

JOHNNIE MOORE + JERRY PATTENGALE

A modern
update to
*Foxe's Book
of Martyrs*

The
New Book
OF
Christian
Martyrs



The Heroes of Our Faith from
the 1st Century to the 21st Century

Almighty God moved upon the hearts of Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale to tell the horrific stories of modern-day martyrdom, and how the church triumphant advances because of it. The persecuted show us the path to truly live as disciples of the one true God.

MICHELE BACHMANN, dean of Regent University and former member of US Congress

The stories in this book are difficult to read and tragic, but so very important. And they are beautiful, as is any life abandoned to Christ. *The New Book of Christian Martyrs* is a profound gift, updating what others have started and confronting a culture in which we are constantly told to live for self. I'm profoundly grateful.

JOHN STONESTREET, president of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview

The passion Johnnie Moore holds for the Word of God and the suffering Church has been evident in my years of friendship with him. This work glorifies God through telling the stories of the martyrs of our faith, while inspiring a new generation to fulfill the Great Commission.

DOUG CLAY, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God

Scripture compels us to *remember well* when great sacrifices have been made. *The New Book of Christian Martyrs* helps us do just that. Through these true accounts, we are inspired to *remember well* the loving sacrifices that have been made by friends of Jesus, and to take up our own cross and follow Jesus wherever that may lead . . . just as they did.

SANTIAGO "JIMMY" MELLADO, president and CEO of Compassion International

A classic powerful resource for this generation and beyond. Nothing like it. . . . Stories of faithful and courageous followers of Jesus for the past two thousand years, right up to the present day. The organization and writing is so compelling I could not stop reading these accounts—many through tears. My faith and understanding of God increased with each page. A must for every household.

JO ANNE LYON, general superintendent emerita of The Wesleyan Church

Few people have been as impressed with the witness of those who in fact did give their lives as martyrs as Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale. Their stories inspire every one of us in these days that so fiercely and dangerously threaten not only our families and freedom, but our very lives. In our present day, it appears no one is more hated than Christians who are serious about God's Word and doing his will. God wants every one of us to be challenged and inspired by those who were martyred to live every moment of our lives sold out to pleasing God, fulfilling the Great Commission. Wow—what a book! God bless you, Johnnie and Jerry. Christians will be motivated as they read the testimonies you've shared so clearly and effectively.

JAMES ROBISON, founder and president of LIFE Outreach International,
Fort Worth, Texas

As a new believer during my freshman year at university, I discovered *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. It was one of the first Christian books I ever read. I can still feel the fire that came into my heart with every passing page, and to this day, decades later, it continues to impact my life in incredible ways. Gratefully, and out of the burning heart of Johnnie Moore, this classic has been resurrected and brought up to date for today's new generations and those who are coming. Even as I type these words, I am praying that its reading will become a defining moment of everyone who opens it. Get it . . . keep it close . . . read it . . . and reap!

O. S. HAWKINS, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas and author of *The Joshua Code* and the Code series of devotionals

In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells the disciples, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NKJV). The Greek word for witnesses is *martyrs*. Among its meanings is one who certifies the truth by a willingness to die. The strength, spread, and sustainability of our faith is due to men and women whose lives and deaths certified the truth of the gospel. Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale chronicle such a cloud of witnesses. May we in our reading be inspired to do the same.

BISHOP CLAUDE ALEXANDER, senior pastor of The Park Church in
Charlotte, NC

The New Book of Christian Martyrs reminds us that martyrs are not distant, historical figures but real people willing to sacrifice everything for Christ. Readers will find the weight of suffering experienced by these individuals lifted by the inspiring impact of how God continues to use their legacy. Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale have created a labor of love that's sure to be a timeless resource for generations to come.

CHRIS HODGES, senior pastor of Church of the Highlands and author of *Out of the Cave* and *Pray First*

When we choose to follow Jesus, we are choosing to share in his sufferings, as Paul writes in Romans 8. Through this, we also share in his glory. Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale remind us of this as they recount the compelling stories, both across history and in our own time, of remarkable heroes of the faith who have gone before us and, in their death and suffering, have come into life and glory in Jesus.

D. MICHAEL LINDSAY, president of Taylor University

From the early centuries of the church, Christians have written martyrologies—catalogues of the martyrs to inform and inspire the saints. Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale's *The New Book of Christian Martyrs*, an up-to-date twenty-first-century martyrology, continues this important tradition. These sacred records remind us that persecution is present, not past; it is to be expected; it is not abnormal; and it wears many different faces in our world today. The authors point out that we are now living in one of the greatest ages of Christian persecution, and that, as Paul said to Timothy, "all who desire to live a godly in life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). American Christians must be informed of this sobering reality, so we can pray regularly for the persecuted church, speak up for human rights/religious liberty, and be ready to stand faithfully for Christ when persecution comes our way.

DONALD SWEETING, president of Colorado Christian University

The epic battle between darkness and light will only intensify as we approach the climactic Day of the Lord. Johnnie Moore and Jerry Pattengale have reminded us all to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might during these times of great spiritual warfare. *The New Book of Christian Martyrs* chronicles the power of a heart fully surrendered to

the love of God and tempered with the zero victim mentality of Christ, in overcoming the forces of darkness.

JAMES E. WARD JR., founder and pastor of INSIGHT Church in Tinley Park, IL, and author of *Zero Victim: Overcoming Injustice with a New Attitude*

Just as the testimonies of these martyrs have influenced my life, let them touch you when you see that they have given all to Jesus. Then after your life is touched by them, I want you to reach out and touch others—to share your faith with them. In one sense, we who are believers are all martyrs. Did not Paul tell us, “I am crucified with Christ; when He died I died, but now I am living but I am not living my life, I am living for Jesus Christ” (Galatians 2:20, paraphrased)? Because we are all martyrs having died with Christ, let us read the stories of these heroes of faith and live for Christ.

ELMER L. TOWNS, cofounder of Liberty University

Moore and Pattengale have brought back to life one of history’s most important texts, and a copy should be in every single Christian home. This is an instant classic which honors those whose faith cost them everything and reminds the rest of us of the blessing it is to be Christian.

REV. SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

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Introduction

From Nero's Rome to Nairobi's Islamist extremists, Christians in every century have been slaughtered at the hands of enemies of Christ. Once set ablaze as human torches in Roman gardens, now believers are plucked from Kenyan buses and beheaded by al-Shabaab militants.

Eusebius, who wrote during the third and fourth centuries, says Christians died under Roman leaders in "great numbers"—many poor and forgotten by history, along with many "who were distinguished by family and career."¹ The atrocities under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, and Diocletian have filled volumes.

The stories of some of these early martyrdoms have become legendary, including those of Jesus' disciples. The upper panel of the famous title page of the first King James Bible (1611) depicts the apostles holding the implements their persecutors allegedly used to put them to death. For instance, Bartholomew holds the knife with which he was flayed; Andrew holds the X-shaped cross on which he was crucified; and Simon the Zealot holds a saw.² These heroes of our faith suffered horrific deaths, and their testimonies have impacted countless millions over many centuries. They loved Jesus with their lives and with their self-sacrificial deaths.

Countless numbers have been slain since the fall of Rome, but many believers today do not realize that Christians are still dying cruel deaths

throughout much of the world. Thousands die annually for their faith in Jesus. Most of these modern stories are not legendary; in fact, most of them are unknown.

By even the most conservative estimates, we are currently witnessing a wave of martyrs.³ George Weigel, a distinguished senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, states, “More Christians died for the faith in the twentieth century than in the previous nineteen centuries of Christian history combined.” Weigel states that Christians are obligated to be in solidarity with the persecuted church during this, “the greatest era of persecution in Christian history. . . . The assault on the Christian faithful today is ongoing, extensive, and heart-rending.”⁴

The authors of this book have interviewed many surviving family members and friends of modern martyrs, and one of those who reviewed the manuscript is even a descendant of a sixteenth-century martyr whose story was included in the original edition of *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*. His name was William Sweeting, and he was burned alive, alongside James Brewster, on October 18, 1511. Sweeting’s descendant Dr. Donald S. Sweeting is now a scholar and the distinguished Chancellor of Colorado Christian University.

We have pored over pages of historic Christian texts. Every retelling of these deaths evokes emotion, usually pride, and often questions about how to tell the world what is happening.⁵

This work is especially inspired by—and at points drawn directly from—*Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, but it also includes accounts from other works and traditions, and a recounting of some of the most impactful modern martyrdoms. John Foxe wrote not only about martyrs in ancient history but also about those in his day, as we have done. He believed the world needed to know about these heroes of the faith and to venerate their stories. The perpetrators needed to have their names recorded in infamy and the victims their sacrifice inscribed with glory for future generations to remember them. Foxe devoted his career to this objective so that his world and all who followed might know. Our world needs a fresh reminder as we endure this global phenomenon of Christian persecution.

John Foxe has been indispensable in awakening the conscience of countless generations of Christians. He took up this challenge in the sixteenth



century, and it was his life's work (d. 1587). Foxe's readers understood the terminology, passion, and purpose of his intense prose—simmering with righteous anger; we have followed suit in this volume. His no-nonsense style with a flair for graphic descriptions propelled his controversial work to ubiquity, becoming one of the most-read books in the English language, often chained alongside Bibles in chapels and cathedrals, the books being both expensive and extremely popular. His tome was also on the short list of books carried by a litany of characters—famous and infamous. Early American households with any books at all had the Holy Bible and often *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. It's our ambition to resurrect this tradition in the homes of Christians worldwide—introducing new generations to the stories and lessons of Christians who have suffered and continue to suffer for Jesus in every corner of the globe.

The abbreviated title *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* had soon supplanted in public discourse the long original title (*Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church*). The complete title of his second edition in 1570—the best-edited and most careful edition—included the full longer title (given here in modern English, adding to the above):

. . . wherein are comprehended and described the great persecutions and horrible troubles that have been wrought and practiced by the Romish Prelates, specially in this Realm of England and Scotland from the year of our Lord a thousand, unto the time present.

With each new edition came new stories, and one volume became two. Four editions were eventually published during Foxe's lifetime alone (1563, 1570, 1576, and 1583). All four editions are now electronically accessible online. The University of Sheffield, in partnership with the University of Bangor, compiled and maintains the best resource site on Foxe.⁶

Several organizations carry on the task of chronicling and researching the plight of modern martyrs. Under Caesar's Sword, a robust effort at the University of Notre Dame, is shedding considerable light on the scope and scale of global persecution, and especially the responses of Christians



under persecution. Organizations like Barnabas Fund and The Voice of the Martyrs provide valuable information and inroads to help those serving Christ and desiring “to fulfill His Great Commission—no matter the cost.”⁷ The Open Doors organization even has a site that includes a world watch-list ranking.⁸ Reminiscent of John Foxe, but from a very different place among faith traditions, the organizers of *Under Caesar’s Sword* write on their website’s homepage:

Christians around the world are being brutally persecuted, facing imprisonment, torture, and even death. We shed light on their responses so that the world may know their stories and that others facing persecution may forge similar paths of witness and resistance.⁹

In many ways, the worldwide church can empathize with the essence of Foxe’s stories. Two-thirds of the world’s estimated 2.3 billion Christians live in danger. They are often oppressed, poor, and suffering as ethnic or religious minorities. Conservative estimates record around ten thousand Christians have died in each of the last ten years because of their faith.¹⁰

Sometimes these massacres take place in countries that have real religious freedom. On the day we were editing this very page, a gunman slayed twenty-six people during their Sunday worship service in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Such needless loss not only saddens us but also makes us angry.

In many countries, brothers and sisters in Christ lie warm in their graves or in ashes—lost for now, but not forever. May this update to John Foxe’s seminal work help keep them in our thoughts and frame their testimonies for future generations.

While this volume carries on with Foxe’s original candor and intention, we will differ from Foxe in one key commitment: to commemorate Christians across a wide spectrum of faith traditions. We selected accounts strategically, knowing we can but represent the wider collection of stories.

At the center of each believer’s life and death is the cross of Christ—a symbol we also find etched in some of their early hideouts, clutched in the



hands of Chinese martyrs, mounted atop cathedrals, and today displayed in retrofitted worship spaces in strip malls.

Something transpires in the lives of many of Christ's followers—a brazen fortitude—from Stephen in Acts 7 to ISIS casualties. Something we have become too familiar with in the beginning of this digital century through boastful images posted by the tormentors and murderers. This courage inspires Christians to follow Christ to the ends of the earth, even if it means their own ends.

Not all Christians are called to make the ultimate sacrifice, but all are called to be ready. Christ's outstretched arms reflect not only his death on the cross but his embrace of all who seek him. Christianity is steeped in historicity, as evidence abounds for its narrative—a nearly unfathomable message of mercy and grace, often demonstrated in the face of oppression.

Nearly all accounts that follow use the term *martyr* in its traditional sense, referring to those who died for their faith. In the New Testament's original Greek, the word *martus* (from which we get the word “martyr”) refers to a witness, and what a special cloud of witnesses we have in our tradition—literally too many to recount, and millions unknown. In a few instances we include accounts, as did John Foxe, of “martyrs” who endured severe persecution or oppression for their faith but may not have died through direct confrontation.¹¹ We also tell the stories of others whose devotion to the gospel of Jesus led them into danger and death, though they were not targeted specifically for their faith.

From oppression and persecution to torture and death, we thank and salute all of those on this sacrificial continuum. Unfortunately, it continues today and in parts of the world in even greater numbers than ever before.

Justin Martyr, before his beheading in AD 165, declared, “The more we are persecuted, the more do others in ever increasing numbers embrace the faith and become worshippers of God through the name of Jesus.”¹² Tertullian claimed, “The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church” (an adapted version).¹³ If so, the harvest ahead will be significant. At the very least, it's safe to say “The blood of the martyrs is the inspiration for the church.”

This volume represents a trail of martyrs that should be included in even a cursory look at human history. A trail worn with a faith in and



of eternal consequence. A path through history that finds countless martyrs of different ethnicities and languages championing the same biblical teachings. A trail that finds martyrs' recognition that divine, transcendent standards will judge human actions pure and putrid. To read the histories and sacrifices of this sea of witnesses otherwise is problematic.

When one person or group takes the life of another because of religious belief, we call it a murder. When this person or group martyrs several people for such a cause, it is still homicide—even if now we consider it a social crisis. When thirty million people die because of religious differences, it is still murder, but now it is also a humanitarian catastrophe.

It is evil writ large.

We live in such a day. It appears that a growing number of uneducated people are casting biblical standards aside, often for inhumane leanings of whatever brand. Illogic written boldly in bestsellers. Graphic violence on the big screen and horrendous videos on iPhones. Many educated people are doing the same, often complicit as leaders, and as a result, our sensitivities to such atrocities are in danger of becoming numb.

Stanley Fish, a controversial public intellectual, argues that public classrooms are no place to give moral answers, as the title of his book suggests: *Save the World on Your Own Time*.¹⁴ The British education system took the opposite approach, and now requires its high schools to help students understand the evils of ISIS—in their required Religion Education (RE) curriculum.¹⁵ We agree—the persecuted, including those facing martyrdom, need a voice.

The authors of this current volume took a break from studying both ancient and recent accounts of individuals and groups who suffered and died for their faith to watch the film *Silence* (2016).¹⁶ Imagine examining the original editions of John Foxe (1563) in the reading room in Cambridge University Library, then thirty minutes later slipping into a matinee showing of *Silence* in the Light Cinema in Leisure Park. From woodcut images of William Tyndale and Jan Hus burning at the stake, to a theater replete with cafés, a wall of candy machines, and games.

Calling it surreal would be an understatement—this tension between the worlds of the crucified and the comfortable. The smell of popcorn



wafting through an almost empty theater while Christians on screen hang on crosses amid smoldering tar pits. Hearing in one ear kids persuading parents for more soda while in the other ear Martin Scorsese's film characters face complex decisions of the will—the ramifications of dying for their faith (especially for others).

Connecting history to current audiences is challenging. Foxe's bulky book and woodcut pictures helped his readers realize that the thirteen-year-old mutilated Christian was just as precious as their own daughter. That Polycarp was no less important than their father or grandfather. That the Jews killed in Spain were as real as their own classmates. That the hymns the fourteen nuns sang while the guillotine beheaded them during the French Revolution are melodies that connect to their own songs of faith.

Living in God's sovereign providence, we try to understand the remarkable stories of heroism of martyrs, and the complexities of decisions they confronted. Under severe persecution, some believers lapsed, at times to save others' lives (as in Japan), yet the church continued to grow worldwide. As many believers did during Christ's time on earth, some today opt to walk away from his challenge unto salvation, echoing the words of Jesus' followers along the Sea of Galilee: "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" (John 6:60, NIV). For various reasons, many choose to prioritize ephemeral gains over eternal glory. But one's rejection of the truth can never nullify that truth. Conversely, a person's sacrifice for it accents and encourages the faith of others. John Foxe believed that the stories of those who died for their beliefs needed to be told, and telling them was an encouragement to stand faithful against evil.

In this light, we are typing at times through tears, trying to capture new stories of slaughtered Christians occurring all too often. Inasmuch as we are able, this is our first response. It is our best effort, one whose publication took almost two years longer than we anticipated, the majority of a decade. It is only because of our publisher, Tyndale House Publishers, whose namesake is one of history's great martyrs, that we were able to continue with this labor of love. The sobering yet compelling truth is that we could have kept writing this book the rest of our lives, with so many



stories still unfolding. Perhaps we will for new editions. Like the Gospels, the apostolic letters, and early church martyrologies, what is written here is but a glimpse of the pain and suffering Jesus and his followers endured.

So please read, and read often and to others. Let us learn from and honor our dear, broad Christian family. Let us have communion with the saints.





SECTION ONE

The New Testament through the Battle of Tours (AD 732)

From the Stoning of Stephen to the Religious Clashes of Europe

POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA

Polycarp was eighty-six years old when the Romans executed him. The thought of anyone burning alive is horrific, of a man near ninety is unconscionable, of a pillar of the community is senseless, and of a revered humanitarian accents the human capacity for evil.

As word reached Smyrna that Roman officials were executing those not paying allegiance to the Imperial Cult, the Christians persuaded Polycarp to hide at a farm. He was evading the captain of the police (who had the fitting name Herod). Though Polycarp moved to another farm, his pursuers captured two slave boys from the household who revealed his location—and in turn, Polycarp refused to keep running. He also fed his captors a large meal before leaving.

After Polycarp had a candid exchange with Herod and his father, and rough treatment, they skipped usual protocol and took him straight to the

stadium. There, according to the chronicler, amid the mayhem a voice from heaven rang out: “Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man.” And he did.

As the crowds clamored to get to the stadium, he remained firm. After additional pleas for their elderly bishop to save himself, Polycarp replied, “Eighty-six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no harm. How then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?”¹ After many called for the beasts, the magistrate determined to burn him (since Roman law forbade the use of beasts after the festival ended). When the soldiers moved to nail Polycarp to the stake, he convinced them he would go freely. And told them that they were focusing only on the temporal flames but should be worried about the eternal ones.

According to the account, the fires formed a vault and didn’t touch him, so the guards killed him with a dagger—and reportedly, a fragrant smell filled the arena.² His death inspired churches throughout the Roman Empire after the church of Smyrna circulated his testimony.

Various writers connect Polycarp’s life to those of the apostles—with some crediting the apostle John himself as appointing Polycarp bishop of Smyrna. Polycarp was certainly friends with the legendary Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch martyred ca. AD 110. This familiarity is evident in Ignatius’s personal comments in his letter to Polycarp.³ Irenaeus, himself martyred in Lyon, France, ca. AD 202, also links Polycarp to the apostles. He was born in Smyrna, and had heard Polycarp preach (and refer to a “John”). He seems to campaign for his former pastor’s relationship with the apostles.⁴ Polycarp’s statement became legendary, and appears in other martyr accounts in various versions, like the following—“All my life have I served thee, and never have ye forsaken me, so how can I forsake you now?”⁵ Polycarp’s execution is the earliest recorded martyrology in Christian history beyond the New Testament.



CHAPTER ONE

New Testament Martyrs

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 1 JOHN 3:16

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him [Stephen]. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” . . . And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. ACTS 7:54-56, 59-60

The torments of martyrdom are probably most keenly felt by the bystanders.¹ RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Horrid images of Christians enduring torture, and even vivid executions broadcast live by terrorists, are available at our fingertips—Christian heroes who sacrificed all for the sake of Christ. Each one stands in the lineage of Stephen—the first recorded martyr of the church (though John the Baptist had already been beheaded while Christ walked the earth).



Stephen was the first of the seven great men the apostles selected to help care for the poor in Jerusalem. These men, with clear evidence of God's Spirit on them, helped ensure that no widows, orphans, or needy were overlooked in the church's generosity. Stephen became known for his powerful preaching, a threat to established leaders. They considered his teachings blasphemy and stoned him.

The thud of rocks crushing Stephen's body and the inhumane jeering of his accusers remained seared in the consciousness of at least one bystander: the future apostle Paul (Acts 7:57-58). He would not soon forget God's glory redounding from Stephen's eyes as he gazed into heaven. Only after the Damascus Road experience and Paul's conversion would he fully appreciate what he'd witnessed that day. Paul went from carrying letters from the Jewish high priest to capture Christians for trial and possible death—official orders—to writing letters on behalf of Christ, the highest of priests—spiritual orders. Paul determined, "Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death" (Philippians 1:20), but the memory of persecuting Christians haunted him: "I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15:9).

We don't have the names of most individuals persecuted under Paul and his fellow tormentors during the New Testament era, but the accounts in Scripture and in tradition herald their sacrifice. Of the New Testament leaders, we have compelling accounts of around twenty-five who paid the ultimate price,² many of whom are outlined in the following timeline. While many of the first-century martyrdoms are recorded in different manners (sometimes conflicting) by different writers, we have enough early information to be reasonably sure they died cruel deaths for Christ. In addition to the first-century text of the New Testament, early Christian accounts, and the wealth of sources in subsequent centuries, Roman sources like Josephus and Pliny corroborate the common thread of persecution.³



Early Persecutions: A Timeline

While scholars often vary on dates, the following represents a common timeline with approximate dates.⁴

A.D.	EVENT
35	Stephen martyred; Paul converted
42	Apostle James beheaded by Herod Agrippa I
64	Nero launches persecution
65	Peter and Paul executed
80s	Domitian develops emperor worship
107	Simeon, cousin of Jesus and bishop of Jerusalem, killed for political (anti-Semitic) reasons
approx. 110	Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, martyred in Rome
155 (166?)	Polycarp martyred
155, 160	Justin Martyr writes <i>First</i> and <i>Second Apology</i>
165	Justin beheaded
177	Forty-eight Christians massacred in Lyons and Vienne
197	Tertullian writes his <i>Apology</i>
202	Emperor Septimius Severus forbids conversions to Christianity; Leonidas, Origen's father, is beheaded
203	Perpetua and Felicitas martyred, along with several others
235-36	Theologian Hippolytus and other church leaders persecuted by Emperor Maximin Thrax
248	Persecutions in Alexandria
250	Emperor Decius orders sacrifice to Roman gods; Origen jailed and tortured; Pope Fabian, along with bishops of Antioch and Jerusalem, is martyred; Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, and Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, flee their cities
251	Decius dies; Cyprian returns to his city, where he deals with Christians who've denied faith during persecution; theologian Novation asserts that lapsed Christians cannot be readmitted to the church, creating schism



A.D.	EVENT
252-53	Emperor Callus revives persecutions instituted by Decius
254	Origen dies
257-60	Cyprian and Pope Sixtus II martyred
270-75	Emperor Aurelian establishes state cult of the Roman sun god, whose birthday is said to be December 25; renews persecution of Christians
275	The Neoplatonist philosopher Porphyry writes <i>Against the Christians</i>
298-302	Civil service and army purged of Christians
303	Great Persecution begins February 23. Edicts order church buildings to be destroyed, Scripture confiscated and burned, Christians to lose civil rights, and clergy to be imprisoned and forced to offer sacrifices; in 304, all people are ordered to sacrifice or be executed
305	Roman emperors Diocletian and Maximian abdicate, leading to a pause in persecution
306	Constantine named Augustus by troops; Maximinus II resumes persecution in the east; Council of Elvira, held in Spain, approves severe penalties for various sins
311	Emperor Galerius issues edict of toleration shortly before his death; Maximinus II continues persecution in Egypt and Palestine
312	Constantine defeats Maxentius, expanding his rule to the western part of the Roman Empire
313	Constantine and Licinius, emperor of the east, issue Edict of Milan, which grants toleration of Christianity
324	Constantine defeats Licinius to become emperor of the entire Roman Empire; sanctions Christianity across empire, which helps end persecutions in most territories





John the Baptist

Crowds of people flocked to the Jordan River to hear the Baptizer's message of repentance and the coming of God's Kingdom. John was the last of a long line of prophets proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. His greatest legacy was his role as a forerunner of Jesus, announcing him as the coming Messiah and baptizing him.

From before John's birth, he was consecrated for God's purposes. His birth was announced to his elderly parents by none other than the angel Gabriel, who stands "in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). As a child, John leapt in his mother's womb during the visit of Mary, who was pregnant with our Lord. Around thirty years later, Jesus met John at the Jordan River, and after John baptized him, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove on Christ (Matthew 3:16).

But John also had to navigate the king's anger and fear. Imagine a president intimidated by Billy Graham's or Mother Teresa's message. King Herod feared John indeed, but considered him "a righteous and holy man." The Bible says, "When he heard [John], he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly" (Mark 6:20). Nonetheless, Herod imprisoned John for repeatedly condemning his marriage to his half brother's wife, Herodias. When her daughter, Salome, pleased the king with her dancing, Herod promised her before his guests, "Ask me for whatever you wish. . . . Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom" (Mark 6:22-23). And after consulting her scandalous mother, Salome rushed back in and said, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter" (Mark 6:25). With this, Mark's Gospel records the cost of following our Lord—everything.

The king was exceedingly sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother.



When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

MARK 6:26-29

In the eyes of their assailants, many Christian martyrs, like John the Baptist, died not so much for following Christ but for challenging their status quo. Those in power felt questioned or criticized. Men and women like John, whose godly teaching exposed the moral and ethical depravity around him, often challenge the lives and actions of those in control of both their societies and their personal fates.

CULTURAL CONNECTION

John the Baptist's Death in Media

The tension between John the Baptist and Herodias, Salome's seductive dancing, King Herod's predicament, and the gruesome image of John's head on a platter—all have elicited considerable attention from artists throughout the centuries. Numerous famous painters and sculptors, including Caravaggio and Jan Rombouts, have vividly imagined John's beheading. English officials found one depiction repulsive, banning Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* (1891) for forty years. Albert Camus cast his novel *The Fall* (1956) around the character Jean-Baptiste Clamence, based on John. In similar fashion, Joseph Conrad's main character in *Nostromo* (1904) is Gian Battista. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow presented the Pharisees and Sadducees encountering John the Baptist, who refuses to identify himself. Instead of giving his name, John eventually recites the words of Isaiah as in John 1:23 (lines 66–70). The poem's title, "Vox Clamantis," means "A Voice That Cries Out."⁵

STEPHEN Stephen is the first martyr recorded in the New Testament after our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection. Acts 6 informs us that Stephen was "of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" (verse 3). He was so



strong in representing Christ's message that the religious authorities who challenged him "could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking" (verse 10). After seizing Stephen in Jerusalem and "gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15). His powerful recitation of God's work from Abraham through "the Righteous One" (Christ, Acts 7:52) infuriated them. They dragged him out of the city, gnashed their teeth at him, and stoned him to death.

JAMES THE APOSTLE Around a decade after Stephen's martyrdom, Herod Agrippa launched more severe attacks against Christians, laying "violent hands" on them, and he killed James "with the sword" (Acts 12:1-2, ca. AD 41–42). James and John were the "Sons of Thunder," who exhibited a bold and convincing presence. Their parents were Zebedee and (a different) Salome—possibly a first cousin of Mary, mother of Christ. According to Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150–215), James's boldness convicted his accuser—who asked for forgiveness, became a Christian, and was beheaded alongside James.

PHILIP Philip had been with Jesus during remarkable conversations, conversions, and miracles that would change the world, from the baptism with John to the feeding of the five thousand. He was certain of his Savior. Many commentaries note his penchant for practicality (e.g., asking Jesus how to feed the crowds and helping the Greeks to meet Jesus [John 6 and 12]). His time with Jesus gave him courage to stand for his faith—and Philip has become a model for many present-day ministries. He came from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter, and saw extraordinary events in places that before Christ's intervention had been ordinary. Early church sources report his death by crucifixion in Hierapolis in Phrygia (modern Turkey), after being imprisoned and scourged. In 2011, Francesco D'Andria claimed to have found St. Philip's tomb at Hierapolis inside an early church built over the site. He assumed the relics were exhumed, and then taken to Constantinople and eventually Rome to the church named in his honor.⁶



MATTHEW Originally called Levi (mentioned in Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27), Matthew composed the first book of the New Testament. He had been a tax collector for the Romans, but at Jesus' call, he left his booth to follow Jesus and invited all his friends and associates to meet the Messiah as well. Different accounts of his martyrdom present varying stories, including burning, beheading, and stoning. John Foxe chooses the account of Matthew dying in Nadabah (Ethiopia) by the halberd, a slicing axe blade mounted on a long pole. The Ante-Nicene Fathers collection of writings by the church fathers (to AD 325) includes an apocryphal account with details of Matthew's heroic survival of the king's death threats. The king was prompted by a demon disguised as a soldier—but Matthew was saved each time by God. He survived an attack of ten cannibalistic soldiers sent by the king to tear apart him and the local bishop, and eat them.

In this account, Jesus appears in the form of a beautiful boy with a torch, rushes at the “man-eaters,” and burns out their eyes. Next the evil king has Matthew pinned to the beach with nails piercing his hands, paper covering him and smothered with dolphin oil. Local idols (some in gold) were placed around him—but God sent fire to devour the pagan gods and soldiers, and Matthew, angelic in appearance, remained unharmed. The king then put Matthew's body in a lead box and secretly threw it into the sea—but onlookers had seen Matthew leave his body beforehand and then reappear later.⁷ The famous Baroque artist Caravaggio depicts Matthew's death at the altar by sword in “The Martyrdom of Saint Matthew” (1600).⁸

DID YOU KNOW? *Ossuaries*

Burial boxes called ossuaries tie first-century Jerusalem to first-century martyrs. Some dead bodies were initially placed in sarcophagi (literally, “flesh eaters”) until the flesh decayed, after which the bones were removed into ossuaries, much smaller stone chests, around 2.5 feet long. While we know of ossuaries from outside the last century of the Second Temple period, their popularity from the middle of Herod the Great's reign (ca. 20 BC) to the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 helps place remains easily within this period (and often connected to families of the



Pharisees).⁹ At least two of these artifacts very likely relate to the stories of Christian martyrs. One ossuary discovered in southeast Jerusalem (1990) clearly belonged to Joseph Caiaphas, based on the name etched on its side. Caiaphas is the high priest in the story of Jesus' trial. Though some debate its definite link to the high priest, the authenticity of this burial box is generally accepted and is usually on display at the Israel Museum. Another ossuary box, though much more controversial, is the James Ossuary. First announced to the world in 2002, it had been in a controversial collector's possession for decades. Its inscription reads, "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." While the ossuary's first-century date is not in question, various factions of researchers have come to competing conclusions about the last part of the inscription "Brother of Jesus." However, there continues to be strong support among some for the full inscription's authenticity. Often overlooked is that the ossuary's owner, collector Oded Golan, produced for his trial a 1976 photo of the bone box in his home, thirty years before he offered it for sale. This helped in securing his acquittal on the forgery charge.¹⁰

JAMES THE BROTHER OF JESUS As might be expected, the treatment of Jesus' family members draws special attention from the writers and chroniclers of Christian martyrs. The great church historian Eusebius (fourth century) gives three accounts of James's death, based on available sources, all adding considerable detail and variations.¹¹

Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, mentions the death of "the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James." He claims that the high priest Ananus despised James's boldness and quickly tried him and others, and then stoned them before the new procurator, Albinus, arrived. Albinus relieved Ananus because many Jews were upset about illegal executions; they had met him en route to his new post in Jerusalem. In the account by Hegesippus (AD 170), the Pharisees pushed James from the top of the Temple after his speech motivated more to follow Christ. When he didn't die from the fall, they stoned him. The *Roman Martyrology* states, "James, who is called the Brother of the Lord and the first bishop of Jerusalem, was thrown from the pinnacle of the Temple whereby his



legs were broken. Then he was beaten on the head with a fuller's club and died. He was buried [near that spot] not far from the Temple." Before they crushed his head with the club used for pounding cloth, he knelt on his knees that were calloused like those of camels from his daily prayers, and prayed for them. He was ninety-four years old.

Voices from the Past

Hegesippus records that James, before being shoved from the "summit of the Temple," proclaimed: "Why ask ye me concerning Jesus the Son of man? He Himself sitteth in heaven, at the right hand of the Great Power, and shall come on the clouds of heaven."

HEGESIPPUS, *Commentaries on the Acts of the Church*, Book V, ca. AD 170

MATTHIAS Chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, Matthias was the only apostle not personally called by Jesus. Accounts of his ministry and death vary. Some traditions and early sources record him working among cannibals ("meat-eaters") in Ethiopia, where he was stoned to death. Other traditions place him near the Black Sea, where he was stoned. And other sources, which John Foxe relies on, have him dying in Jerusalem, where he was stoned and then beheaded.

ANDREW According to later sources, Andrew, the older brother of Peter, died as valiantly as his younger brother had served the church. He challenged Roman officials in Patras near the Ionian Sea, where allegedly his bones remain in the Cathedral of St. Andrew. Instead of cowering in the presence of the cross upon which he would die, he welcomed it. He died on an X-shaped cross, a saltire, bound instead of nailed. In one account, Regulus (a monk from Patras) took some of Andrew's bones to Scotland and built a shrine there. St. Andrew's Cross became part of Scotland's flag, and Andrew became Scotland's patron saint. In other accounts, the bones end up in Scotland at modern St. Andrews, and the alleged presence of these relics brought about a military victory for King Angus and the Picts.¹²



MARK While the New Testament references a “Mark” eight times, though never in the Gospels, later traditions generally consider them all to be the same person—the writer of the second Gospel. He is also closely associated with Peter, serving as his interpreter in Rome. Others, especially those influenced by the work of Thomas Oden, claim that he was the first to preach in Egypt and became the founder of Alexandrian Christianity.¹³ After the first-century biblical accounts of Mark’s missionary service, sources are silent until the fourth century. Eusebius, relying on sources he had gathered, chronicles Mark’s brutal martyrdom. After serving as the bishop of Alexandria (a role Eusebius tells us he passed to Anianus in AD 62–63¹⁴), he was attacked by the pagan citizens. They dragged him through the streets, pulling him with ropes through fire and tearing his body to pieces.¹⁵

SIMON PETER Peter seems the most celebrated or discussed of the apostles. He walked on water with Jesus. He made bold outbursts in defense of Christ, yet denied Christ three times. And he’s pictured in many great paintings—including those in the Sistine Chapel—receiving the keys to the Kingdom. Simon’s nickname, Cephas (also known later as Peter, from the Latin *petrus*, meaning *rock*), given him by our Lord, represents well his boldness in life and death (Matthew 10:2). According to early church writers Hegesippus and Jerome, he displayed amazing resolve in Rome when he was martyred by Nero.¹⁶ Christ had chosen Peter for a special place among the apostles and the church (John 21). He also foretold Peter’s death: “‘When you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.’ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God)” (John 21:18-19). The church fathers’ accounts of his death in Rome indeed reflect this prophecy. He had fought the magician Simon after battling an assortment of witchcraft, from vicious dogs to demons carrying Simon. The local Christians had warned Peter to flee because of Nero’s wrath for killing Simon the Sorcerer by spoiling his trick. As Peter approached the gate, however, he saw Jesus face-to-face.



“Lord, whither goest Thou?”

And Our Lord responded: “I go to Rome, to be crucified anew!”

“To be crucified anew?” asked Peter.

“Yes!” said Our Lord.

And Peter said: “Then, Lord, I too return to Rome, to be crucified with Thee!”

Whereupon Our Lord ascended to Heaven, leaving Peter all in tears.¹⁷

When pressed again, Peter answered that he cared only for the message of the cross, and thus was sentenced to crucifixion.

And when Peter came in sight of the cross, he said: “My Master came down from Heaven to earth, and so was lifted up on the Cross. But I, whom He has deigned to call from earth to Heaven, wish to be crucified with my head toward the earth and my feet pointing to Heaven. Crucify me head downwards, for I am not worthy to die as my Master died.” And so it was done: the cross was turned, so that he was fixed to it head downwards.¹⁸

A later letter attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite (Acts 17:34) claims he was a witness to the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul in Rome. In his alleged seventh letter to the Romans, after reflecting on these apostles’ planting of the Corinthian church, Dionysius notes they continued their teaching ministry in Rome, where they were martyred “at the same time.”¹⁹

PAUL The apostle Paul contributed the most books to our New Testament, and though the exact number is debated, God used him to record and pass on a significant part of his revelation “in verbal propositional form.”²⁰ To appreciate the ultimate sacrifice of the martyrs in this study, we especially need to pause and cite the words Paul wrote by divine leading. From his very hands came the words that likely returned to him during his own imminent death:



I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. . . . For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

“O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:50, 53-58

Paul went to his death with God’s promises emblazoned on his mind and heart. Like Peter, Paul also suffered martyrdom in Rome under Nero—and in some traditions on the same day. In the account of Abdias (of whom Foxe asks “if his book be of any substantial authority”), Paul led Nero’s two esquires to faith in his sepulcher before they led Paul out to “the place of execution.”²¹ Before he “gave his neck” he made the sign of the cross on his forehead.²² In Dionysius’s letter to Timothy, he states he was present as Paul’s assistant, recording the moving account of the last words between the two apostles after the crowd pummeled them and spat on them. “Paul said to Peter: ‘Peace be with thee, cornerstone of the Church, shepherd of the lambs of Christ!’ And Peter said to Paul: ‘Go in peace, preacher of truth and good, mediator of salvation to the just!’ Thereafter Dionysius followed his master Paul, for the two apostles were put to death in different places.”²³

JUDE Jude, also called Thaddeus, was the brother of James (and many take this to mean he was also Jesus’ brother, noted in Mark 6:3 and Matthew



13:55). He is identified as the author of the book of Jude. It's one of the clearest authorship statements of the New Testament—"Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James" (Jude 1:1). However, his relationship to Jesus is not clear, as some interpret the Greek word for *brother* as its alternative designation for *cousin*. In the Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible, commentators identify him as "Judas Jacobi" or "Judas the brother of James" (Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:16). Like our Lord, he was crucified, purportedly ca. AD 72 in Edessa (modern Turkey).²⁴ The area of his ultimate sacrifice became the first of the Crusader States of the twelfth century. He is recognized as a patron saint of the Armenian Orthodox Church, and the saint of "lost causes," an attribute memorialized in the robust charity St. Jude Children's Research Hospital (opened in 1962).

BARTHOLOMEW Scripture tells us very little about Bartholomew. Two key fourth-century Christian writers, Eusebius and Jerome, discuss his missionary work in India—so successful that 12,000 converts came to retrieve his body after King Astreges had him beaten with rods and then the idolaters crucified or beheaded him. Astreges charged him as a magician, saying Bartholomew tricked the king's brother Polymius (or Polemius), also a king, into converting. In one account, Bartholomew challenged Astreges's god Baldad (or Baldach) to a fight with God, and soon all the pagan idols crumbled—infuriating Astreges. After Bartholomew's death, according to one account, demons that had been cast from King Astreges's priests turned and killed the king and his priests. Polymius was made bishop.

In *The Golden Legend* account, citing writer Theodorus, the executioners (in Alban, Armenia) flayed Bartholomew, ". . . that some say that he was crucified and was taken down ere he died, and for to have greater torment he was flayed and at the last beheaded."²⁵ This is vividly depicted in Jusepe de Ribera's *Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew* (1644). Though a later tradition, the flaying of St. Bartholomew is a common motif in representing his passion: "Among the many excellent statues that adorn the cathedral of Milan, none is more justly admired than one of St. Bartholomew flayed alive, representing the muscles, veins and other parts with inimitable softness and justice."²⁶



THOMAS Later tradition asserts that Thomas, like Bartholomew, ministered in India. History has hung the moniker “Doubting Thomas” on him for being skeptical of Jesus’ resurrection until seeing the actual scars (John 20:24-29). However, John 11 shows his boldness, challenging his fellow apostles to join Jesus in Judah even if it meant death (verse 16). According to the second-century Acts of Thomas, his martyrdom came at the end of four soldiers’ spears. In this apocryphal account, Thomas has an extended interaction with King Gondophares about the building of a palace. While it’s difficult to ascertain the authority of these written accounts,²⁷ archaeologists have found several coins in the Kabul Valley in Afghanistan attesting to this first-century king.

LUKE Luke served as a physician, an author of one of the Gospels, and a faithful companion of Paul, even accompanying him to Rome. According to later sources, Greek pagan priests in Boeotia (central Greece) hanged Luke on a green olive tree at age eighty-four. His relics are now in Padua, Thebes, and Prague.²⁸ We know much more of his life than his death, but nonetheless such a great man died not touching this earth, closer to heaven than his accusers.²⁹

SIMON To help distinguish him from Simon Peter, this Simon was also called “Zelotes” or “the Zealous” (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). Early accounts place him in ministry in nearly all of the known world.³⁰ Writers record his death in various places, including Persia, Iberia, and Britain—but agree on his death by crucifixion. And in a heralded version, his tormentors sawed his body into pieces. This is why he is commonly depicted with a saw (as in the King James cover page illustration, 1611).³¹

JOHN Though he suffered persecution, John was the only apostle not to die a horrific but celebrated martyrdom. The “beloved disciple” wrote the last of the four Gospels, and three of his letters to the churches are included in the New Testament. He composed the book of Revelation from the island of Patmos—banished there by emperor Domitian. Foxe notes that various miracles are attributed to John, “reported in sundrye chronicles.”³² He made



a miraculous escape from a cauldron of boiling oil. Isidorus relates several miracles during John's times of persecution—including surviving poison, and then healing two others who also drank it. He died at age ninety-nine.³³

BARNABAS Barnabas spent considerable time with the apostle Paul assisting in ministries and became a church leader himself. Although he and Paul eventually had a dispute and parted ways for a bit, Barnabas was clearly passionate about Christ and his teachings.

The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

ACTS 11:22-24

We also know of Barnabas's zeal for the gospel. He traveled from his place of ministry in Antioch to Paul's hometown, Tarsus, and brought him to Antioch to minister. "For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians" (Acts 11:26).

He was a Cypriot Jew whose name means "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36-37), and a cousin of John Mark who was also from Cyprus. Sources record tradition stating Barnabas was stoned to death in Salamis, Cyprus, due to his very effective preaching.³⁴

Vintage Foxe

Wherein marvellous it is to see and read the numbers incredible of Christian innocents that were slain and tormented, some one way, some another, [as] Rabanus³⁵ saith, and saith truly, Some slain with sword; some burnt with fire; some with whips scourged; some stabbed with forks of iron; some fastened to the cross or gibbet; some drowned in the sea; some their skins



plucked off; some their tongues cut off; some stoned to death; some killed with cold; some starved with hunger; some their hands cut off, or otherwise dismembered, have been so left naked to the open shame of the world, etc. Their kinds of punishments, although they were divers, yet the manner of constancy in all these martyrs was one.³⁶

DID YOU KNOW? *Pilate's Stone*

The Roman prefect who tried washing his hands of our Christ was almost lost to history among critics of the Bible's historicity. Then in 1961, archaeologists had good fortune while excavating the theater at Caesarea Maritima. They discovered the "Pilate Stone," a piece of limestone that builders had reused in a stairway. What is left of the broken text on it clearly identifies Pontius Pilate from the New Testament narrative. It's also contemporary to his lifetime—he was the Roman prefect from AD 26 to 36. It can be seen at the Israel Museum and states, "*Tiberieum . . . Pontius Pilate . . . prefect of Judea.*"

+ Historic Sources

An excerpt from *Martyrs Mirror*, 1660³⁷

SUMMARY OF THE MARTYRS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

This first century did not pass without the shedding of much blood of the saints; for, since Jesus Christ Himself, the leader of all true believers, was subject to it, it was just, that His members should follow in the same path. . . . After the death of Christ, the fire of persecution raged exceedingly, consuming nearly all of the beloved apostles and friends of Christ, according to the flesh. We have described those who followed Christ, their Captain, into suffering and death, according to the order of time; they are the following persons: Stephen the deacon; the apostles, James, Philip, Barnabas, Mark the evangelist, Peter, Paul; some companions and friends of Paul—as Aristarchus, Epaphras, Silas, Onesiphorus, Prochorus, Nicanor, Parmenas, Olympas, Carpus, Trophimus, Materus, Egyetus, Hermagoras, Onesimus, Dionysius of Athens, and Timothy; but the latter was slain a few years after the others. In the meantime the preceding ones are followed by Andrew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, Simon Zelotes, Matthias,



Luke the evangelist, Antipas, the faithful martyr of Jesus, John, whom Jesus loved, Urticinus, Vitalus, etc., all of whom obtained the martyr's crown, as may be seen from the following account.

To Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we have accorded the first place among the martyrs of the new covenant; not in the order of time, for herein John was before, and preceded with his death; but on account of the worthiness of the person, because He is the head of all the holy martyrs, through whom they all must be saved.

Voices from the Past

So, when many even of the ruling class believed, there was a commotion among the Jews, and scribes, and Pharisees, who said: "A little more, and we shall have all the people looking for Jesus as the Christ."

HEGESIPPUS, *Commentaries on the Acts of the Church, Book V*, ca. AD 170

