

Matthew 23.29–39

“You’re hopeless, you religion scholars and Pharisees! Frauds! You build granite tombs for your prophets and marble monuments for your saints. And you say that if you had lived in the days of your ancestors, no blood would have been on your hands. You protest too much! You’re cut from the same cloth as those murderers, and daily add to the death count.

“Snakes! Cold-blooded sneaks! Do you think you can worm your way out of this? Never have to pay the piper? It’s on account of people like you that I send prophets and wise guides and scholars generation after generation—and generation after generation you treat them like dirt, greeting them with lynch mobs, hounding them with abuse.

“You can’t squirm out of this: Every drop of righteous blood ever spilled on this earth, beginning with the blood of that good man Abel right down to the blood of Zechariah, Barachiah’s son, whom you murdered at his prayers, is on your head. All this, I’m telling you, is coming down on you, on your generation.

“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Murderer of prophets! Killer of the ones who brought you God’s news! How often I’ve ached to embrace your children, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you wouldn’t let me. And now you’re so desolate, nothing but a ghost town. What is there left to say? Only this: I’m out of here soon. The next time you see me you’ll say, ‘Oh, God has blessed him! He’s come, bringing God’s rule!’”