

Expository Thoughts On John - JOHN 16:1-7

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

"I have told you all these things so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue, yet a time is coming when the one who kills you will think he is offering service to God. They will do these things because they have not known the Father or me. But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember that I told you about them.

"I did not tell you these things from the beginning because I was with you. But now I am going to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking me, "Where are you going?" Instead your hearts are filled with sadness because I have said these things to you. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.

The opening verses of this chapter contain three important utterances of Christ, which deserve our special attention.

For one thing, we find our Lord delivering a remarkable prophecy. He tells His disciples that they will be cast out of the Jewish Church, and persecuted even to the death--"They shall put you out of the synagogue--yes, the time comes, that whoever kills you will think that he does God service."

How strange that seems at first sight! Excommunication, suffering, and death, are the portion that the Prince of Peace predicts to His disciples. So far from receiving them and their message with gratitude, the world would hate them, spitefully use them, and put them to death. And, worst of all, their persecutors would actually persuade themselves that it was right to persecute, and would inflict the cruelest injuries in the sacred name of religion.

How true the prediction has turned out! Like every other prophecy of Scripture, it has been fulfilled to the very letter. The Acts of the Apostles show us how the unbelieving Jews persecuted the early Christians. The pages of history tell us what horrible crimes have been committed by the Popish Inquisition. The annals of our own country inform us how our holy Reformers were burned at the stake for their religion, by men who professed to do all they did from zeal for pure Christianity. Unlikely and incredible as it might seem at the time, the great Prophet of the Church has been found in this, as in everything else, to have predicted nothing but literal truth.

Let it never surprise us to hear of true Christians being persecuted, in one way or another, even in our own day. Human nature never changes. Grace is never really popular. The quantity of persecution which God\

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