

STUDY PAK 7

WYCLIFFE, LOLLARDS, AND THE ENGLISH BAPTISTS

“Brethren we must preach the doctrines; we must emphasize the doctrines; we must go back to the doctrines! I fear that the new generation does not know the doctrines as our fathers knew them.”

~ ~ Dr. John Broadus ~ ~

I. JOHN WYCLIFFE.

During the Fourteenth Century, Wycliffe, sometimes called the “_____ _____ _____ _____ _____,” became the most famous preacher in England. He clearly preached _____ _____ _____ _____ _____, and he renounced _____ _____ _____. He wrote brilliant defenses of the doctrine of the sole authority of Scripture. Even though he was under the protection of powerful English nobles and was made a chaplain by Edward III, he was forced to retire to the countryside for safety.

Wycliffe devoted himself to _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ into the English tongue commonly spoken in the Fourteenth Century (called Middle English today). He was so committed to the sole authority of Scripture, soul liberty, and the priesthood of all believers that he felt everyone must have _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ of the Scriptures _____ _____. A whole new group of preachers (many of them converted priests) began to travel throughout England proclaiming these truths and preaching directly from the Scriptures. They often attracted great crowds and were warmly received by the people.

Constant efforts were made by representatives of Catholicism to get Wycliffe to _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ and _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ the _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ he was preaching. Once, when he was very ill and thought to be dying, representatives of four Catholic orders came to see him and demanded that he recant his previous teachings. He rose from his sick bed and declared, “I shall not die but live, and again declare the evil deeds of the friars.”

Wycliffe spent fifteen years translating the _____ into English. His translation was wildly received. His following grew until one writer who was a contemporary of Wycliffe estimated that he had _____ than the Roman Catholic Church! Many of his followers were street preachers who taught that _____, not the Pope, was the _____. Many also preached that the Pope was not the “Vicar of Christ,” but that, in fact, he was the Antichrist.

During the last years of John Wycliffe’s life, he devoted himself to the study of theology. He _____ the Roman Catholic teaching about the _____ and _____. He identified with the Baptist teaching of Berengarius of Tours and began to hint about the teaching of separation of church and state. These teachings went too far for many of the nobles who protected him, and most of them withdrew their support. Some of his closest associates in the ministry broke with him, but rather than hesitate, he now _____ for _____ and _____. He was ordered to appear before the Pope, but he refused. Baptist historian, Thomas Crosby declared, “I am inclined to believe that Wycliffe was a Baptist.”

Wycliffe had a stroke and died in church in 1384. His books were ordered to be burned by the Council of Constance, and his body was later dug up and burned.

II. THE LOLLARDS.

Walter Lollard, a Dutch Waldensian, came to England during the period and was clearly a Baptist preacher. He soon attracted a great following that were called, along with Wycliffe’s followers, _____ or “_____” (not a bad name to be called!). They were called “*Bible Men*” because of their emphasis on the Scriptures as the _____ for _____.

The Lollards petitioned the King and Parliament for an end to the _____ and for _____. At this time, they were estimated to be in a slight majority in England.

They were soon the objects of vicious persecution, sponsored by the King and Parliament. In 1401, a preacher known as William Sawtre was burned at the stake for being a “Bible Man.”

The _____ to be burned at the stake in England was _____, a Lollard, who was burned at Smithfield in 1494. She was bravely followed to the stake by her daughter!

A tower in Lambeth was set aside to imprison Lollards waiting for trial; this tower is still known as Lollard’s Tower today.

This was a very unstable time in England. In 1401, King Henry IV of England had laws passed that made the _____ for anyone who disagreed with the _____. English sheriffs had to swear they _____ every _____ in England. When a “heretic” was found “guilty,” all the church bells would toll and a priest would grab a lighted candle from the altar and scream, “Just as this candle is deprived of its light so let him be deprived of his soul in Hell.”

The power of the Roman Catholic persecutors was so great that in 1413, they pressured King Henry V into putting his old friend John Oldcastle to death. Oldcastle’s crime had been that of advocating personal salvation by faith and the sole authority of Scripture.

Lollard preachers _____, and their assemblies were confined to the remote areas of _____ and _____.

At an early date a Lollard church was located at Hill Cliff, near Washington, in Cheshire (Christian, p. 182). The historian Goadby states: “Hill Cliff was admirably situated for

the erection of a conventicle, an _____ . The ancient chapel built on the spot was so constructed that the surprised worshipers had half a dozen _____ from it, and long proved a meeting place suited to the varying fortunes of a hated and hunted people ... There is some probability for the tradition that the chapel itself was built by the Lollards who held Baptist opinions. One of the dates on the tombstones is 1357, the time when Wycliffe was still a fellow at Murton College, Oxford ... Hill Cliff is undoubtedly one of the _____ in England ... The extent deeds which go back considerably over 200 years describe the property as being ‘ _____ ’” (Goadby, *By-Paths of Baptist History*, p. 23).

III. WILLIAM TYNDALE.

In the late Fifteenth Century, William Tyndale was born in England. His parents were members of an independent Lollard (Baptist) church in Wales. He was personally converted to Christ while studying the Greek New Testament of Erasmus at Oxford University. Tyndale became a great Greek scholar, and was greatly used of God in bringing the _____ to the _____. His translation of the _____ into English had an incredible impact upon the country. A century later, the King James Bible translators were careful to _____ whenever possible.

Tyndale also wrote _____ books, which show that he took many Baptist positions. He is on record as teaching the independence of local churches, priesthood of believers, only two offices for the church—pastor and deacon, baptism by immersion of believers only, and sole authority of Scripture. None of his writings _____ to the Baptist Distinctives. Tyndale was joined in his labor by _____ who had studied the Greek New Testament of Erasmus and had been converted. _____, another Greek scholar, was led to Christ by Tyndale. The three men became _____ for the _____ and _____ of Scripture in England.

While Tyndale increased in popularity, unmolested by the government, others were persecuted. _____ was arrested for teaching the _____ and for having led _____. He was condemned and burned at the stake.

The Roman Catholic Church began to teach against the reading of the _____ or the use of any _____. Seven adults were burned at the stake for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments in English.

Finally, the established church turned its sights on Tyndale, and even his powerful friends could no longer protect him. He fled to Germany to the town of _____, long noted for its _____. Here he worked peacefully for a while, but then the printing of his New Testament _____ in that city. He fled to _____, and his New Testament was _____. The impact upon England was incredible. The English New Testament was widely read with great joy.

Tyndale was eventually burned at the stake by _____. His last words were "God, open the eyes of the King of England." During the last days of his life, Henry was _____ by his wife _____. She read to him from the _____.

IV. PERSECUTION DURING THE ENGLISH REFORMATION.

Henry VIII energetically _____ in England through each of his different religious phases. Early in his reign, Alice Grenvill, a lady who testified to being a Baptist for 28 years, was executed in London, and several leaders from a Baptist church in London were also burned at the stake. Henry even _____ to help with the persecution of Baptists in _____. In 1533, he issued a decree that gave all people who believed in believer's baptism 12 days to leave the country, and many left England. Others continued openly, while still others were imprisoned. Some others were executed.

Even the _____ of the Church of England _____ the persecution of Baptists. The famous evangelical leader, Hugh Latimer said, “The Anabaptists that were burned in divers towns in England ... went to their death ... without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Well, let them go!” Three times - 1538, 1540, 1550—English kings issued _____. These Acts forgave all prisoners and convicts of the crimes for which they had been convicted, although some violent crimes were not included. Each time Baptists were _____. Jails were emptied of thieves, robbers, and vagabonds, but Baptists _____.

Eventually, the _____ was instituted for _____. One Englishman, writing to Erasmus, joked that it was a wonder that firewood was not scarce because so many Baptists had been burned at the stake.

Many Dutch Baptist missionaries came to England during this period, and a number of them were executed. Baptists were known by several names: _____, _____, _____, and some students of church history even called them _____ and _____.

When Henry VIII died, his son, Edward VI, became king. He was sympathetic to religious freedom. Joan of Kent was burned at the stake for smuggling Baptist books into the Royal Court. Edward put an end to such brutality, but, unfortunately, he was always in poor health, and he died after ruling for only six years. He had no children, so he was followed to the throne by his sister, Mary.

V. **BLOODY MARY.**

Mary was a very intense Roman Catholic who had learned her Roman Catholicism from her mother, Catherine, Henry’s first wife. She never forgot that England had become _____ in connection with the abandonment of her mother by her father. She _____ to bring England back to _____, and even married

Philip II, the Roman Catholic King of Spain in order to strengthen the Roman Catholic _____.

Mary had almost all of the _____ of the Church of England burned at the stake. These professing Christians, who had been _____ to send other believers to their death, _____ what _____. Latimer, who could so unflinchingly send Baptists to the stake, now went to the stake himself. Baptists, meanwhile, fared no better under Mary, and many Baptist preachers were also burned at the stake. Mary died after ruling for only five years and is remembered as “_____.” Her death was greeted with rejoicing throughout England.

VI. QUEEN ELIZABETH.

The next ruler of England was Mary’s sister, Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. She finally re-established the _____ of the Church of England and, for a while as she reorganized the church, all _____. Many thought this was a commitment to religious toleration, but they had misunderstood her motives. The Baptists began to operate much more openly, and many Baptists from the mainland of Europe _____ in England. This respite was only temporary, however. Elizabeth declared herself the _____ for the Church and demanded that nothing be preached _____.

The Baptists had quickly grown into a _____ and _____ in England, but Elizabeth would take care of that. She established a commission with the responsibility to _____ the independent churches. Again, Baptists were burned at the stake in England.

Robert Browne, known as the “_____,” became a prominent preacher in England during this time. He studied with some Dutch Baptists in Norwich, England. Browne became convinced of all the Baptist Distinctives except _____, and his preaching led to the formation of many

independent churches in England. These independent churches stood nobly for religious liberty and separation of church and state, even though it brought them severe persecution. Each of these independent churches _____ about baptism. Some were Baptists, and some practiced infant baptism. They were often called _____ because of their emphasis on independent churches _____ who governed _____. There was often fellowship between the Baptists and the early Congregationalists.

The difference between the Baptists and the evangelical Protestants is made clear by the case of Bishop Hooper of the Church of England, who came to the conclusion that _____ must be seen as the _____. Hooper began to preach that truth and asked the Church of England to _____ to the _____. He was rebuked and reminded that both the ruling Monarch and the Church leadership are _____. He was also reminded that the sole authority of Scripture might even rule out infant baptism. He was ordered to stop such preaching or leave the Church of England and identify _____ who had always stood for the sole authority of Scripture.

The persecution under Elizabeth was so severe that Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, and other independents began to flee to the forests and mountains again. After Elizabeth's death, her second cousin, King James of Scotland became the English King.

VII. KING JAMES.

Baptists continued to be oppressed in England; however, James turned away from the past policy of executions and turned to imprisonment and fines. Baptists appealed to James for religious freedom; however, it was not granted. But following their appeal, James seemed _____ in persecuting them. He did not stop _____ from persecuting the Baptists, but he _____ as he had previously. Many Baptists _____, while others were

permitted to participate in new _____ on the Atlantic seaboard of North America.

In 1614, _____, a member of a Baptist church in England, wrote the first book published in England _____. He had to flee to Holland after it was published, though he was eventually able to return to England. His book greatly influenced _____ and the political writer, _____. Locke's political writings greatly influenced people like _____, _____, and _____. The Declaration of Independence is basically _____ of Locke's _____ applied to the situation of the _____.

John Locke wrote: "The Baptists were from the beginning the firm advocates of absolute liberty—just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty."

~~ C. A. Jenkins, *Baptist Doctrines*, p. 47 ~ ~

VIII. THE SE-BAPTIST EPISODE.

One of the most famous events of English Baptist history took place during this time. It is often called the "_____." _____ had been a Church of England preacher who became convinced of sole authority of Scripture and separation of church and state. He left the Church of England and returned to his hometown of Gainsborough. In Gainsborough, there were two Congregationalist churches. One became the group from which most of the _____ to Plymouth Bay Colony came. Smyth became the pastor of the other church. Because of persecutions, the majority of the members of both churches _____ and, while there, Smyth became convinced of the truth of believer's baptism. He led his congregation in the study of this doctrine, and they agreed. He baptized himself, and then most of the members of his congregation. Disputation arose over whether or not his baptism _____, and he even began to question it. He presented himself to a Mennonite church for membership, and they would not recognize his self-baptism. It appears that he

died while they were discussing how to handle the situation. Most of his church congregation applied for membership to the _____, and they were eventually admitted as members.

A small number of the congregation did not want to join the Mennonites. They were led by _____, who became their pastor and continued to accept John Smyth's baptism. They returned to England. Helwys formed a Baptist church. Helwys aggressively _____ the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Because he strongly taught a _____ (that Christ had died for _____), his church became known as a _____ church. Soon, this name was applied to any Baptist church which taught a general atonement. Churches which taught that Christ died _____ became known as _____. Helwys then aggressively criticized King James and was arrested and imprisoned. He died soon after.

It should be noted that historians sometimes differ on the details of the "Se-Baptist Episode" and the origin of the General and Particular Baptists. Some even deny that Smyth and Helwys were immersionists, but the evidence that they were legitimate Baptists is overwhelming (see John Christian's *A History of the Baptists*).