

# 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 ψυχήν 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

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

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

## Study Questions

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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

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

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

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

## Additional Cross-References

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**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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