

A The truth in question:

❖ Times of persecution.

- The period of persecution is announced in three different ways: “time, times and half a time” (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14); 1,260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6); 42 months (Rev. 11:2; 13:5). All expressions indicate a single period: 1,260 days.
- Under the principle of “day for year” (Ez. 4:6; Num. 14:34), this period of persecution spans 1,260 years of history: from 538 to 1798.
- As prophesied, God prepared a place to help the faithful church: the wilderness, that is, places sparsely inhabited (Rev. 12:6, 14).
- In the time of difficulties and persecution, faithful believers stood firm in defense of the truth, taking refuge in the love and care of God (Ps. 46:1-3).

❖ Fidelity in the pursuit.

- Once it gained political power, the Roman Church began to become corrupt and use its power to demand that everyone comply with its religious precepts, many of which had been perverted.
- To prevent the masses from rebelling against his authority, he took from them the most precious thing: the Word of God.
- But faithful arose who, guided by biblical teachings and following the advice of Judas, fought vigorously to defend their faith (Jude 1:3).

B The defense of the truth:

❖ Sharing the Bible: the Waldenses.

- Peter Waldo (1140-1218), a wealthy French businessman who renounced his wealth to preach Christ, founded the “Poor of Lyon” movement, known as “Waldenses.”
- What characterized the Waldenses?
 - (1) They were the first to have the Bible available in their own language (until then, it was only available in Latin, Greek or Hebrew).
 - (2) Since it was a forbidden book, they copied it in caves, hiding from the papists who besieged them.
 - (3) They always carried biblical portions with them that, at opportune moments, they shared with others, giving them hope and encouragement in the Lord.
 - (4) They preserved the biblical truths they knew for centuries. They were known for their fidelity and devotion.
 - (5) Entire villages were converted both in the south of France and in the north of Italy, Piedmont.
 - (6) Most of these villages were razed to the ground by the Papacy, and their inhabitants massacred.

❖ The star of the reform: Juan Wycliffe .

- John Wycliffe (1324-1384) dedicated much of his life to translating the Bible into English. What motivated her to do this? Two reasons: Christ had transformed him through the Word; and wanted to share the love of Christ with others.
- Of course, this brought him into conflict with the official Church. Thanks to his contacts with high officials in England, John avoided death at the hands of the Church.
- In 1428 the reformer's remains were burned, and his ashes were thrown into the river. His scattered ashes became a symbol of his legacy.
- The small light of truth that John Wycliffe lit reached Bohemia, where John Hus took his legacy. In this way, the truth made its way until the dawn of the reform. The day was beginning to lighten.

❖ **Strengthened by faith: Juan Huss and others.**

- After John Wycliffe, other reformers arose:
 - (1) John Huss (1370-1415)
 - (2) Jerome (1360-1416)
 - (3) Tyndale (1494-1536)
 - (4) Hugh Latimer (1490-1555)
- What gave them courage to carry out their reforms and face problems and death?
 - (1) They believed in the promises of Christ
 - (2) The strength of Christ was enough for them to overcome the trials
 - (3) They found joy in participating in the sufferings of Christ
 - (4) His faithfulness was a powerful testimony to the world
 - (5) They looked beyond the present, towards the glorious future
 - (6) They knew that death was a defeated enemy
 - (7) They held fast to the promises of God's Word
- John Hus was imprisoned and eventually burned at the stake. From prison he wrote: “how merciful God has been to me, and how admirably he has sustained me.”
- Just as God's promises sustained his people in the past, they sustain us today.