

## 1381 AD – WYCLIFFE’S CRUSADE AND THE PEASANTS’ REVOLT

“**For this gird you with sackcloth,  
lament and howl  
for the fierce anger of the LORD  
is not turned back from us.” (Jeremiah 4:8)**

### HISTORY

Before the events of 1381 [Wycliffe](#) had been in a long battle against the Roman Church, which at that time in England was the official Church. Wycliffe called for the divestment of Church property on the basis that the King was the sovereign of the temporal realm not the Pope. For this reason Wycliffe found favor with some of the nobles and scorn from the Pope.

In 1377 [Pope Gregory XI](#) issued a bull which denounced Wycliffe’s teachings as erroneous and dangerous to the Church and State. A council of bishops met and forbid Wycliffe to speak any further on these matters. Pope Gregory XI died in 1378 and the matter died down.

Over time the ideas of Wycliffe became even more radical. He came to believe true priests ought to be poor itinerant preachers. He saw the saved as an invisible company of the elect who bear no relation to people inside an institutional church. He rejected the concept of purgatory. He disapproved of monasticism, clerical celibacy, pilgrimages, selling indulgences, and praying to saints. In a word Wycliffe esteemed the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles recorded in Scripture as supreme in matters of faith and practice, and the Pope to be nothing.

Up until 1381 Wycliffe enjoyed the protection of nobles and the favor of his contemporary academics at Oxford. Wycliffe also had a popular following. Wycliffe published tracts in Latin and in English for the consumption of lay people. As a result Wycliffe’s teaching spread into a popular movement called the [Lollards](#). After Wycliffe died the Lollards continued to be a force for reformation of the Church – long before the official Reformation on continental Europe.

In 1381 Wycliffe wrote his most radical teaching – which addressed the Lord’s Supper. As a result of this teaching Wycliffe lost the support of the nobles, in particular [John of Gaunt](#) who had defended him strongly in the past. The Chancellor of Oxford pronounced that he was a heretic. Wycliffe was unrepentant and published his opinions abroad to the public.

## WYCLIFFE'S THESES ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

These are Wycliffe's theses:

- I. "The consecrated host which we see on the altar is neither Christ nor any part of Him, but the efficacious sign of Him
- II. "No pilgrim on earth is able to see Christ in the consecrated host with the bodily eye, but by faith
- III. "Formerly the faith of the Roman Church was expressed in the confession of Berenger – viz., that the bread and the wine, which continue after the benediction, are the consecrated host.
- IV. "The Lord's Supper, in virtue of the sacramental words, contains both the body and the blood of Christ, truly and really, at every point.
- V. "Transubstantiation, Identification, and Impanation – terms made up by those who have given names to the signs employed in the Lord's Supper – cannot be shown to have any foundation in the Word of God.
- VI. It is contrary to the opinions of the saints to assert that in the true host there is an accident without a subject.
- VII. The sacrament of the Eucharist is in its own nature bread and wine, having, by virtue of the sacramental words, the true body and blood of Christ at every point of it.
- VIII. "The sacrament of the Eucharist is in a figure the body and blood of Christ, into which the bread and the wine are transubstantiated, of which the latter the nature remains the same after consecration, although in the contemplation of believers it is thrown into the background.
- IX. "That an accident can exist without a subject is what cannot be proved and well grounded: but if this be so, God is annihilated, and every article of the Christian faith perishes.
- X. "Every person or sect is heretical in the extreme which obstinately maintains that the sacrament of the altar of a kind per se – of and infinitely lower and more imperfect kind even than horse's bread.
- XI. "Whoever shall obstinately maintain that the said sacrament is an accident, a quality, a quantity, or an aggregate of these things, falls into the before-mentioned heresy.

XII. “Wheaten bread, in which alone it is lawful to consecrate, is in its nature infinitely more perfect than the bread of bean flour or of bran, and both of these are in their nature more perfect than an accident.”

The words of Wycliffe were a bombshell. In his book ‘The Morning Star of the Reformation’ John Wilson described it like this:

*“These things were bold – bold beyond precedent. Nothing so daring had been done in the entire history of the medieval Church. The boldness of the attack can only be understood and appreciated when it is borne in mind that the real presence [transubstantiated bread and wine] was then, as it is now, regarded as the cardinal doctrine of the Church. It was the very centre and citadel of the [Roman] faith.*

*“The blow fell like a thunderbolt. If there was commotion before, it now gave way to wild excitement. The Church was attacked in its very life centre; the honor of the University was imperilled; pious people were shocked...”*

In 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council the Roman Church had formally adopted the doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches that the bread and wine actually turn into the body and the blood of Christ when the priest says the magic words: ‘This is my body’.<sup>1</sup>

Wycliffe debunked the notion of transubstantiation as a patent lie and clerical invention. Wycliffe did not deny that celebration of communion was central to the faith. Wycliffe did not set out to destroy the faith – his purpose was to restore the faith. Wycliffe understood that the wine and the bread had significance – but as ‘a figure’ – a shadow of the real thing. The bread and wine assist the believer to enter into an awe of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross.

Wycliffe’s twelve theses came at a time of social upheaval in England. There was a Peasant’s Revolt. It was a major uprising which was triggered not by Wycliffe’s tract on the Lord’s Supper but by attempts by a royal official to collect the poll tax in Essex. This produced a confrontation and from there violence spread across England. Court records were burned and jails opened. The rebels occupied London and killed the Lord Chancellor and the Lord High Treasurer. [Young King Richard II met the rebels](#) and accepted their demand to abolish serfdom. It was a time when rulers were humbled for their sins against the commoners.

<sup>1</sup> <http://standardbearer.rfpa.org/articles/wycliffes-doctrine-lords-supper>

## PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH 4 V 8

### **“For this gird you with sackcloth”**

This simple phrase has so many fulfillments in the events of 1381 AD. First, the teachings of Wycliffe ought to have spurred saints on to celebrate communion and by God’s grace repent of unworthiness in the sight of the suffering of Christ. Second, the Roman Church should repent of its obstinacy in perpetuating a non-Scriptural practice in replacement of the holy commandment. Third, the King of England needed to repent of the entire feudal system of oppression of the common man – which he did, thank God, and saved his kingdom from the hand of the Lord in discipline. We can contrast King Richard II’s humility in meeting with the people and responding to their respectful and reasonable requests with the arrogance and violence of the Tughlaq Dynasty in India in oppressing their people. Only seven years after King Richard’s concessions, Timur came to the Tughlaq Dynasty in Delhi and delivered a crushing blow – it was the hand of the Lord in judgment. (See our paper [1398 AD](#))

### **“lament and howl”**

If saints truly appreciated the sacrifice of Christ – that he stepped down from the highest throne and humbled himself to be a child, and then abused by ignorant religious men, and finally totally debased upon the Cross – it would make us scream for the injustice of it.

### **“for the fierce anger of the LORD”**

The fierce anger of the LORD was destined for our souls – but Christ took our punishment on the Tree. He who knew no sin became sin for us.

### **“is not turned back from us”**

But for those spiritually dim religious leaders who perpetrate lies and suppress the efficacy of the work of Christ on the Cross to forgive God’s worshippers – once for all – and replace it with endless celebration of masses that have no favor in God’s eyes to forgive sins – to them the fierce anger of God is not turned back.

Wycliffe boldly declared the truth – in spite of the backlash and personal consequences. He paid the price to declare freedom to sinners through the gospel of Jesus. But to the religious men of the Church who hide behind lies – you will pay a more severe price on Judgment Day.

## SPIRITUAL NUMBER ANALYSIS

For a mind that has wisdom please read on. See truth from another perspective.

### PART ONE

Jeremiah **4 v 8** is the **19,036<sup>th</sup>** verse in the whole Bible starting at Gen **1 v 1**.

The number **19,036 = 4 x 4759 [641]**

The spiritual meaning of **4** is 'Message

The spiritual meaning of **641** means 'Accept Discipline'.

The spiritual meaning of **4759** means 'Rich Oppressor Condemns a Missionary'.

The 'Rich Oppressor' in this context were the nobles of England, the high clergy of England, and the highest academic authorities in the land who condemned Wycliffe 'Missionary' for his bold testimony for the power of the blood of Christ to forgive sins; grace through faith.

But central among this crowd of nay-sayers stands the archbishops and bishops and learned men whose very duty it is to preserve the Christian faith. But rather than preserve the faith they fought to preserve their privileged positions in society.

### PART TWO

Jeremiah **4 v 8** is the **1,381<sup>st</sup>** verse of The Prophets starting at Isaiah **1 v 1**.

The number **1,381 = [221<sup>st</sup> prime]**

The spiritual meaning of **221** is 'God Forsakes Them'

The spiritual meaning of **1381** is 'Great Harlot: Rebellion of Angels'.

The institutional church in all its forms – the Roman Church being a prime example – is a collection of individuals, many of whom are genuinely pious and feel in their conscience the scourge of conviction of sin. But these pious and learned men become the messengers 'Angels' of a 'Rebellion' against God when they turn the freely offered grace of our Lord Jesus into marketable religious commodities 'Great Harlot' sold to the saints as masses.