

The Upper Room Guide

Section I

Is there No God in Israel?

My Plans are for your Building up not your tearing Down.

The presupposition of this book is Ephesians 4:11-16, the promise that growth in the maturity of Grace and Truth is possible where the Spirit of God is and where His Word dwells richly; and with that growth, the transformation in how we govern ourselves is **inevitable**.

Society, the Church, the world, can only be governed as freely as the people are able to govern themselves freely by God's law from the heart. It is the ideal Jesus pointed us toward: His command was not to adopt this or that form of Authoritarian government. Indeed, there is literally nothing even vaguely like a Book of Church Order in the Bible, no discussion of forms much less theories of government, even in Moses' law. What we propose here is not an attempt to fill the silence with our theories. The NT focus on leadership in the Church is not a silent shrug, concerning government, but it is a positive command to form a government based on mentoring and discipleship to maturity from the heart.

Yet what we see in the Church today is perpetual external control and discipline of the immature, something that Jesus gave no example of in His ministry, and commanded us to avoid. The goal of Christ's government is maturing people to control themselves internally from the heart according to God's word. Wycliffe, like Christ, knew that if His church and His leaders could do this, in time the government of the State would follow in an increasing unfolding of freedom consistent with God's Law. God's law is the perfect law of freedom, not when it is imposed from the outside by controlling government, but when lived from the heart.

The Upper Room Guide

Chapter 1

Wycliffe's Vision

Seeing What You Don't think Is Possible

"So," he said, looking intently at his friend. "You do not believe fundamental change and growth in human character is possible. Yet you live in a world so transformed by the Gospel already as to be unrecognizable by any 1st or even 13th Century Christian. Let me just point out one small change that transformed the world in a mere 350 years."

And so, we sat together over glasses of Joel Gott and talked about John Wycliffe, an English revolutionary so obscure even his name can be spelled a dozen different ways, it is so irrelevant today to get him right. He is best known for his Bible translation that within a hundred and fifty years was rendered archaic because of the linguistic transformation of England coming into its own as a separate independent European power.

Though his name and what he did is believed utterly irrelevant to our modern world, all we see around us was made possible by his vision, which was hopelessly utopian in his day . . . just like you say mine is.

Join him for a minute as he looked out on his world.

As you look at his world with him, remember he, unlike you, knew nothing of what was to happen in the next 600 years. To him and to the people of his day, everything was the way things "always were" and "always would be". It is not that they ignored the soon to be reality of a printing press, it is that such a thing was unthinkable! It is not so much that it is foolish to imagine that something could change the world as we know it so radically as to erase every limit, boundary and possibility that is taken for granted, it is that it is almost impossible to live life in that unrealized "reality" if even the thought of it hasn't happened yet. Though we dream

from time to time about Utopias, or how things ought to be in family, church, or state, we do not let such dreams get in the way of reality.

For Wycliffe, there were two indomitable powers, the government of the state and the government of the Church of Rome. Both were, without apology, authoritarian absolutist. Both had experienced relative success or failure based on the strength and authority of the man whose hand was on the helm. Both were thoroughly autocratic and both fully confident that any form of government without a strong man at the helm would lead to hopeless instability, slaughter, starvation and death. Though much maligned, Machiavelli put this conviction of human government down in print one hundred years after Wycliffe. He argued in, ***"The Prince,"*** that ruthlessly firm autocratic rule was a necessity to avoid the far greater horror of civil wars, and social chaos — the squalor, starvation, rape and riot that would inevitably result without that firm external legal power in control of our lives. From the least to the greatest, Machiavelli's views have tended to provide the conviction and rationale to defend the need for the central power of government sufficient to control you, collectivize you, regulate you, centrally plan you and so protect you from those who would harm you.

The world had never known anything other than some version of a central government to rule/control the people . . . "for their own good." In the four hundred years following Wycliffe, both Church and State would take a radical transforming step, directly due to Wycliffe's ministry which, in the following centuries, grew far beyond anything he could have possibly imagined, though its effect and impact was precisely as he predicted in his preface to his Bible Translation.

There were two political power structures in Europe, the Noble and the Priestly, financed by a growing though still statistically insignificant group of merchants. Under them lived the other 95% of the people. These serfs and peasants were illiterate, living only forty short brutish years. The repeatable words used to describe them were, "Common", "Ignorant", "Unwashed", "Starving," "Rude", "Filthy", "Foul", "Ugly", "Beshiten," "Ignoble", and "Superstitious". The unrepeatable words are as long a list but I will not scorch your ears with hate speech. The general attitude of

the Nobles and Priests towards them matched the words they used to describe them. They were considered so devoid of any wholesome character, charm, or potential for anything, that even Karl Marx, the self-styled champion of the working classes, four hundred years later, wrote a letter to his patron Engels telling him that these peasants are entirely unfit to lead a revolution of the workers, or even to live in a land ruled by the proletariat, which is why he said Russia would not be a good place to organize the "People's Revolution," They were so devoid of potential that Marx's only solution was to, "liquidate them". Better for everyone to simply "kill them." (His words.)

While slaughtering them as a class was certainly not a thought shared by the intellectual, social, religious, political, and economic elite of 1350, the conviction that serfs and peasants are hopelessly worthless, ignorant, filthy, crude and useless except for the most menial of tasks, was their inescapable conclusion, which if you do not share it means that you cannot picture them as they were, you only picture them as the romantic imagination of the movies you have seen falsely portrays peasants and serfs.

Indeed, you have never met a serf, and will never meet one.

The despised 95% of society have all been transformed as a result of Wycliffe's vision into not only the people you know today and have grown up with, but you yourself are most likely a descendant of these miserable brutish people. There are no serfs and peasants in the West. **They have been transformed by the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit as Wycliffe said they would be.**

Wycliffe was one of the intellectual elites in England. England's leading scholar and vocal critic. He was sponsored by the most powerful political figure in England at the time, John of Gaunt, First Duke of Lancaster. His theological works described what any Reformer one hundred years later would easily recognize as standard Reformation thinking — except the Reformation was not even dreamt of while he was writing. It is true that his political writing thoroughly supported the monolithic power of the State. He provided theological reasons for the state to dismantle the monstrosity the Church had become in his day, and urged them to keep its preachers and prelates beggars. Why? His statism? No, he

realized he could not take on both tyrannical powers at once. Between the two, he chose Church reform as the most important knowing that, in time, if God's people in the Church could transform their relationship to the world then the structural transformation of the State would inevitably follow.

He was right.

The question Wycliffe faced was not then, nor is it now, "How will I change my world?" The first question to be addressed in his day, our day, and any day, is, "Why change the world at all? Indeed, can I change it?" Everyone at whatever period of human history they live in cannot help but believe in their bones that, "It all is what it is, and it is as we know it today." The more perceptive "recognize" the "fact" that the world as we know it is in a precarious balance: it's easy to make it worse but whimsically impossible to fundamentally improve it. Above all, it is almost impossible to think of the future in terms substantially different from the present. This is why people in general will applaud you for being a visionary, they will applaud you for your stimulating entertainment, and they will applaud you for the changes you think important. They will agree that, "things are a mess and need a-changin'". . . but they will seldom follow you no matter what the Bible says. If you get serious, they will seriously oppose you. Not so much because they disagree that what you say is "true," "better" or even "wrong," but because the balance we now live is impossible in their mind to actually change and to even try would bring disaster, blasphemy and every evil thing. They will find any and every way to obstruct you in the name of God and decency. **Any** alternative to the world as we know it is truly and literally unthinkable to most people. It's the Devil they know (all too often in the Biblical sense.)

Fundamental change never comes from persuading those functionally invested the world as it is. It comes from actually changing something in that world which keeps things the way they are. Consider: horses and buggies exchanged for cars; telephones replaced letters and visits; cellphones replaced televisions, telephones, movies and intimate exchanges; Internet replaces conversations, fellowship, research and libraries; and so on. In Wycliffe's case, he said, let Scripture change the heart and the Holy Spirit will change the world itself.

It is this way with forms of government. What changed English and Continental forms of government was not the theoreticians, though they had their place. What changed Europe was a transformation of the people themselves who were governed: that 95% who were serfs and peasants. They were changed at every level from bottom to top. So radical the change, that the English Commoner (that filthy, ragged, short lived, brutish, ignorant peasant) became an educated reformation warrior in every part of his culture, eventually leading to a reckoning that took the head off not merely King Charles, but in the next two hundred years, off the concept of Monarchy itself as a viable form of government.

And so, we come to Wycliffe. He wrote theoretical books and tracts about what the Church and state should be like — Church and State theory: you know, books about what the 3% who could actually read should believe about themselves and about their world in order to change it. Today even if translated they would make heavy going. Wycliffe realized at the end of his life that they were not going to be the agent of change.

These treatises — as radical as any Calvin or Luther wrote — did not change England, and in time, Europe and the World. No one ever heard of them.

Wycliffe, himself, it is clear from reading him, did not know what exactly the change would be, but he did know that because the Bible is true, the Holy Spirit is real, then these together in a man's heart would make him and the world unrecognizable to anyone who lived in his day, if they could only read God's Word with Spirit-opened eyes.

He proposed a simple act: translate the Bible into the Common Tongue; that is, the vulgar; the language actually spoken by the English. If he had been able to post his intent on Facebook, you would reply, "LOL, take ideas in a language that no one could understand or read (Greek and Hebrew) and translate them into another language that not only can no one can read, but no one wants to read (the everyday English that the peasants spoke)."

Did this vision grip him from his early days? Did it occur to him late in life when he looked at the futility of what he had written and the intellectual battles he had fought? The answer is romantic,

but irrelevant. The fact is, late in life he began work on the First English Bible. He justified that work by the transformation made possible by the Holy Spirit speaking in the Word to the heart and life of each Christian.

If he needed confirmation that he was on the right track, it came in the level of opposition and hatred, worse than he had ever known. Were it not for John of Gaunt, the first Duke of Lancaster, he would have been burned by the Church for pure heresy and the diabolical idea that the serf is changeable; that the serf can be transformed; that the serf would do anything but become an ungovernable mob if they ever got their hands on the Holy Words of God Himself. So deeply seated was their hatred and fear that though they could not burn him alive at the stake back in 1380, they did dig up his grave one hundred years later and burn his anathematized bones. But it was too late, the Holy Spirit and Scripture were out of their bag.

The church leaders hated Wycliffe, because, like us, they could only see the future in terms of the world they lived in. They could not grasp the fact that a transformed serf is no longer a serf at all. In fact, a serf transformed by the Holy Spirit speaking through the Word of God in his heart is a threat to all power systems that are designed to work with only the dull and empty masses, such as what Marx called the “lumpen proletariat,” which could only be managed by an elite ruling class of Nobles and bureaucrats.

If you can see the world as all who lived in 1375 saw it in their day, you can understand that your skepticism for his plans is no different from the skepticism of Church leaders today. The asked:

Why Translate the Bible into a language almost nobody of any distinction (the 3%) considered a legitimate language for any person of gentle birth to even speak at all?

Why translate the Bible into a language that nobody who speaks it can read?

Why translate the Bible if it is impossible to handwrite enough copies of it for more than a small handful of illiterates to possess in their miserable hovels?

Why translate the Bible for people who are incapable of grasping its simplest concepts when they are painstakingly explained to them? What could they possibly do with a conceptual world that is hopelessly beyond them?

If the whole world had Down Syndrome, and were managed by an elite 3% who took care of everyone, why translate anything at all? If a Downs could be taught to read, a big "IF", how would it help him? So too the serf, the peasant of 1370.

So too, your estimation of the common Christian today, surely the Holy Spirit can do no more to change us today than he could do to change the Christian serfs and peasants of 1350.

Of course, today, you know that once the Bible was in translation, people would crave to be taught to read it. You know that in sixty years, Guttenberg would invent a device that would put copies of the Bible in everyone's hands. You know that once people began to read and understand God's Word, their whole understanding of who they were and what they could do changed. You know that the very structures of the political, intellectual and scientific world would be transformed by these people who only two, three, four generations earlier, with all honesty and no prejudice, could only be described as, "Common", "Ignorant", "Unwashed", "Starving," "Rude" "Filthy", "Foul", "Ugly", "Ignoble", "Superstitious".

Yes, you know this. *But no one in Wycliffe's day "knew" this.* They only knew back then of Wycliffe's impossibly dangerous scheme of Bible translation. They knew of their future as much as you know of your future. When you listen to the rest of what I have to say, will you too say with the Church of 1350, "Impossible! Entertaining? Yes. Whimsically hopeful? Yes. But impossible! Impossible because freedom destroys the free. Such a vision of God's Word and God's Holy Spirit would permit every heresy. It would break down all lawful authorities and powers which hold heretics in check. It would corrupt and destroy the very people who would be "liberated" or "empowered" by these ideas from God's Word! We need rulers to control us!"

What do you think about yourself when you find yourself picking up the same stones to throw, and the same firewood they picked up to burn Wycliffe's vision when you are presented with

the idea that Today, in your day 2018 or whenever you live, you who are reading this. Is this what you say when someone tells you like Wycliffe told them that the Holy Spirit and God's word are not finished freeing and transforming the life of the world for whom Christ died.¹

One bedrock fundamental of Wycliffe's day, and of our day, is that people cannot change and get better as a whole. You are convinced, that, "Even if the Holy Spirit Himself were to indwell them² ... even if the Word of God is in their hands and dwells richly in their heart³ . . . even if the Law of God is written on their hearts⁴ . . . even if the Bible itself says all that, transformational change of God's people and the earth⁵ through them is impossible. Not even God can do it! We are what we are."

In the end, wherever you find yourself in history, you will, along with everyone else in that age, believe that people are what you experience them to be and they will never be capable of accomplishing, or living, or becoming, or achieving more or less than the people of that age imagine is possible given what we all "know" our limits to be. And of course, God must be just as limited as we are.

Wycliffe in answer to these same questions was convinced that the serf, the ignorant, boorish, short-lived ploughboy, with God's word in his heart could be transformed into someone capable of self-government, wisdom and trust. That is, someone who did not need the strong hand of the Lord of the Manor and even the King of England to keep him under strict control as if they were his true father . . . for his and everyone's own good. Above all, Wycliffe believed that such a ploughboy would need no Priests to control him through mediating Grace for him. That ploughboy would in time have no need to call any man Father, or Rabbi, or Teacher, for he would be taught by God.

He wrote for the first time in human history a political statement of something that had only been written before by

¹ John 3:16; Matthew 23:31

² Numbers 11:29; Hebrews 8:11

³ Colossians 3:16

⁴ Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26; Jeremiah 31:29-33; Hebrews 8:10.

⁵ John 3:16; Matthew 28:18-20;

Moses, Jeremiah, Joel, Peter, the Author of the Book of Hebrews, and Jesus Christ in the Upper Room at the end of his earthly ministry.

When Moses was confronted by men who were prophesying apart from his control and direction, his key men urged him to make them stop, to recognize the potential for political division and riot if men are permitted to be a source of God's Word apart from the control of the Church or State. To which Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" He saw the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God in the heart and mouth of every man, woman, and child to be **the** necessary ingredient of the Kingdom of God on Earth, not a threat to it. The Holy Spirit poured out on all flesh is only a threat to the Simon the Sorcerers of the world⁶ that is, those who fancied themselves as the elite ones who control God's Kingdom by controlling His Word and Spirit.

When Jeremiah envisioned what the New Covenant person would look like, he said, "In that day, no one will need anyone to teach him, 'know the Lord' for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest."⁷

When Joel foresaw the Holy Spirit of God being poured out on all flesh as the sign of the last days fulfillment of God's people and Peter said on Pentecost, "This which you see is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel."⁸ This Church then and today is that longed for reality.

The writer of Hebrews quoted Jeremiah at length beyond this small excerpt and said that this is the day Jeremiah spoke of. The coming of Christ is the Sabbath the world awaited. These are the Christians — the garden variety common every-day Christians — who fulfill that Word.⁹ As Paul said, they have no need of a pedagogue, a teacher for children, they are adults capable of self-government.¹⁰ The purpose of elders is not to be a pedagogical

⁶ Numbers 11, Acts 8:9-24

⁷ Jeremiah 31:34

⁸ Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17

⁹ Hebrews 4, 5 & 11. Matthew 1. The Word of God made flesh is at birth, the dawn of God's Sabbath in History.

¹⁰ Galatians 3:24-26.

external disciplinary or protective force but like Jesus, a teacher, mentor, discipler of mature adults who lay down their lives.

Another 1,300 years later, Wycliffe stated the political possibility of a people who had direct access to God's Word in their own language: hidden in their own hearts, transforming their lives, filled with God's Holy Spirit, making them a people as a body politic to be sufficiently self-governed so as to make possible a ***"government of the people, by the people and for the people."*** Yes, it was Wycliffe who said that in his introduction to his translation of the Bible into English in 1385. He saw the world-transforming possibility of the Holy Spirit speaking through the word to each believer who took the name of Christ, none in need of intermediaries between them and God to control their lives either in the government of the Church or, in time, in the government of the State as well.

If you can see your world as Wycliffe saw his, it will help you understand that what you feel in your bones about the possibility of fundamental change, is false even as what his critics felt in their bones about the danger of what he proposed was utterly false. What you think of as the limits of honesty, morality, truth and action of the world as you know it is no more the limit of what God will do with our world, than it was God's limit in 1370, in 400 or in 32 or in 1400 BC. Our current world is not the limit of the best we can hope that God wants to make of us. You may think that the current mode of governance in Church and State is necessary to control humankind as you know them to be — as you know yourself to be — that it is unalterably necessary to protect freedom, truth, and justice, and to prevent disaster for all. But that was not what Wycliffe thought in the 1370's and it is not what you should think in whatever year you read these words from now to the end of time itself.

In reality, what must be learned from Wycliffe is that government is the solution to a problem. Government (wherever found) will only be as heavy handed as the people think it needs to be based on their level of ability to freely govern their own affairs. In Wycliffe's day the level of people's ethical knowledge and judgment was such that it seemed necessary to all that a heavy handed central authority was necessary to maintain order and defend freedom such as it was. It made common sense that there

must be an empowered elite society of Nobles authenticated by royal blood equipped to run things for everyone's good ordained by God Himself!

In the Church, though the structure was a bit different, this same elitist idea of a hierarchy of Priests authenticated not by royal blood but by their relationship to the Pope (Father) as the source of truth, authority and peace for society was the bedrock assumption of society.

After the Reformation, after Wycliffe's translation project (magnified by a thousand translators printed into millions of books) took hold, the people did change. Their level of personal ethics and judgment matured. They could be involved directly in the government of Church and State without descending into a mob. They threw off the now unnecessary bondage of the Fatherhood of Priests and Aristocrats. The basic lot of every member of society improved. How they were governed externally changed as radically as their hearts of stone changed to hearts of flesh internally.

Do not misunderstand, Government is not an artificial construct that you can change like clothes as you wish. The corporate government of Church or State is always based on the general consensus of how people think they work together best. That is, how much freedom they should have before their liberty becomes a threat both to them and to those in power.

Government is what human kind from creation was wired to exercise first in themselves, and then with each other. It is an inescapable solution to the problem of living together. There is no such thing as a nongoverning human being, or an organizationless, or leaderless society. Therefore, successful exercise of our humanity requires that enough people must understand the problems posed by life in society, in sufficiently similar terms and understand the solution — their specific government — as a reasonable solution that is generally agreeable to enough people to sustain it.

While the Curse reigned in the earth from Genesis 3:16 until the Cross of Jesus Christ, we governed by ordaining a group of leaders to control us religiously, politically and in our families. Every age has had its theory of proper government and the one

unchanging point in common was that someone or some group should have the special power to force all others to do what it said. Changing that gut sense of how things work to protect and enable us all to be free is not an idle task for an afternoon.

Only if it is possible for people to change from the heart, internally, will it be possible and necessary for their external governments to change with them. This is true regardless of who holds the seats of power in that government, or how it is structured, or who wants the change.

In the New Covenant, the Priesthood has changed. It is no longer a hierarchy of specialist-elites set apart as mediators between God and man. When the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change in the form of government. That is, government also will reflect the level of freedom a people can responsibly manage based on their unmediated, internal self-government.

This is precisely the horror that the Pharisees warned of when they got wind of what Jesus was up to. It is the horror that the Roman Catholic Church warned the world of concerning Wycliffe: You must keep God's Word out of the hands of the Commoners lest they discover that they and none other, are the only priests spoken of in the New Covenant, lest they attempt through egalitarian chaos to impose the rule of the mob, lest they vainly imagine themselves capable of freedom, lest they introduce every heresy known to man, lest society breaks down and all morality with it.

This is the problem created in our social and political world when people believe that in Christ, the Holy Spirit of God Himself dwells richly in Word and truth in each common Christian who to us today seems so similar to the unchangeable ploughboy of Wycliffe's day — so desperately in need of a governor to tell him when, where, and how to know the Lord.¹¹

Ezekiel asked the same question we ask: "Can these bones be made alive with merely the Word of God and the breath of the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel's day? in Jesus' day? in Wycliffe's day? in our day? And if made alive will they be nothing more than a zombie

¹¹ Ephesians 1

apocalypse? Or is God through His prophetic Word and Spirit creating new possibilities along with the new people he is bringing to life?"

If human kind were static; if there were no end goal, no Plan of God for the Earth, to which we journey as God's people from Creation to the end of time; if what we are today; if both the good and the bad, is all we will ever be; if everything is up to date in Kansas City; if they really have gone as far as they can go; if turning the radiator on whenever they want heat is as much as can be expected of human fruitfulness and multiplication and of the redemption of Christ; then Jesus would be absurd to command that government as human kind has always known it — government by the greatest among us, albeit with checks and balances — is not the way He wants **His** people to govern themselves.

The presupposition of this book is not that we can today describe exactly what God has in mind or how he wants us to organize ourselves. It is not faith in some egalitarian vision which denies either the differences between people and gender, or even a denial of the distinctives which call for leadership and submission to it.

The presupposition of this book is not that all other forms of government are mistaken or evil or compromises of God's word. In fact, so far is it from these things, even if every word of this book were true, that would not mean that you and I have the growth in grace sufficient to live in such a Church as Christ envisioned, any more than the Israelites had grown sufficiently in grace to inherit the promise of the Land though they saw its goodness with their own eyes from the Desert.

The presupposition of this book is that the Promised Land is here. It is the promise that growth in the maturity of Grace and Truth is possible where the Spirit of God is and where His Word dwells richly, that this transformation in how we govern ourselves is **inevitable**.

The presupposition of this book is that as God's people grow in grace. That what His people did in the Upper Room and then with the Disciples in that first generation is actually possible. We are not inventing something if we try to be faithful to their vision, it is the church after the Apostles — in opposition to the

Apostles — who have invented the alternative to the rule of the Holy Spirit. Wycliffe's "Government of the people by the people and for the people" is more than just a hope of representative government, whether the rule of elders we elect, or the rule of congressmen and presidents we elect. It would be ridiculous to think that Wycliffe or Scripture prophesied a specific form of constitutional government. It is rather a visionary statement of what Jesus commanded in the Upper Room on the night he was betrayed, you might say his last normal night on earth as they once knew it before the dawning of the Sabbath.

The presupposition of this book is that Jesus opened the door in the Upper Room to the possibility of organizing a government on a foundation other than finding "the greatest among you" and granting them power to enforce the submission of the not so great among you for a period of time (or life). These words in the context of the rest of Scripture show that He did not prescribe a particular form of that government, that night. Rather He commanded that we seek a form of government that is utterly founded on and consistent with self-government under His Spirit and Word guiding the individual's life. This kingdom from the heart is to be the basis of further corporate union and government church, state, or family. This is why He turned government from "the greatest" among you into a government of "the least" among you (which, if you reflect for a moment, is one of the key notes of His entire ministry, His answer to John the Baptist's skepticism, His answer to the Pharisees' elitism, His central theme in the Sermon on the Mount, his words on who should govern whenever the disciples asked who was the greatest — who would rule when he had gone — His last words on government in the Upper Room.) He was not addressing the character of the governor. He was cutting his governors off from the worldly power of coercion, control and externally imposed discipline and control of the spiritual life of His congregation. He would not leave them powerless He would merely take away the organizational illusion of power and grant to them the true world changing power of the Holy Spirit poured out on even the least esteemed among us as fully as the greatest: to persuade and convince based on the integrity of life and word and the power and testimony of the Holy Spirit speaking through the Word alone. He did this because He foresaw that someday, the burden of government, of freedom itself, would be the daily

responsibility of each and every individual — *not* the responsibility of an elite few guardians ad litem in mediatorial or representative place of God's people.

Society, the Church, the world, can only be governed as freely as the people are themselves personally able to govern themselves freely. It is the ideal Jesus pointed us toward in the Church: ***His command was not to adopt this or that form of external government which is why there is literally nothing even vaguely like a book of Church order in the Bible or a discussion of forms of government; it was to focus the leadership in the Church not on controlling people externally but on discipleship — maturing people without coercion to control themselves internally from the heart according to God's word.*** Like Wycliffe, He knew that if His church and His leaders could do this, in time the government of the State would follow in an increasing unfolding of freedom consistent with God's Law.

We have been on a two-thousand-year sidetrack by ignoring His words that night, thinking the task of government is to control and protect incompetent minors, rather than to equip and enable a transformed mature people to govern, to protect and to control themselves from every wind of doctrine.

It's time we recognize and do what it takes for us to change this trajectory and find true Liberty, Justice and Freedom. Come turn the page with me!