

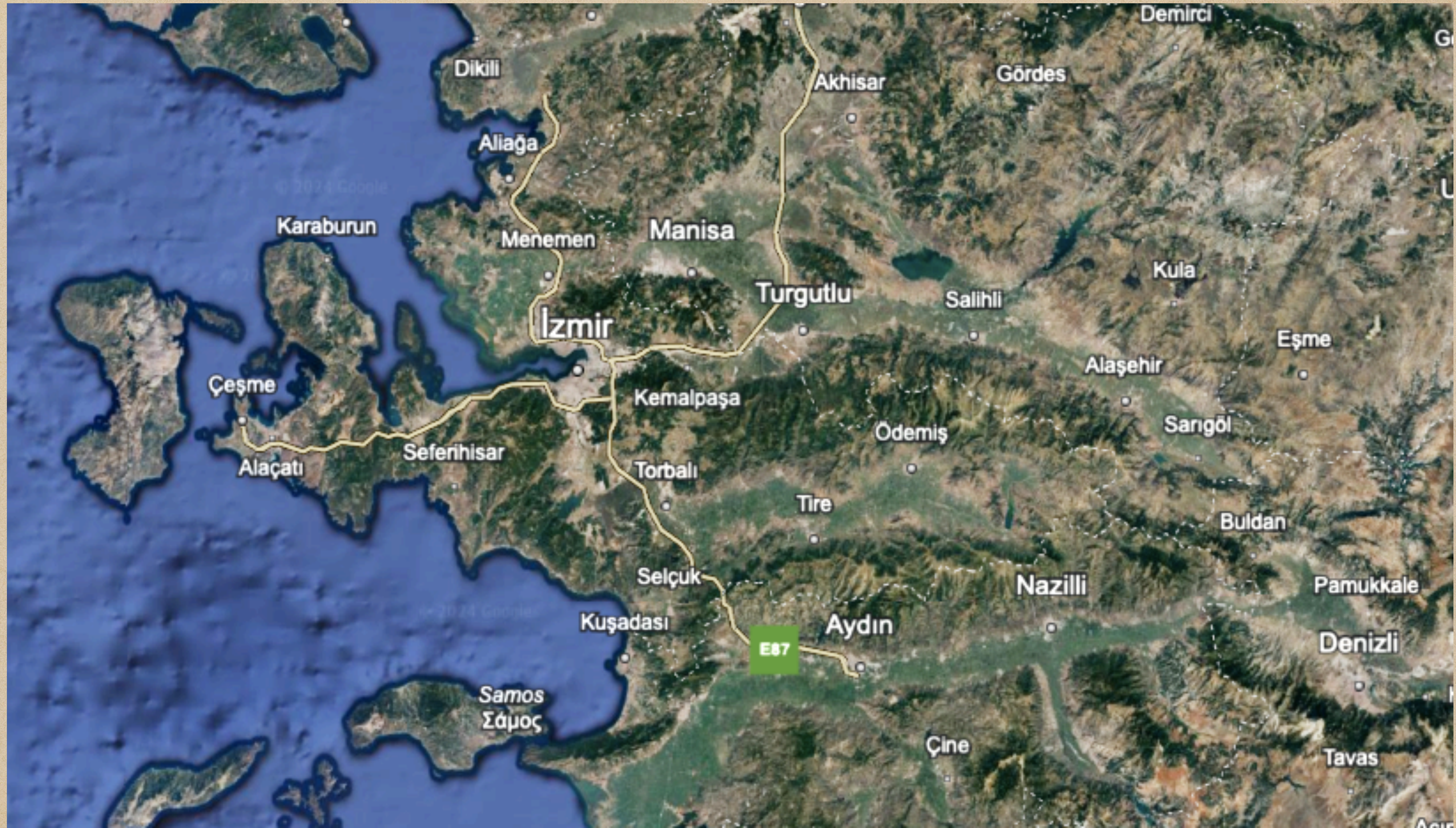
TO THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA

Revelation 2:8-11

saying, "Write what you see in
a book and send it to the
seven churches, to Ephesus
and to Smyrna and to
Pergamum and to Thyatira and
to Sardis and to Philadelphia
and to Laodicea."

Revelation 1:11







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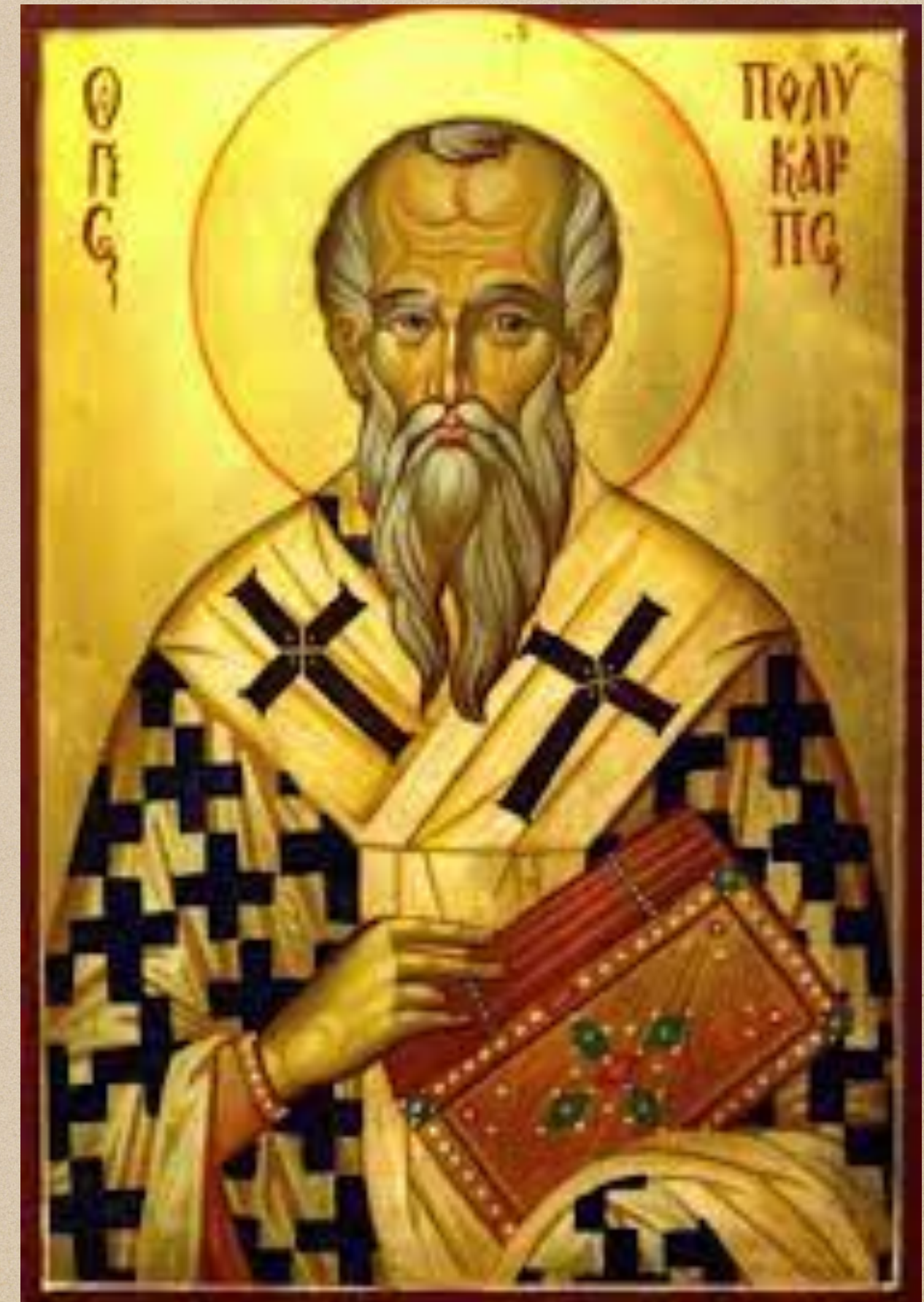
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Influence of Polycarp (69-155 A.D.)



Martyrdom of Polycarp

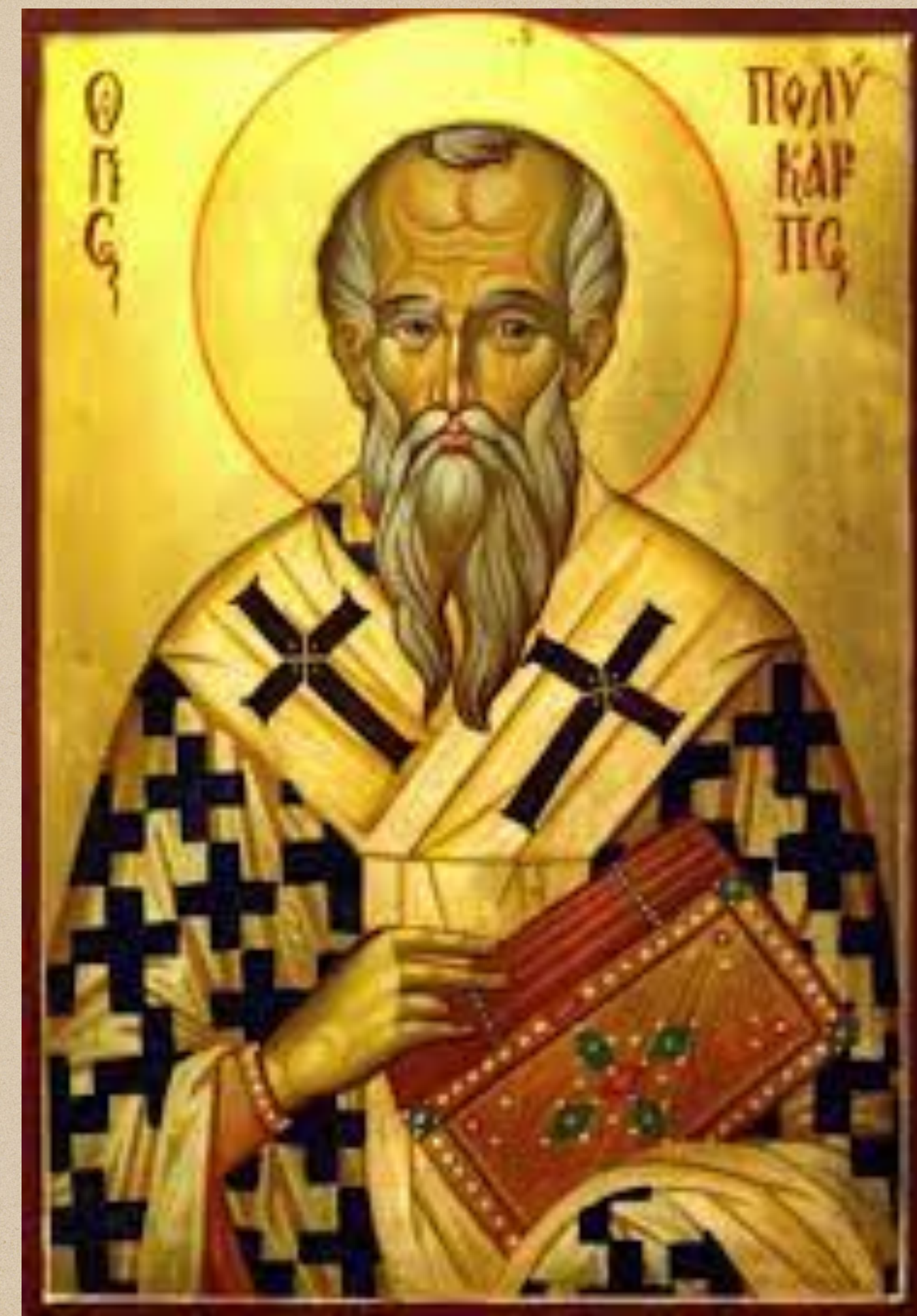
a manuscript written in the form of a letter that relates the religious martyrdom of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (the site of the modern city of Izmir, Turkey) and disciple of John the Apostle in the 2nd century AD. It forms the earliest account of Christian martyrdom outside of the New Testament. The author of Martyrdom of Polycarp is unknown.



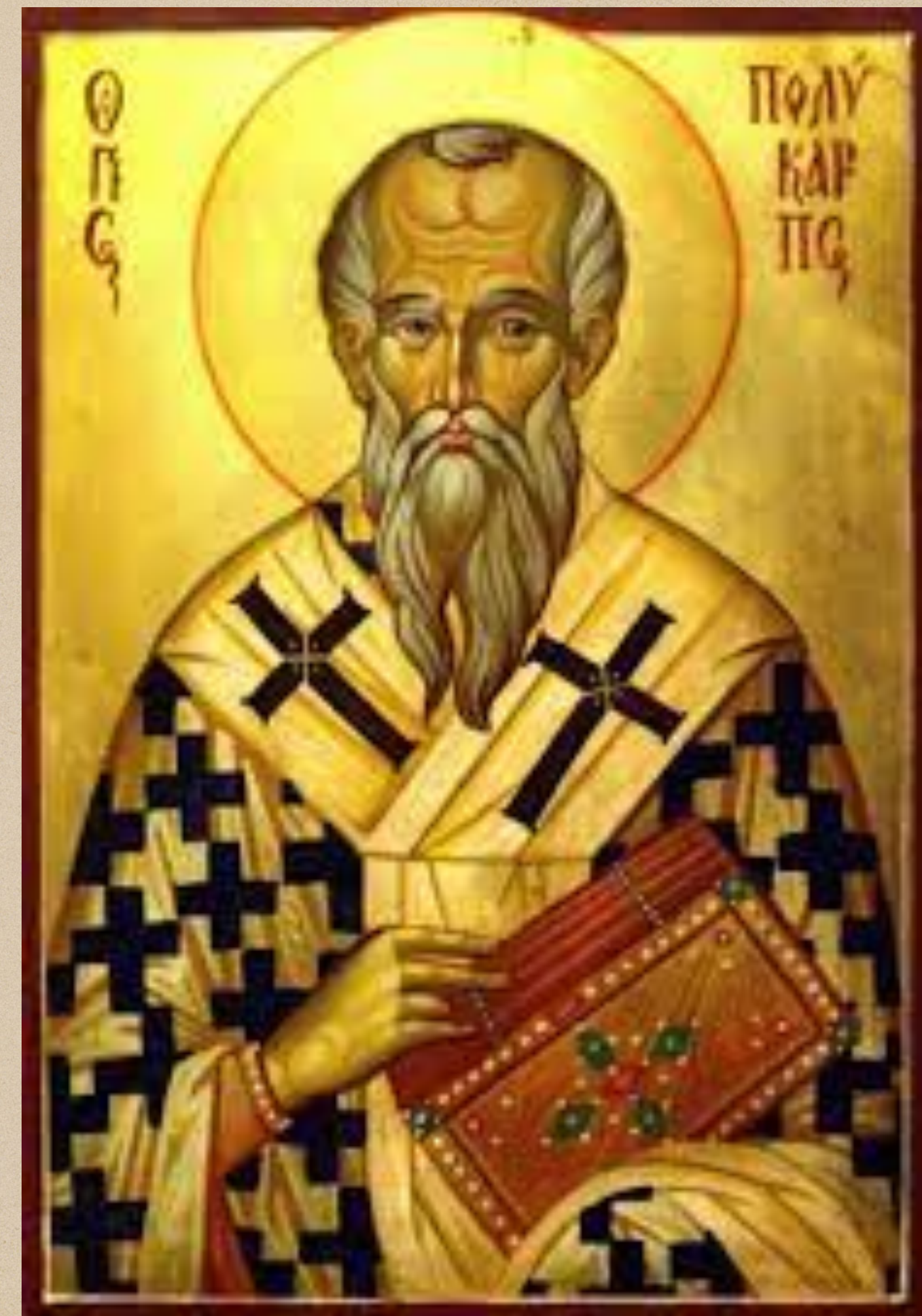
Polycarp is brought to a stadium in Smyrna and encouraged to swear by Caesar and thus affirm that the emperor was a god. Polycarp declines, and the officials attempt to burn him alive.

However, the fire miraculously avoids him in a circle, merely giving him a heavenly glow. Instead, Polycarp is stabbed; his blood goes everywhere, extinguishing the fire, similar to Jesus's sacrifice.

The Jews influence the governor to burn the body so as to remove all evidence and avoid his body becoming a shrine.

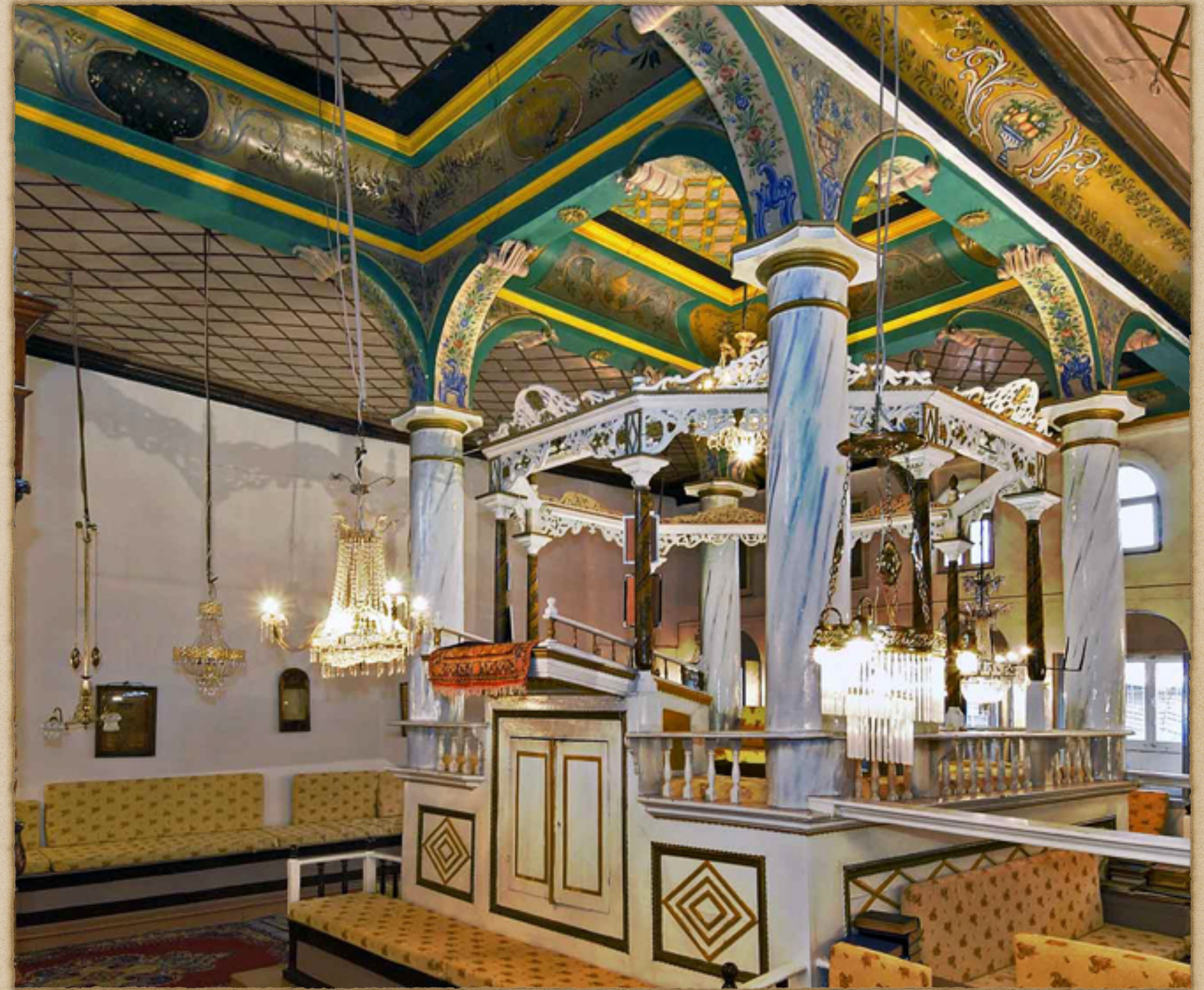


In the Martyrdom, Polycarp is recorded as saying on the day of his death: "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong." Polycarp goes on to say: "How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched; but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked."



Jewish Presence in Izmir

- ◆ Prosperous Jewish community in Smyrna in ancient times
- ◆ Some were “a synagogue of Satan”
- ◆ Tolerated in the Muslim Ottoman Empire
- ◆ Thousands came to escape persecution in Europe
- ◆ Beautiful synagogues today
- ◆ Izmir one of the most diverse and tolerant places in modern, Islamist Turkey



“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:
‘The words of the first and the last, who died and
came to life.’”

– Revelation 2:8 ESV

“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

– Revelation 2:9

“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

– Revelation 2:10

“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast
[hupomenō - divinely empowered endurance]
under trial, for when he has stood the test he will
receive the crown of life, which God has promised
to those who love him.”

– James 1:12

“being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all **endurance** and patience with joy” Colossians 1:11

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, **endures** all things.” 1 Cor. 13:7

“ If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the **endurance** and faith of the saints.”

– Revelation 13:9-10 ESV

“ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death”

– Revelation 2:11

“Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

– Revelation 20:14-15 ESV

“Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

Revelation 20:4

“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.”

– Revelation 20:5 ESV

“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.”

– Revelation 20:6 ESV

What we learn from the Smyrna Message

- ◆ Jesus Christ is the faithful witness of what lies beyond death and he has the power of resurrection.
- ◆ Though they experienced poverty— he assures them they are rich.
- ◆ God allowed the devil to threaten, persecute and kill them. That will also be true when the antichrist reigns.
- ◆ Jesus Christ will grant the crown of life to those who are killed.
- ◆ The second death has no power over the overcomers.