

Reformation History

John Wycliffe

The Morning-star of the Reformation
The Evening-star of Scholasticism
First translator of Latin Bible into English

I. World during Wycliffe's Life

- 1320's – 1384 – Wycliffe's life
- 1346 – 1353 – Black Death
 - Death of 75 million in Europe alone
- 1308 – 1378 – Babylonian Captivity
 - Catholic papacy moved to Avignon, France
- 1378 – 1417 – The Great Western Schism
 - 2 or 3 competing popes
- 1337 – 1453 – The Hundred Year's War
 - Between England and France
 - Joan of Arc (d. 1431)

II. Wycliffe's Life

- Birth
 - 1320's in Yorkshire, England (abt 100 mi south of Scottish border)
 - Family was landed
- Education
 - 1340's – at Oxford
 - 1361 – Master of Balliol College at Oxford
 - 1369 – Bachelor's of Theology
 - 1372 – Doctor of Theology
- Politics
 - 1374 – Commission from English Govt to dispute with Pope
 - Began writing tracts attacking the concept of “temporal rule of the Church”
 - De Civili Dominio
 - The Church had fallen into sin and therefore ought to give up all its property and the Clergy live in poverty
 - Supported by John of Gaunt – brother of the king of England
 - Censured by Gregory XI
 - 1377 – Denounced
 - The Papal Bull did not reach England until after Edward III's death
 - King – Was it lawful to withhold taxes from the Church
 - Wycliffe – Yes, it was
- Translation of the Bible
 - 1380 – Began at Queen's College (Oxford)
 - 1381 – move to Lutterworth
 - Sent out missionaries
 - Lollards – preaching in the countryside with the English translation
 - Persecuted, killed, books burned
 - Eventually went underground until the English reformation

- Last Days in Lutterworth
 - 1382 – 1st stroke
 - 1384 – final stroke – died 31 Dec 1384
 - Condemned at Council of Constance
 - Bones to be dug up and burned as a heretic
- Video [Clip](#)

III. Doctrines Emphasized

- The Gospel
 - “The gospel alone is sufficient to rule the lives of Christians everywhere – any additional rules made to govern men’s conduct added nothing to the perfection already found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ”
- The Scriptures
 - “The laity ought to understand the faith. And since the doctrines of our faith are in the Scriptures, believers should have the Scriptures in a language familiar to the people. To this end the Holy Ghost endued them with knowledge of all tongues”
 - “Holy Scripture is the highest authority for every believer, the standard of faith and the foundation for reform...”
- Doctrines Emphasized
- Predestination
 - One of his 1st works was “On the Cause of God against the Pelagians”
- The True “Invisible and Universal” Church
 - Membership in “the Elect” makes one in the Invisible Church
 - This Church is the one “outside of which there is no Salvation”
- Iconoclasm
 - The destruction of images
- Caesaropapism
 - The secular state is ordained by God and therefore responsible for correcting the Church when it becomes corrupt.
 - “The Bible is for the Government of the People, by the people, and for the People”

IV. Doctrines Denounced

- Veneration of the Saints
- Purgatory
- Pilgrimages
- Indulgences
- Non-Biblical Sacraments
 - Requiem Masses
 - Transubstantiation
- The Concept of the Papacy
 - Not biblical
 - Certainly not infallible
- Monasticism
- Simony
- Church ownership of property and accumulating wealth