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Assassination in Scripture

by David Sielaff, October 2024

Read the accompanying "[October 2024 Newsletter](#)"



A surprising number of assassinations are recorded and detailed in the Bible. Some assassinations were authorized by God against evil people. Other assassinations were done by evil people against even worse people. Others were done by evil people against good people. There were several assassination plots against Jesus, the Son of God, which were attempted and eventually succeeded, according to God's will. Other assassination attempts were made, and some accomplished against the apostles and members of the *ekklesia* and the Body of Christ.

On July 13, 2024, former President Donald Trump, and (as I write) a current presidential candidate survived an attempted assassination. The event has many "earmarks" (forgive the pun) of President Trump being saved by "an act of God." One can conclude this because of the near miss of a bullet that was aimed at his head. Instead, one of the bullets injured the upper portion of Trump's right ear. Behind President Trump one man was killed protectively covering his wife and daughter. Two other men were seriously wounded by other six bullets, presumably fired by the same shooter. A second attempt was thwarted on September 15, 2024.

There are also rumors of other assassination groups from foreign countries that might attempt other attacks against one or both of the two major candidates.

Several deadly intrigues and plots (also called "conspiracies") to kill people are mentioned in the Scriptures.¹ In this article I present details of attempted and successful assassinations in the past and for the future, as presented in the Bible.

Assassination attempts and successes are also motivated by religious reasons other than political reasons, although both blend together as the reason for the attempted assassination. The assassination of Jesus was led by the Jewish religious Sanhedrin and community of priests, Levites, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. A substantial number of them agreed to the crucifixion of Jesus. More on this later.

What Does the Term "Assassination" Mean?

"[Assassination](#)" in the *Miriam Webster Dictionary*, original 1828 edition is defined as "**ASSASSI-**

¹ Some are described in my November 2016 article "[Conspiracy in Scripture](#)."

NA'TION, noun. The act of killing or murdering, by surprise or secret assault; murder by violence.” It is a subset of the broader term of “murder.” The verb “[Assassinate](#)” is defined:

“ASSAS'SINATE, verb transitive:

1. To kill or attempt to kill, by surprise or secret assault; to murder by sudden violence.

...

2. To way lay; to take by treachery.”

The one who commits an assassination is an “[assassin](#)” defined as:

“One who kills or attempts to kill, by surprise or secret assault. The circumstance of surprise or secrecy seems essential to the signification of this word; though it is sometimes used to denote one who takes any advantage, in killing or attempting to murder; as by attacking one when unarmed.”

Black’s Law Dictionary, 2nd edition, 1910, defines “[assassination](#)” similarly, but with added elements:

“Murder committed [1] for hire, [2] without provocation or cause of resentment given to the murderer by the person upon whom the crime is committed ... A murder [3] committed treacherously, or [4] by stealth or surprise, or by lying in wait.”

The word “assassin” is derived from the name of a fanatical Muslim sect arising during the early Crusader period **“in Persia, Syria, and Turkey and eventually spread to the rest of the Middle East, taking down political and financial rivals alike before their organization fell in the mid-1200s.”** See “[Hashshashin: The Assassins of Persia](#).”²

A precursor of the Assassins were two Jewish groups: the *Zealots* and the *Sicarii*. They used murder as a tactic of *terror*. The apostle Simon was called a Zealot in Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote about the Zealots and *Sicarii* in his histories:³

“Zealots, a sect of Jews which originated with Judas the Gaulonite Acts 5:37 They refused to pay tribute to the Romans, on the ground that this was a violation of the principle that God was the only king of Israel. They rebelled against the Romans, but were soon scattered, and became a lawless band of mere brigands. They were afterwards called Sicarii, from their use of the *sica*, i.e., the Roman dagger.

• “[Zealots](#)” in Easton’s Bible Dictionary

Assassination in the Old Testament

Was Cain’s Murder of Abel an Assassination?

It may be that Cain’s anger toward YHWH fell upon his brother Abel, who he murdered at the altar of sacrifice (where YHWH placed Cain’s redemption if he would repent — which he did not do). Did Cain murder Abel to somehow hurt YHWH? What was he thinking?

Note what Jesus said to the people of Jerusalem; directly challenging the Scribes and Pharisees:

“Serpents! Progeny of vipers! How may you be fleeing from the judging of Gehenna? Therefore, lo! I am dispatching to you prophets and wise men and scribes. Of them, some you

² The Assassins were often paid to commit murders. They were feared throughout the Middle East for the terror and threat they put in the hearts of political and religious leaders, of Islam and Christianity. The “Assassins” cult ended when a Mongol army captured their headquarter, a castle in Iran in 1256 AD.

³ Josephus writes about the Sicarii (who today would be called “assassins”). Josephus refers to them in *Antiquities of the Jews* 20:186, 204–210, and *Wars of the Jews* 2:254, 425; 4:400, 516; 7:253–254, 262–263, 275, 297, 311, 410–415, 437 and 444. He refers to Zealots in *Wars* 2:651; chapter 4 (many times); 5:3, 7, 101, 250, 358, 528, 6:92, 148, and 7:268.

WILL BE KILLING AND CRUCIFYING, and of them, some you **will be scourging in your synagogues and persecuting from city to city**, so that on you should be coming **ALL the just blood shed on the earth, from THE BLOOD OF JUST ABEL** until the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom YOU murder **BETWEEN THE TEMPLE AND THE ALTAR**.

Verily, I am saying to you: All these things will be arriving on this generation. Jerusalem! Jerusalem! **who are killing the prophets and pelting with stones those who have been dispatched to her! ...**"

• *Matthew 23:33–37 Concordant Literal Version*⁴

What did Jesus mean when He used the phrase **"between the Temple and the altar"**? Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices to the entrance of Eden. This would have been the same symbolic location relative to the presence of God in both Eden and the Tabernacle-Temple representation. In front of the entrance (or gate) God placed two **"cherubim and the flame of the revolving sword to guard the way to the tree of life"** (Genesis 3:24 CLV). In the Temple two pillars represented that precise location east of the entrance to God's presence in both the Garden of Eden and the Tabernacle-Temple design.

After Cain murdered Abel, many more evils were committed by Adam and Eve's descendants before the flood, with all kinds of violence, murder, and assassinations that are not recorded in detail in the Bible. However, we have hints as to the killings in pagan myths and legends about the human "heroes" inspired and advised by pagan "gods." Like Cain's murder of Abel, these included plots, murders by stealth, ambush, and mass murder:

"As for the distinguished [Hebrew, *nephilim*], they were on earth in those days and also afterward, when the sons of the elohim were coming to the daughters of the human, and they bore them offspring. They were the masterful [mighty] ones, who were from the eon, mortals of renown [i.e., of legend]. Yahweh saw that the evil of humanity was multiplying on earth, and EVERY FORM of the devisings of its heart was surely EVIL ALL THE DAY."

• *Genesis 6:4–5 CLV*

Abel's animal sacrifice was accepted by YHWH, Cain's sacrifice of grain was not accepted, even though he put much thought and labor to produce it (Genesis 4:1–5). YHWH asked Cain three questions:

"Then Yahweh said to Cain:

- [1] **WHY is your anger hot? And**
- [2] **WHY is your face fallen? If you had done what is well,**
- [3] **WOULD you not lift up your face?**

But since you have not done well, AT THE PORTAL THERE IS A SIN OFFERING, a recliner; And for you is restoration in his sacrifice; You are ruling over him."

• *Genesis 4:6–7 CLV*

YHWH provided a sacrificial animal that was reclining by the "portal" or the gate. See Dr. Martin's article **"The Temple Symbolism in Genesis."**

Jesus understood Cain's murder of Abel was an assassination for religious reasons directed to hurt God, their Creator. Imagine the horror of Adam and Eve when they learned about Cain's murder of his brother.

Other Assassination Plots in the Old Testament

After Moses and later Joshua died, repeated cycles of [1] obedience, [2] disobedience, [3] God's judgments (usually oppression by foreign peoples), [4] Israel's repentance, and [5] YHWH's deliverance was repeated many times.

The second cycle of God's rescue came through the acts of a man named Ehud. He was considered to be a "Savior" (translated "deliverer" in the King James Version), and a "Judge" as the text calls such

⁴ Jesus said, **"WOE to you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES!"** six times in Matthew 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, and 29.

people. When the people of Israel disobeyed and worshipped other gods, YHWH punished them by making them serve other nations (Judges 2:13–15). The people would repent, and YHWH would raise up “judges” to save them from the hand of their robbers (Judges 2:16).

- When the people of Israel did evil in YHWH’s sight, He punished Israel with Eglon the king of Moab to oppress the people of Israel. Eglon sought help from neighboring kings:

“EGLON gathered the sons of Ammon and Amalek to join him; then he went and smote Israel. They took over the city of palm trees, and the sons of Israel served Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years.”

• *Judges 3:13–14 CLV*

God raised up a “judge,” a hero to rescue His people.

But when the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh, then Yahweh RAISED UP A SAVIOR FOR THEM: EHUD son of Gera, a Benjamite man, hampered in his right hand. By means of him the sons of Israel sent a tributary present to Eglon king of Moab. Ehud had made for himself a sword; it had two edges, its length being a short cubit. And he had girded it underneath his coats on his right thigh.”

• *Judges 3:15–16 CLV*

Eglon was greatly obese. Ehud asks to speak with Eglon privately and alone. Ehud hid a short **“two-edged sword”** under his clothes, tied to the inside of his right thigh. Guards seeing his damaged right hand thought Ehud posed no threat to Eglon to hold a weapon with his right hand. They left the room.

Read the rest of the story in Judges 3:17–30. Ehud had a handicap with his right hand. He could not fight normally with a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left hand. So, he devised a way to use his handicap to get close to his enemy.

Getting close, Ehud assassinated Eglon by stabbing deep into his belly. The Moabite king died silently. Eglon’s wound was not discovered until after Ehud calmly left the royal residence. Eglon’s servants went in and found his dead body. Ehud left and went to a nearby ridge where armed Israelites were waiting to attack. When Eglon’s body was discovered, disorder gave the Israelites an opportunity to attack, winning a great victory. Israel lived in peace for 80 years.

Assassinations During King David’s Reign

- King Saul learned that the prophet Samuel anointed David to be King of all Israel (1 Samuel 16:1–13). Saul tries to assassinate David (1 Samuel 18:10–17). David’s wife Michal and Saul’s son Jonathan both help David escape death from King Saul (1 Samuel 19:1–17).
- Ishbosheth is the last son of King Saul and heir to Saul’s throne. Ishbosheth goes to war with David. Abner is Ishbosheth’s general. Abner turns his allegiance from Ishbosheth to David. **Joab, David’s general, assassinates Abner** (2 Samuel chapter 3).
- Ishbosheth is assassinated by two of his officers. They bring Ishbosheth’s head to David seeking a reward. David kills both of them for betraying their master (2 Samuel chapter 4).
- David has Uriah the Hittite killed, essentially assassinating him for personal reasons (2 Samuel 11:1–12:23). This was a murder of passion.
- David’s son Absalom arranges the assassination of his half-brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13:28–29) to avenge the rape of Absalom’s sister Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1–35). But ... Amnon was David’s eldest son and a likely heir to be David’s successor as King of Israel. Absalom’s assassination of Amnon removed an obstacle to Absalom to become King after David.
- Forgiven, Absalom plots against David, causes him to leave Jerusalem. Absalom seizes the throne, and wars against David (2 Samuel 14:1–19:17). Absalom is defeated and killed.

- As King David nears death, Solomon's elder brother Adonijah is supported by Joab (David's former general), and members of David's royal court. Adonijah proclaims himself to be king.

Assassinations After King David

- **"Solomon sought to put Jeroboam to death"** (1 Kings 11:40), to ASSASSINATE him. Jeroboam fled to Shishak king of Egypt, staying with him until Solomon's death. Jeroboam was prophesied to rule 10 tribes of Israel.
- Jezebel (wife of King Ahab of Israel) assassinates God's prophets and swore to kill Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 19:1–18).
- Jehu assassinates King Ahaziah, King of Israel (Ahab's heir). Then he continues murdering:
 - Jehu killed Ahaziah, King of Judah.
 - Jehu saw to it that Jezebel was killed. She was Ahab's Queen. Her death fulfilled YHWH's prophecy (2 Kings 9:7) that she would die for killing God's prophets and servants (1 Kings 18:4; 19:10).
 - Jehu killed 70 of Ahab's sons by various wives and concubines.
 - Jehu killed all of Ahaziah's sons.
 - Jehu went to the city of Jezreel in Samaria and killed all the administrators and supporters of Ahab's kingdom.
 - Jehu ordered all the priests of Baal to be killed. (They would have been political opponents.) God's orders coincided with Jehu's political advantage (2 Kings 10:1–17).

Jehu was a very busy man. Within days he destroyed the dynasties of Israel and Judah. According to the Scriptures, Jehu did not desire or attempt to unify the 12 tribes of Israel.

- Queen Athaliah of Judah is assassinated. She ruled six years. Athaliah was the daughter of King Ahab and Jezebel of the northern Kingdom of Israel. Athaliah married Jehoram, King of Judah (2 Kings 8:18). She was as evil as her mother Jezebel. When Jehoram and his son Ahaziah were assassinated by Jehu, Athaliah sought to rule Judah as queen. She thought she killed all of King David's heirs not killed by Jehu. Athaliah promoted pagan gods and worship, supported by like-minded administrators, rogue military leaders and even Levitical priests.

On the death of her husband and of her son Ahaziah, Queen Athaliah made herself ruler of the Kingdom of Judah. **"As for Ahaziah's mother Athaliah, when she saw that her son was dead, she set out and DESTROYED [murdered] ALL THE ROYAL SEED"** (2 Kings 11:1). She slew all but one: Joash, who was hidden away. He was anointed as king at age seven. A plot was designed to remove Athaliah and place Joash on the throne. Read the full story: "[Israel and Judah: 29. Athaliah and Joash of Judah.](#)"

- The prophet Jeremiah was threatened with ASSASSINATION by the people of Anathoth, where Jeremiah grew up. God told him Babylon would conquer Judah; the people should not resist. They threatened Jeremiah: if he continued to **"PROPHECY in the name of Yahweh,"** they would kill him (Jeremiah 11:21–23). YHWH told Jeremiah the people of Anathoth would die, not Jeremiah. God then tells how His words will be fulfilled (Jeremiah 18:21–23).
- Gedaliah, Governor of Judah, is ASSASSINATED. After the destruction of Jerusalem and Temple by the Babylonian army (2 Kings 25:22 and Jeremiah 40:5, 52:16). Gedaliah was to govern **"the men and women and little ones of the poor in the land who were not deported to Babylon"** (Jeremiah 40:7).

“Yet Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him rose and smote Gedaliah son of Ahikam son of Shaphan with a sword and put him to death whom the king of Babylon had given supervision in the land. Then Ishmael smote all the Jews who were with him, with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.”

• *Jeremiah 41:2–3 CLV*

Assassination in the New Testament

Assassination Plot Against John the Baptist

John the Baptist was assassinated. John offended Herod the tetrarch, ruler of one of four divisions of Herod the Great’s kingdom. John was imprisoned for criticizing Herod’s marriage to his brother’s wife. Herod’s new wife and daughter conspired to have John the Baptist killed. Their plot worked and John was beheaded.

Assassination Plots and Attempts to Kill Jesus

- About 1½ years after Jesus was born on September 11, 3 BC, King Herod tried to ASSASSINATE his future rival, the future King of Israel. He ordered the murder of all children under two years old in and around the town of Bethlehem. Read Matthew 2:1–23 in any translation.

The complete background to the story of this assassination attempt is in Dr. Ernest Martin’s book, [*The Star That Astonished the World*](#), free online (in print and audio for your smart phone or computer, and for purchase).

- After Jesus was tempted by Satan, and after He began His ministry, Jesus was chosen to read the Scripture at the synagogue in the town where He grew up. The people became so enraged at Him that they suddenly desired to KILL Jesus for blasphemy:

“He came to Nazareth, where He was reared, and, according to His custom on the day of the sabbaths, He entered into the synagogue and rose to read. And handed to Him was a scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and, opening the scroll, He found the place where it was written [He read Isaiah 61:1–3],

‘The spirit of the Lord IS ON ME, On account of which HE ANOINTS ME

- [1] to bring the evangel [Gospel] to the poor. He has commissioned Me
- [2] to heal the crushed heart,
- [3] To herald to captives a pardon, And
- [4] to the blind the receiving of sight;
- [5] To dispatch the oppressed with a pardon,
- [6] To herald an acceptable year of the Lord.’

And furling the scroll, giving it back to the deputy, He is seated. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were looking intently at Him. Now He begins to be saying to them that “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears.”

And all testified of Him and marveled at the gracious words which are issuing out of His mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ...

... Now He said, ‘Verily, I am saying to you that no one who is a prophet is acceptable in his own country ...’

And **FILLED WITH FURY** are all who are in the synagogue, AT HEARING THESE THINGS, and rising, they cast Him outside of the city. And they led Him to the brow of the mountain on which their city had been built, **so as TO PUSH HIM OVER THE PRECIPICE**. Yet He, passing

through their midst, went [unharméd].

• *Luke 4:16–22, 24, 28–30 CLV*

- Jews seek to Assassinate Jesus, after He healed a crippled man on a Sabbath day. He did this outside of the Temple at the sheep market:

“And therefore the Jews PERSECUTED JESUS AND SOUGHT TO KILL HIM, for He did these things on a sabbath. Yet Jesus answers them, ‘My Father is working hitherto, and I am working.’

Therefore, then, THE JEWS SOUGHT THE MORE TO KILL HIM, for He not only annulled the sabbath, but said His own Father also is God, making Himself equal to God.”

• *John 5:16–18 CLV*

“And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee [in the north], for He would not walk in Judea, for THE JEWS SOUGHT HIM TO KILL HIM.”

• *John 7:1 CLV*

Later, during the autumn Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus went to Jerusalem and taught in the Temple:

“The Jews, then, sought Him in the festival and said, ‘Where is he?’ And there was much murmuring concerning Him among the throngs. These, indeed, said that ‘He is good,’ yet others said, ‘No. But he is deceiving the throng.’

Howbeit no one spoke with boldness concerning Him [why?] because of fear of the Jews. Now at length, midway of the festival, Jesus went up into the sanctuary and taught. The Jews, then, marveled, saying, ‘How is this one acquainted with letters, not having learned?’”

• *John 7:11–15 CLV*

“And, proceeding thence, He came into their synagogue. And lo! a man having a withered hand. And they inquire of Him, saying, ‘Is it allowed on the sabbaths to cure?’ that they should be accusing Him. Now He said to them,

‘What man of you will there be, who will have one sheep, and if ever this should be falling into a pit on the sabbaths, will not take hold of it and raise it? Of how much more consequence, then, is a man than a sheep! So that it is allowed to be doing ideally on the sabbaths.’

Then He is saying to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretches it out and it was restored, sound as the other.

Now, coming out, the Pharisees held a consultation against Him, SO THAT THEY SHOULD BE DESTROYING HIM. Now Jesus, knowing it, retires thence. And many follow Him, and He cures them all.”

• *Matthew 12:9–15 CLV*

- Still later ...

“And at His coming out thence, the scribes and the Pharisees begin to hem Him in dreadfully and to be [1] quizzing Him concerning more things, [2] ambushing Him, [3] seeking to pounce upon something out of His mouth, [why?] that they shall be accusing Him. At which, a throng of ten thousand being assembled so as to be trampling one another, He begins to be saying to His disciples first, ‘Take heed to yourselves of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.’”

• *Luke 11:53–12:1 CLV*

- Yet another attempt to stone Jesus

“‘I and the Father, We are one.’ Again, then, THE JEWS BEAR STONES [why?] that they should be stoning Him.”

Jesus answered them, ‘Many ideal acts I show you from My Father. Because of what act of them are you stoning Me?’

The Jews answered Him, ‘For an ideal act we are not stoning you, but for blasphemy, and that you, being a man, are making yourself God.’”

• *John 10:30–33 CLV*

“From that day, then, THEY CONSULT THAT THEY SHOULD KILL HIM. Jesus, then, no longer walked with boldness among the Jews, but came away thence into the country near the wilderness, into a city termed Ephraim, and there He remains with His disciples.

Now near was the Passover of the Jews, and many went up into Jerusalem out of the country, before the Passover, that they should be purifying themselves. They [the people], then, sought Jesus, and said, standing with one another in the sanctuary, ‘What do you suppose? That He may under no circumstances come to the festival?’

Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given directions that if anyone should know where He is, he should be divulging it, so that they should be arresting Him.”

• *John 11:53–57 CLV*

- At Pentecost, the apostle Peter spoke to the people of Jerusalem that they participated in the assassination of Jesus:

“Men! Israelites! Hear these words: Jesus, the Nazarene, a Man demonstrated to be from God for you by powerful deeds and miracles and signs, which God does through Him in the midst of you, according as you yourselves are aware — This One, given up in the specific counsel and foreknowledge of God,

YOU, gibbeting [hanging] by the hand of the lawless, ASSASSINATE, Whom God raises, loosening the pangs of death, forasmuch as it was not possible for Him to be held by it [death].”

• *Acts 2:22–24 CLV*

Assassination Plot Against Lazarus

Lazarus was a good friend of Jesus. Lazarus was raised from the dead by Jesus after being dead for three days:

“The vast throng, then, of the Jews, knew that He [Jesus] is there. And they came, not because of Jesus only, but that they might become acquainted with Lazarus also, whom Jesus rouses from among the dead.

Yet the chief priests also plan that THEY SHOULD BE KILLING LAZARUS also, [Why?] for many of the Jews went because of him [Lazarus], and believed in Jesus.”

• *John 12:9–11, 17 CLV*

It is amazing that the chief priests desired the death of the person Jesus brought back from the dead. Nothing more is written about Lazarus in Scripture after John 12:17.

Jewish Leaders Plot to Assassinate the Apostles

After the resurrection of Jesus and after Pentecost, the apostles returned to the Temple, teaching powerful messages at Solomon’s Porch (or Portico), a covered colonnade area at the eastern portion of the Temple enclosure (Acts 5:12). They were also given power to perform signs, wonders, and healings of the sick. The apostles gathered crowds. Many Jews became believers, the Jewish leaders needed to act.

- Jewish leaders desired to assassinate the Apostles, and the *Ecclesia* in Acts chapter 5. Peter speaks to the leader:

“This Inaugurator [originator] and Savior [referring to Jesus], God exalts to His right hand, to give repentance to Israel and the pardon of sins. We are witnesses to these declarations, as well as the holy spirit which God gives to those yielding to Him.’

Now those who hear were harrowed, and they intended to ASSASSINATE THEM [the apostles].

Yet, rising, a certain Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, honored by the entire people, orders them to put the men outside a bit. Besides he said to them,

‘Men! Israelites! Take heed to yourselves, as to these men, what you are about to be committing. For before these days rose Theudas, saying that he is somebody himself, to whom men numbering about four hundred inclined, WHO WAS ASSASSINATED, and all, whoever were persuaded by him, were disbanded, and came to nothing.’”

• Acts 5:31–36 CLV

Peter’s testimony about Gentiles, years after the resurrection of Jesus:

“Of the word He dispatches to the sons of Israel, bringing the evangel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you are aware, the declaration coming to be down the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John heralds: Jesus from Nazareth, as God anoints Him with holy spirit and power, Who passed through as a benefactor and healer of all those who are tyrannized over by the Adversary, for God was with Him.

And we are witnesses of all that He does, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; WHOM THEY [the Jews] ASSASSINATE also, hanging Him on a pole [Greek, *xulou*, “tree”].

This One God rouses the third day, and gives Him to become disclosed, not to the entire people [of the Jews], but to witnesses who have been selected before by God, to us who ate and drank together with Him after His rising from among the dead.”

• Acts 10:36–41 CLV

- Paul admits his role in the murder of the deacon Stephen (in Acts 6:9 and following):

“Yet SAUL WAS ENDORSING [admitting] HIS ASSASSINATION. Now in that day there came to be a great persecution of the ecclesia which is in Jerusalem, and they were all dispersed among the districts of Judea and Samaria, save the apostles.

• Acts 8:1 CLV

- Luke tells of the assassination of the apostle James by King Herod Agrippa I:

“Now at that season Herod the king put forth his hands to illtreat some from the ecclesia. Now HE ASSASSINATED JAMES, the brother of John, with the sword. Now perceiving that it is pleasing to the Jews, he proceeded to apprehend Peter also (now they were the days of unleavened bread), whom, arresting also, he placed in jail, giving him over to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to lead him up to the people.”

Acts 12:1–4 CLV

It is reasonable to believe that Herod Agrippa I also intended to kill Peter.

Assassination Plots Against The Apostle Paul

Before the death of James, Saul was converted on his way to Damascus. His name was changed to Paul. He went to Arabia for almost 3 years (Galatians 1:17–18; 2 Corinthians 11:31–32). Then Paul returned to Damascus and his success converting Jews and Gentiles became known. The Jewish leaders conspired to kill him. Paul was aided and protected by believers who helped him escape from Damascus.

“... Now he came to be with the disciples in Damascus some days. And immediately, in the synagogues [plural], he heralded Jesus, that He is the Son of God. Now amazed are all who are hearing, and they said,

‘Is not this the one who, in Jerusalem, ravages those who are invoking this Name?
And for this had he come here, that he may be leading them bound to the chief priests.’

Yet Saul was the more invigorated, and threw the Jews dwelling in Damascus into confusion, deducing that this One is the Christ. Now as a considerable number of days were fulfilled, THE JEWS [in Damascus] CONSULT TO ASSASSINATE HIM [Paul]. Yet known to Saul is their plot. Now they scrutinized the gates also, both by day and by night, so that THEY MAY BE

ASSASSINATING HIM. Yet the disciples, getting him at night, let him down through the wall, lowering him in a hamper.”

• **Acts 9:19–25 CLV**

Paul went to Arabia (Galatians 1:17–18) for about 3 years, back to Damascus, and finally to Jerusalem to stay for 15 days (Galatians 1:18-20).

“Now, on coming along to Jerusalem, he [Paul] TRIED to join the disciples; and all feared him, not believing that he is a disciple. Yet Barnabas, getting hold of him, led him to the apostles and relates to them how he became acquainted with the Lord on the road, and that He speaks to him, and how, in Damascus, he speaks boldly in the name of Jesus.

And he was with them, going in and out, in Jerusalem. Speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, he both spoke and discussed with the Hellenists. Yet THEY took in hand TO ASSASSINATE HIM.

Now realizing this, the brethren led him down into Caesarea, and they send him away to Tarsus.”

• **Acts 9:26–30 CLV**

- His missionary journeys established Paul’s reputation as a true Christian. When Paul returned to Jerusalem in 56 AD, enemies of Christians swore an oath to murder Paul.

Paul went to the Temple and gave his testimony as a believer to the crowd. A disturbance occurred near the Temple, but Paul was rescued from a mob by a Roman officer and his troops, likely assigned to keep the peace outside of the Temple enclosure. Paul identified himself as a Roman citizen, which the Roman officer acknowledged because Paul spoke to him in educated Greek dialect:

“Besides, being about to be led into the citadel, Paul is saying to the captain, ‘Is it allowed me to say anything to you?’

Yet he averred, ‘Greek you know, consequently you are not the Egyptian who, before these days, raises an insurrection and leads out into the wilderness THE FOUR THOUSAND MEN OF THE ASSASSINS [Greek sicarrion].’

Yet Paul said, ‘I, indeed, am a Jewish man, a Tarsian [from the city of Tarsus] of Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. Now I beseech you, permit me to speak to the people.’”

• **Acts 21:37–39 CLV**

The Roman officer allowed Paul to speak to the people from a safe position above the courtyard north of the Temple (near the southern entrance to Fort Antonia).

“And I said, ‘Lord, they are versed in the fact that

[1] **I was jailing and lashing those at the synagogues who are believing on You. And when the blood of Stephen, Your witness, was shed,**

[2] **I myself also was standing by, endorsing it, as well as guarding the garments of those WHO ARE ASSASSINATING HIM [Stephen].”**

• **Acts 22:19–20 CLV**

Paul defended himself to the people while Roman soldiers protected him. Nevertheless, the Roman officer was concerned for Paul’s safety if he released him. He decided to escort Paul to Caesarea for trial with a substantial force of soldiers (infantry, cavalry, and slingers). He also wrote a letter to explain the extraordinary measures to protect one Jewish-Roman citizen with so many troops. Again, a plan was made to ambush and assassinate Paul.

“Now, day coming on, MAKING A CONSPIRACY, the Jews anathematize [curse] themselves, saying that they would neither eat nor drink TILL THEY SHOULD KILL PAUL. Now there were

more than forty who make this cabal, who, coming to the chief priests and the elders, say,

‘With an anathema we anathematize ourselves to taste nothing TILL WE SHOULD KILL PAUL.

Now then, you inform the captain together with the Sanhedrin, so that he may be leading him down to you, as being about to investigate more exactly that which concerns him; YET WE, before he draws near, ARE READY TO ASSASSINATE HIM.’

Now the son of Paul's sister, hearing of the ambush, coming along and entering into the citadel, reports it to Paul.”

• **Acts 23:12–16 CLV**

Paul’s nephew told Paul what he overheard the Jews plotting. Paul had his nephew speak to the Roman officer of the guard at Fort Antonia. The Roman officer took the information seriously.

“You, then, should not be persuaded by them, for there are ambushing for him more than forty of their men, who anathematize themselves neither to eat nor drink TILL THEY MAY BE ASSASSINATING HIM. And now they are ready, anticipating the promise from you.”

• **Acts 23:21 CLV**

The Roman officer writes a letter to his superior Felix, the governor of Judea explaining his plans: [1] to protect the prisoner and [2] bring him to Caesarea with a strong force of soldiers comprised of infantry, cavalry, and slingers (missile troops). [3] This is done so the prisoner can have a trial and not be killed.

“He writes a letter having this model:

‘Claudius Lysias, to the most mighty governor Felix. Rejoice!

This man, being apprehended by the Jews, and being about to be assassinated by them, standing by with the troop, I extricate, learning that he is a Roman [citizen].

Besides, intending to get to know the charge because of which they indicted him, I led him down into their Sanhedrin. Him I found being indicted concerning questions of their law, yet having nothing deserving death or bonds in the indictment.

Now at its being divulged to me that there will be a plot against the man, forthwith I send him to you, charging the accusers also to speak against him before you. Farewell.’”

• **Acts 23:25–30 CLV**

Less than 12 days later Paul has a trial before Felix. Ananias the High Priest was present to speak against Paul, with Jewish elders, and a famous orator (read Acts chapter 24). Paul spoke in his own defense. Paul was kept under light confinement in Caesarea.

After two years, a new Roman Governor was appointed for Judea. His name was Festus and after arriving at Caesarea, he traveled to Jerusalem. The Jewish religious leaders immediately approached Festus about Paul’s legal case:

“Now, two years being fulfilled, Felix got a successor, Porcius Festus. Besides, wanting to curry favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul bound.

Festus, then, stepping into the prefecture, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. Besides, the chief priests and the foremost of the Jews inform him against Paul, and they entreated him, requesting a favor against him, so that he should send after him to bring him into Jerusalem, making AN AMBUSH TO ASSASSINATE HIM by the way.”

• **Acts 25:1–3 CLV**

After the first trial in Caesarea, Paul was in prison there for two years. At this later trial, Paul made a request to appeal to the Emperor which was his right as a Roman citizen. His appeal was granted, and Paul made his way to Rome. That portion of Paul’s story is told in Acts chapters 25–28.

Assassinations in the Future?

The two witnesses will be assassinated by the antichrist. The words of the text seem to indicate that the world will be able to watch these events as they occur. That could not have been possible until about 70 years ago. Now it is common for the entire world to view events in Jerusalem, probably at or near to the future site of the Temple. The Apostle John saw and heard in the vision he was given:

“And I will be endowing My two witnesses and they will be prophesying a thousand two hundred sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

These are the two olive trees,⁵ and the two lampstands⁶ which stand before the Lord of the earth. And if anyone is wanting to injure them, fire is issuing out of their mouth [from the mouths of the witnesses] and is devouring their enemies. And if anyone should be wanting to injure them, thus must he be killed.

These have authority to lock heaven, that there may be no shower of rain for the days of their prophecy. And they have authority over the waters to be turning them into blood, and to smite the land with every calamity, as often as they will.

And whenever they should be finishing their testimony, THE WILD BEAST which is ascending out of the submerged chaos

[1] will be doing battle with them and

[2] will be conquering them and

[3] killing them.

And their corpses will be at the square of the great city which, spiritually, is being called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord, also, was crucified. And those out of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations are observing their corpses three days and a half, and they are not letting their corpses be placed into a tomb.

And those dwelling on the earth are rejoicing over them and are making merry, and will be sending approach presents to one another, seeing that these two prophets torment those dwelling on the earth.

And after the three days and a half the spirit of life out of God ENTERED INTO THEM, and they stand on their feet. And great fear falls on those beholding them. And they hear a loud voice out of heaven saying to them, ‘Ascend here!’ And they ascended into heaven in a cloud, and their enemies behold them.”

• Revelation 11:3–12 CLV

Also, there appears to be an assassination resulting in the death of the “wild beast”

“And I perceived one of its heads AS IF it had been slain to death, and its death blow WAS CURED, and the whole earth marvels after THE WILD BEAST.”

• Revelation 13:3 CLV

Later in Revelation chapter 13 there might be an assassination and a false “resurrection” to mimic Christ.

“And it is exercising all the authority of the first wild beast in its sight, and making the earth and those dwelling in it to be worshiping the first wild beast, WHOSE DEATH BLOW WAS CURED.” ...

And it is deceiving those dwelling on the earth because of the signs which were given it to do in the sight of the wild beast, saying to those dwelling on the earth to make an image to the wild beast which has the blow of the sword and lives.

• Revelation 13:12, 14 CLV

⁵ For olive trees in a prophetic setting, see Psalm 52:8; Jeremiah 11:16; Zechariah 4:2–3, 11–14; and Romans 11–17.

⁶ For the two lampstands (candlesticks in the KJV), see Revelation 1:20; Mathew 5:14–16; Luke 1:33.

Throughout history assassination has been and still is a tool used by the most evil people in any society. May Christ come quickly so that such evils will cease.

Was Christ's Death an Assassination?

From a human perspective, yes, Christ's seizure in the Garden of Gethsemane, His trial, His beatings and scourging, and His execution, all were a conspiracy and an ASSASSINATION involving Judas, the Jewish religious and civil leaders, the Jewish people, and even the Roman governor Pontius Pilate who, in spite of his wife's dream and warning, Pilate agreed to allow Jesus to be crucified and murdered, although He was totally innocent of any crime.

Peter was correct at Pentecost, when he spoke to the crowd that gathered because of the noise of the arrival of God's Holy Spirit into the soul of those in the upper room on that day. He held them accountable for the innocent being killed:

“Men! Israelites! Hear these words: Jesus, the Nazarene, a Man demonstrated to be from God FOR YOU by powerful deeds and miracles and signs, which God does through Him [Jesus] in the midst of YOU, according as YOU yourselves are aware —

This One, given up in the specific counsel and foreknowledge of God, YOU, gibbeting by the hand of the lawless, [YOU] ASSASSINATE [Jesus], Whom God raises, loosing the pangs of death, forasmuch as it was not possible for Him to be held by it.”

• *Acts 2:22–24 CLV*

However, from God's perspective, Jesus gave Himself up as a voluntary sacrifice, the true Lamb of God, symbolized by the physical lamb killed at Passover. He truly was the Lamb of God for the people Israel, as John the Baptist said when Jesus approached to be baptized:

“On the morrow he [“the next day” John the Baptist ...] is observing Jesus coming toward him, and [John] is saying, ‘Lo! THE LAMB OF GOD Which is taking away the sin of the world!’”

• *John 1:29 CLV*

The apostle Paul reinforced John's statement: **“For our Passover also, Christ, WAS SACRIFICED for our sakes.”** (1 Corinthians 5:7 CLV). And ... He gave Himself as that sacrifice.

While it is true that human beings assassinated Jesus, in reality He was a voluntary sacrifice arranged by God the Father and His only begotten Son. God our Father sacrificed His Son, and Jesus agreed to be sacrificed. Consider these verses Christ spoke to his apostles and disciples:

“... even as the Son of Mankind came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give His soul a ransom for many.”

• *Matthew 20:28 CLV*

The Gospel of John is, in my opinion, a “Mystery” Gospel. It certainly was composed and completed long after the revelation of the Mystery was given to the apostle Paul and others. Paul was rejected for a period of time because of the Mystery, and so too the apostle John was rejected.

“For thus God loves the world, so that HE GIVES His only-begotten Son, that everyone who is believing in Him should not be perishing, but may be having life eonian. For God does not dispatch His Son into the world that He should be judging the world, but that the world may be saved THROUGH Him.”

• *John 3:16–17 CLV*

“... according as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father. And MY SOUL am I laying down [why?] for the sake of the sheep. ... Therefore the Father is loving Me, seeing that I am laying down My soul that I may be getting it again.

No one is taking it away from Me, BUT

- I AM laying it down of MYSELF.
- I have the right to lay it down, and
- I have the right TO GET IT AGAIN.

This precept I got from My Father."

• *John 10:15, 17–18 CLV*

The apostle Paul agreed that Christ's actions were voluntary:

"Become, then, imitators of God, as beloved children, and be walking in love, according as Christ also loves you, and GIVES HIMSELF UP for us, AN APPROACH PRESENT and A SACRIFICE TO GOD, for a fragrant odor."

• *Ephesians 5:1–2 CLV*

"For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is GIVING HIMSELF a correspondent Ransom for all (the testimony in its own eras),"

• *1 Timothy 2:5–6 CLV*

Peter and John write similar sentiments after Paul has died.

"... seeing that Christ also, FOR OUR SAKES, once died concerning sins, THE JUST FOR THE SAKE OF THE UNJUST, [why?] that He may be leading us to God; being put to death, indeed, in flesh, yet vivified in spirit ..."

• *1 Peter 3:18 CLV*

"And He is the propitiatory shelter concerned with our sins, yet not concerned with ours only, but concerned with the whole world also."

• *1 John 2:2 CLV*

Christ's Sacrifice: Two Books to Help You Understand What Took Place

Two important books by Dr. Ernest Martin focus on Christ's sacrifice. The physical events, background, details, and history of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection are presented in [*The Secrets of Golgotha*](#). You will learn more about the crucifixion than you ever thought was in the Bible.

The full significance of Christ's voluntary sacrifice is analyzed in Dr. Martin's book [*The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*](#). It will instruct you about God's plan of salvation (and our glorious part in that plan) — developed, prepared, fulfilled, and the results being implemented for humanity by God our Father and our Lord Christ Jesus. All of Scripture is a story arc that leads to the revelations told in the mystery epistles of the apostle Paul, explained for all in *Essentials*.

The Mystery epistles clarify why God initiated His creation, how Christ fulfilled God's plan, and what our destiny will be when that plan comes to completion. Christ's sacrificial work has been completed with His resurrection. Reconciliation will begin on time. Each of us will participate to assist Christ in reconciling all creation to God. We also help educate every child of Adam to learn about God as you know him now.

Every person will participate in the same glory Christ is experiencing at this moment. We will become like God and Christ at a tremendous learning rate after we all are glorified. It was planned from before we existed, before time (the eons) began. Christ was assassinated according to the desires of those who committed murder upon their Lord and Savior, according to Satan's designs, but most of all according to the will of God, and Jesus Himself, through Whom all things were created (Colossians 1:15–20). He was faithful, though He DIED in body, in spirit, and in soul. HE CEASED TO EXIST for three days and three nights until His Father raised Him from the dead.

"For it became Him, because of Whom all is, and through Whom all is, in leading many sons into glory, to perfect the Inaugurator of their salvation through sufferings."

• *Hebrews 2:10 CLV*