

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020

King James Bible. Jeremiah 38:6

*“Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire.”*

Acts 7:59, 60.

*“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep.”*

King James Bible. Acts 9:4(part).

*“...Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?”*

Whilst very dated the wording of the King James Bible still resonates. They paint a picture of extreme brutality against the prophets and disciples for their determination to preach the supremacy of God and the gospel of Jesus.

Jeremiah faced death by exposure, drowning or starvation. Stephen was stoned to death in the presence of Saul who was shortly to be dramatically converted on the road to Damascus. The early church was criticised, mocked and its adherents persecuted. Today our facing only ignorance or indifference is nothing compared with the trials and tribulations of the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christian church.

Whilst here in Britain we can plug away at promulgating the Christian message without fear of physical harm or imprisonment this still is not the case in many parts of the world. Adherents of the Coptic church in Egypt, the Christian church in northern India and in China face assault verbally and physically. It isn't only those of the Christian faith. Suppression and 'ideological correction' of Muslims in China and riots against Muslim people and mosques in India are with us now.

The good news of the gospel is as relevant today as in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Christians or indeed followers of any faith, should be free to practice and promote their beliefs in a peaceful way without fear. We must offer support, understanding, grace and a message of forgiveness of sins.

King James Bible. Luke 23:24. *“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”*