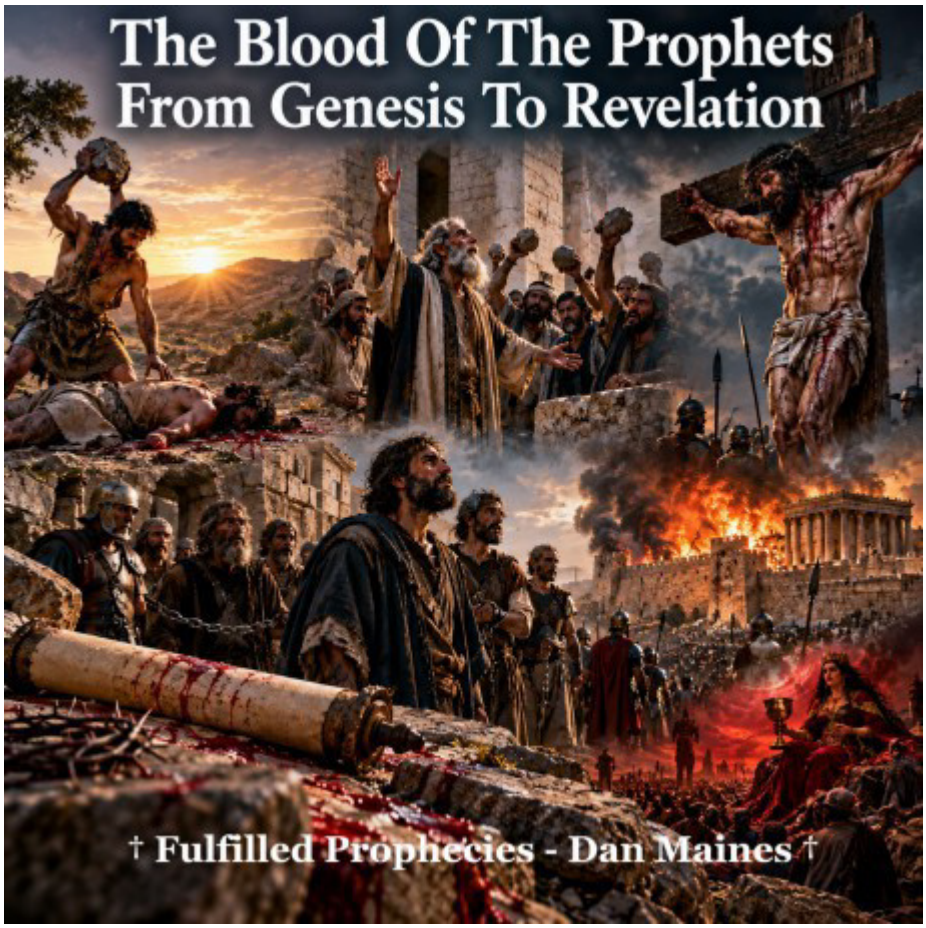
Fulfilled Prophecies

The Blood Of The Prophets From Genesis To Revelation



By Dan Maines

The Blood Of The Prophets From Genesis To Revelation

Introduction

† From the blood of righteous Abel in Genesis to the blood of the martyrs in Revelation, Scripture tells one continuous story of persecution, covenant rebellion, and divine judgment.

† This wasn't a collection of unrelated tragedies. It was the unfolding history of God's righteous servants being rejected by those who claimed to represent Him.

† Abel was murdered by his brother. The prophets were persecuted by Israel. Jesus was rejected and crucified. The

apostles were threatened, beaten, imprisoned, and killed. Revelation reveals the final judgment upon the covenant nation responsible for shedding the blood of God's servants.

† Jesus identified the generation that would bear responsibility for this accumulated bloodshed. He didn't point to a generation thousands of years in the future. He pointed directly to the generation standing before Him.

† The blood of the prophets wasn't forgotten. God had promised justice, and Jesus declared when that justice would come.

† The central question isn't whether God would avenge His servants. The question is when that judgment would take place, and Jesus answered it plainly.

Genesis 4:8-10

Cain talked to his brother Abel; and it happened that when they were in the field Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" Then He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to Me from the ground.

† The first recorded murder in Scripture was the murder of a righteous man by his own brother. Abel's death established a pattern that would continue throughout Israel's history.

† Abel's blood cried out for justice. His murderer couldn't hide what he'd done, and God didn't overlook the innocent blood that had been shed.

† Jesus later identified Abel as the beginning of the historical record of righteous bloodshed for which His generation would be held accountable (Matthew 23:35).

† This connection is important because Revelation's judgment didn't begin with the persecution of Christians. Its roots reached back to the earliest account of a righteous person being

murdered.

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he was attested to be righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

† Abel's righteousness was grounded in faith, not merely in the outward act of presenting a sacrifice.

† His testimony continued after his death because God hadn't forgotten his faithfulness.

† The writer of Hebrews places Abel at the beginning of a long history of faithful witnesses, many of whom suffered persecution and death.

† Abel's continuing testimony helps us understand why the blood of the martyrs in Revelation also demanded divine justice (Revelation 6:9-11).

2 Chronicles 24:20-22

Then the Spirit of God covered Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the priest like clothing; and he stood above the people and said to them, "This is what God has said, 'Why do you break the commandments of the Lord and do not prosper? Because you have abandoned the Lord, He has also abandoned you.'" So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the house of the Lord. So Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Zechariah's father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as Zechariah died he said, "May the Lord see and avenge!"

† Zechariah was murdered in the temple courtyard because he confronted the nation's covenant rebellion.

† His death exposed the corruption of a religious system that claimed to honor God while rejecting His messengers.

† Zechariah's final appeal was for God to see the injustice and require an accounting for his blood.
† Jesus later connected the blood of Abel with the blood of Zechariah, bringing the long history of righteous persecution into one declaration of judgment (Matthew 23:35-36).
† The location of Zechariah's murder is significant. The temple, which should've represented faithfulness to God, became the scene of violence against His servant.

Nehemiah 9:26

But they became rebellious and revolted against You, And threw Your Law behind their backs And killed Your prophets who had admonished them In order to bring them back to You, And they committed great blasphemies.
† Israel's persecution of the prophets wasn't an isolated problem. It was part of a recurring pattern of rejecting God's warnings.
† The prophets were sent to call the people back to covenant faithfulness, but their message was often met with hostility.
† The nation repeatedly rejected the very messengers God sent for its correction.
† This history explains why Jesus described Jerusalem as the city that killed the prophets and stoned those sent to her (Matthew 23:37).

Jeremiah 7:25-26

Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, sending them daily, again and again. Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers.
† God repeatedly sent His prophets to Israel, but generation after generation resisted their message.

† The problem wasn't that God had failed to warn the nation. The problem was that the nation refused to listen.
† Jeremiah's warning was connected to the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in his own day, establishing a historical pattern of covenant judgment.
† Jesus later applied the same pattern to the Jerusalem of His generation, announcing that its rejection of God's messengers would result in another devastating judgment (Luke 19:41-44).
† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was the final judgment upon the Old Covenant system, not the destruction of the physical world.

Matthew 23:29-32

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs for the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, and you say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

† Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who honored dead prophets while rejecting the Messiah standing before them.
† They condemned their ancestors for murdering God's messengers, yet they were preparing to commit an even greater act of rebellion.
† Their rejection of Jesus demonstrated that they shared the same hostility toward God's revelation that had characterized their fathers.
† When Jesus told them to complete the measure of their fathers, He was announcing that their covenant rebellion was approaching its final judgment.

† This wasn't a prediction about religious leaders thousands of years later. Jesus was addressing the scribes and Pharisees of His own generation.

Matthew 23:34-36

Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will flog in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, so that upon you will fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

† This passage is one of the clearest declarations of the timing and purpose of Jerusalem's coming judgment.

† Jesus identified the historical beginning of righteous bloodshed with Abel and connected it to the murder of Zechariah.

† The Zechariah named by Jesus is identified as the son of Barachiah, while the Zechariah murdered in the temple courtyard in Chronicles is identified as the son of Jehoiada. The identification is debated, but the theological point remains unmistakable.

† Jesus declared that the accumulated guilt of persecuting God's righteous servants would come upon the generation standing before Him.

† Notice that Jesus also predicted the persecution of His own messengers. Some would be killed, others would be beaten, and others would be pursued from city to city.

† The persecution of the apostles wasn't a separate prophetic event. It was the final stage of the same historical pattern.

† The words "this generation" establish the time frame. Jesus

wasn't describing a judgment reserved for a distant generation.
† The judgment announced here belongs to the same first-century generation identified in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:34).
† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 fulfilled this declaration of covenant accountability.

Matthew 23:37-38

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!
† Jesus identified Jerusalem as the city responsible for killing the prophets and rejecting God's messengers.
† His lament revealed both the mercy that had been offered and the rebellion that had continued.
† Jerusalem's desolation wasn't an arbitrary punishment. It was the consequence of persistent covenant unfaithfulness.
† The declaration that their house would be left desolate pointed toward the coming removal of the temple system.
† The temple's destruction in AD 70 demonstrated that the Old Covenant order had reached its appointed end.
† God's dwelling place wasn't being transferred to another physical temple. Through Christ, believers had become God's spiritual household (Ephesians 2:19-22).

Luke 11:49-51

For this reason also, the wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill, and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of

Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation.'
† Luke confirms the same declaration recorded in Matthew, but explicitly includes the apostles among those who would be persecuted.
† The blood of the prophets and the blood of the apostles belong to one continuous history of opposition to God's messengers.
† Jesus stated that the blood of the prophets would be required of His generation.
† This provides the foundation for understanding Revelation's later announcement that judgment had come upon the city responsible for the blood of the saints.
† We don't need to invent another generation or another prophetic timetable. Jesus already identified the people and the period involved.

Acts 7:51-52

You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, and you have now become betrayers and murderers of Him;
† Stephen confronted the religious leaders with the same historical pattern Jesus had identified.
† Their ancestors persecuted the prophets who announced the coming of Christ, and Stephen's audience had participated in rejecting Christ Himself.
† Stephen wasn't introducing a new accusation. He was confirming the covenant indictment already pronounced by Jesus.

† The religious authorities responded by killing Stephen, demonstrating the very rebellion he had exposed (Acts 7:54-60).
† Stephen's martyrdom showed that the persecution Jesus predicted was already taking place within that generation.
† The murder of Stephen also revealed that the religious establishment wasn't merely defending tradition. It was resisting the fulfillment of the promises those traditions were supposed to anticipate.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16

For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out. They are not pleasing to God, but hostile to all people, hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved; with the result that they always reach the limit of their sins. But wrath has come upon them fully.

† Paul connected the killing of Jesus, the persecution of the prophets, and the opposition to the apostles in one continuous accusation.
† He also declared that the persecutors were completing the measure of their sins.
† This directly parallels Jesus' warning that the religious leaders would complete the measure of their fathers (Matthew 23:32).
† Paul's words show that the anticipated judgment wasn't disconnected from the events of the first century.
† The wrath he described belonged to the covenant crisis unfolding during the apostolic generation.
† This passage doesn't condemn every Jewish person. Paul

himself was Jewish, and the earliest Christians were Jewish. The indictment concerns those who actively opposed Christ and persecuted His messengers.
† The judgment was directed against covenant rebellion, not against an ethnic identity.

Revelation 6:9-11

When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who live on the earth?" And a white robe was given to each of them; and they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were to be killed even as they had been, was completed also.
† The martyrs beneath the altar were crying out for justice, just as Abel's blood had cried out from the ground.
† Their appeal wasn't for personal revenge. It was a request for God's righteous judgment against those responsible for persecuting His servants.
† They were told to rest for a little time because the persecution hadn't yet reached its appointed completion.
† The expression "a little time" is significant. Revelation presents the judgment as approaching, not as an event separated from its original audience by thousands of years.
† The altar imagery connects the martyrs' deaths with sacrificial language, emphasizing that their faithful testimony hadn't been forgotten.
† The same covenant accountability announced by Jesus was now being revealed through the prophetic imagery of

Revelation.
† The martyrs' prayer would receive its answer in the judgment of the persecuting city.
Revelation 16:4-7
Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, the One who is and who was, O Holy One, because You judged these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it." And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."
† Revelation declares that God's judgments were righteous because the persecutors had shed the blood of saints and prophets.
† The imagery of blood given in return for blood represents divine justice corresponding to the crimes committed.
† This judgment wasn't directed against the physical universe. It was covenant judgment against those responsible for persecuting God's people.
† The altar's affirmation connects this judgment with the earlier appeal of the martyrs beneath the altar (Revelation 6:9-11).
† What had been requested in the fifth seal was being answered through the judgments revealed in the bowls.
† The connection between bloodshed and judgment becomes even clearer when Revelation identifies the guilty city.
Revelation 17:5-6
and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery: "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of

the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.
† The woman called Babylon was portrayed as intoxicated with the blood of God's people.
† This wasn't simply a description of general wickedness. It identified a persecuting city whose guilt included the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus.
† The name Babylon was symbolic, drawing upon the Old Testament language of idolatry, covenant unfaithfulness, and divine judgment.
† Jerusalem had repeatedly been condemned for spiritual unfaithfulness, and Jesus had specifically identified her as the city that killed the prophets.
† Revelation's portrayal of Babylon fits the covenant indictment Jesus pronounced against Jerusalem.
† The city that rejected the prophets, crucified the Messiah, and persecuted the apostles was approaching the judgment Jesus had announced.
† The symbolic name doesn't require us to look for a rebuilt Babylon or a future worldwide religious organization.

Revelation 18:20

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.
† The judgment of Babylon is presented as the vindication of the saints, apostles, and prophets.
† These are the same categories of faithful witnesses Jesus described when announcing judgment upon His generation.
† Revelation doesn't separate the prophets from the apostles into unrelated prophetic judgments.
† Their persecution is brought together in the judgment of the guilty city.

† This confirms that Revelation's judgment is inseparably connected to the bloodshed Jesus condemned.
† The announcement of divine justice wasn't an invitation for believers to seek personal revenge. It was the declaration that God had judged the persecuting covenant system.

Revelation 18:24

And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.

† This is one of the strongest connections between Revelation and the words of Jesus in the Gospels.
† Jesus declared that all the righteous blood from Abel onward would be required of His generation (Matthew 23:35-36).
† Revelation declares that the blood of prophets, saints, and the slain was found in Babylon.
† The parallel isn't accidental. Both passages describe accumulated bloodguilt brought to its appointed judgment.
† Jerusalem is the city Jesus specifically identified with the killing of the prophets, making her the central covenantal referent of Revelation's Babylon imagery.
† The language of all the slain is prophetic and representative, emphasizing the fullness of the city's guilt rather than requiring that every murder in human history physically occurred there.
† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 fulfilled the judgment announced against that generation.
† The blood of the prophets had been remembered, the persecution of the apostles had been answered, and the Old Covenant persecuting system had reached its end.

Revelation 19:1-2

After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God, because His judgments are true and

righteous; for He has judged the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her sexual immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her.
† Heaven rejoiced because God's righteous judgment had been accomplished.
† The great harlot had been judged, and the blood of God's servants had been avenged.
† This is the answer to the martyrs' appeal beneath the altar.
† The judgment wasn't presented as an unresolved event awaiting fulfillment thousands of years later.
† In the fulfilled perspective, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 marked the historical completion of the covenant judgment Jesus announced.
† The rejoicing in heaven wasn't about the destruction of the physical world. It was about the vindication of God's servants and the triumph of His righteous purposes.
† The persecuting covenant order had been removed, but Christ's kingdom remained.

Hebrews 12:22-24

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.
† The story that began with Abel's blood reaches its fulfillment in the blood of Jesus Christ.
† Abel's blood cried out for justice, but Christ's blood speaks of redemption, forgiveness, and the establishment of the New Covenant.

† The contrast is essential. The blood of the righteous exposed humanity's guilt, while the blood of Christ provided the means of reconciliation with God.
† The writer of Hebrews told his original audience that they had come to heavenly Jerusalem.
† This wasn't a promise that believers would someday enter a physical city descending onto a reconstructed earth.
† Through Christ, believers were already being brought into the heavenly reality of the New Covenant.
† The destruction of earthly Jerusalem didn't destroy God's kingdom. It confirmed the passing of the former covenant order while the heavenly Jerusalem remained.
† The final answer to the history of persecution isn't merely judgment against the wicked. It's the completed redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Historical References

† Flavius Josephus, writing in The Jewish War, Books 5-7, described the siege, famine, internal violence, destruction of Jerusalem, and burning of the temple in AD 70.
† Josephus recorded that Jerusalem's defenders were divided by violent internal factions, and that the city suffered devastating destruction during the Roman siege.
† His account provides historical evidence for the catastrophic judgment that came upon first-century Jerusalem, although Josephus didn't present the complete Christian theological interpretation of that event.
† Tacitus, in Histories 5.10-13, described the Roman campaign against Jerusalem, the city's defensive position, and the circumstances surrounding the siege.
† Tacitus provides an additional Roman historical witness to the first-century conflict that culminated in Jerusalem's destruction.

† Eusebius, in Ecclesiastical History 3.5-7, connected the destruction of Jerusalem with the judgment announced by Christ and reported the tradition that Christians had departed Jerusalem for Pella before the city's destruction.
† Eusebius wrote centuries after the events, so his account is a later Christian historical interpretation rather than an eyewitness record.
† Together, these historical writers establish the reality of Jerusalem's destruction and demonstrate that early Christian historians understood its significance in connection with Jesus' warnings.
† The historical destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 corresponds to the generation Jesus identified as responsible for the accumulated bloodguilt of the prophets and His messengers.

How It Applies To Us Today

† The blood of the prophets teaches us that God doesn't overlook injustice, even when judgment isn't immediate.
† Abel's murderer couldn't hide his guilt, Israel couldn't escape accountability for persecuting God's messengers, and Jerusalem couldn't avoid the judgment Jesus announced.
† But we must distinguish between the completed covenant judgment of AD 70 and the moral responsibility of believers living today.
† We're not waiting for another destruction of Jerusalem to complete Bible prophecy. The judgment Jesus announced against that generation has already taken place.
† We're living under the established New Covenant, with Jesus Christ reigning as King.
† The heavenly Jerusalem isn't a future political capital. It's the spiritual reality believers have entered through Christ (Hebrews 12:22-24).

† We must never repeat the error of those who honored God's messengers with their words while rejecting the truth those messengers proclaimed.
† Faithfulness to Christ requires humility, obedience, love, and a willingness to receive correction from Scripture.
† Persecution doesn't mean God has abandoned His people. The martyrs of Revelation were remembered, and their faithful testimony wasn't forgotten.
† We're not called to avenge ourselves or persecute those who disagree with us. We're called to follow Christ, love our enemies, and overcome evil with good (Romans 12:17-21).
† The destruction of Jerusalem also reminds us that no religious institution, building, or human tradition can replace faithfulness to Jesus Christ.
† God's kingdom isn't maintained by earthly temples, political power, or religious coercion.
† Through Christ, we've received access to the Father, and we've become members of God's household (Ephesians 2:18-22).
† The story of the blood of the prophets ultimately directs our attention to the blood of Jesus, which speaks a better word than Abel's blood.
† Abel's blood exposed guilt. Christ's blood established redemption.
† The persecuting Old Covenant system has passed away, but the kingdom of Jesus Christ remains forever.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why does the story begin with Abel?
A: Abel was the first recorded righteous person murdered in Scripture. Jesus specifically identified his blood as the beginning of the accumulated righteous bloodshed that would

be required of His generation (Genesis 4:8-

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