

7. The killer has denied his victims justice.

Isaiah 25:7-8

On this mountain, the LORD will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever

Many people today believe that death is the end. It was the same in the days of Isaiah the prophet, seven hundred years before Jesus.

Some people find the idea that death is the hard, cold end comforting. They are even energised by it as a firm conviction to build life on. They are like the people of Isaiah's day who had made what the prophet called, "A covenant with death".

These people figured that if this life is all there is; if there would be no accounting for their lives after death; that there was nothing better to hope for, and no life other than this one, then the best thing to do is to, "Eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow we die".

For these people in Isaiah's day – who were threatened with a ruthless military invasion – death was their trump card. They could disregard their moral responsibility and then when the game was up and the armies marched in to capture them, they could find refuge in death. That was how their, "Covenant with death" worked.

Does their thinking sound familiar?

The gunman must have intended to escape the Crown Prosecution Service. He must have thought that he would never have to give an account to his victims or his community. Likewise, many local people assume that with his last pull of the trigger all hope of an explanation and for justice disappeared for ever.

Who knows if Bird thought about God in that moment? But he will certainly have to do so now.

I like to play hide and seek with my little children. They think I'll never find them under the duvet – even though it's rippling and making squealing noises.

In today's Bible verse, death is pictured as a shroud that covers the whole world with darkness. That's why people think they can hide in it. But God promises to lift it off – like I lift the duvet off the children. That's exactly what happened hundreds of years after Isaiah made the promise, when Jesus rose from the tomb.

Jesus' victory over death has given him authority to summon everyone from their graves for the final judgement. Then, a full explanation for everything will be given; then, justice will be enacted.

A classic booklet called *The Evidence for the Resurrection*, written by Professor Norman Anderson, starts in a very striking way: "Easter is not primarily a comfort, but a challenge". Anderson meant, as we have said, that for better or for worse no one in all human history can escape the justice of Jesus Christ – not even in death. We will not be denied justice.