.

Now to him who is able to bring us all into his eternal kingdom by his grace and generosity though his only begotten Son Jesus the Christ, be glory, honour, power and greatness forever.

Say, *"Hello"* to all GOD's special people. Those who are with us say, *"Hello"* to you as does Euarestus, who wrote this letter, along with his entire household.

The blessed Polycarp was executed as GOD's witness at 2pm on Saturday 23rd February 155 on a great Sabbath. He was arrested by Herod when Philip of Tralles was high priest during the pro-consulship of Statius Quadratus, but whilst Jesus the Christ was reigning as King forever. *"To him is the honour, glory, majesty and the eternal throne from generation to generation. Let it be."*

Stephen – First Original Christian to be Executed

Introduction

In AD 34, a year after Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth's death and resurrection and ten years before they were first called Christians, violent persecution broke out against the "Followers of The Way." Condoned by the Roman Empire as an internal religious discipline matter, the Jewish leaders embarked on a programme to eliminate the teachings of the breakaway sect. Followers of The Way were proclaiming that the Christ had come as Jesus of Nazareth and that he would return again. What follows is the account of the first Martyr of Christ called Stephen.

Acts Chapters 6 & 7

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, a complaint arose from the Greek-speaking Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. The twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not appropriate for us to forsake the Word of GOD and serve tables. Therefore, select from among you, brothers, seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue in constant prayer and in

serving the Word.” These words pleased the whole multitude. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, whom they set before the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them. The Word of GOD increased, and the number of the disciples greatly multiplied in Jerusalem. A great company of the priests became obedient to the faith. Stephen, full of faith and power, performed great miracles and signs among the people.

But some of those who were of the synagogue called “The Freed Slaves” which included Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicia and Asia, rose up and opposed Stephen. They weren’t able to stand up against the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and GOD.” They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, and came against him and seized him, then brought him in to the council, and set up false witnesses who said, “This man never stops speaking blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” All who sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face like it was the face of an angel. The high priest said, “Are these accusations true?”

Stephen replied, "Brothers and fathers, listen. The GOD of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Leave your land and your relatives, and come into a land which I will show you.' Then he came out of the land of the Chaldaeans and lived in Haran. From there, when his father was dead, GOD moved him into this land where you are now living. He gave him no inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on. He promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his offspring after him, when he still had no child. GOD spoke in this way: that his offspring would live as aliens in a strange land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. 'I will judge the nation to which they will be in bondage,' said GOD, 'and after that they will come out and serve me in this place.' He gave him the covenant of circumcision. So, Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

"The patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt. GOD was with him and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now a famine came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction. Our fathers found no food. But when Jacob

heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers the first time. On the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was revealed to Pharaoh. Joseph sent and summoned Jacob his father and all his relatives, seventy-five souls. Jacob went down into Egypt and there he died along with our fathers. They were brought back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a price in silver from the children of Hamor of Shechem.

"But as the time of the promise came close which GOD had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, until there arose a different king who didn't know Joseph. The same took advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers, and cruelly forced them to place their babies outside of their homes so that they would die. At that time Moses was born and was exceedingly handsome to GOD. He was nourished three months in his father's house. When he was abandoned, Pharaoh's daughter took him up and reared him as her own son. Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He was mighty in his words and works. But when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. Seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him who was oppressed, striking the Egyptian. He supposed that his brothers understood that GOD, by his hand, was giving them deliverance; but they didn't understand.

“The day following, he appeared to them as they fought, and urged them to be at peace again, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong one another?’ But he who was mistreating his neighbour pushed him away, saying, ‘Who made you a lord and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ Moses fled when he heard this and became a stranger in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

“When forty years were fulfilled, an angel of the RULER appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight. As he came close to look, the voice of the RULER came to him, ‘I am the GOD of your fathers: the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob.’ Moses trembled and dared not look. The RULER said to him, ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning. I have come down to deliver them. Now come, I will send you into Egypt.’

“This Moses whom they refused, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge?’— GOD has sent him as both a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. This man led them out, having worked miracles and signs in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. This is that

Moses, who said to the children of Israel, 'The RULER our GOD will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers, like me.' This is the man who was in the assembly in the wilderness with our fathers and was accompanied by the angel that spoke to him on Mount Sinai, the man who was given living words to pass down us. But our fathers wouldn't be obedient, they rejected him and turned back in their hearts to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods that will lead us, for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him.' They made a calf as an idol and sacrificed to it and celebrated in this work of their hands. So, GOD turned away and gave them up to worship the stars, as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'It was not me that you offered up slain animals and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness, was it house of Israel? You carried the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship; therefore, I will send you into exile beyond Babylon.'

"Our fathers had the tent of witness in the wilderness. It had been made just as GOD, who spoke to Moses, had instructed it to be made based on the design he had seen. Later on, our fathers, in their turn, brought it with Joshua when they entered into the possession of the nations whom GOD drove out before them. So, it was right up to the days of David, who found favour in the sight of GOD, and asked to find a house for the GOD of

Jacob. But Solomon built him the house. However, the Most High doesn't dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says, 'heaven is my throne, and the Earth a footstool for my feet. What kind of house will you build me?' says the RULER. 'Or what is the place of my rest? Didn't I myself make all these things?'

"You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit! You do exactly as your fathers did. Which of the prophets didn't your fathers persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of whom you have now become betrayers and murderers. You received the law as it was given by angels, but you didn't keep it!"

Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of GOD, and Jesus standing on the right hand of GOD, and said, "Look, I see the heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of GOD!" But they yelled with loud voices so they would not hear him. Then they rushed at him with one accord, threw him out of the city and stoned him. The witnesses placed their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. They stoned Stephen as he called out, saying, "RULER Jesus, receive my spirit!" He kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, "RULER, don't hold

this sin against them!” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Conclusion

It would have been easy for Stephen to save his life. All he had to do was confess that Jesus was not the Christ, and that Jesus the Christ was not resurrected from the dead. But Stephen chose to die instead. Why? Because the death and resurrection of Jesus really happened. Stephen was not going to lie to save his own life. He was certain of the reward he would receive from Jesus at the second coming of Jesus the Christ. Stephen never doubted the return of Christ for one moment. Why should he? He had just witnessed a man who had done great miracles, been unjustly put to death, dead then buried and rise up to life again. Everything Jesus had said had become true so the promise Jesus made about his return would also come true. All the written miracles – the prophecies and predictions made over hundreds and thousands of years beforehand about Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth – all came true. Stephen himself had also done miracles in the Name of Jesus the Christ. So, Stephen chose to let the Devil-Satan inspired Jewish leaders murder him – an innocent, gentle, kind, peaceful man of unconditional love and truth.

The Contest

Devil-Satan's war against GOD and the community of GOD's people had just taken another nasty turn. It was all out war on the resurrected, living Christ as Saul, who later converted to become the Apostle Paul, attacked the followers of The Way with merciless cruelty. We have just read the accusation of the crowd against Polycarp, *"This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians and the destroyer of our gods who tells us not to sacrifice or worship."*

Stephen was the first to be executed in the era of followers of The Way and the first original Christians. Polycarp was the last: *"We are writing to you brothers about what happened to those who were executed by the Roman Empire because of their witness for GOD, and particularly Polycarp who ended the persecution by his execution and witness as if he were placing his own seal upon it."*

We are only told to commemorate two days in the year: Nisan 14 and 23 February. February 23 is the date of Polycarp's execution:

"The RULER willing and when possible, we will all come together with happiness and joy to celebrate the anniversary of his execution as GOD's witness and to remember all those who have fought in the contest and for the training and preparation of those who will fight in the future."

The unjust murder of Stephen started a persecution, sporadic at times, that continued for hundreds of years and was added to by the Roman Empire official persecution of Christians in the AD 60s. The persecution and contest were to continue during the church age right up to the present time. Justin was one of the first executed during the church age.

This contest, in one new form or another, has now continued for two thousand years. Devil-Satan fought, and is fighting, with everything and every person in his power to stop the spread of GOD's truth. Regardless, the Word of GOD cannot be stopped and so GOD's community of people are winning.

Polycarp continued to do the work of Jesus and destroy the gods. All the evil spirit gods have now been defeated or are dead. Except for the voluntary ignorant power people give them over their lives, these wicked demons are now all powerless. The Roman Empire is no more. The Word of GOD: the thirty-nine Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament-Covenant, the seven Greek scriptures of the Old Testament-Covenant and the twenty-seven (universally recognised) scriptures of the New Testament-Covenant are freely available throughout most of the world. The twenty-two *Scriptures of Unconditional Love* are now being revealed here to guide mankind into interpreting these seventy-three scriptures, the Qur'an and all the other revelations sent from heaven with the greatest accuracy for

nearly 2,000 years. GOD's preferred Name, EHYEH ASHER EHYEH has started to be declared and, in accordance with GOD's promises, declarations and prophecies, will be praised amongst every tongue, peoples, tribe and nation. Holy Spirit is accessible everywhere.

The Good Confession

We agree with the apostles and believe that there is only one Healer who is made of both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, GOD in the flesh, true life surrounded by death, son of Mary and Son of GOD, initially experiencing suffering then afterwards beyond suffering – Jesus the Christ, our RULER.

For our GOD, Jesus the Christ:

- Was conceived in Mary's womb according to the pre-planning of GOD and by the Holy Spirit
- Is physically descended from the line of David according to ancestry
- Is the Son of GOD according to the will and power of GOD
- Was born the son of Mary when she was still a virgin
- Ate and drank among us, both before being killed and after being raised up to life again
- Was baptised by John in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him
- Was nailed and crucified for us in his physical body under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch
- Died in full sight of persons in heaven, on earth, and under the earth

- Was physically and spiritually raised from the dead when his Father raised him up
- Was touched and handled by his disciples after his resurrection. His disciples then saw that he was composed of flesh whilst being spiritually united with the Father at the same time. For this reason, his disciples also treated death with the same contempt.

He suffered all these things for our sakes so that we might be saved and likewise be raised up from the dead by the Father if we exercise trust in Jesus the Christ.

He has raised up a standard for all ages through his resurrection, to rally together his holy and faithful people whether among Jews or non-Jews, in the one body of the community of GOD's people.