Based on Matthew 23:29–36 (ESV/NIV)

In Matthew 23:29–36, Jesus confronts the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites for honoring the prophets whom their ancestors had killed, while claiming they themselves would never have been guilty. Jesus reveals the truth: they are the spiritual descendants of those murderers.

> “Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,
> so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.”
> — Matthew 23:34-35 (ESV)

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1. The Blood of Abel: The First Righteous Martyr

Abel was the first man recorded in Scripture to be murdered unjustly, slain by his brother Cain out of jealousy (Genesis

4:1–16). Abel’s offering pleased God, but Cain’s did not, leading to hatred and murder.

> “By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.”
> — Hebrews 11:4 (NIV)

Abel’s blood “speaking” is understood as God’s ongoing testimony against violence and injustice (Genesis 4:10). The innocent blood of the righteous demands divine justice.

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2. Zechariah Son of Barachiah: The Priest Martyred in the Temple

The Zechariah mentioned here is identified as the son of Jehoiada the priest (2 Chronicles 24), not the prophet Zechariah who authored the book bearing that name.

Jehoiada was a faithful priest who helped restore worship in Judah. After his death, the people rebelled, returning to idol

worship. Zechariah courageously rebuked the people and the king for their disobedience:

> “Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, ‘This is what God says: Why do you disobey the Lord’s commands? You will not succeed. Because you have abandoned the Lord, He has abandoned you.’”
> — 2 Chronicles 24:20 (NIV)

For this, Zechariah was stoned to death in the temple courtyard (2 Chronicles 24:21). His death symbolizes the rejection and murder of God’s messengers, even within His own house.

---

3. The Ongoing Cry of the Righteous Blood

The shedding of innocent blood is not forgotten by God. The righteous blood of Abel, Zechariah, and countless others cries out for justice.

This is echoed in Revelation:

> “When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.
> They called out in a loud voice, ‘How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?’”
> — Revelation 6:9–10 (NIV)

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4. Historical and Present-Day Application

Throughout history, faithful believers have been persecuted and killed for their faith. The Holocaust saw millions of innocent Jews murdered because of their heritage. Christian martyrs throughout history—many at the hands of corrupt religious leaders—also bear witness to this ongoing reality.

Jesus’ warning applies to all who reject God’s truth and persecute His people: judgment will come.

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5. The Call to Repentance and Salvation

Anyone outside Christ is under the domain of darkness and subject to judgment (Colossians 1:13; John 3:18). Salvation through Jesus Christ cleanses from sin and breaks the power of death:

> “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”
> — 1 John 1:7 (NIV)

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6. God’s Final Judgment on Those Who Shed Innocent Blood

God’s righteous judgment on those who persecute His saints is certain:

> “The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they turned to blood.
> Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: ‘You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was, the Holy One, because you have judged these things.
> For they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and

> you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.’
> And I heard the altar respond: ‘Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and just are your judgments.’”
> — Revelation 16:4–7 (NIV)

May God bless you with repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Please share this message to warn others and encourage a heart that honors God’s justice and mercy.

If you want, I can help you format this into a Bible study or sermon outline. Would you like me to do that?

THE BLOOD OF ZACHARIAH SON OF BARACHIAH
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