

## Touch not my anointed

Written by Administrator

Friday, 30 April 2010 11:47 - Last Updated Wednesday, 31 August 2011 12:06

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Touch Not Mine Anointed  
And Do My Prophets No Harm

What Happened To Joseph Smith's Persecutors?

by  
Lynn Ridenhour

"...Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm..."  
-Psalm 105:15

Even David wouldn't lay a hand on Saul.

We're talking--Saul, the...

...scoundrel, the  
...jealous king,  
...devious,  
...evil-minded,  
...and envious to the point of insanity toward David.

You know the story...

A Benjamite, the first king of Israel, anointed by the prophet Samuel, Saul stood "head and shoulders" above his fellow Israelites. There was a time in Saul's life when he was anointed. Saul was a warrior and a good one at that. With the help of his son, Jonathan, he overthrew the mighty Philistines. Saul had God's favor.

And Israel was proud of its king.

However, the greater part of Saul's reign was disappointing. Toward the end of his life he seemed to have been filled with a raging jealousy toward David. Saul spent his last few years tracking down David and attempting to kill him. Not a good commentary.

One evening David, accompanied by Abishai, came upon Saul sleeping. "...Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day; now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear..." -I Sam.26:8

David's answer is nothing short of miraculous.

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"...And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" (verse 9)

David repeated to Abishai, "...The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed..." (verse 11).

David knew--you don't touch God's anointed!

"...But Saul's a has-been. He's an apostate..."

Doesn't matter.

You don't touch God's anointed--if you want to remain guiltless before the Lord.

David, I'm afraid, knew something we don't. For when the persecutors of Joseph Smith touched the Lord's anointed, they sealed their fate. Their doom was inevitable.

What Happened to Joseph Smith's Persecutors?

Few realize that Joseph prophesied "...sickness would...vex them..."

His persecutors died terrible deaths. Men's flesh actually rotted upon them while they were alive.

Before crossing the Mississippi River, on June 22nd, 1844, Joseph prophesied the fate of those who were persecuting the saints in Nauvoo:

"...At 6 p.m. I prophesied that in the sickly seasons sickness would enter into the house of the mob and vex them until they would fain repent in dust and ashes. They will be smitten with the scab..."

By the way, the test of a true prophet, says Jeremiah, is "...when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him..." -Jer.28:9.

Did the Lord send Joseph? Did Joseph's prophecy come true? Did the mob kill one of God's anointed?

That's the theme of our essay.

To begin with...

Let it be known, Joseph Smith, during his lifetime, uttered numerous prophetic statements concerning all kinds of subjects; i.e., hidden thoughts revealed, prophecies of the Civil War and future wars, the falling of the stars foretold, Jackson County to be visited by fire and sword, Martin Van Buren not to be elected again, Stephen A. Douglas to seek the Presidency of the United States, his death prophesied to be near, mobocrats to face the cannon's mouth from an

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unanticipated source. And all these prophecies came to pass.

Let's look into the background of Joseph's last days.

Joseph Prophesied that His Death was Near (The Prophecies of Joseph Smith, Duane Crowther)

A warrant was sworn out by the mobocrats for Joseph's arrest because of the Expositor's destruction, a Nauvoo anti-Mormon newspaper. Joseph knew that if he were ever taken into custody that he would be assassinated. He told a friend, "...That if I and Hyrum were ever taken again we should be massacred, or I was not a prophet of God."

And yet he went to Carthage, Illinois to answer the demands of the law. As they were riding towards Carthage the party encountered sixty mounted militiamen on their way to Nauvoo. As he saw them coming Joseph commented, "...I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men. I shall die innocent, and it shall yet be said of me-he was murdered in cold blood."

Joseph prophesied his end was near.

As the group passed his farm, Joseph turned several times to gaze at it. This raised some comment from his friends, to which he replied, "...If you had such a farm, and knew you would not see it any more you would want to take a good look at it for the last time."

Mobocrats to Face the Cannon's Mouth from an Unanticipated Source

Joseph and his party arrived in Carthage about midnight on June 24th, 1844. A number of mobocrats were present and they began yelling and cursing and becoming abusive.

Governor Thomas Ford, the governor of Illinois, had come to Carthage and was housed in the Hamilton House where Joseph was to spend the night. Disturbed by the cries of the mob, he called out the window to quiet them and promised them he would have the Prophet pass through the troops of the Illinois Militia on the square the next morning so they could all see him.

True to his promise, the Governor invited Joseph and his party to pass among the troops early the next day, after which they returned to the Hamilton House. When the troops were dismissed, many of them followed the Prophet into the hotel where they engaged him in heated conversation and questioned the good intentions of the brethren. While talking to them, Joseph made the following prophecy:

"...I can see what is in your hearts, and will tell you what I see. I can see that you thirst for blood, and nothing by my blood will satisfy you. It is not for crime of any description that I and my brethren are thus continually persecuted and harassed by our enemies, but there are other

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motives, and some of them, I have expressed so far as relates to myself, and inasmuch as you and the people thirst for blood, I prophesy, in the name of the Lord, that you shall witness scenes of blood and sorrow to your entire satisfaction. Your souls shall be perfectly satiated with blood, and many of you who are now present shall have an opportunity to face the cannon" mouth from sources you think not of..."

It was almost three years later when this prophecy saw its fulfillment in the Mexican War. Illinois was asked to furnish four regiments of volunteers, and these men of western Illinois were quick to volunteer. A large number of them were among the 3,720 Illinois recruits who fought in northeastern and central Mexico.

On February 22 & 23, 1847, two of the Illinois regiments along with a regiment from Kentucky, engaged 17,000 of the soldiers in Santa Ana's army in the battle of Buena Vista.

Although outnumbered almost 4-to-1, the American soldier held their own the first day. On the morning of the second day they seemed to gain the advantage on the left flank of the Mexicans, and led a wild charge against the retreating enemy. Suddenly they discovered that they had been led into a trap as they were charged by 12,000 of Santa Ana's regulars.

The Americans retreated into a narrow gorge in the Mexican territory where the sides were so steep and covered with loose pebbles that they were hardly able to stand up. The Mexican army surrounded the top of the gorge and saturated the terrain with their gunfire.

Suddenly American cannons began to fire from behind the American lines and cleared the Mexican calvary from the north of the gorge. The Mexicans then made a wild bayonet charge down the sides of the gorge, and to escape their attack the Americans had to retreat directly into the cannon fire of their own troops at the mouth of the gorge.

Thus many of them died from their own artillery fire, in fulfillment of Joseph's statement to them three years before, that their "...souls shall be perfectly satiated with blood..." and that many of them who were present would have to "...face the cannon's mouth..." from sources they had not anticipated-their own artillery.

What Happened to the Mob?

Surrounding newspapers reported the assassination as follows:

From the Quincy Herald, July 10, 1844:

"...It will probably never be known who shot Joseph and Hyrum-but their murder was a cold-blooded, cowardly act, which will consign the perpetrators, if discovered, to merited infamy and disgrace. They have broken their pledges to the Governor-disgraced themselves and the State to which they belong. They have crimsoned their perfidy with blood..."

From the Illinois State Register:

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Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, and His Brother, Hyrum, Murdered in Prison.

"...The following particulars of the most disgraceful and cold-blooded murder ever committed in a Christian land, is copied from an extra from the office of the Quincy Herald. Rumors of the bloody deed reached this city several days ago, but were not believed until Tuesday evening, when there was no further room left for doubt. Next week we will have all the particulars. Every effort will be made to bring the assassins to punishment..."

Were the assassins ever brought "...to punishment?"

They were pitifully brought to trial.

### The Identity and Trial of the Murderers

The trial took place at Carthage, beginning on the 19th of May, 1845. Sixty names had been presented to the Grand Jury of the Circuit Court as being implicated in the crime, but only nine men had been indicted. One of them, Levi Williams, the leader of the mob, was not only a Colonel of militia, he was also a Baptist minister. Judge Richard M. Young presided at the trial.

(I too am a Baptist minister. I too live in the state of Missouri. It makes me wonder-if I were alive during those days, which side would I have come down on? Truly, a serious matter to contemplate.)

The trial was a farce. On Friday, May 30th, 1845, the trial ended. All prisoners were acquitted. The Saints gave their own verdict:

"...This accords with the vote of the city council last July, that when the law failed to atone for the blood of our prophet and patriarch, shed at Carthage on the 27th, of June last by a mob, we would refer the case to God for a righteous judgment..." --Millennial Star, Vol.6:41

On June 29th, two days after the martyrdom, Sheriff J.B. Backaenstos sent a letter to Brigham Young identifying the mob members:

### ROLL OF CARTHAGE GREYS AND OFFICERS JUNE 27TH, A.D. 1844

Robert F. Smith, Captain  
F.A. Worrell  
S.O. Williams  
M. Barnes, Jun.  
Lieutenants

### Guard at the Jail, June 27, 1844

F.A. Worrel, officer of the guard, Joseph Hawley, lives in Franklin Rhode, Carthage Illinois  
William Baldwin  
Anthony Barkman, lives in Levi Street, lives near Mendon

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Carthage, Illinois  
Adams County, Illinois  
Clabourn Wilson, lives in Carthage, Illinois

Balance of (Company of) Greys  
Edwin Baldwin, lives near Carthage  
Frederick Loring, lives in Carthage  
James D. Barnes, lives near Carthage  
Leyrand Doolittle lives in Carthage  
Marvin Hamilton lives in Carthage  
Ebenezer Rand lives in Carthage  
Lewis C. Stevenson lives in Carthage  
John W. Maith lives in Carthage  
Thomas Griffith lives in Carthage  
Noah M. Rekard lives in Carthage  
Eli H. Wilson lives in Carthage  
H.T. Wilson lives in Carthage  
Albert Thompson lives in Carthage  
Walter Bagby left the country, gone to Louisiana, and died  
George C. Waggoner lives 2 and a half miles north of Carthage  
Thomas J. Dale lives 5 miles east of Carthage  
Richard Dales lives 5 miles east of Carthage

The Carthage Greys never numbered more than about thirty, rank and file; during the June mob war, several joined for the time only, who reside at other places, and whose names are unknown to me. The Carthage Greys were nearly to a man parties in the June massacre.

### Green Plains

Captain Weir's company of about sixty men

### Warsaw

Captain J.C. Davis' company of about sixty men  
Captain Wm. N. Grover's company of about sixty men  
Captain Mark Aldrich's company of about sixty men, comprising the entire settlement in about Warsaw and Green Plains, with the exception of the Walkers, Paytons, Bledsors, Gallahers, Byrrs, Kimballs, Worthens, Summervilles, and Bedells, and the Mormon families who resided in that part of the country at that time.

Those active in the massacre at Carthage-supplied by Sheriff J.B. Backenstos

The leaders of the Hancock mob, and those who took an active part in the massacre of Joseph and Hyrum Smith are-

Thomas C. Sharp, Warsaw Signal, Illinois, editor  
Colonel Levi Williams, Green Plains, Illinois, farmer  
William N. Grover, Warsaw, Illinois, lawyer

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Jacob C. Davis, Warsaw, Illinois, lawyer  
Mark Aldrich, Warsaw, Illinois, no business  
Henry Stephens, Warsaw, Illinois, lawyer  
George Rockwell, Warsaw, Illinois, druggist  
James H. Wood, Warsaw, Illinois, blacksmith  
Calvin Cole, Warsaw, Illinois, tavernkeeper  
William B. Chipley, Warsaw, Illinois, doctor  
\_\_\_\_\_Hays, Warsaw, Illinois, doctor  
J.D. Mellen, Warsaw, Illinois, merchant  
E.W. Gould, Warsaw, Illinois, merchant  
Samuel Fleming, Warsaw, Illinois, constable  
John Montague, Warsaw, Illinois, no business  
Jas. Gregg, Warsaw, Illinois, no business  
Lyman Prentiss, Warsaw, Illinois, no business  
D.W. Matthews, now St. Louis, Missouri, merchant  
J.B. Matthews, now St. Louis, Missouri, merchant  
Trueman Hosford, Warsaw, Illinois, farmer  
Four of the Chittendens, Warsaw, Illinois, different occupations  
J.W. Athey, Warsaw, Illinois, no business  
Onias C. Skinner, now of Quincy, Illinois, lawyer  
Calvin A. Warren, Quincy, Illinois, lawyer  
George W. Thatcher, Carthage, Illinois, county clerk  
James W. Brattle, Carthage, Illinois, land shark  
Alexander Sympton, Carthage, Illinois, land shark  
Jason H. Sherman, Carthage, Illinois, lawyer  
Michael Reckard, one-half mile west of Carthage, Illinois, farmer  
Thomas Morrison, Carthage, Illinois, lawyer  
E.S. Freeman, Carthage, Illinois, blacksmith  
Thomas L. Barnes, Carthage, Illinois, quack doctor  
John Wilson, Carthage, Illinois, tavernkeeper  
Edward Jones, 5 miles north of Carthage, farmer  
Captain James E. Dunn, Augusta, Illinois, tavernkeeper  
Joel Catlin, Augusta, Illinois, farmer  
William D. Abernethy, Augusta, Illinois, farmer  
Erastus Austin, constable  
\_\_\_\_\_Austin, loafer  
Reuben Graves, St. Mary's, Illinois, farmer  
Henry Garnett, St. Mary's, Illinois, farmer  
F. J. Bartlett, St. Mary's, Illinois, miller  
Valentine Wilson, St. Mary's, Illinois, farmer  
Sylvester M. Bartlett, editor of the Quincy Whig  
Major W.B. Warren, a damned villain  
Colonel\_\_\_\_\_ Gettis, Fountain Green, Illinois, farmer  
Matthews McLaughny, Fountain Green, Illinois, farmer  
Nickerson Wright, Fountain Green, Illinois, farmer  
John McAuley, Camp Creek Precinct, Illinois, one of the worst men in Hancock

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William H. Rollason, Pontusuc, Illinois  
John M. Highbee, Pontusuc, Illinois  
Francis M. Highbee, Pontusuc, Illinois  
\_\_\_\_\_Douglas, Pontusuc, Illinois  
Moss or Morse, one of the Durfee murderers  
Jacob Beck, one of the Durfee murderers

Backman lives in Carthage, Moss or Morse, and Jacob Beck have left the country, but expect to return.

The foregoing is a pretty large list; there are others of the smaller fry which I deem unworthy of notice, inasmuch as they were led on through the influence of the leaders, and whiskey. I most cheerfully give you any information in my power in reference to this matter; the only thing that I regret about is, that these things I am fearful will be put off so long that I will not live to see or hear of the awful vengeance which will in the end overtake the Hancock assassins. I have long been of the opinion that forbearance is no longer a virtue, let the guilty be made to answer for their crimes. Let justice be done, and all will be well.

The bloodhounds are still determined on taking my life; I can hear from them every once in a while. I will have to be exceedingly careful this summer, or they will have my scalp. They still act upon the principle that had it not been for me in September last, Sorwill and McBradney would not have been killed, and the city of Nauvoo burned to the ground. They want to hold me responsible for everything that was done to put them down in their mob doings last year.  
--End of letter

Sheriff Backaenstos's letter was a bit lengthy, but I wanted to include it. As said, it was written two days after the martyrdom. I include it, for I wanted to list the members of the mob-for one thing. I think the letter is quite revealing. If we read down the list slowly, it makes us wonder-what was in the hearts of these men?! Some were editors of newspapers, some were lawyers, others were doctors, some were preachers, others were druggists and merchants. Two were constables. Many were farmers. It's said of some, "...one of the Durfee murderers..." "...one of the worst men in Hancock..."

Preachers, lawyers, millers, quack doctors, farmers, millers, and murderers-all crying for the blood of Joseph Smith. Why?

It's still a mystery.

What happened to these men? Where are their souls today?

Flesh Rots

We said earlier, Joseph prophesied the fate of his persecutors. Did his prophecy come to pass? Listen to the testimony of Parley P. Pratt, contemporary to Joseph:

"...A man named Townsend, living in Iowa, near Fort Madison, was one of the mob who

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assaulted and forced in the jail door. The pistol discharged by Joseph Smith wounded him in the arm, near the shoulder, and it continued to rot without healing until it was taken off, and even then it would not heal.

About six months after he was shot Mrs. Lawn saw his arm and dressed it. He was then gradually rotting and dying with the wound. He staid [sic] overnight with Mrs. Lawn's Father, and groaned through the night without sleeping. He asked the old gentleman what he thought of Joseph Smith being a prophet? He replied that he did not know. 'Well,' said Townsend, 'I know he was a prophet of God! And, oh that I had staid [sic] at home and minded my own business, and then I would not have lost my life and been tormented with a guilty conscience, and with this dreadful wound, which none can heal! He died two or three months afterwards, having literally rotted alive!...

A colonel of the Missouri mob, who helped to drive, plunder and murder the Mormons, died in the hospital at Sacramento, 1849. Beckwith had the care of him; he was eaten with worms-a large black-headed kind of maggot-which passed through him by myriads, seemingly a half pint at a time! Before he died these maggots were crawling out of his mouth and nose! He literally totted alive! Even the flesh on his legs burst open and fell from the bones! They gathered up the rotten mass in a blanket and buried him, without awaiting a coffin!

A Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, one of the Missouri mob, died in the same hospital about the same time, and under the care of Mr. Beckwith. His face and jaw on one side literally rotted, and half of his face actually fell off! One eye rotted out, and half his nose, mouth and jaw fell from the bones! The doctor scraped the bones, and unlocked and took out his jaw from the joint round to the center of the chin. The rot and maggots continued to eat till they ate through the large jugular vein of his neck, and he bled to death! He, as well as Townsend, stank so previous to their death, that they had to be placed in rooms by themselves, and was almost impossible to endure their presence, and the flies could not be kept from blowing them while alive!

These particulars, and many others, were related to me by Brother Beckwith previous to his death, and afterwards by his widow and father-in-law, and others who were conversant with them, and are believed to be correct."

--Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, pp.474-77

An elder in the church, Henry G. Boyle, has this to say:

"...While in California on a mission in the year 1855-56, and laboring on the Russian River, near where Healdsburg now stands, I often heard of an old mobocrat by the name of Kogan, or Cougan, who lived in that vicinity, and who boasted of having helped to murder Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage. He often sent a request to me to visit him and proferred to tell me all about the manner of the death of the Prophet. A few months afterwards I heard that Mr. Cougan was stricken with some very singular disease.

So peculiar was his case, that many people came to see him. He grew worse and worse, and lay for three months seemingly at the point of death. He suffered excruciatingly, and constantly prayed to die. He also begged his friends to put an end to his suffering, by taking his life, and even sought an opportunity to commit suicide, but was prevented by those waiting upon him. Many physicians visited him, and declared they never saw anything like his case.

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Many of the people in the neighborhood said, 'If such is the end of those who kill the prophets and mob and drive the Saints, then may we be delivered from such a fearful and terrible calamity.'

--The Martyrs, pp.112-114

### Another Murderer Meets His Fate

A sworn affidavit, August 15, 1951

North Carolina,  
Surry County

J. Monroe Hiatt, first being duly sworn, deposes and says:

"...that about the year 1907, District President, Elder John Berret, of Murray, Utah, requested that he interview the following named persons with reference to their knowledge of facts connected with the participation of Corporal James Belton in the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Accordingly he interviewed these parties and the following is the substance of their statements:

John Wesley Inman, late of Surray County, North Carolina, stated that he was well acquainted with Corporal James Belton and that many times he had heard Corporal Belton state that he took part in the killing of Joseph Smith and that he shot at him, taking as 'good aim as he ever did at a squirrel.'

Mrs. Bettie Lineback, of Mount Airy, Surry County, N.C., stated that she was a close neighbor of George Belton, son of Corporal James Belton and with Mrs. George Belton visited frequently Corporal James Belton in his home. Corporal Belton was sorely afflicted for several years, his eyes eaten from his head by this disease..."

Signed: J. Monroe Hiatt

Sworn and subscribed before me, this the 13th day of August, 1938.

Benton Moody,

Notary Public for North Carolina

My Commission Expires Aug.12, 1940 [Seal]

### Statement of Arthur S. Haymore on Belton

(Dictated to N.B. Lundwall on Dec.7th, 1951 at Mesa, Arizona)

"...I was born in Payson, Utah, on Feb. 1, 1878. My parents wee born at Mr. Airy, Surry County, North Carolina, my father, Franklin D. Haymore on Aug. 12, 1849, my mother, Lucinda Adeline Taylor born in 1852.

Father was well acquainted with the Belton family. James Belton was a member of the mob that murdered the Prophet Joseph Smith, and after the murder he fled into North Carolina, located there and reared a family.

He was in great poverty and could barely keep the wolf from the door. When I was visiting that vicinity in 1939, I visited a neighbor of Belton who told me of Belton's illness. He said he died from a cancer in his eye and when his meals were brought to him, the pus from his eye would

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drop in his plate. He died a horrible death.

I asked this neighbor if Belton ever discussed Mormonism or the tragedy of the Prophet's death, and he stated that Belton did not wish to talk about it, that he didn't boast or brag about the martyrdom but was very sorry for what had happened..."

Thomas Steed in his book tells this story...

### Hyenas Dig Up Graves

"...The gold fever prompted many to go to California that summer, by way of the north side of the Platte, so that the feed for animals was all used up. For that reason President Hyde advised us to go along the south side. Some of the gold seekers did take the same route.

The cholera broke out among them; they were all around us, before and behind us, before and behind us, although we tried to keep away from them, and many of them died, but our company escaped.

One afternoon our camp stopped earlier than usual. I stole away about two miles to the Bluffs, to see where those people came from who were swept out to such an alarming extent. Such a horrible scene as I beheld I hope never to see again. The graves of the cholera victims were there, with head-boards bearing their names, who were from Missouri; but the hyenas had dug upon the graves, dragged the cadavers out and devoured the flesh from their bones; the ravens had plucked out their eyes, and their bloody long skeletons lay stretched out on the ground.

That awful sight shocked my feelings beyond expression. I did not take notes of their names, unfortunately, but I remembered many were of the mobbers of Missouri, who had cruelly treated our people.

Then I recalled the prophecy of Joseph Smith, 'You shall not die a natural death; the judgments of the Almighty shall overtake you; the wolves shall eat the flesh from your bones and the ravens shall pluck out your eyes.'

And I saw it literally fulfilled...

--Life of Thomas Steed, pp. 14-15

### Summary

We have just witnessed men at their worst-or depravity at its best. Man can climb so high yet fall so low. And I'm not so sure we can completely escape their actions. I'm gripped by the Collective Conscience. No, I was not there. Yes, I'm ashamed. For I'm a part of the human race. I feel the mob's guilt. And experience their pain vicariously. There are some things we're a part of by simply being part of the human race.

I only know of two groups that have been given the death sentence-Jews and Mormons.

Hitler gave the extermination order and so did Governor Boggs--kill all Jews and all Mormons. Yes, I'm gripped by the Collective Conscience. Perhaps we should pause a moment and ask the Lord's forgiveness by proxy for the sins of our ancestors-up to and including our third and fourth generations. I had relatives that were part of the mob.

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I'm aware-our generation has a difficult time with the concept of judgment.

We're by and large recipients of "cheap grace." What I call easy believism. God is a gentle God. He would never do anything like that. We suffer from a distorted view of his justice.

Yes, God would do something like that.

History documents-you don't touch God's servants, his prophets. They're the apple of his eye, his mouth piece in the earth, his friends with whom he shares his secrets.

God meant what he said, "...touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm..."

Such consequences are grave. For any man.  
For any generation.