

Aim: God's way is always best, even if it is not always easy; God always blesses those who obey Him.

Refer: Great Controversy chapter 5

Last week I told you about John Wycliffe, who found a copy of the Bible at Oxford University and studied it for himself and then started preaching to the people about it and writing booklets to teach even more people. Well, the next thing he decided to do was to translate the Bible into English so that everyone could read it for themselves. The Pope and the leaders of the church were already upset by the things he had been teaching and now they determined to try and kill him. But God had other ideas.

The first time John Wycliffe was called before a council of Bishops (church leaders) in England, he was accompanied by two important princes and the courtroom was filled with people supporting him so they let him go. Then the Pope died and two rival Popes were elected – each claiming to be God, and calling the other the antichrist! So there was civil war in the church and John Wycliffe was left alone.

But before he could finish the work of translating, he was struck down by a serious illness; representatives from the church came to his death bed telling him he was dying because of his sins; but he suddenly told them that they were wrong and he would not die! And that is what happened.

At last the first English Bible was finished. There was no printing press in those days, so writers immediately set to work copying it by hand. There was so much demand for it that they couldn't keep up. Some rich people bought a copy of the entire Bible; many people bought parts of the Bible and often a group would combine together to purchase a copy to share. Nearly half of the people in England accepted the truth!

John Wycliffe fully expected to become a martyr. Three times he was called before different courts, but each time the Spirit of God came on him and he spoke with such power that the court couldn't say or do anything. When he did die, it was as a free man in his own church.

God did not bless John Wycliffe with money, with an easy life or even with good health; but he was blessed by God's protection of his life, by the satisfaction of doing a great work for God and sharing the good news of salvation with more people than we will ever imagine.

Do you remember what God promised Solomon, if Solomon would obey God? Read about it in 1 Kings 9:4-5 Did Solomon obey? 1 Kings 11:3-8 (no – he worshiped idols with his wives and even built temples for them!) What did God do? Read 1 King 11:11-13 and 1 Kings 11:29-31. 38 (planned to take 10 tribes away) And can you guess what Solomon did? Verse 40 (tried to kill Jeroboam)

When Solomon died his son Rehoboam became king; Rehoboam didn't love God and after listening to the advice of his friends he determined to be a tough king, forcing the people to work even harder for him and making them pay more taxes. He refused to listen to the advice of the elders. The ten northern tribes rebelled and chose Jeroboam to be their own king, and the kingdom was split in two just as God had foretold.

Rehoboam was the king of Judah – did he learn from his initial mistake and become a good king? 1 Kings 14:22, 23 Because of Rehoboam's sins, God allowed the king of Egypt to attack and carry off the treasure from the temple and the royal palace. After Rehoboam, his son Abijah was king and then Abijah's son Asa became king. Asa actually loved God and did a lot to start cleaning up the land and bring them back to God.

Jeroboam was the king of the ten northern tribes - did he obey God and receive the blessing God had promised through his prophet? Read 1 Kings 12:26-28, 31-33

What did God do? 1 Kings 13:1-5 (Have an adult or a really good reader tell or read this) God did heal Jeroboam's hand but still worshipped idols, so God finally told him that disaster would come on his family and they would all die. Jeroboam's son Nadab had only been king for two years before he and all his family were killed by Baasha who became the next king.

Did Baasha follow God? 1 Kings 16:1-3

Baasha could have had that same blessing promised to Jeroboam but he chose to reject God. His son Elah reigned only two years before Zimri plotted against him and eventually killed him and all of his family.

How long did Zimri rule? 1 Kings 16:15 (only seven days)

The army preferred Omri to be the king, but some people preferred Tibni, but Omri's supporters proved stronger. Omri's son was Ahab – the King in our Bible story this morning.

Discuss what had happened to Solomon's great kingdom.

What about us – we can't all be kings; what does God promise to those of us? (If possible come up with your own ideas in class, but here are some suggestions if you get stuck.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (temptation), John 3:16 (a home in heaven), 1 John 1:9 (forgiveness), Psalm 91:15 (deliverance), Isaiah 41:10 (support), Philippians 4:19 (needs), Jeremiah 10:31 (good plans), James 1:5 (wisdom)