

Luke 11:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

Analysis

From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple (ἀπὸ αἵματος Ἀβελ ἕως αἵματος Ζαχαρίου τοῦ ἀπολομένου μεταξὺ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τοῦ οἴκου)—Jesus specifies the range: from Abel (Genesis 4:8, first martyr) to Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20-22, last martyr in Hebrew Bible canon, since Chronicles was ordered last). This encompasses 'all the prophets' (v.50). Zechariah's murder metaxu tou thusiastēriou kai tou oikou (between the altar and the temple) emphasized sacrilege—priests murdered God's prophet in the temple court.

Verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation—the emphatic *amēn* legō humin (truly I say to you) confirms the verdict. Jesus's generation will answer for all prophetic bloodshed from Scripture's beginning (Abel) to end (Zechariah). Their Messiah-rejection completes a pattern spanning biblical history.

Historical Context

The Hebrew Bible's canonical order placed Chronicles last, making Zechariah the final martyr chronologically recorded (though not the last chronologically in history). Zechariah's dying words, 'The LORD look upon it, and require it' (2 Chronicles 24:22), echo Jesus's language of divine requital. Jesus uses Scripture's bookends (Abel to Zechariah) to encompass all martyrdom.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Scripture's testimony to prophetic martyrdom from beginning to end validate the pattern Jesus describes?
2. What does Zechariah's murder in the temple court reveal about religious systems' capacity for violence against truth?
3. How should the history of prophetic martyrdom shape expectations for faithful gospel ministry in hostile cultures?

Interlinear Text

ἀπὸ τῆς αἵματος Ἀβελ ἔως τῆς αἵματος Ζαχαρίου
From which the blood of Abel unto which the blood of Zacharias
G575 G3588 G129 G6 G2193 G3588 G129 G2197

τῆς ἀπολομένου μεταξὺ τῆς θυσιαστηρίου καὶ τῆς
which perished between which the altar and which
G3588 G622 G3342 G3588 G2379 G2532 G3588

οἴκου· ναί λέγω ὑμῖν ἐκζητηθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς
the temple verily I say unto you It shall be required From which
G3624 G3483 G3004 G5213 G1567 G575 G3588

γενεᾶς ταύτης
generation G3778
G1074

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 11:4 (Sacrifice): By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Matthew 23:35 (Blood): That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

1 John 3:12 (Parallel theme): Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Zechariah 1:1 (Parallel theme): In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

Hebrews 12:24 (Blood): And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Jeremiah 7:28 (Parallel theme): But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.