

# Psalms 79:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem;  
and there was none to bury them.

## Analysis

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**Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them.** The simile "like water" (כְּמַיִם, kamayim) indicates blood poured out abundantly, carelessly, without value—as common and cheap as water. The Hebrew verb shaphak (שָׁפַךְ, "shed/poured out") appears frequently in contexts of violence and murder, especially innocent bloodshed that cries to God for vengeance (Genesis 9:6; Ezekiel 22:3-4).

"Round about Jerusalem" emphasizes the geographic scope—the holy city itself surrounded by carnage. Jerusalem, the city of shalom (peace), becomes encircled by bloodshed. The irony is devastating: the place where God's presence dwelt, where sacrificial blood was carefully regulated according to Levitical law, now witnesses unregulated slaughter of God's people. Their blood mingles with dust rather than being properly handled as sacred.

"There was none to bury them" (ein qover, אֵין קָוֶר) compounds the tragedy. Normal burial required family members performing ritual acts of love and duty. The phrase suggests complete social breakdown—either the living were too few, too traumatized, or themselves threatened with death. This recalls Jeremiah 14:16 and anticipates the mass graves and abandoned bodies following ancient sieges. To die without burial meant being cut off from ancestral rest and communal memory.

## Historical Context

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The Babylonian siege of Jerusalem lasted approximately 18 months (2 Kings 25:1-3). Ancient siege warfare was brutal—starvation, disease, and ultimately massacre when walls were breached. Babylonian records and biblical accounts confirm mass executions. The phrase "none to bury them" reflects the demographic catastrophe: Jerusalem's population was killed, enslaved, or fled, leaving insufficient survivors to perform burial rites for the dead.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does this verse inform prayer for regions today where mass atrocities leave believers unable to bury their dead with dignity?
2. What does the psalmist's appeal to God's covenant faithfulness teach about bringing unfiltered grief and horror before God in prayer?
3. How should awareness of such historical suffering shape Christian perspectives on religious freedom and persecution?

## Interlinear Text

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have they shed	Their blood	like water	round about	Jerusalem	H369
H8210	H1818	H4325	H5439	H3389	

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וְיָדְרָא:

and there was none to bury

H6912

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 16:4** (Parallel theme): They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcases shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

**Jeremiah 14:16** (References Jerusalem): And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them.

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