

# THE ROAD TO REFORMATION

## *From Pentecost to Wittenberg*

### 1500 YEARS OF REVIEW

#### **I. The Apostolic Church (30–100 A.D.)**

The Apostles began to fulfill the Great Commission by taking the gospel first to those in Jerusalem, then to Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth.

Churches in major cities were established all throughout the Roman Empire. Persecution started with hostile Jewish leaders. Under Nero, persecution came also from governmental authorities. False teachers also began to arise within the church.

Followers of Jesus are first called *Christians* in Antioch. The Antioch church became the home base for missionary activity to the Gentile world (primarily through Paul and Barnabas).

#### **Key Dates:**

- Church begins on the Day of Pentecost (A.D. 30)
- Paul converted (~ 32)
- Philip takes the gospel to Samaria (early to mid-30s)
- First Missionary Journey (47–49)
- Jerusalem Council (49)
- Paul writes Galatians (first NT epistle) (50)
- Second Missionary Journey (50–52)
- Third Missionary Journey (53–56)
- Matthew writes his gospel (50s)
- Nero becomes emperor (54)
- Paul arrested in Jerusalem; taken to Rome (57–59)
- Luke writes his gospel and Acts (60)
- Paul released from prison (~ 61–62)
- Great fire in Rome; Christians blamed (64)
- Peter and Paul martyred under Nero (~ 65–67)
- Death of Nero (68)
- Jerusalem destroyed (70)
- Persecution under Domitian (81–96)
- John writes epistles, fourth gospel, and Revelation (80s to mid-90s)
- John dies in Ephesus, after exile on Patmos (~ 100)

## II. The Persecuted Church (100–313 A.D.)

From A.D. 100–250, governmental persecution erupted periodically against Christians in certain parts of the empire. Many believers gave their lives as martyrs. After 250, Roman persecution became more widespread.

**Renald Showers:** “From approximately 250 to 311 A.D. government persecution is planned and vigorous. Officials throughout the empire are ordered to arrest Christians and give them an ultimatum: Deny your faith in Jesus Christ, or die. It becomes official policy to destroy Christianity. Vast numbers of Christians refuse to deny Jesus and become martyrs, often as public entertainment in large arenas. Yet the church grows stronger and expands throughout the empire” (*Israel My Glory*, Dec/Jan 1999/2000, Insert B).

The earliest group of individuals included in this time period are the Apostolic Fathers, followed by the Apologists and the Polemical Fathers.

This time in church history is often referred to as the ante-Nicene period, because it took place before the Council of Nicea.

### Key People/Dates/Writings:

#### Apostolic Fathers

- Clement of Rome (30–100)
- Polycarp of Smyrna (69–160)
- Ignatius of Antioch (d. between 98–117)
- Papias (c. 60–130)
- *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 130)
- *Shepherd of Hermas* (mid-second century)
- *Didache* (early to mid-second century)

#### Apologists & Polemical Fathers

- Justin Martyr (100–165)
- Tatian (110–172)
- Irenaeus (c. 130–202)
- Clement of Alexandria (d. between 211–215)
- Tertullian (c. 155–230)
- Origen (c. 185–250)
- Cyprian (200–258)

### III. The Imperial Church (313–590 A.D.)

After gaining political control of Rome, Constantine issued the *Edict of Milan* in 313 that changed the official stance of the government toward Christianity from hostile to neutral and even friendly. Christianity would not become the official religion of the Roman empire until 380, under Theodosius the Great.

Though the merging of the church with the state brought religious freedom to Christians, it also introduced the seeds of the corruption of the church—as positions of political power and religious leadership became more and more confused. The union of church and state also brought a lot of wealth to the organized church.

Nonetheless, the circumstances did allow bishops from all across the Roman Empire to convene at a number of important church councils—councils which affirmed the Trinity and the deity of Christ, for example. At the same time, the seeds for a number of unbiblical doctrines (many of which show up in the Roman Catholic system) began to take root during this period (such as baptismal regeneration and the veneration of Mary and the saints).

#### Key People/ Dates:

- Athanasius (c. 296–373)
- Ambrose (339–397)
- Augustine (354–430)
- John Chrysostom (347–407)
- Jerome (342–420)
- Leo I (440–461)

#### Ecumenical Councils:

- Nicea (325) – affirmed the full deity of Christ; denounced Arianism
- Constantinople I (381) – reaffirmed the Nicene Creed
- Ephesus (431) – affirmed that Jesus was born fully God and fully man
- Chalcedon (451) – affirmed the hypostatic union (2 natures; 1 person)
- Constantinople II (553) – reexamined the nature of Christ

#### Later Councils:

- Constantinople III (680) – still examining the nature of Christ
- Nicea II (787) – iconoclastic controversy; authorized veneration of some icons

#### **IV. The Medieval Church (590–1517 A.D.)**

As the church grew richer and more politically powerful, it also grew more corrupt. Over this thousand year period, the Roman Catholic Church became dominate in the West, officially splitting from the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054. The rise of Islam (in the 7<sup>th</sup> century) led to a number of crusades, in which Christian soldiers attempted to regain the Holy Land from Muslim control.

Missionary activity to the north brought virtually all of Europe under Roman Catholic control. Struggles for political power (between kings and popes) characterized the period. In theory, the pope had authority over the soul while emperors retained authority over the physical life. But in reality, this led to significant corruption and conflict between church and state.

#### **Significant People/Events/Dates:**

- Gregory I (540–604) – first Pope to have significant political power
- Mohammad (570–632)
- Charlemagne crowned “Emperor of the Romans” (800)
- East/West Split (1054) – split was finalized by 1204 when Constantinople was sacked by western soldiers in the Fourth Crusade
- Crusades (1095–1272)
- Waldenses persecuted for protesting Roman church (1184–1500s)
- Pope Innocent III (1198 – 1216) – pinnacle of papal authority
- Fourth Lateran Council (1215) – requires celibacy of priests
- Synod of Toulous (1229) – forbids translation of Bible in lay languages
- Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274) – foremost Catholic theologian
- Babylonian Captivity (1309–1377) – papacy moved to Avignon, France
- Great Schism (1378–1416) – multiple popes each condemning the other
- John Wycliffe (1324–1384)
- Renaissance in Europe (1350–1650)
- John Huss (1369–1415)
- Savonarola (1452–1498)
- Fall of Constantinople (1453)
- Christopher Columbus; discovery of the New World (1492)

The corruption of the Catholic Church, technological advancements (printing press), socio-political conditions in Europe, the Renaissance, and other factors made a Reformation of some kind inevitable.

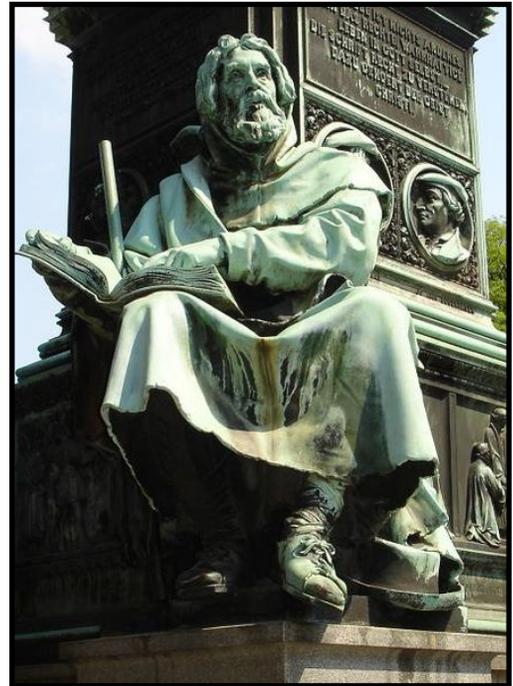
## FORERUNNERS TO THE REFORMATION

Long before Luther nailed his *95 Theses* to the Wittenberg Door, there were those who recognized the corruption within the Roman Catholic Church and the need for major reform. Generally speaking, these men attempted to stay within the Catholic system rather than attempting to leave the church (as the Protestant Reformers later would do).

### The Waldensians (1184–1500s)

- Waldo (or **Peter Waldo**, also spelled **Valdes**) lived from around 1140 to 1218. He was a merchant from Lyon. But after being influenced by the story of the fourth-century Alexius (a Christian who sold all of his belongings in devotion to Christ), Waldo sold his belongings and began a life of radical service to Christ.
- By 1170, Waldo had surrounded himself with a group of followers known as the *Poor of Lyon*, though they would later become known as Waldensians.
- Waldo was characterized by a love for the Scriptures, especially the teachings of Christ in the Gospels:

**Emilio Comba:** The word of Christ, which the theologian had finally shown him, had induced him not only to break the idol in his heart [the love of money], but also to search the treasures hidden in the Sacred Scriptures. He was not learned; but neither was he so illiterate as to be unable to succeed in this, although he was obliged to read them in Latin. Every day he would find new teachings which so filled his soul with joy that he began to speak of them to his acquaintances. Finally he determined to translate a portion of the Scriptures with the assistance of two churchmen, each of whom was intrusted with a special charge: Stefano d'Ansa was to dictate the translation, and perhaps make the annotations, while Bernardo Ydros was to act as amanuensis. Although many questions relative to the character of this version have not been solved, it certainly was not insignificant, either in itself or as a sign of the times. On the contrary, this proved the powerful



as well as indispensable lever of the new re-action, and its first effects were already noticeable in Waldo. This word gained power and authority: it became the hammer that breaks the hearts hardened by error. It may well be said that he had a school; for his hearers, even the women, were also witnesses to the things to which they listened, and they spoke of them. Zeal increased, and propagated itself, but without confusion, because Waldo directed, being always inspired by the Sacred Scriptures. While his disciples went to preach the gospel in the surrounding country, he generally remained in the city, and was soon assisted by able coadjutors; so, when the word of God was silent in the churches, it was heard on the squares and in the houses, as in the time of the apostles. Then the clergy became suspicious, censured him, and made him the object of the first abuse, and denounced him at Rome. (*Waldo and the Waldensians*, trans. by T. E. Comba, pp. 15–17)

- The movement was denied official sanction by the Roman Catholic Church (and condemned at the Third Lateran Council in 1179). Waldo was excommunicated by Pope Lucius III in 1184, and the movement was again condemned at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.
- Waldensians were, therefore, persecuted by the Roman Catholics as heretics. However, the movement survived (even down to the present) though the Waldensians were often forced into hiding in the Alps.
- The Waldensian movement was characterized by (1) voluntary poverty (though Waldo taught that salvation was not restricted to those who gave up their wealth), (2) lay preaching, and (2) the authority of the Bible (translated in the language of the people) over any other authority. They emphasized the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and placed great importance on Bible memorization.
- The Waldensians would eventually join the Reformed branch of the Protestant Reformation. Protestants have historically considered the Waldensian movement to be a precursor to the Reformation.

**Johann Heinrich Kurtz:** The news of the Reformation caused great excitement among the Waldensians. Even as early as A.D. 1520 the Piedmontese *barba*, or minister, Martin of Lucerne, undertook a journey to Germany, and brought back with him several works of the reformers. In A.D. 1539 the French Waldensians sent two delegates, George Morel and Peter Mosson, who conferred verbally and in writing with Oecolampadius at Basel, and with Bucer and Capito at Strassburg. The result was, that in A.D. 1532 a synod was held in the Piedmontese village of Chauvoran, in the valley of Angrogna, at which the two Genevan theologians Farel and Sunnier were present. A number of narrow-minded prejudices that prevailed among the old Waldensians were now abandoned, such as the

prohibition against taking oaths, the holding of magisterial offices, the taking of interest, etc.; and several Catholic notions to which they had formerly adhered, such as auricular confession, the reckoning of the sacraments as severe, the injunction of fasts, compulsory celibacy, the doctrine of merits, etc., were abandoned as unevangelical, while the Reformed doctrine of predestination was adopted. On this foundation the complete Protestantizing of the whole Waldensian community now made rapid progress, but called down upon them from every side bloody persecutions. (*Church History*, New York: 1892, vol. 2, p. 343)

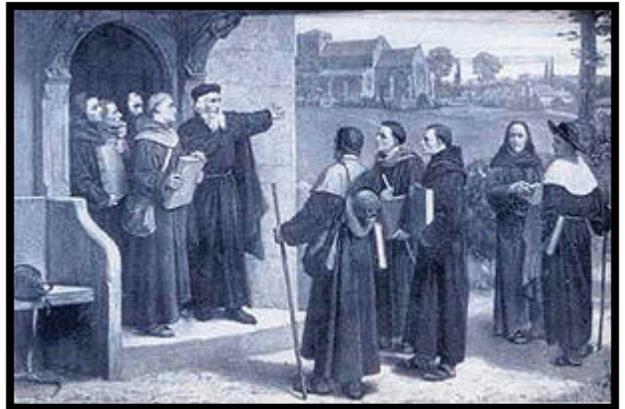
### **John Wycliffe (1329–1384)**

- Known as “the Morning Star of the Reformation”

**Christopher Catherwood:** Since I have argued that the Reformation was a process, we can now start to look at some of its great precursors, men like John Wycliffe (or Wycliff), who lived in England from 1324–1384 and was for a brief while Vice-Master of Balliol College, Oxford.

Wycliffe never started a new church. But like many of his contemporaries, he realized that the medieval church was going seriously astray. In his case he saw the decadence and corruption of much of the clergy, some of whom were more politicians or major landowners than priests and had mistresses and illegitimate children.

In 1377 Wycliffe got into trouble with the church authorities. Here he was fortunate: he had a political protector in John of Gaunt, a younger son of King Edward III (and the ancestor of today’s British Royal Family). This was crucial since otherwise Wycliffe would have been executed, as Jan Hus would later be. John of Gaunt was no saint, but he did admire Wycliffe, and, as earlier in history, God used an unrighteous man to protect a godly one. (*A Crash Course in History*, 90–91)



- There are a number of different spellings of his last name
- Followers known as Lollards (Oxford scholars who embraced his views and supported him)
- Educated at Oxford University and received his doctorate from there in 1372
- Early advocate for the translation of the Bible into the native languages of laity

- Translated Bible (from Latin Vulgate) into English in 1382
- Also opposed the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation
- Died of a stroke in 1384

**John Laird Wilson:** On December 28th he received the fatal stroke ; and on the 31st came the end. And so John Wycliffe, one of the truest, brightest, and bravest of men, the greatest by far of all the Reformers before the Reformation, the morning star of that better day which was soon to dawn upon the earth, passed away to his rest and his reward. Of him truly, if ever of any one, it may with truth be said that he being dead continued to speak. His work was not completed. In its main features it was hardly a success. He had not broken the power of Rome in England. He had not fully inaugurated the Reformation. But the fault was not his. The times were not ripe ; circumstances were not in his favor ; and he suffered the fate which is common to pioneers. But he laid the foundation on which others were to build—he sowed what others were to reap ; and whatever glory belongs to the great work, which brought about the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, a large portion of that glory justly attaches to the memory of John Wycliffe. (*John Wycliffe: Patriot and Reformer*, 229–230)

- Declared a heretic by the Council of Constance in 1415; his body was exhumed and burned in 1428
- Taught several important Reformation principles:
  - Affirmed *Sola Scriptura*
  - Opposed the Papacy – Christ is the only Head of the Church
  - Taught that clergy can marry
  - Denied baptismal regeneration
  - Opposed transubstantiation and the mass
  - Opposed crusades, indulgences, and religious orders

**B. K. Kuiper:** In 1376 he began to criticize the clergy. He said that wealth and political power had so corrupted the Church that a radical reform was necessary. The Church, he said, should return to the poverty and simplicity of apostolic times. The pope he called the antichrist. He declared that the Bible rather than the Church should be the only rule of faith. But the Bible in general use in the Catholic Church was written in Latin and could not be read by the people. . . . In order that Christians in England might be able to read

the Bible to themselves, Wycliffe translated it into the English language. (*The Church in History* [Grand Rapids: Christian Schools International, 1964], 143–144)

- Many in Bohemia also embraced Wycliffe’s views (including Jan Hus)

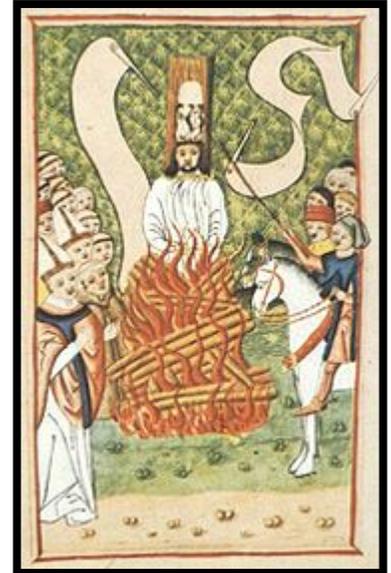
**Samuel Parkes Cadman:** An Englishman who heard the examination of Hus before the Council of Constance, which condemned and burned him, declared that he thought standing before him “the very Wycliffe.” It required little stretch of imagination to see, looming in the background, the majestic shade of that great Englishman “for whose doctrine Hus went to the stake.” Their memories, with Luther’s, are enshrined in three medallions at the University of Prague, which depict the evolution of Protestantism for a century and a half, from the Anglican Scholastic through the Bohemian martyr to the German Titan. The first shows Wycliffe gleaming sparks from a flint; the second, Hus kindling the coals with the sparks; the third, Luther bearing a blazing torch he has lit at their fires. (*The Three Religious Leaders of Oxford and Their Movements* [Macmillan, 1916], 169)

### **John Huss (1373–1415)**

- Alternate spellings — “Jan Hus” or “John Hus”
- Bohemian reformer; educated at the University of Prague
- Highly respected preacher
- Adopted many of Wycliffe’s views
- Preached against corruption in the Roman Catholic Church and faced tremendous persecution as a result

**B. K. Kuiper:** When Huss became acquainted with the writings of Wycliffe, he began to preach against the corruption of the clergy. Long before the birth of Huss, strong opposition to the Roman Church had developed in Bohemia. The Waldenses were especially numerous in that country. So the preaching of Huss met with a hearty response among the common people and the nobility. Huss won almost the whole of Bohemia to his views.

Huss taught many ideas which later became the main teachings of the Reformers. He taught that the holy Catholic Church consists of the total number of the predestinated. He distinguished between being *in* the Church and being *of* the Church. He taught that one could be in the Church and yet not be a real member of it. Of the universal Church Christ



alone is head. Popes and cardinals are not necessary to the government of the Church. (pp. 144–145)

- Invited to Council of Constance in 1414 and promised safe passage
- While there he was arrested, tried for heresy, and ultimately burned at the stake
- Huss reportedly prophesied shortly before his death that, “in a hundred years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed.” Other renditions report that he said, “Today you cook a goose [derived from his name, Huss], but in 100 years a swan will rise whom you will not be able to silence.” Luther would nail his *95 Theses* to the church door almost exactly a century later.
- Followers of Huss fall into two categories:
  - Hussites – reactionaries in Moravia and Bohemia who stood courageously against the papacy after Huss’s death (even engaging in armed conflict)
  - Bohemian Brethren – also known as Moravians – followed the principles of Huss; at the outset of the Lutheran Reformation, it is estimated that there were 200,000 Moravians in some 400 parishes
- Here is one of the last letters Huss wrote while in prison:

**Letter 50 (to his friends):** I have resolved, dear and faithful friends in our Lord, to make known to you in what manner the Council of Constance, swelled with so much pride and avarice, has condemned as heretical my books, written in the Bohemian tongue, without ever having seen or read them, and which it could not have understood, even when it had listened to the reading of them. For this Council is filled with Italians, French, Germans, Spaniards, and persons from all countries, and of every different language. They could not be understood but by Bishop John de Litomissel, by several Bohemians, my enemies, and by a few priests of Prague, who have first to calumniate the truth of God, and afterwards our Bohemia, which I hope is a country of a perfect faith, remarkable for its attachment to the Word of God, as well as for its good morals. And if you had been at Constance you would have witnessed the detestable abomination of this Council, which calls itself infallible and very holy ; an abomination of which, many of the country of the Grisons have said, the city of Constance could not wash herself of in thirty years, and almost every body, supporting with great difficulty the great corruption, which is to be seen in it, is irritated against the Council. . . . Having said, that, if I had erred, I should be glad to be instructed of my errors : " Since you desire to be

instructed," replied the Grand Cardinal, " you must first of all abjure your doctrine, conformable to the sentence of the fifty doctors and interpreters of the Holy Scriptures." An excellent advice! Therefore, St Catherine should renounce the Word of God and faith in Jesus, because fifty doctors opposed her ! But this sublime virgin did not yield; she remained faithful unto death ; she thus gained over her judges to Christ; but I cannot in the same manner persuade mine ; it is wherefore I have thought fit to write to you, in order you might be informed they have not vanquished me neither by the Scriptures nor by reason, but tried me by terror and by lies to extort an abjuration from me. The God of mercy, whose justice I have glorified, was with me. He is still with me now, and I am confident he will remain with me unto the end.

Written the fourth day after the Festival of John the Baptist, in prison, in chains, and in the expectation of death; and yet I dare not say, on account of the hidden judgment of God, that this letter may be my last; for, even now, the Almighty God may effect my deliverance. (*Letters of John Huss Written During His Exile and Imprisonment*, trans. by Campbell Mackenzie [Edinburgh: William Whyte & Co., 1846], 181–83)

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### **John Huss – Fox’s Book of Martyrs**

In the month of November, 1414, a general Council was assembled at Constance, in Germany, in order, as was pretended, for the sole purpose of determining a dispute then pending between three persons who contended for the papacy; but the real motive was to crush the progress of the Reformation.

John Huss was summoned to appear at this Council; and, to encourage him, the emperor sent him a safe-conduct: the civilities, and even reverence, which Huss met with on his journey were beyond imagination. The streets, and sometimes the very roads, were lined with people, whom respect, rather than curiosity, had brought together.

He was ushered into the town with great acclamations, and it may be said that he passed through Germany in a kind of triumph. He could not help expressing his surprise at the treatment he received: "I thought (said he) I had been an outcast. I now see my worst friends are in Bohemia."

As soon as Huss arrived at Constance, he immediately took lodgings in a remote part of the city. A short time after his arrival, came one Stephen Paletz, who was employed by the clergy at Prague to manage the intended prosecution against him. Paletz was afterwards joined by Michael de Cassis, on the part of the court of Rome. These two declared themselves his accusers, and drew up a set of articles against him, which they presented to the pope and the prelates of the Council.

When it was known that he was in the city he was immediately arrested, and committed prisoner to a chamber in the palace. This violation of common law and justice was particularly noticed by one of Huss's friends, who urged the imperial safe-conduct; but the pope replied he never granted any safe-conduct, nor was he bound by that of the emperor.

While Huss was in confinement, the Council acted the part of inquisitors.

They condemned the doctrines of Wickliffe, and even ordered his remains to be dug up and burned to ashes; which orders were strictly complied with. In the meantime, the nobility of Bohemia and Poland strongly interceded for Huss; and so far prevailed as to prevent his being condemned unheard, which had been resolved on by the commissioners appointed to try him.

When he was brought before the Council, the articles exhibited against him were read: they were upwards of forty in number, and chiefly extracted from his writings.

John Huss's answer was this: "I did appeal unto the pope; who being dead, and the cause of my matter remaining undetermined, I appealed likewise unto his successor John XXIII: before whom when, by the space of two years, I could not be admitted by my advocates to defend my cause, I appealed unto the high judge Christ."

When John Huss had spoken these words, it was demanded of him whether he had received absolution of the pope or no? He answered, "No." Then again, whether it was lawful for him to appeal unto Christ or no? Whereunto John Huss answered: "Verily I do affirm here before you all, that there is no more just or effectual appeal, than that appeal which is made unto Christ, forasmuch as the law doth determine, that to appeal is no other thing than in a cause of grief or wrong done by an inferior judge, to implore and require aid at a higher Judge's hand. Who is then a higher Judge than Christ? Who, I say, can know or judge the matter more justly, or with more equity? when in Him there is found no deceit, neither can He be deceived; or, who can better help the miserable and oppressed than He?" While John Huss, with a devout and sober countenance, was speaking and pronouncing those words, he was derided and mocked by all the whole Council.

These excellent sentences were esteemed as so many expressions of treason, and tended to inflame his adversaries. Accordingly, the bishops appointed by the Council stripped him of his priestly garments, degraded him, put a paper miter on his head, on which was painted devils, with this inscription, "A ringleader of heretics." Which when he saw, he said: "My Lord Jesus Christ, for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns; why should not I then, for His sake, again wear this light crown, be it ever so ignominious? Truly I will do it, and that willingly." When it was set upon his head, the bishop said: "Now we commit thy soul unto the devil." "But I," said John Huss, lifting his eyes towards the heaven, "do commend into Thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ! my spirit which Thou has redeemed."

When the chain was put about him at the stake, he said, with a smiling countenance, "My Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this for my sake, and why then should I be ashamed of this rusty one?"

When the fagots were piled up to his very neck, the duke of Bavaria was so officious as to desire him to abjure. "No, (said Huss;) I never preached any doctrine of an evil tendency; and what I taught with my lips I now seal with my blood." He then said to the executioner, "You are now going to burn a goose, (Huss signifying goose in the Bohemian language;) but in a century you will have a swan which you can neither roast nor boil." If he were prophetic, he must have meant Martin Luther, who shone about a hundred years after, and who had a swan for his arms.

The flames were now applied to the [kindling], when our martyr sung a hymn with so loud and cheerful a voice that he was heard through all the cracklings of the combustibles, and the noise of the multitude. At length his voice was interrupted by the severity of the flames, which soon closed his existence.

Then, with great diligence, gathering the ashes together, they cast them into the river Rhine, that the least remnant of that man should not be left upon the earth, whose memory, notwithstanding, cannot be abolished out of the minds of the godly, neither by fire, neither by water, neither by any kind of torment.

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### **Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498)**

- Italian reformer; Dominican monk
- Follower of Thomas Aquinas; excellent preacher, settled in Florence
- Denounced worldly and corrupt papacy and was opposed by Pope Alexander VI
- Made major moral reforms in the city of Florence
- In 1498, he was convicted of heresy and hanged and burned

**Williston Walker:** He began in 1490 to attract huge crowds through his powerful sermons calling for repentance and conversion, and warning, in vague apocalyptic terms, of impending tribulations. The French invasion of 1494, which seemed to confirm the ascetic friar's status as a divinely inspired prophet, led to a popular revolution against the [ruling] Medici, and Savonarola became the de facto ruler of Florence, which he sought to turn into a penitential city. A semimonastic life was adopted by many of its inhabitants. The carnival seasons of 1496 and 1497 witnessed the "burning of vanities": cards, dice, jewelry, cosmetics, wigs, and lewd books and pictures were all consigned to the flames. . . . But he aroused

formidable enemies. The adherents of the deposed Medici hated him, and Pope Alexander VI, whose evil character and misrule Savonarola denounced, was an implacable foe, owing not least to the friar's pro-French policy. Papal agents excommunicated him in 1497 and demanded his punishment. Friends sustained him for a while, but the fickle populace turned against him. In April 1498, he was arrested and cruelly tortured, and on May 23 he was hanged and his body burned by the city government. (*A History of the Christian Church*, Fourth Edition [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985], 398–99).

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**John Fox (*The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, pp. 8–10):** In the same year also (A. D. 1499), fell the martyrdom and burning of Hieronymus Savonarola, a man no less godly in heart, than constant in his profession; who, being a monk in Italy, and singularly well learned, preached sore against the evil life and living of the spirituality, and specially of his own order; complaining sore upon them, as the springs and authors of all mischiefs and wickedness.

. . . In all his preaching he desired to teach no other thing than the only pure and simple word of God, making often protestation that all men should certify him, if they had heard him teach or preach any thing contrary thereunto; for, upon his own conscience, he knew not that he had taught any thing but the pure word of God. What his doctrine was, all men may easily judge by his books that he hath written.

After this (A.D. 1498) he was taken and brought out of St. Mark's cloister, and two other friars with him, named Dominic and Silvester, who favoured his learning, and was carried into prison, where he wrote a godly meditation upon that most comfortable thirty-first Psalm: "In te Domine speravi, non confundar in seternum, sed in justitia tua libera me;" wherein he doth excellently describe and set forth the continual strife between the flesh and the spirit.

After this the pope's legates came to Florence, and called forth these three good men, threatening them marvellously; but they continued still constant. Then came the chief counsellors of the city, with the pope's commissioners, who had gathered out certain articles against these men, whereupon they were condemned to death; the tenor of which articles hereafter ensue.

Articles objected against [Savonarola] and the two Friars.

- I. The first article was as touching our free justification through faith in Christ.
- II. That the communion ought to be ministered under both kinds.

- III. That the indulgences and pardons of the pope were of no effect
- IV. For preaching against the filthy and wicked living of the cardinals and spirituality.
- V. For denying the pope's supremacy.
- VI. Also, that he had affirmed that the keys were not given unto Peter alone, but unto the universal church.
- VII. Also, that the pope did neither follow the life nor doctrine of Christ; for that he did attribute more to his own pardons and traditions, than to Christ's merits; and therefore he was Antichrist
- VIII. Also, that the pope's excommunications are not to be feared, and that he who thuth fear or flee them is excommunicate of God.
- IX. Item, that auricular confession is not necessary.
- X. Item, that he had moved the citizens to uproar and sedition.
- XI. Item, that he had neglected and condemned the pope's citation.
- XII. Item, that he had shamefully spoken against, and slandered the pope.
- XIII. Item, that he had taken Christ to witness of his naughtiness and heresy.
- XIV. Also, that Italy must be cleansed through God's scourge, for the manifold wickedness of the princes and clergy.

These and such other like articles were laid unto them and read before them. Then they demanded of the said [Savanarola] and his companions, whether they would recant and give over their opinions. Whereunto they answered, that through God's help they would steadfastly continue in the manifest truth, and not depart from the same. Then were they degraded one after another by the bishop of Vasion, and so delivered over to the secular rulers of Florence, with straight commandment to carry them forth, and handle them as obstinate and stiffnecked heretics.

Thus was the worthy witness of Christ, with the other two aforesaid, first hanged up openly in the market-place, and afterward burnt to ashes, and the ashes gathered up, and cast into the river.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Jacques Lefevre d'Etaples (c. 1455–1536)**

- Frequently called by his Latinized name: Jacobus Faber Stapulensis (Jacob Faber of Staples)
- French reformer; scholar of equal ability to Erasmus; renown humanist
- Espoused Reformation principles such as *sola Scriptura*, *sola fide*, and *solī Deo gloria*
- Translated the Bible into French (which he completed in 1528)
- In 1533 or 34, he met with Calvin on several occasions and was probably a great influence on him as Calvin wrote his *Institutes* a couple years later
- Sought to reform the Catholic Church without separating from it

