



WATCHMAN'S TRUMPET



Vol. 2 SN. 032 A monthly online publication of Watchman Outreach Mission February 2023



FROM THE MISSION DIRECTOR

Hello,

I welcome you to this new month and present to you February 2023 edition of Watchman's Trumpet. The theme of this month's edition is "Power and profit of peace and patience in perilous end-time"

Christ never left believers in doubt about what was coming, as we get closer to the end of man's sojourn on earth and the end of time. He did not only tell us that trials, troubles, afflictions and persecution shall come with increasing and intense waves and storms, He told us what He will do for us at such times and what we should also do to ensure that we emerge triumphant and reign with Him in the end. This is the focus of our magazine this month.

Jesus in the gospel presented twin virtues and factors that will sustain us in the midst of life's storm and the increasing trial and troubles including persecution of saints that shall characterize life and living in the end-time. These are peace and patience. He promise to give us His peace. Christ gives a peace to His own in challenging times; a kind of peace that people finds difficult to understand. The kind of peace that makes Martyrs to be calm and courageous when they were to be mauled by lions or thrown into fire after inquisition. This kind of peace made Peter sleep soundly in Herodian prison while awaiting execution after Easter. It is a supernatural experience mediated by the power of the Holy Ghost. However, enjoyment of peace directly correlates with individual's actions and attitude.

Our attitude and actions will determine whether we will keep and enjoy this peace that Christ gives or lose it. Hence, The Lord enjoin us to perseveringly endure and be patient as things turn from bad to worse in the world. To us they are evidences that our redemption is getting closer. We should therefore at such times not be governed by our instincts, passions and emotions so we don't lose out. "In your patience possess your souls" Luke 21:19.

In the passage where The Lord gave this admonition, He stated that even if we had to suffer martyrdom, not one hair on our head would perish, meaning that He will be waiting for us at the other end. Halleluiah! We are therefore assured that life with Christ is a winning life on earth, in life now and in eternity. May we all therefore keep this abiding and winning life as a precious treasure until the end. May the peace of God that Christ gives be yours now in Jesus name; may you receive tremendous capacity for patience as you read this edition of Watchman's Trumpet in Jesus Name. Welcome!

PEACE FROM THE PRINCE

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" John 14:27.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" John 16:33



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Almost everyone desires peace in this troublous world. Men dread most whatever threatens their peace and security. People are willing to pay any price to enjoy peace and security. Living in peace, peaceful co-existence among citizens and in relationship with their neighbours is the primary responsibility of Government. A leader or King would go to any length to ensure that peace reigns in his domain. He would declare and fight war if and when necessary to ensure that his subjects are safe and live in peace. Jesus as a prince ruling over His kingdom and having sovereign authority over all people, things, situations and circumstances in the world loves to do the same for His people and citizens in God's kingdom.

The presence of Christ with the disciples implies abiding peace. According to our text, as He was about to leave them and physically leave the earth, He probably felt the worries and anxiety creeping upon them at the thought of His departure from them. Hence, He needed to reassure them.

He showed them the possibility of His continuous presence with them and ministry among them through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). There must by necessity be a divine-human contact and connection for man to possess and enjoy lasting peace on earth. This is the missing link in man's frustrated efforts since the world began to possess and enjoy enduring peace. Real peace, lasting peace, enduring peace could only be attained when the prince of peace is accorded His rightful place in man's heart, home, activities in the world.

United Nations as a world's body whose leading goal is to promote and secure world peace came into being 78 years ago. Can we say the world is a more peaceful place today than it was 78 years ago? The answer is No. Men can sign pact, give money, organize soldiers, deploy peace keepers, buy weapons but only God can change men's heart. Let it be on record therefore today that Jesus' reign and government by converted men hold the key to world's peace and order. This reign must first begin in men's heart. When the grace of Christ conquers the heart, he has conquered all. Wherever the trouble is today-in your heart, home, work, office, programme, your plans, invite Jesus into it and everything will change in Jesus name!

We shall consider 3 points:

1. Giver of Peace
2. Gift of Peace
3. Gains of the Peace from the Prince

1. Giver of Peace

"And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" **Mark 4:37, 39**

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" **John 14:27**

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;" **Ephesians 2:14**

Jesus described himself in our text as the giver of peculiar, special, enduring and permanent peace. Isaiah described the chaos on earth as a result of transgression before the coming of Christ (Isaiah 24:1-13). The same is true of homes, life, business, Christians, Churches or work, situations where Christ is not allowed to reign. Christ is the giver of peace. His birth promises individual, family, national and universal peace (Luke 2:7-14). When He rides in our ship, He brings His authority to bare on every storm and wave of life or circumstances that may threaten to drown us and calms them. One day he is coming to reign on earth and it will be a reign of peace. Are you ready for His coming? Are you ready to reign with Him?

2. The gift of peace

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" **John 14:27.**

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:" **Romans 5:1**

When Christ comes into our life, he gives a lasting peace. He does this by declaring and promoting a cease-fire right inside the heart of man. Men who are converted to Christ want to reconcile and restore. Reconciliation and restoration are leading signs of salvation in Christ. Unsaved, unconverted and unregenerated sinful men are enemies of God and often live lives that are injurious to other men. There is no peace for the wicked says the word of God. Jesus Christ is the bridge and bridge-builder, bringing total and lasting reconciliation between man and his God and between man and His neighbor.



When we are born-again, we have the peace of God and great peace like a river. Peace with God guarantees us divine help, His presence, supports and total obliteration of demonic and



enemy activities (Proverbs 16:7). If God be for us, none can be (work) against us. Peace with men through restoration, reconciliation and restitution frees us from guilty conscience and emboldens us to pray to God in faith. This gift of lasting peace is the will and plan of God for our life today. If we possess it, it come with great gains.

3. Gains of peace from the prince

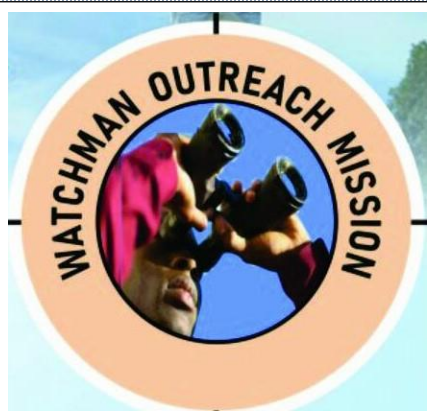
"And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" **Romans 16:20**

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you". **Philippians 4:7, 9**

Christ promised His followers peace. The peace Christ promised can be received by: (1) Repentance (Acts 3:19). (2) Restitution. Acts 24:16, (3) Obedience to God's word. Philippians 4:9. (4) Regular prayer to resist the devil and faith in God and His promises. (5) Reconciliation ministry to others. Isaiah 52:7. (6) Relinquishing dangerous ambitions and freedom from covetousness Psalm 37:7-11. (7) Remaining rooted in Christ and abiding in Him continually.

The gains of such peace are also described:

(1) Your heart will not be troubled (calmness in your mind) (2) You will not be afraid. God will send fear far away (3) Sowing and reaping the fruits of righteousness (James 3:18) (4) Prosperity and progress only achievable in an environment of peace (Psalm 122:6. What is true of Jerusalem is also true of wherever there is peace.



ABOUT WATCHMAN OUTREACH MISSION

Watchman Outreach Mission as envisioned fundamentally comprises of men and women of faith who watch over one another and together watch for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Next to this primary assignment is an equally important responsibility of bringing others into the same state of watchfulness and readiness as the coming of the Lord draws near. Ours is a trans-ministerial, trans-denominational mission. Our core values include expository teaching, prayer and counselling. We train in principles and practice of Christian discipleship and equip for effective Kingdom Service.

The Lord Jesus Christ in one of His parable said "*While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept*" **Mathew 25:5**. Watchman Outreach Mission is a response of faith to this and similar warnings about events in the last days. Our response is based on the premise that prophecies, visions and revelations about the future such as the one documented in the Lord's parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins are sign-posts by which men are warned to keep vigil to avoid disastrous end. We serve to wake up the church and men everywhere to remain alert and watch for the Lord's return.

The Mission, based in Ibadan, Nigeria, was launched in 2009 and its maiden outing took place on the 20th November of the same year. On that day, we partnered with All Nations Evangelical Ministry (ANEM), Akobo, Ibadan for Evangelistic and Medical Mission Outreach to Idi - Ose Village on Arulogun - Olorunda Road in Lagelu Local Government, Ibadan.

In the years that followed we networked with churches and other Christian groups too to implement our mandate which include conducting gospel outreaches, discipleship training for new converts, organizing and facilitating workers and ministerial training, conducting administrative reviews in churches and ministries, writing of proposals for reforms and church growth strategies that can enhance social cohesion, improve church finances and foster overall development, unity and growth of such ministries; monitoring and/or supervision of the implementation of such reforms and strategies.

Some of these Christian groups and ministries include with Christ Apostolic Church, Oke - Ife in Ajangboju, Ibadan, Nigerian Military Christian Fellowship, Adekunle Fajuyi Cantonment Chapter in Oyo - State Nigeria, Christ Gospel Mission International, Light of Jesus Evangelistic Ministry with branches in different cities in South Western Nigeria, and Ark of Salvation Church of Christ (ASCC) with headquarters at Molade, Monatan Ibadan.

Till date, although partnered ministries change from time to time depending on the leading we receive from the Lord, we remain committed to our main purpose and vision; that of service to the church and in the world to wake up men everywhere and encourage them to remain alert and watch for the Lord's return. Through our activities, souls had been saved, believers edified and church workers' spiritual growth and development enhanced, all to the glory of God.

WATCHMAN PRAYER HOUR



Prayer Points - For February 2023

1. Thank God for the gift of peace that we have received from Jesus the prince of Peace
2. Thank God for the assurance of His presence in the midst of life's storms
3. Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the comfort and peace that He provides
4. Pray for divine help for all who at this moment are passing through difficult times and looking up to God for help in any area of life
5. Pray for faith in God in times of trouble, trials, temptation and danger
6. Pray for manifestation of Holy Spirit's fruit of patience in our lives at all times
7. For our preservation and protection whenever sleep; at home and at work; the same for us and all who belong to us
8. For grace to walk constantly with God and serve Him till the end

"..... men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" **Luke 18:1**

May the Lord hear and answer all our prayers - AMEN!

Watchman Prayer Hour holds every Saturday from 10.30am - 12.00MD. We invite you to join us at our office in 78/80 Nepa (IBEDC) Building, Opposite U.I. Second Gate, Ibadan . Oyo - State Follow us on any of our Social media platforms and send your inquiries or prayer requests to any of our digital addresses.

ENDURING PEACE IN A TROBLOUS WORLD

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” John 16:33

Our text is a summary of the conversation in the entire chapter (John 16). In it, the Lord told His disciples that beginning from the next few hours, the days ahead will be very challenging. Hardship, suffering and persecution will come to Him and later to them. They may even face the prospect of martyrdom (John 16:1-4) but the spiritual bond and connection that He shares with them will make them confident and calm in the mind, most especially when they remember that He had earlier prophesied that these things will come; if they remember that in His prophesy, He put side by side trial and triumph both for Himself and for them. Christian life guarantees peace and victory. These Jesus promised, but to enjoy them we must abide in Him.

We shall consider three subtopics

1. Believers' trials in the world
2. Jesus' victory over the world
3. Abiding believer's peace through victorious Christ

1. Believers' trial in the world

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption



to wit, the redemption of our body” Roman 8:22-23

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”. 2 Timothy 3:12

Many and full of troubles are the days of man on earth, believers are not exempted. More than the general trouble in the world that believers partake in, faithfulness in following Christ comes with a price tag. It was even so in the Old Testament. Hebrews Eleven recorded how some face trial associated with mockery and flogging, some are chained and put into prison, while others were stoned or put to death in most brutal manner after maltreatment. All who are determined to live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution. Persecution is part of the hundredfold reward Christ catalogued that believers will receive for their sacrifice (Mark 10:28-30). Peter in his epistle taught that Jesus through His suffering presented to us a model of how to conduct ourselves when these experiences come our way. He admonished us to follow His footsteps. Trial, troubles and difficulties should not produce fear or confusion in the believer if we remember Christ's warning and scripture's revelation that these things will come. In fact, we are to cheer up. We are to face persecution, trials and troubles in the world with joy and holy defiance. Our joy comes and ought to come from knowing that Christ has obtained ultimate victory.

2. Jesus' victory over the world

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” Colossians 2:14-15

Jesus declared in our text that He has overcome the world. He gave His victory as reasons why His disciples and by extension all believers today should be cheerful, joyful and confident in the midst of life's trials and tribulation. The word “world” in our text John 16:33 refers to enemies and forces inspired by the devil that opposed and antagonized Christ, and His mission; the world that crucified Him to the cross. Jesus by His resurrection overcame them. This victory He won for our sakes and shares willingly with all who abides in Him.

3. Abiding believer's peace through victorious Christ

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over” Psalm 23:4

According to the Lord in our text, His victory over the world is the basis for our peace. No matter what is happening in our lives physically, we are to remain calm and confident. We are to take heart, be bold and courageous. We are to remain focused on Christ and abide in Him. We are to abide in Him by abiding in fellowship with His word. We abide in Him by constant continuous communion with Him in prayers especially in trying moments. We abide in Him by regular fellowship with His followers. We abide in Christ by exhibiting and demonstrating constant faith in God and love for Him through obedience to His word and submission to the prompting and restraints of the Holy Spirit. When we do our part, the Spirit of God in us will complete the rest.



PROFITABILITY OF PATIENCE IN PERILOUS TIMES

“And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls” Luke 21:16-19

Our text (Luke 21:16-19) revealed that living in the end-times which is the main subject of conversation in the entire Luke chapter 21 will be increasingly challenging and difficult for all men especially for the followers of Christ who refuse to compromise with the world. However, our texts singled out a virtue or attribute that guarantees triumph in every trial. Our being exercised by it will ultimately earn us eternal inheritance, happiness and life that God promised those in His kingdom. This virtue is patience.

A Greek word for patience means *“taking a long time to boil”*. It is about remaining calm under difficult circumstances without giving up, complaining or giving in to bitterness. Patience means taking what life offers even if it means suffering (in the will of God or according to the will of God) without lashing out; maintaining calmness when there is delay, pressure or when things are not happening the way we wanted or planned it. It is the power to wait, hold out, persevere and endure till the end. We shall consider:

1. The weakness of impatience
2. The power and profit of patience

1. The weakness of patience

“And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not



to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;” 1 Samuel 13:8-9, 11

The opposite of patience is impatience. No matter what is happening to us or happening around us, we must remain calm, resist and overcome every tendency towards acting in impatience. We should never be governed or enslaved by our passions, instincts and emotions. We must relinquish all controls to the power and influence of the Holy Spirit and clearly express that desire in prayers at crisis times. Impatience is weakness, an evidence of unbelief and distrust in God's power, ability and wisdom. Impatience was Saul's weakness. It nearly ruined Isaac's family and truncate Moses' calling. An impatient man, no matter how physically strong is a weak man because in a split of seconds, by an impatient action or rash word, he can rubbish all that he has been building for years, most times not from enemy actions but with his own hands, actions and attitudes.

1. The power and profit of patience

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste”. Isaiah 28:16

“For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Lord

GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not” Isaiah 30:15

Impatience has its root in selfishness. We become impatient when we get too preoccupied with only our own needs, desires, goals, wants, schedules and inconveniences. It is easy at such moments to forget that that what delayed us may actually have helped someone else or even us on the long run.

“In your patience, possess ye your souls”

Luke 21:19 is the counsel of the Bible and of the Lord. Taken together within context of surrounding verses, the Lord is saying that in the face of attack from outside and betrayals by traitors within the church or family setting and sometimes with the threat of martyrdom, if we respond in faith, calmness and holy defiance like the three Hebrew children when they faced the prospect of death from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, eternal life will be waiting for us at the end of life's dark tunnel.



Patience is love's stabilizer. The absence of it is sometimes a primary indicator of evaporating love. It helps us to live peacefully. Patience is needed between seed-time and harvest-time. Thus, if exercised, it will bring prosperity. Patience helps us to inherit and enjoy God's promises. In the church and family, it enhances mutuality and strengthens relationship. , patience is one of the greatest personalized gospel messages.

HELP AND PRESERVATION FROM ABOVE

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand" Psalm 121:1-5

This Psalm of David has been described as Soldier's psalm. Others call it the traveller's Psalm. This is probably because it addresses the experiences and need of one in need of protection as he travels on life's road or in his fight against unspecified but dangerous enemies. It is a reminder that there are many things we do not know in life and many questions requiring answers. In the face of limitations and infirmities that surrounds human helpers and the possibility of failure and disappointments as we try to cash in on promises made by men, there is someone on the Holy Mountains that we can look up to; whose help we can assess in every situation and at all times. He has never failed and will never fail because He is not subject to the limitations that human helpers face. He is high above, He rules over all and He is greater than all. Besides He is ready and ever willing to help.

We have in this psalm the testimony of one who have tried placing his trust and confidence in God and has not for once been let down. God greatly cared for Him in the past and still does. He invited and encouraged us to make this song and poem ours and make his caring, loving, everlasting and ever-keeping God our own too. The Grace to do so, God will give to us in Jesus name.

We shall consider three subtopics:

1. Identity of believer's immutable and omnipotent helper
2. Human experiences requiring divine intervention and help
3. Invitation to trust in God's unfailing ability to preserve and help

1. Identity of believer's immutable and omnipotent helper

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth" Psalm 121:1-2

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" Isaiah 41:10

Jerusalem is a city built on hills and surrounded by mountains. On one of these mountains lies the Temple, the habitation of the living God. Forces who occupy a higher ground are at advantage of seeing and knowing enemy moves ahead of confrontation and time of conflict. High ground for the purpose of victory is strategic. It could determine whether a war would be won or lost.



The psalmist describes the presence and power of a helper who occupies such a ground. He refers to Him as the LORD. This word speaks of only one person "YAHWEH" or "JEHOVAH".

In that case, the psalmist refers to seeking and securing help from God. He attached to his desire the pedigree, power and ability of the one whose face he seeks for intervention. He described Him as the creator of heaven and earth. He is the Almighty God who made all things. He has power over all situations and circumstances and can do all things. He is not only the psalmist's God, He is believer's God too; He is our God.

He is your God. If you can with the eye of faith look up to Him today, help will come to you.

2. Human experiences requiring divine intervention and help

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" Psalm 23:4

"The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore" Psalm 121:5-8

"The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate" Psalm 34:22

The experiences of this psalmist are well captured in this psalm too. We have in it the experience of one subject to infirmities of weariness, weakness and sleep in the most unguarded moment.



"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Isaiah 41:10

It will be a great encouragement to have by our side at such a time someone who is ever vigilant and watchful. That is what our God will do for you. Beyond infirmities in the flesh, here on earth, the scotch of midday sun, the quietness and creepy shadows created by rays from night's moonlight, the possibility of running into ambush on life's road or while on a actual physical journey gives men great cause for concern and constant worries. The psalmist encourage all readers (and singers) of his hymn who find themselves in such circumstances and experiences that they are not alone. He has been there and His God showed up. He has not for once been disappointed. If we look up to him and call upon His name, He will help; He will protect and preserve us. He will not leave us or forsake us. Jesus is with us always *"till the end"*

3. Invitation to trust in God's unfailing ability to preserve and help

"Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" Psalm 121:4

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" Isaiah 45:22

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" Isaiah 26:3

The invitation to place our confidence in God and look up i.e pray and call upon God to receive help, provision and protection is introduced in the psalm by the word **"Behold**" (Psalm 121:4). Food supplied must be eaten to cure hunger, medicine supplied must be swallowed to receive cure from diseases.

All who want to benefit from help that comes from above must look up. Problems come to men in life sometimes because of looking at the wrong thing and looking in the wrong direction. To get the best from God we must realign our focus. We must look away from men who are limited in knowledge, power and ability and look at the boundless holy mountains called heaven where the Most High lives.



We must look away from the threat of the devil because he is a defeated foe. We must look away from the mountains in our lives because they are not as high as heaven; and heaven has the final say. God rules and reigns in the affairs of men. *"Looking unto the Hills"* also suggests taking on a prayer posture. It means turning to prayer points the things that threatens our peace of mind and terrifies us. It is by prayer that men can secure help from God. Those who call upon God and wait for Him can never be put to shame. You can do that right now wherever you are.



He never disappointed the psalmist; He will not disappoint you. Look at Him, focus on Him, concentrate on Him, not on your difficulties, trials and troubles, *"Behold"* are you on a journey? do you feel edged in or troubled in any way?, are you plagued by winds or air of adversities and uncertainties?, is it as if you cannot move forward or your interests cannot survive the strains or stress of another day? Don't give up.

"Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. LORD is thy keeper; the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evils: He shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore". AMEN.

We are here assured and reassured that Almighty Jehovah keeps His own, constantly, personally, temporally, morally, spiritually (thy soul), effectively and eternally. These promises are ours to claim today in prayers as we confront and cope with life's uncertainties; we are in safe hands, He will keep us!



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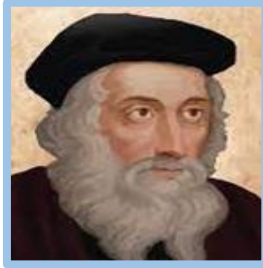
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John Wycliffe has been called “**The Morning Star of the Reformation**.” Darkness dominated the horizon in the fourteenth century, the century of Wycliffe, who was born in 1330 and died in 1384, almost exactly one hundred years before Luther was born. By his teenage years, Wycliffe was at Oxford. Wycliffe later took his own place among the faculty. Appointed the Master of Balliol College, Wycliffe lectured and wrote in the field of philosophy. But the tug of biblical studies pulled on him. He applied himself rigorously to the study of theology and Scripture. As he did, he realized how much the church had veered off in so many wrong directions. In the 1370s, he produced three significant works as countermeasures to the church’s corruption. The first one, *On Divine Dominion* (1373–1374), took aim at papal authority. Wycliffe was at a loss to find biblical warrant for the papacy. In fact, he argued that the papacy conflicts with and obscures the church’s true authority, Scripture. The second major work was *On Civil Dominion* (1375–1376). Here Wycliffe targeted the Roman Catholic Church’s assertion of authority over the English crown and English nobility. He saw no reason for England to be obliged to support a corrupt church. In his third major work, *On the Truth of Sacred Scripture* (1378), he further developed the doctrine of the authority of Scripture.

These three works were crucial to setting the stage for the Reformation. Two faculty members visiting at Oxford returned with Wycliffe’s writings to their home city of Prague, which in turn influenced Jan Hus. He would consequently go on to be a second “Morning Star” of the Reformation. On the *Truth of Sacred Scripture*, Wycliffe called for the Bible to be translated into English. According to Roman Catholic law, translating the Bible into a vulgar, common language was a heresy punishable by death. . It is almost impossible to imagine why a church would want to keep God’s word from people, unless that church wanted to hold power over the people. Wycliffe was more convinced of the power of the word of God than the power wielded by the papal office. Consequently, he and a group of colleagues committed themselves to making the word of God available.

MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH

JOHN WICLIFFE
1330 - 1384



Not only did the Bible need to be translated; it also had to be copied and distributed. This was before the printing press (invented in 1440), so copies had to be made painstakingly by hand. Despite the challenges, hundreds of the Bibles were produced and distributed to Wycliffe’s troop of pastors, who preached across England as the word of God made its way to the people. Wycliffe’s followers came to be called Lollards. They were enclaves of reform not only in England, but across Europe.

In his final years, Wycliffe endured falling out of favor with the church and nobility in England. Of course, he had long ago fallen out of favor with the pope. He remained convinced of the authority and centrality of Scripture and devoted to his life’s calling to help Christians study the Bible. Having suffered two strokes, John Wycliffe died on December 30, 1384, but persecution of his followers continued. In 1401 a new law ordered that heretics be burned at the stake, Because he had escaped the prescribed punishment for heresy, he was tried a second time in 1415 and this time condemned. The Council of Constance ordered that his body be disinterred and burned. Pope Martin V approved the order, and the deed was carried out in 1428, approximately 44 years after Wycliffe’s death. His bones were burned in a field of execution and the ashes scattered in the River Swift near Lutterworth.

SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

John 16:33

SONG OF THE MONTH

CONSTANTLY ABIDING

1. There’s a peace in my heart that the world never gave,
A peace it cannot take away;
Tho’ the trials of life may surround like a cloud,
I’ve a peace that has come there to stay!

Refrain:

*Constantly abiding, Jesus is mine;
Constantly abiding, rapture divine;
He never leaves me lonely, whispers,
O, so kind:
“I will never leave thee,” Jesus is mine.*

2. All the world seemed to sing of a Savior and King,
When peace sweetly came to my heart;
Troubles all fled away and my night turned to day,
Blessed Jesus, how glorious Thou art!
3. This treasure I have in a temple of clay,
While here on His footstool I roam:
But He’s coming to take me some glorious day,
Over there to my heavenly home!

Author: Anne S. Murphy

CONTACT DETAILS

Watchman Outreach Mission
78/80 Nepa (IBEDC) Building,
Opposite U.I Second Gate
Ibadan, Oyo – State, Nigeria

BANK DETAILS FOR DONATION

Bank: FBN PLC
Acct Name: Watchman Outreach Mission
Account No. C/A 2016363366
GSM No. +234-9026840215,
8033846714
8056671595