



# MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY

FROM NUMIDIA TO BYZANTIUM



# Medieval Church History

1. The Gospel in North Africa: Augustine
2. The Doctrine of Christ and the Council of Chalcedon
3. Bishops, Emperors, and the Latin Vulgate
4. The Gospel in the British Isles: Patrick, Columba, and Aidan
5. Roman Catholic Development and the Emergence of Islam
6. The Great Schism between Rome and Constantinople
7. The Gospel in the Alps: Peter Waldo, the Waldensians, and the French Bible
8. The Crusades
9. Roman Catholic Development
10. The Gospel in English: John Wycliffe and the English Bible
11. The Gospel in Bohemia: Jan Hus





# Beginnings of Reformation in Bohemia

## Unknown Bible translators

- Completion of Dresden Bible, translated from Latin Vulgate to Old Czech (c. 1360)

## Early Reformers: Konrad Waldhauser and Matěj of Janov

- Criticized immorality of Roman Catholic Church leadership
- Encouraged Bible reading in Czech

## Jan Milíč, “Father of the Czech Reformation” (1325-1375)

- Preached in Latin for Prague nobility, and in Czech for the common people.
- Established “New Jerusalem,” a home to rescue women from prostitution
- Died in Avignon after summons by the pope to face trial (1375)
- Two of his followers establish Bethlehem Chapel in Prague (1391)

## John Wycliffe’s writings arrive in Bohemia (c. 1395-1401)



# Context of Jan Hus (1371-1415)

- Avignon Papacy (1309-1376)
- John Wycliffe's death (1384)
- Papal Schism between Rome and Avignon (1378-1417)
- Twelve Conclusions of Lollards (1395)
- Lollards begin to suffer martyrdom in England (1401)
- Third pope added at Council of Pisa (1409)
- Council of Constance (1415-1418) convened to address the problem of three popes
- Charles IV of Luxembourg (1316-1378)
  - King of Bohemia (r. 1342-1378)
  - Holy Roman Emperor (1355-1378)
  - Founds Charles University in Prague (1348)
- Anne marries Richard II of England
- Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia
  - King of Bohemia (1378-1400)
  - elected but not crowned Holy Roman Emperor
- Sigismund of Luxembourg
  - King of Hungary (1385-1437)
  - King of Germany (1410-1437)
  - King of Bohemia (1419-1437)
  - Holy Roman Emperor (1433-1437)







# Early Life and Education

c. 1370-1398



# Early Life.

- Born in Husinec, Bohemia (c. 1370)
- Parents unknown
- Initially pursued priesthood for financial gain
- Began studies at Prague University (1393)
- Change of heart as he studied the Scriptures and encountered the writings of John Wycliffe





# Prague University

## Studies

- Bachelor of Arts (1393)
- Master of Arts (1396)

## Academic Career

- Joined the faculty of Prague University as a professor of philosophy
- Translated some of Wycliffe's works from Latin into Czech





# Bethlehem Chapel

- Bethlehem Chapel founded by two merchants in 1391
  - Financed by Wenceslas Kříž and John of Milheim
  - A chapel, not a church, as a place where the Word of God would be preached in Czech
  - Privately owned instead of being owned by the Roman Catholic Church
  - Took people from the parish of Saint Philip and James
  - Milheim had to pay the priest there for subtracting people from his parish
  - It could hold about 3,000 people







# Professor and Preacher

1398-1412







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## Sermon excerpt from December 19, 1410

“To believe means to agree with the truth we cannot see and to disregard the intimidation of enemies.

It means to believe that Christ was born, died for our sins, rose from the dead, to believe in eternal bliss and eternal life and other articles of faith which I cannot see.

Faith does not mean to believe in something I have seen, when I see you or something else . . . .

Here we can see how we are to believe and how to establish our faith on God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Let us not believe in anything else, not even in the blessed Virgin or in a Pope, because we are not to love either one of them more than Christ.”



# Theology Disputes at Prague University

A mock genealogy of “Wycliffite” heresy at Prague University:

*“Stanislav begat Peter, Peter begat Páleč, and Páleč begat Hus.”*

- Stanislav taught at the University, Páleč was a fellow student
- German faculty voted in 1403 to declare Wycliffe’s writings to be heresy and ban them from the university.
- Stanislav, Páleč, and Hus defended Wycliffe’s teachings  
Páleč: “Let anyone who wishes rise and impugn one word of it, and I will defend it.”
- German votes (3) outnumbered the Bohemian vote (1)
- Páleč and Stanislav are summoned to Rome, imprisoned, and released after recanting from following Wycliffe. They return and denounce Hus.



# Papal Schism Wicens (1409)





# Pope John XXIII succeeds Alexander V in Pisa





# Zbyněk Zajíc, Archbishop of Prague

- Purchased the archbishopric of Prague for 2,800 gulden (1402).
- Supported the Roman pope Gregory XII while Wenceslaus IV waited for the outcome of the Council of Pisa. (1409)
- Placed Bohemia under interdict as penalty for not supporting Gregory XII (no church services, no preaching, no sacraments).
- Wenceslaus IV decided to support new pope Alexander V of Pisa, and sought the title of Holy Roman Emperor.
- Zbyněk places Hus is placed under interdict, Wycliffite heresy must be purged from Bohemia to strengthen Wenceslaus' candidacy for Holy Roman Emperor (1409)
- Ordered that Wycliffe's writings be burned (July 16, 1410).  
*“Bishop Zbyněk, ABCD, burned books not knowing what was written in them.”*
- Zbyněk denounces Hus to Alexander V of Pisa and excommunicates Hus (1410).
- Prague riots and Zbyněk fled.
- Wenceslaus IV ordered an end to the interdict and for books to be replaced. Zbyněk refused, and Wenceslaus confiscated church property.





# Papal Opposition and Escalation

- Alexander V of Pisa died, is succeeded by Pope John XII.
- Jan Hus and King Wenceslaus IV appealed to Pope John XIII of Pisa to lift excommunication, but he upheld the excommunication (1411).
- Pope John XXIII declared Hus a heretic and summons him to Pisa.
- Pope John XXIII placed Prague under interdict (March 15, 1411)
- King Wenceslaus IV ordered Prague's clergy to ignore the interdict and keep churches open.



# Against Indulgences (1412)

- Pope John XXIII of Pisa sent a seller of indulgences to Prague (December 1411).
- Indulgences were to raise money for war against Pope Gregory XII of Rome.
- Hus denounced indulgences, falling out of favor with Wenceslaus IV.
- Three of Hus's followers beheaded for condemning the sale of indulgences.
- Prague is placed under interdict because of Hus' preaching.







# Exile

1412-1414



# On Scripture

“Every Christian is expected to believe explicitly and implicitly all the truth which the Holy Spirit has put in Scripture, and in this way a man is not bound to believe the sayings of the saints which are apart from Scripture, nor should he believe papal bulls, except insofar as they speak out of Scripture, or insofar as what they say is founded in Scripture simply.

For both the pope and his curia make mistakes from ignorance of the truth. And, with reference to this ignorance, it can be substantiated that the pope makes mistakes and may be deceived. Sordid gain deceives the pope . . .

Of one kind is the faith which is placed in God . . .

of another is the faith placed in the pope, who may deceive . . .”





## Excerpts from Letters (1/3)

“For my own part, I will expose my body to death (I trust with the assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ), if his mercy comes to my assistance; for I do not desire to live in this corrupted age, unless I can lead to repentance myself and others, according to the will of God.”

“Hold yourselves ready for the combat; for behold already appear the preludes to the beginnings of Antichrist: the combat is near, and the poor bird must flap his wings against the wings of Behemoth, and against this tail of Antichrist, that always engenders abominations.”

“The Lord will confound the pope and his preachers, his officers and his doctors, who, under a false name of holiness conceive abominations . . . He sits in high places, offers himself as if he were God to the adoration of all; traffics in spiritual things, and sells all that he possesses not. Woe unto me if I weep not, if I write not against it!”



## Excerpts from Letters (2/3)

“I understand they intend destroying the chapel of Bethlehem . . .

They wanted to entwine the simple bird in the snare of citations and anathemas . . . But if that bird, which is a mere domestic fowl . . . has broken through their nets, how much more with other birds, that soar aloft as they announce the Word of God, despise such ineffectual wiles.

They have flung about their fiery darts from the quiver of antichrist, in order to prohibit the Word of God and His worship.”

“I do not hesitate to expose this miserable body to the peril of death for God’s truth, being well aware that nothing will be wanting to us in his Word, and that his Gospel must be propagated more and more every day.”



## Excerpts from Letters (3/3)

“I desire to live for those who suffer violence, and who have need of the preaching of the Word, in order that the malice of antichrist may be laid open, and that the good not become its victims . . . God’s will must be accomplished in me, whether I suffer and die by antichrist.”

Woe to priests who neglect the word of God!

Woe to them who, when they announce it, live nevertheless in effeminacy and idleness!

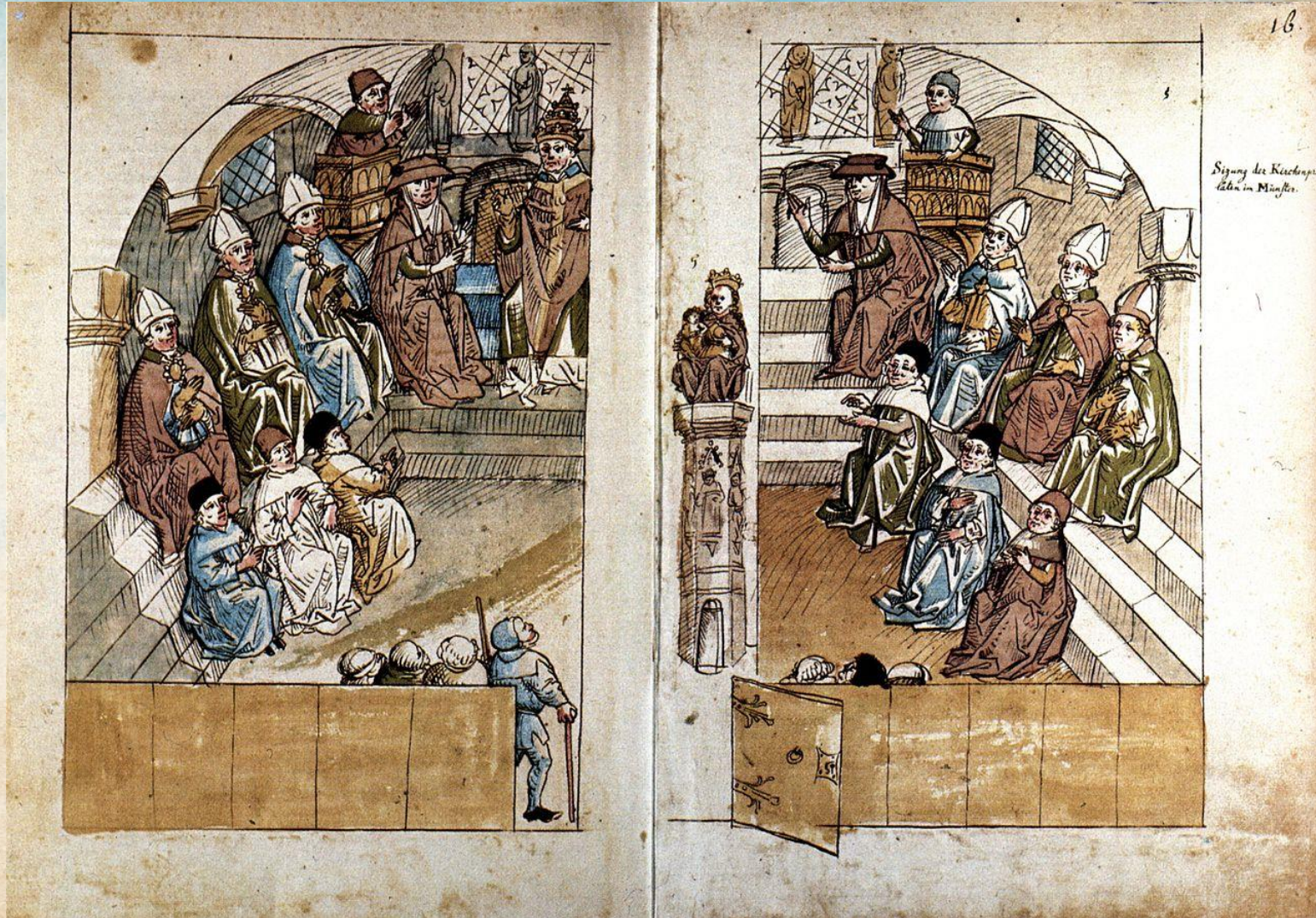
Woe to them who prevent the Word of God from being preached and listened to!

Happy, on the other hand, are they who attend to it, who guard it in their hearts, and who preserve it in themselves by good works. Christ has blessed them, saying ‘Happy are they who hear the word of God and keep it.’”



# The Council of Constance

- Called by Pope John XXIII
- 18,000 clergy and attendants
- 5,000 in attendance at the council





# Summons to Constance, Germany

- Friends counseled Hus against going
- Reassurance from Sigismund
  - promised that Hus can address the council
  - promise of safe conduct to and from the council
- Travel to Constance (October 11 - November 3, 1414)
- Initial freedom in Constance to go to worship and to preach
- Imprisoned on November 28, 1414





# Imprisonment and Trial

November 1414-July 1415

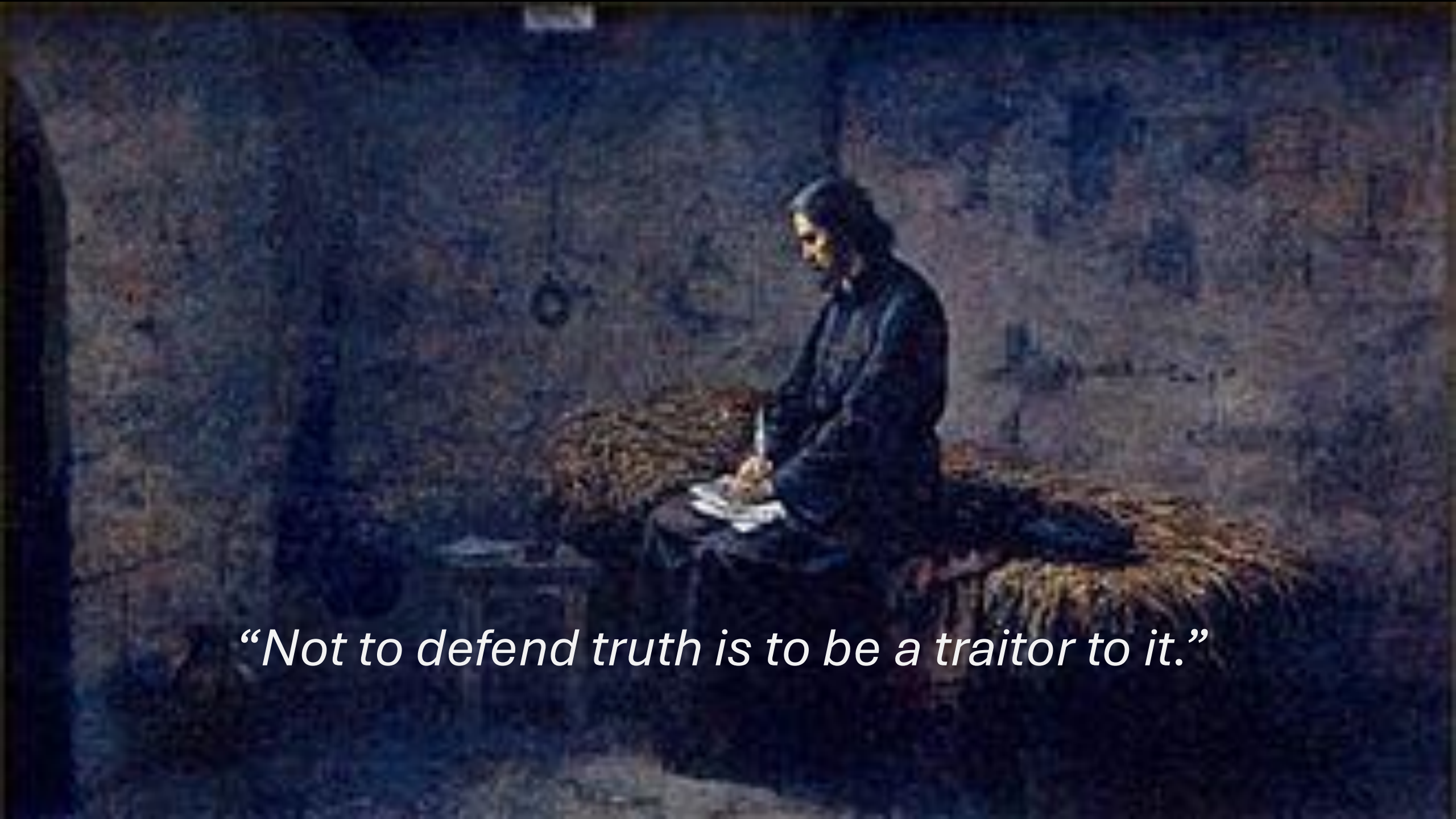


# Imprisonment (November 28, 1414 - July 6, 1415)

1. A home (November 28, 1414)
2. Dominican monastery (December 6, 1414)
3. Castle of the bishop of Constance (73 days)
4. Franciscan monastery (June 5, 1415)







*“Not to defend truth is to be a traitor to it.”*



Johannes Bus Magister in Artibus  
manu propria scriptum



# Decree of *Haec Sancta*

## Session 5, April 6, 1415

“The holy synod of Constance . . . declares that, legitimately assembled in the Holy Spirit . . . it has power immediately from Christ; and that everyone of whatever state or dignity, even papal, is bound to obey it in those matters which pertain to the faith.”













# Final Letters

“In the council, with the assistance of God, I will loudly proclaim the truth. Rather than be basely stifled by them, I prefer to have my body burned with fire; but I am anxious that every Christian shall know my last words.”

“I write this letter in my prison and with my fettered hand, expecting after tomorrow my sentence of death, and having an entire confidence in God that he will not forsake me; that he will not suffer me to renounce his word.”







# Condemnation & Martyrdom

July 6, 1415



# Condemnation of Wycliffe and Hus

## Session 15, July 6, 1415

- 260 articles from Wycliffe's books and pamphlets are condemned
- All who teach them are anathema
- Hus is condemned as "a disciple not of Christ, but rather of the arch heretic John Wycliffe."
- 60 articles from Hus's writing and teaching are condemned and his works ordered to be burned
- Order of Degradation
- Order of Execution





## Order of Degradation (1/3)

John has taught many evil, scandalous and seditious things, and dangerous heresies, and has publicly preached them during many years. This most holy synod of Constance, invoking Christ's name and having God alone before its eyes, therefore . . . decrees . . . that the said John Hus was and is a true and manifest heretic and has taught and publicly preached, to the great offence of the divine Majesty, to the scandal of the universal church and to the detriment of the catholic faith, errors and heresies that have long ago been condemned by God's church and many things that are scandalous, offensive to the ears of the devout, rash and seditious, and that he has even despised *the* keys of the church and ecclesiastical censures.



## Order of Degradation (2/3)

He has persisted in these things for many years with a hardened heart. He has greatly scandalized Christ's faithful by his obstinacy since, bypassing the church's intermediaries, he has made appeal directly to our lord Jesus Christ, as to the supreme judge, in which he has introduced many false, harmful and scandalous things to the contempt of the apostolic see, ecclesiastical censures and the keys.

This holy synod therefore pronounces the said John Hus . . . to have been a heretic and it judges him to be considered and condemned as a heretic, and it hereby condemns him.

It rejects the said appeal of his as harmful and scandalous and offensive to the church's jurisdiction. It declares that the said John Hus seduced the Christian people, especially in the kingdom of Bohemia, in his public sermons and in his writings; and that he was not a true preacher of Christ's gospel to the same Christian people, according to the exposition of the holy doctors, but rather was a seducer.



## Order of Degradation (3/3)

Since this most holy synod has learnt from what it has seen and heard, that the said John Hus is obstinate and incorrigible and as such does not desire to return to the bosom of holy mother the church, and is unwilling to abjure the heresies and errors which he has publicly defended and preached, this holy synod of Constance therefore declares and decrees that the same John Hus is to be deposed and degraded from the order of the priesthood and from the other orders held by him.



# Handed Over for Execution

“This holy synod of Constance, seeing that God’s church has nothing more that it can do, relinquishes John Hus to the judgment of the secular authority and decrees that he is to be relinquished to the secular court.”













# Excerpts from the articles for which Hus is burned

- There is only one holy universal church, which is the total number of those predestined to salvation.
- No part of the church can finally fall away from it, since the predestinating love that binds the church together does not fail.
- The grace of predestination is the bond whereby the body of the church and each of its members is indissolubly joined with the head.
- Peter neither was nor is the head of the holy catholic church.
- The papal dignity originated with the emperor, and the primacy and institution of the pope emanated from imperial power.
- The pope is not the manifest and true successor of Peter the prince of the apostles, if he lives in a way contrary to Peter's. If he seeks avarice, he is the vicar of Judas Iscariot.



# Excerpts from the articles for which Hus is burned

- A priest of Christ who lives according to his law, knows scripture and has a desire to edify the people, ought to preach, notwithstanding a pretended excommunication. And further on: if the pope or any superior orders a priest so disposed not to preach, the subordinate ought not to obey.
- By the church's censures of excommunication, suspension and interdict the clergy subdue the laity, for the sake of their own exaltation, multiply avarice, protect wickedness, and prepare the way for antichrist. These censures come from antichrist.
- Christ would govern his church better by his true disciples scattered throughout the world, without these monstrous heads.



The background is a watercolor-style wash. The top half features a soft, blended blue wash, while the bottom half is a warm, textured beige or tan wash. The colors transition smoothly, creating a serene and artistic atmosphere.

# Aftermath and Legacy



# Martyrdom of Jerome of Prague (May 26, 1416)

Poggio Bracciolini's eyewitness account:

“It was wonderful to see with what words, how persuasively, with what arguments, what a spirit, and what calmness Jerome answered his enemies, and how fairly he put his case. He stood there utterly fearless, not just scorning death but seeking it. He went to his fate with a joyful and willing spirit. When the executioners wanted to start the fire behind his back so that Jerome would not see it, he told them, ‘Come here and light the fire in front of me. Had it frightened me, I would not have come to this place.’”



# Defenestration of Prague

- Jan Želivský led his church to the New Town Hall on July 30, 1419 to demand the release of Hussite prisoners.
- The crowd broke into the town hall and defenestrated seven members of the town council.
- Pro-Hussite nobles seize control of Bohemia





# The Hussite Wars

- Pope Martin V (elected at Constance) announces a Crusade to destroy followers of Wycliffe and Hus (March 1, 1420)









# Joan of Arc's Letter to the Hussites (1430)

... from true Christians you have become heretics and practically on a level with the Saracens [Muslims].

You have eliminated the valid faith and worship, and have taken up a disgraceful and unlawful superstition . . . there is not a single disgrace nor act of barbarism which you would not dare. You corrupt the sacraments of the Church, you mutilate the articles of the Faith, you destroy churches, you break and burn statues . . . you massacre Christians unless they adopt your beliefs. What is this fury of yours, or what folly and madness are driving you? You persecute and plan to overthrow and destroy this Faith which God Almighty, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have raised, founded, exalted, and enlightened a thousand ways through a thousand miracles. You yourselves are blind . . .

if I was not busy with the English wars I would have come . . . if I do not find out that you have reformed yourselves I might leave the English behind and go against you, so that by the sword - if I can't do it any other way - I will eliminate your false and vile superstition and relieve you of either your heresy or your life. But if you would prefer to return to the Catholic faith and the original light, then send me your ambassadors . . . if not . . . keep in mind what damages and crimes you have committed and await me, who will mete out suitable repayment with the strongest of forces both human and Divine.



## Jan Hus on truth:

“Therefore faithful Christian, seek the truth, listen to the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, adhere to truth, and defend truth to the death; for the truth will make you free from sin, the devil, the death . . .

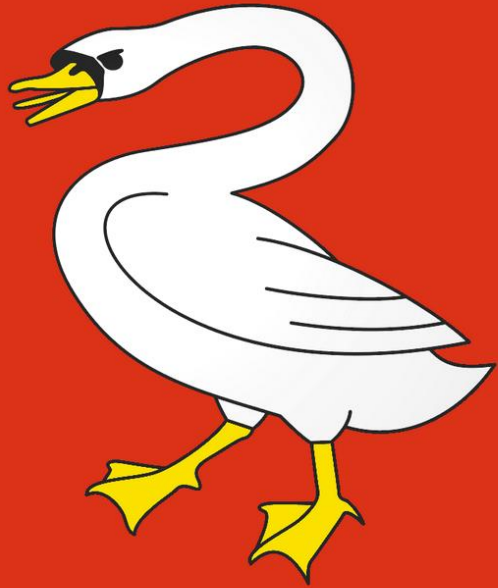
My dearest, live according to the discerned truth which prevails over everything and is powerful forever.”





# Truth Conquers

VERITAS VINCIT



VERITAS VINCIT









# The Four Articles of Prague (1433)

- Council of Basel (1433) approved the Four Articles
  - Hussites are allowed to receive both bread and wine in communion
  - Hussite clergy can preach without interference
  - Hussite clergy must be devoted to the gospel and not hold secular power
  - Secular courts will punish sins of both laity and clergy
- Hussites remain distinct from Roman Catholicism
- Some connect with the Waldensians
- 400-500 congregations in Bohemia and Moravia by the time of the Protestant Reformation









# Influence on Martin Luther

- Johann Eck accused Luther of being a Hussite at the Leipzig Debate (1519)
- Luther initially denied it, but after reading Hus, declared “I am a Hussite.”
- Luther later stated that he, the head of his monastery, Augustine, and the apostle Paul were “all Hussites.”





# The Pattern of Reformation

- The translation of the Scriptures
- The preaching of God's Word
- The reformation of the church
- The persecution of antichrist
- The perseverance of the saints





# Projected Series Calendar

2024 – Early Church History

2025 – Medieval Church History

2026 – The Protestant Reformation

2027 – The Puritans

2028 – Early American Church History

2029 – Modern Church History

