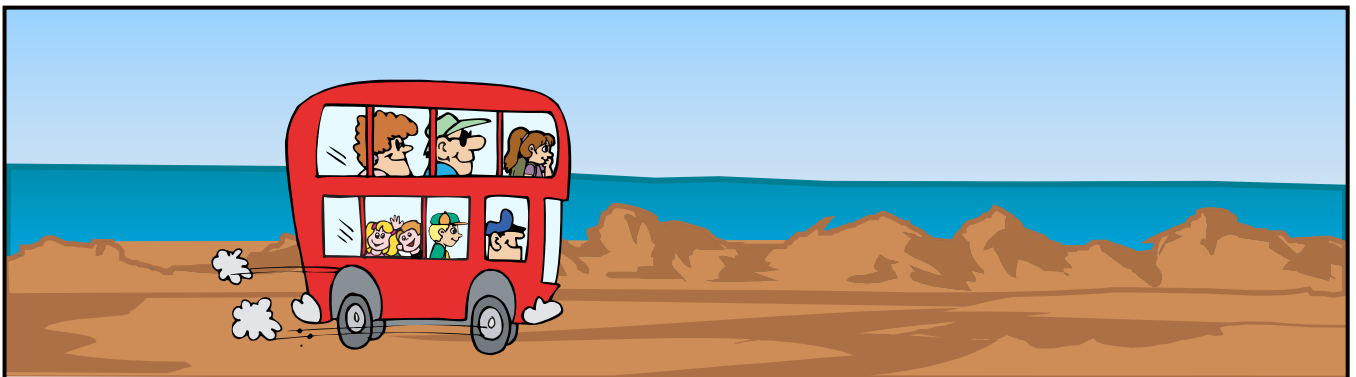


## Tour of the Holy Lands - Smyrna



Our bus driver has driven us over to the sea today, to the beautiful city of Smyrna (smur'na). The archeologists have excavated it recently. Look over there! See the rows of carved stones that have been dug up? The fancy ones are called Corinthian capitals. Capitals are decorated column tops that hold up a roof. These capitals are waiting for archaeologists to find their columns so they can be fit together again.

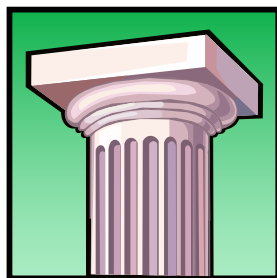




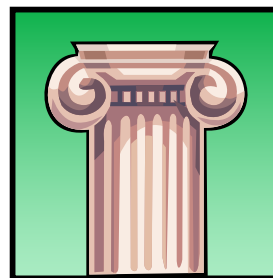
Capitals come in several designs. Guess what the sculptors -- the men who carve stone -- used as their model for the Corinthian capitals. If you guessed the spiny leaves of the acanthus plant, you are truly amazing! Acanthus is a low-growing weed found all around Mediterranean countries. Watch your step -- these leaves are sharp!



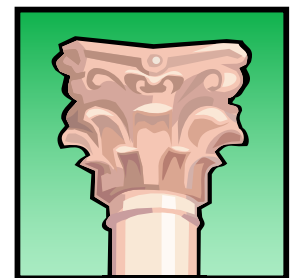
**ACANTHUS  
PLANT**



**DORIC  
CAPITAL**



**IONIC  
CAPITAL**



**CORINTHIAN  
CAPITAL**



If the Apostle John ever visited Smyrna, he would have seen a new city, a resurrected city, a planned city with wide streets built on top of an old city that was destroyed 600 years earlier.



John writes to the Christians there, telling them that he knows their persecutions, how they are being attacked and called names. But he gives them hope. "Fear not," he says. He tells them they will suffer martyrdom (mar'tur-dum), a word that means to die rather than give up one's religion. But he says it is really the devil testing them, trying to destroy their faith, their patience and their courage. They are never to give up, even if it costs them their lives. The persecution will not last forever. Christ will present them with the crown of life, which no one can take away.





There were many brave Christians who lost their lives in those early years. Polycarp was one of the most famous. The crowds called for his arrest, and he was given time to pray. They begged him to say that Caesar was his Lord, but he said, "Eighty and six years have I served Christ and he never did me wrong. What are you waiting for? Come do what you will."

Polycarp stood bound in the flames, untouched and praising God. The flames created a wall around him, but did not hurt him. Finally, the executioner ordered Polycarp to be stabbed to death. The crowd of onlookers marveled at Polycarp's faithfulness and bravery. They would not forget that day.