

Romans 11:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

Analysis

Paul quotes Elijah's complaint verbatim from 1 Kings 19:10, 14 (LXX): **Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.** The verb for "killed" is *apekteinan* (ἀπέκτειναν), indicating completed action—the prophets were systematically murdered. The phrase *monos hypoleiphthen* (μόνος ὑπολείφθην, "I alone am left") expresses Elijah's sense of being the sole survivor, the last faithful Israelite.

This dramatic cry reveals the prophet's emotional and spiritual exhaustion. He believed not only that he was alone, but that Israel was actively seeking his death (*zētousin tēn psychēn mou*, ζητοῦσιν τὴν ψυχὴν μου). The torn-down altars symbolized covenant violation, since God commanded these worship sites. Elijah's isolation felt absolute—but God's response (next verse) will shatter this perception. Paul includes this to show that even prophets can misjudge the extent of apostasy.

Historical Context

Jezebel's persecution (1 Kings 18:4, 13) had indeed killed many prophets of Yahweh. Obadiah hid 100 prophets in caves, suggesting systematic state-sponsored violence. The altars referenced may be the one on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:30) that Elijah repaired, or local altars Jezebel destroyed to establish Baal worship exclusively.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Elijah's emotional state affect his perception of reality, and what does this teach about discerning God's work in dark times?
2. What is the spiritual danger of believing you are the only faithful believer remaining?
3. How might persecution and isolation distort our view of God's faithfulness to preserve His people?

Interlinear Text

Κύριε τοὺς προφῆτας σου ἀπέκτειναν καὶ τὰ
Lord G2962 G3588 **prophets** G4396 **thine** G4675 **they have killed** G615 **and** G2532 G3588

θυσιαστήριά σου κατέσκαψαν καὶ γὰρ ὑπελείφθην μόνος
altars G2379 **thine** G4675 **digged down** G2679 **and I** G2504 **am left** G5275 **alone** G3441

καὶ ζητοῦσιν τὴν ψυχὴν μου
and G2532 **they seek** G2212 G3588 **life** G5590 **my** G3450

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 18:4 (Prophecy): For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

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