

Lecture 32- Morning Stars: Wycliffe & Hus

Charles Spurgeon about John Wycliffe: “God fits the man for the place, and the place for the man; there is an hour for the voice, and a voice for the hour.”

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

II Timothy 4:2

Assigned Reading

The Story of Christianity—Chapter 33, pp. 346-353

Key Terms

Lollards, John Hus, John Wycliffe

Objectives

- Outline the life and contributions of John Wycliffe
- Outline the life and contributions of John Hus
- Demonstrate the ways in which Wycliffe and Hus were precursors to the Reformation

Class Prayer

“Lord, give me grace to hold righteousness in all things...that I may lead a clean and blessed life, and prudently flee evil, and that I may understand the treacherous and deceitful falseness of the devil...Make me mild, peaceable, courteous, and temperate...and make me steadfast and strong. And also Lord give thou to me...that I be quiet in words [and] that I speak what is appropriate. Amen.”

John Wycliffe

Morning Stars: Wycliffe & Hus

The Luther Monument at Worms: Waldo, Wycliffe, Hus, and Savonarola

I. John Wycliffe of England

To Wyclif we owe more than to any one person...our English language, our English Bible, and our Reformed religion.” (Montagu Burrows, *Wyclif’s Place in History*)

A. 14th-century England

1. Worldliness in the church
2. Suffering in the nation

B. John Wycliffe—“The Jewel of Oxford”

1. All authority—secular and ecclesiastical—is a gift of God and can be forfeited.
2. The Bible is the “preeminent authority” for every Christian.
3. Transubstantiation.
4. Preaching is “the most precious activity of the church.”
5. Salvation is by _____.

a. Influence of Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1295-1349)

- 1) Archbishop of Canterbury (“doctor *profundus*”)
- 2) On the Cause of God against the Pelagians

b. Wycliffe’s “Short Rule of Life”: “At the end of the day, think about how you have offended God...and think...how graciously God has saved you; not for your dessert, but for his own mercy and goodness.”**C. The Lollards**

- D. Lutterworth (1381)
- E. “The Earthquake Council” (1382)
- F. Wycliffe died in 1384; his bones were exhumed by the Roman Church in 1428, burned, and the ashes scattered in a nearby stream. “They burned his bones to ashes and cast them into the Swift, a neighboring brook...The Swift conveyed them into the Avon; the Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine which is now dispersed the world over.” Fuller

II. John Hus of Bohemia

- A. Rector of the University of Prague
- B. Influenced by Wycliffe
- C. Themes of his preaching
 1. Christ the head of the church
 2. Bible _____ and grace _____
Hymn the people at Bethlehem Chapel sang before Hus preached: “The Word of God which ne’er shall cease, proclaims free pardon, grace, and peace. Salvation shows in Christ alone, the perfect will of God makes known.”
- D. Excommunicated
- E. Burned at the Council of Constance on July 6, 1415
Prayer John Hus wrote a few days before his death in 1415: “Grant me a ready spirit, a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, and a perfect love, that for thy sake I may lay down my life with patience and joy.”
- F. Moravian Church
- G. Hus monument in Prague: “Live for truth, fight for truth, die for truth.”
Martin Luther in 1529: “I have hitherto taught and held all the opinions of Hus without knowing it...We are all of us Hussites without knowing it. I do not know what to think for amazement.”

For Further Study

Alcock, Deborah. *Crushed Yet Conquering: A Story of Constance and Bohemia*.

Splendid 19th century historical novel on Hus.

Christian History Magazine, vol. 2, no. 2

Special commemorative issue on Wycliffe and the 600th anniversary of the translation of the Bible into English.

Read Wycliffe’s “A Short Rule of Life for Priests, Lords and Laborers.” Do you think that Wycliffe taught salvation by grace through faith? What is his special instruction to priests? What does he tell the lords? What is his message to laborers? Read the second selection from Wycliffe, “Wycliffe Causes Controversy over Eucharist.” What is Wycliffe’s view of the nature of the bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper? What do mice know that theologians don’t? What is Wycliffe’s view of preaching? Notice his “reformation” position on indulgences, absolution, and confession.

Read the pages entitled “From the Letters of John Hus.” These letters were written by Hus when he was in exile and in prison. What do these letters tell us about the man?