

## A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

Revelation 2:8–11

Polycarp (AD 70–155), the bishop of Smyrna, was urged by the Roman proconsul to publicly renounce his faith in Jesus or face execution for the amusement of the anti-Christian culture of the day. In response to the deadly ultimatum, the man of God said: “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?” Thus, the fire was lit and Polycarp was burned at the stake. This is just *one* example of countless saints who have chosen agony and over apostasy, death over denial of Christ, conviction over capitulation, and earthly loss over heavenly loss. Stories like theirs force us to ask ourselves weighty questions: Would I join them if faced with the same dilemma? Could I endure persecution without compromise? These are *exactly* the types of questions Christ asks his people to consider in our passage today—“Are you prepared to die for me?”

### DEATH: The Cause for Concern

- Present and future tribulation vv. 9a, 10d
- Material tribulation vv. 9a, 10b
- Relational tribulation vv. 9c
- Spiritual tribulation vv. 9d, 10b
- Fatal tribulation v. 10e

### LIFE: The Fuel for Faithfulness

- Remember the temporal nature of present testing vv. 10d–f; Phil 1:21
- Remember the nature and knowledge of Christ vv. 8b, 9a; 1:18; Heb 4:15
- Remember the wealth and deliverance that awaits vv. 9b, 10f, 11; 1 John 5:4–5

*Live with life in your sights!*