

Revelation 2:8-11 Smyrna & The Persecuted Church

Matthew 2:11 — And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and [smyrna]

John 19:39 — And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of [smyrna] and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

“God permitted Satan to crush them to yield the sweetness of their aroma.” John MacArthur

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“The Synagogue of Satan”

“Internet searches of “synagogue of Satan” produce quite a few links to sites that claim the “synagogue of Satan” refers to the Jewish people today and that promote all kinds of conspiracy theories about how the Jews run the world. Quite frankly, this is a misinterpretation and misapplication of the verses in Revelation. The synagogue of Satan refers to specific Jewish communities in Smyrna and Philadelphia that were persecuting the church, not to any modern situation. Likewise, no modern situation should be used as an interpretive tool to explain a passage firmly rooted in the first-century Roman world.” -Got Questions

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Polycarp vs. Marcion

“Do you know who I am?” Marcion asked.

“Yes, I know who you are, you first born son of Satan.” answered Polycarp

2 Corinthians 11:5 NLT — But I don’t consider myself inferior in any way to these “super apostles” who teach such things.

Philippians 3:2 — Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of “the mutilation”!

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Romans 2:28-29 NKJV — For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

John 10:31 NKJV — Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

Acts 9:23 NKJV — Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. [Paul]

Acts 23:12 NKJV — And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

2 Corinthians 11:24 NKJV — From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

Romans 11:1-2 NKJV — I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew...

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10- “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. “

“the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested”

Job & Peter

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HISTORY

*The Alexamenos graffito

*Persecuted Timeline

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Martyrdom of Polycarp (Smyrna, c. 155 AD, Mart. Polyc. 18.2):

“We afterwards took up his bones, more precious than costly stones and more valuable than gold, and laid them in a suitable place. There the Lord will permit us to gather together in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom.”

Tertullian (Carthage, c. 197 AD, Apology 50.13):

“The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed.”

Cyprian of Carthage (North Africa, c. 250 AD, Exhortation to Martyrdom 13):

“The crowd of bystanders stood astonished at the heavenly contest, that the greater was the cruelty of the torturers, the greater also the patience of the sufferers.”

Lactantius (North Africa/Italy, On the Deaths of the Persecutors 15, c. 313 AD):

“The prisons, destined for murderers and robbers, were filled with bishops, priests, and deacons; nor was there room left for criminals.”

Eusebius (Palestine/Egypt, Hist. Eccl. 8.9.6–7, c. 311–313 AD):

“We saw with our own eyes, in some places, crowds of men, in others groups of about ten, again some individually, suffering death by the sword. In a single day a hundred men, together with women and little children, were slain, some by beheading, others by fire. We ourselves were present and witnessed this.”

Augustine (North Africa, Sermon 329.1, c. 410 AD):

“The martyrs were bound, imprisoned, scourged, racked, burnt, torn, butchered — and they multiplied.”

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2025 “Short List”

June – Syria (Damascus): Suicide bombing at St. Elias Church during Mass killed 20–30+ worshippers.

-June – Nigeria (Yelwata, Benue State): Armed militants massacred ~100–200 Christians; thousands displaced.

-July – DR Congo (Komanda, Ituri): ADF/ISIS-linked rebels stormed a Catholic church night vigil, killing 40–50 and abducting children.

-Ongoing – India: Over 950 attacks on Christians reported Jan–May; churches vandalized, believers assaulted.

-Ongoing – Pakistan: Christians face mob violence, blasphemy accusations, and forced displacement.

-Year to date – Nigeria (national): Advocacy groups allege 7,000+ Christians killed in 2025 alone (figures vary, not independently confirmed).

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*video

India — Pray for believers facing pressure from anti-conversion laws, violent opposition, and rejection by families, that they may have courage, protection, and strength to continue worship and ministry.

Nigeria — Pray for Christians suffering militant attacks, mass displacement, and loss of homes and loved ones, that God would provide safety, provision, and justice.

Iran — Pray for secret house churches and imprisoned believers, asking God to grant wisdom, courage, release from captivity, and growth of the underground church.

North Korea — Pray for hidden Christians who must worship in secrecy, that God would protect, sustain, and feed them spiritually under constant threat.

Yemen — Pray for isolated believers, especially women leading others in faith, that they may be preserved and strengthened amid war, famine, and persecution.

Somalia — Pray for Christians threatened by extremist groups like Al-Shabaab, asking God to shield them from violence and fill them with boldness and peace.

Libya — Pray for followers of Christ living without legal protection or safe fellowship, that they may endure and remain faithful in a lawless and unstable nation.

Eritrea — Pray for Christians imprisoned in harsh conditions for years without trial, that they may be sustained in body and spirit and granted release.

Sudan — Pray for churches and believers caught in civil war and violent upheaval, asking for protection, peace, and endurance for the displaced.

China — Pray for house church leaders and congregations facing surveillance, arrests, and closures, that they may continue boldly and keep access to God's Word.

Malaysia — Pray for converts from Islam and minority Christians who face discrimination and legal restrictions, asking for unity, perseverance, and open doors.

Mozambique — Pray for rural Christian communities targeted by extremist violence, that they would have security, resilience, and hope in Christ.

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“America is the hardest place on earth to be a Christian.”

1 John 5:21 — Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.