



The Lamblike Beast
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Dear Reader,

I stare out my window as I ride to a youth conference. Today is the deadline for writing the sample magazine. I should have gotten it done sooner, but I only had about two weeks notice that I was doing this, so here I am, wrestling with writer's block, trying to finish the last thing I need to write.

Being an editor is harder than I could have imagined when the idea to start this magazine popped into my head about 2 ½ months ago. Already it's been a learning journey as I step outside my comfort zone and do things I naturally shrink from. It's sent me to my knees in a whole different way, which is not a bad thing in any way. I'm thankful for the way God has led and is working, and I pray this magazine can be a blessing to you as well.

No matter what God calls us to do or how challenging our circumstances may be, He will always be there with us. His angels keep watch over each one of us as we seek His will in our daily lives. Like Millie and Wycliff experienced, God works everything out for the best, even when the devil tries to derail us or cause us harm. As we look at prophecy and see where we are standing today, this gives us hope. Because God never changes, we can rest in the assurance that His promises are true. The miracle working God of yesterday is still as powerful today.

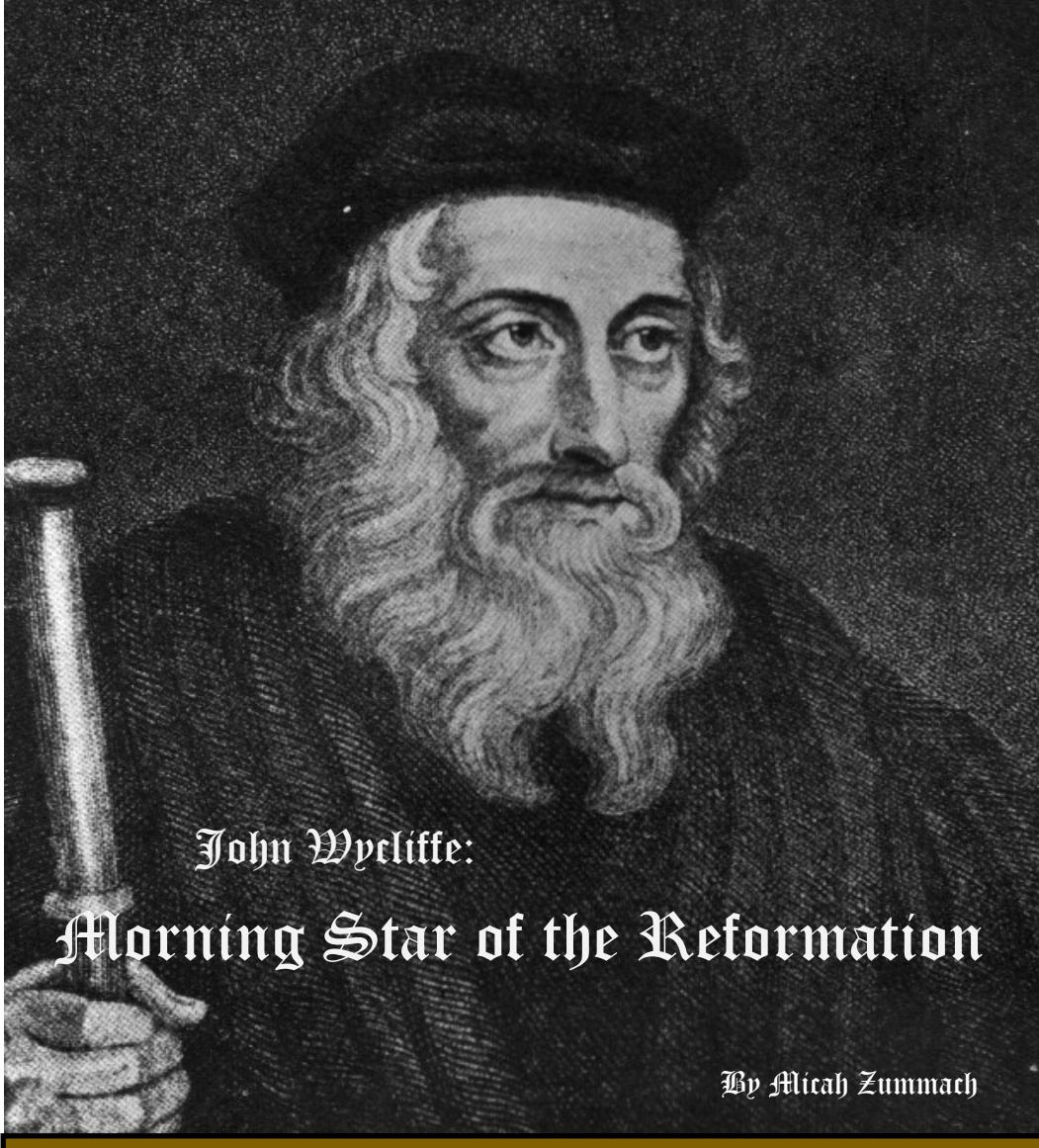
May His blessing be with you as you read and seek to draw closer to Him. He is coming soon!

Maranatha!

Bethany Wickham, Editor



**SCAN TO GO TO OUR
WEBSITE!!**



John Wycliffe: Morning Star of the Reformation

By Micah Zummach

John Wycliffe lay in his bed chamber, deathly ill. The stress of his work had burdened him so much, and now his body had succumbed to the load. It was fully expected that his life would soon slip away.

Suddenly, four friars entered the room, each representing one of the four orders of monks in England. As they approached the sick bed they believed they finally had

Wycliffe where they wanted him. Addressing the sick reformer, they admonished him:

"You have death on your lips, be touched by your faults, and retract in our presence all that you have said to our injury."

Wycliffe, who had held his peace during the friars' admonition, now called for an attendant to prop him up. Then, looking

each friar square in the face, and mustering all the strength he could, Wycliffe said:

"I shall not die, but live; and again declare the evil deeds of the friars!"

Astonished and mortified, the friars fled from the room, their purposes thwarted once more.

Born sometime after the year 1320, John Wycliffe was a member of a large, yet humble, family, coming from the town of Hipswell near Yorkshire, England.

He received his earliest education near his home, but he is first mentioned as being present at Oxford University in 1345, a place which he would maintain ties to for the rest of his life. Here, Wycliffe's foundation of learning was the fear of the Lord, and his already deep devotion to God went even deeper, for now he had access to the Latin text of scripture, which, being at a classical university, he had learned to read.

As he studied the Scriptures with the thoroughness he had applied to his other studies, the truths of the Gospel of Christ began to slowly but surely pierce the spiritual darkness that enshrouded him. The longing of his soul for something more, which he had tried to fulfill with his studies and with the teachings of the religious leaders of the time, now melted away as the beauty and simplicity of the plan of redemption unfolded before the eyes of his soul. As this new peace flooded his life, he devoted himself to the

service of Christ and to the spreading of

His Gospel as he now understood it.

With this new knowledge and outlook, Wycliffe began to teach others what he had learned. And as he taught, he began to see even more clearly the glaring errors of the Roman church.

His teaching was respected by many, and he was soon given the esteemed position of the king's chaplain. It was here that he made a move which endeared him to the English people and sealed his destiny as a Reformer. At the time of his chaplaincy, the pope required all nations that recognized his spiritual supremacy to pay a yearly tribute. This had angered the people of England, but feeling it their duty, they followed the requirement.

Wycliffe now came boldly forward, declaring the exactions of the pope to be outside the realm of his authority. Showing from the scriptures that secular authorities are not to be under the subjugation of spiritual leaders, Wycliffe advised the king and his nobles to refuse to pay the tribute.

However, this was not what Wycliffe would be most remembered for. Around this time, a great percentage of England's population consisted of monks, also known as friars. These monks had been sworn to a life of poverty and therefore were not permitted to work to earn a living. Instead, they must go forth daily from the monastery and beg for their daily provisions.

This caused the English economy to waver, with such a large percentage of the

population having to be supported by the rest. But every day, more young people were deceived into joining the monasteries and cloisters, for these monks were always searching for new recruits, even entering universities to persuade students to leave their studies and join the convent.

It was too much. Soon pamphlets from Wycliffe's pen began circulating all over the country, decrying the evils of the monastic system and showing from scripture how it defied the plain teaching of God's word.

Not long after, Wycliffe was designated rector of Lutterworth. This gave him a new platform from which to push for reform. The pastor's pulpit.

But it wasn't long before these efforts gained the attention of the pope. In short-succession, three separate papal bulls declared Wycliffe a heretic and demanded he appear before a tribunal of bishops. Though it seemed like it would lead to his death, Wycliffe complied with the orders and appeared before the bishops. However, through an overwhelming show of support from the people, the bishops became afraid to lay a hand on him.

Barely had this episode closed when the pope who had issued these bulls was removed by death. Two men then claimed to be the new pope and began calling each other the Anti-Christ. Wycliffe capitalized on the situation, writing *On the Schism of Popes* in which he said neither was wrong on the name they were calling

each other.

After his sickness and episode with the friars, Wycliffe completed one of his greatest accomplishments, the English translation of the Bible. This is probably his most important contribution to reformation.

As he aged, Wycliffe began to send out some of his students to teach the people.

Soon, a substantial group of traveling preachers formed, and these preachers, called Lollards, took the message farther and much faster than Wycliffe could have alone.

Then, once again, Wycliffe was in danger of a martyr's death. The Lord had other-plans though, and soon took him out of their reach when one morning, while performing his duties at the church in Lutterworth, he was stricken with palsy and soon yielded up his life. So ended the life of God's bold servant, who first brought the light of reform to England.

The Papists, enraged at not being able to carryout their plans on him, decided forty years after his death that they could not let his body rest in peace. So a group was dispatched to his grave, where they exhumed him and burned his bones, afterward throwing the ashes into a nearby stream.

But just as those ashes were carried by the stream out to the ocean, so the reforms of Wycliffe were to be picked up by another and spread to the four corners of the earth.

The Lamblike Beast of Revelation 13



John turned around from the sea and the frightening beast he just witnessed there. The rocky shoreline spread up into the hill, cloaked with yellow grass and short green shrubbery. Ever-present rocks jump up from the smooth yellow. It felt peaceful in contrast with the troubled sea.

Suddenly he noticed a slow movement as if a large plant was coming up. It pushed up through the yellow sod, and a beast, quite unlike the first, arose. It had two horns like a lamb, seeming innocent and pure, but then it opened its mouth, and John shuddered. It spoke like a dragon.

This intriguing prophecy is found in Revelation 13. Letting the Bible interpret itself, let's see if we can decipher what this beast may represent. In another issue, we will return to this prophecy and cover it more in depth, focusing on its connection to us today.

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." Revelation 13:11. This verse gives us a few details. This is a beast. It comes up from the earth, has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. The Bible gives definitions for each of these details.

Let's look at the symbol of the beast first. We read in Daniel 7:17, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." No other description in scripture is given, and

scholars typically accept that a beast represents a kingdom or earthly power. So we can know that this beast represents a kingdom.

Next, let's examine where this kingdom arises- the earth. This is the only place we see a beast arising from the earth, and earth isn't really defined anywhere. There's a lot of speculation about what it might mean, but the Bible gives us a clue. "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation 17:15. In other words, lots of people. We see beasts rising out of the water all the time in prophecy. This pattern is very evident in Daniel, with Daniel 2 being Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image representing the progression of nations through time, and Daniel 7 mirroring that, except each nation is represented by beasts. All the beasts rose from the waters, or heavily populated places, which is exactly what happened.

Now we have a nation that doesn't rise from the waters (heavily populated places) for the first time. It comes up differently from the other nations. It has to rise in a place heretofore unconquered. Those who love history are probably ruling countries out by now. There are a few more facts that show which nation this is.

Next, we see two horns like a lamb. It is easy to know what being like a lamb rep-

resents.

resents. Jesus was called the Lamb of God many times. So, whatever these horns are, they indicate likeness to Christ. Let's take a look at what the Bible defines horns as in Revelation 17:12: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." This tells us that horns represent kings or governing powers. Unlike the first beast of Revelation 13, these horns don't have crowns, an interesting difference. We will revisit this point again.

The last identifying factor is that this lamblike nation speaks as a dragon. It does not sound like Christ when it speaks. How does a nation speak? Through its laws and policies. This nation makes laws that are from the devil, who is represented by the dragon (Revelation 12:9).

What nation could this beast represent? It comes up like a plant, peacefully in a primarily unoccupied area. It's ruled by two governing principles that are Christlike in nature, yet it speaks like a dragon. Only one nation that fits these criteria: the United States.

The United States rose in a relatively peaceful manner, especially compared to nations in the Old World. Though the nation was occupied by natives, their populations had been greatly diminished by diseases and war by the time the country was founded. It was founded on the two great principles of Protestantism and Republicanism, with the guarantee of liberty for all. With these governing principles, it rose to greatness. For a long time, it was considered a Christian nation. However, its laws have changed, legislating immorality and death just as the dragon would

have it.

We have one more piece of evidence that confirms this. The first beast of the chapter comes to its end in verse 10; the verse before this beast comes up. It is said to continue for 42 months, which is 1,260 literal years following the day for a year principle (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6). We will cover this beast in more detail later, finding the start and ends times for that time period, and identifying which power it represents, but for now we will accept that 1,260 years stretches from 538 AD to 1798 AD. The second beast arises around the time the first beast loses power, which is exactly what happened with the United States.

Why is this important? It's cool that the United States is in prophecy, but does that really matter to us today? It absolutely does! We will explore the rest of this prophecy in another issue and cover how the United States will play a role in last day events.

Through all this, God is working out His plan to save His people. We may be caught in a great controversy, but Jesus decided the victory when He died on the cross. He will conquer, no matter how the devil tries to skew His plans. In His great love for us, He gave us these prophecies so we can know and be prepared for what will happen. He is not willing that any should perish, so He is calling, through these prophecies, for us to seek Him and hide in the shelter of His wings. Let us choose that now, for today is the day of salvation.



BEHIND THE LINE

By Ruth Myers

Millie stepped on the brakes and squinted out the windshield. "I can't see anything," she muttered to the empty car. "I guess I can make out Mama and Daddy's tail lights, but this road is drenched!" The rain poured harder than her wipers could clear it. Everyone was creeping along at 35 MPH. "If it would just clear up..." With a sigh and breathed prayer, she settled into the rhythm of trying to see through the rain and follow her parents through the downpour.

"I never did like the rain," she mused. "At home in California, I could be driving a full 55 MPH. Sure would be nice! Oh well, I guess that isn't how it is. I'll just be extra careful. I wouldn't want to slide into the ditch- especially not here." The

landscape was quite flat, though visibility was low. It just looked like gray rain and yellow grass, with a few trees here and there.

Finally, after what felt like forever, the rain began to thin. The blurry red lights ahead sharpened. "Good," she breathed, relaxing her grip and nudging the speed up to 45.

Suddenly, she was sliding across the wet pavement. Mile marker posts flew by her window. Everything was a blur. Tires roared. Metal groaned. Mud splashed across her windows. Her heart pounded louder than the storm. She felt halfway as if she was flying and halfway as if the car had turned into a wild bull from the rodeo. Then with a jolt, her wild ride was

over. The windshield wipers kept their steady rhythm as Millie sat for a moment, stunned.

The car's gonna explode.

The thought pressed through her being with such urgency that she threw the door open and leaped out into the rain. Her scenery didn't matter. All she saw was her feet and the little bit in front of her where she was placing them. She had to get away before the explosion took everything in the area.

My purse. She froze. My identification. I can't lose that! Racing against time and the imagined explosion, she reentered the danger zone, grabbed her purse, and ran, her eyes fixed on the wet, torn grass. She was vaguely aware that the grass had changed to pavement. There was the white line that marked where traffic was supposed to drive. She put out her foot to step across that line.

Just then she felt a warmth- then the presence of a robed arm reached over her shoulder. With it, there was a bit of peace in her turmoil. The robe was beautiful: white, with blue sparkling shadows. The hand placed firmly on her chest and drew her back behind the line. Somehow, she didn't lose her balance. And just then a car whizzed right by. Spray soaked her jeans. If she had taken that one step... Millie stood there, trying to comprehend. The whole experience felt like a dream, blurry and unreal.

She pressed her trembling hand to her

chest and glanced down. Her blue jeans were covered with brown spots from the spray, but both her feet were firmly behind the line. "The robed arm..." she breathed, scanning the drenched road. Had she really felt that? There was no one - just the rain and her pounding heart. Yet her ditched car and soaked jeans told her it had to be real. Goosebumps covered her arms. "That car should have run me over! How am I even still standing?"

As she was still contemplating what had just transpired, a car pulled off onto the shoulder beside her. "Do you need help?" the elderly driver asked.

"Yes, please," Millie answered, regaining her bearings. "I need to find my family. I think they stopped up there somewhere for me."

The driver agreed to help Millie, and soon she was reunited with her family. They returned to the accident site to survey the damage. "Mildred," her father began. "You should have rolled that car. And these posts- I don't know how you didn't hit one." He stopped and observed her tracks. "Why, here you were on one tire! I think we can all praise God that you are safe."

Millie nodded slowly, reverently. The image of the robed arm returned- just like the memory of the step she hadn't taken.

Your Name

123 Example Rd

Your Town, ST 12345

BUT THOUGH THE CONFLICT IS A CEASELESS ONE, NONE ARE LEFT TO STRUGGLE ALONE. ANGELS HELP AND PROTECT THOSE WHO WALK HUMBLY BEFORE GOD. NEVER WILL OUR LORD BETRAY ONE WHO TRUSTS IN HIM. AS HIS CHILDREN DRAW NEAR TO HIM FOR PROTECTION FROM EVIL, IN PITY AND LOVE HE LIFTS UP FOR THEM A STANDARD AGAINST THE ENEMY. TOUCH THEM NOT, HE SAYS; FOR THEY ARE MINE. I HAVE GRAVEN THEM UPON THE PALMS OF MY HANDS

HEAVEN IS VERY NEAR THOSE WHO SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE. CHRIST IDENTIFIES HIS INTERESTS WITH THE INTERESTS OF HIS FAITHFUL PEOPLE; HE SUFFERS IN THE PERSON OF HIS SAINTS; AND WHOEVER TOUCHES HIS CHOSEN ONES, TOUCHES HIM. THE POWER THAT IS NEAR TO DELIVER FROM PHYSICAL HARM OR DISTRESS, IS ALSO NEAR TO SAVE FROM THE GREATER EVIL, MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR THE SERVANT OF GOD TO MAINTAIN HIS INTEGRITY UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

AT TIMES THE LORD MAY SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THE PERILS OF HIS CHURCH, AND THE INJURY DONE HER BY HER ENEMIES. BUT GOD HAS NOT FORGOTTEN. NOTHING IN THIS WORLD IS SO DEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD AS HIS CHURCH. IT IS NOT HIS WILL THAT WORLDLY POLICY SHALL CORRUPT HER RECORD. HE DOES NOT LEAVE HIS PEOPLE TO BE OVERCOME BY SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS. HE WILL PUNISH THOSE WHO MISREPRESENT HIM, BUT HE WILL BE GRACIOUS TO ALL WHO SINCERELY REPENT

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