

FORERUNNERS
OF THE
FAITH

Lesson 9



Forerunners to the Reformation

Introduction

DOCTRINAL PILLARS

- 1. The Word of God (in Scripture):** The true church views Scripture alone as its final authority.
- 2. The work of God (in salvation):** The true church understands that sinners are justified solely by God's grace through faith on account of Christ.
- 3. The worship of God (in spirit and truth):** The true church worships the Triune God in purity of devotion and purity of doctrine.

DOCTRINAL PILLARS

**A RIGHT VIEW
OF THE SAVIOR**

**The Sanctity
of the
Worship of God**

**A RIGHT VIEW
OF SALVATION**

**The Sufficiency
of the
Work of God**

**A RIGHT VIEW
OF SCRIPTURE**

**The Supremacy
of the
Word of God**

During the Middle Ages, these pillars began to erode as a result of religious tradition and church corruption.

DOCTRINAL PILLARS

A RIGHT VIEW
OF THE SAVIOR

Mary and the
Saints

A RIGHT VIEW
OF SALVATION

The Sufficiency
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Work of God

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Sacramental
Synergism

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**A RIGHT VIEW
OF THE SAVIOR**

**Mary and the
Saints**

**A RIGHT VIEW
OF SALVATION**

**Sacramental
Synergism**

**A RIGHT VIEW
OF SCRIPTURE**

**Tradition and
Papal Authority**

During the Middle Ages, these pillars began to erode as a result of religious tradition and church corruption.

GROWTH OF TRADITION

Christianization
of Roman
Empire

Purgatory

Crusades/Relics

Transub-
stantiation

Mary Called

Veneration
of Icons

Saints "Mother of God"

Sacramental
System

Replace

Elevation and Corruption
of the Papacy

Dogmatized

Pagan Deities

Constantine
300s

Fall of
Rome

Middle
Ages

Fourth Lateran
Council 1215

The Papacy & the Late Middle Ages

LATE MIDDLE AGES (1250–1500)

- In 1215, at the Fourth Council of the Lateran, the Roman Catholic Church dogmatized the sacramental system.
- Around 1230, the western church developed the idea of a Treasure House of Merit. This led to the “sale” of indulgences.

LATE MIDDLE AGES (1250–1500)

- In the 1300s, political infighting resulted in the papacy moving to France for about 70 years.
- This resulted in a papal schism, in which multiple popes each claimed to be the true pope. This schism was finally resolved in 1417 at the Council of Constance.

LATE MIDDLE AGES (1250–1500)

- By the late 1400s, the Roman Catholic Church in Europe was in desperate need of reform.
- The corruption of the papacy was evident—from the sale of indulgences to the papal schism, in which three rival popes each claimed to be the true leader of the church.

LATE MIDDLE AGES (1250–1500)

- In the 16th century, the Protestant Reformers were committed to regaining the doctrinal purity found in Scripture and earlier church history.
- We see that resolve begin to emerge prior to the 16th century, with the Pre-Reformers.

THE PRE-REFORMERS

Lollard Movement

John Wycliffe

c. 1324–1384

Peter Waldo

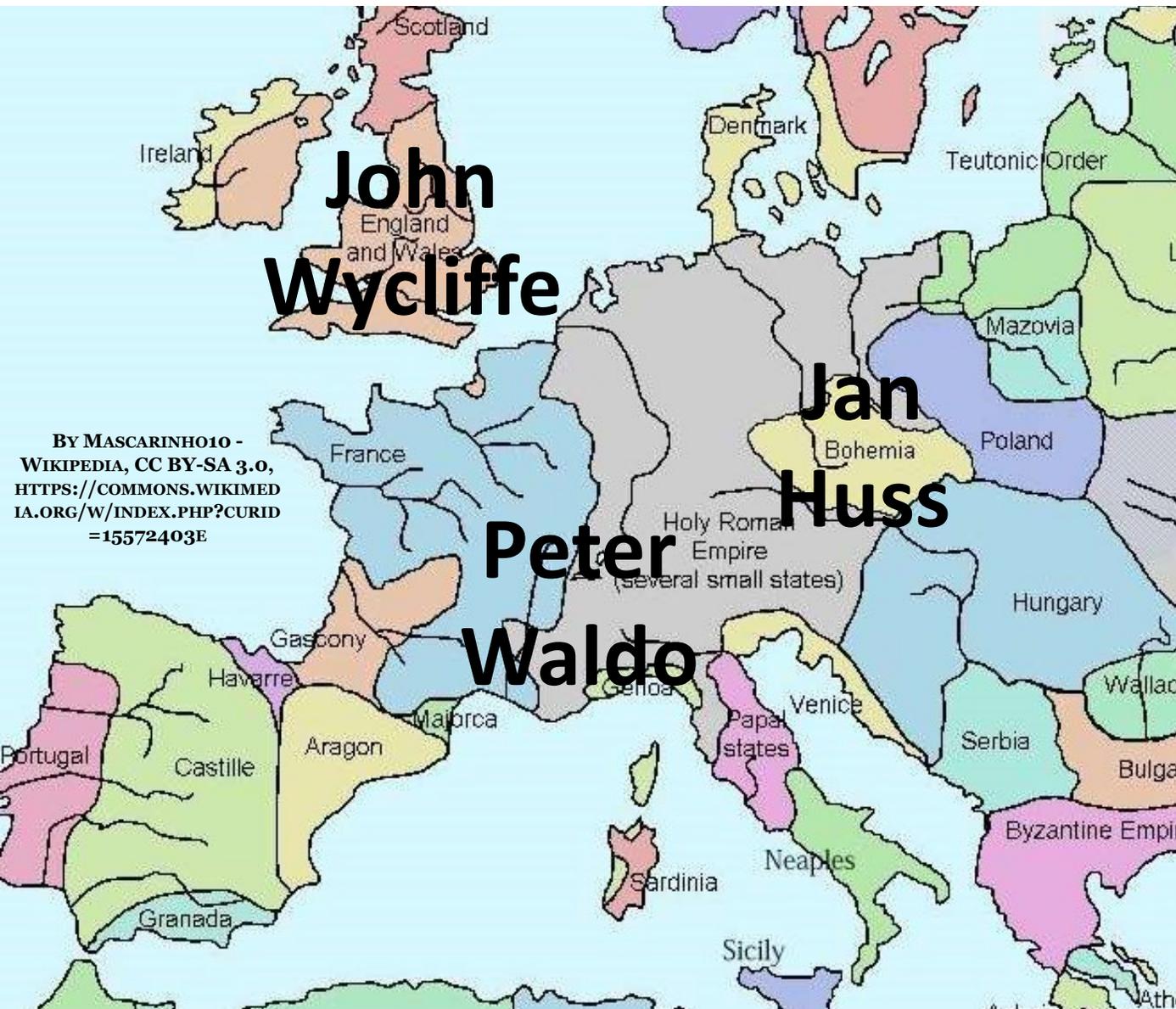
c. 1140–c. 1210

Waldensian Movement

Jan Hus

c. 1369–1415

Hussite Movement



Europe in the Late Middle Ages

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Peter Waldo

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WALDO (1140–1210)

- Waldo was a merchant from Lyons. When he became a Christian, he sold his possessions and dedicated himself to preaching.
- His followers were known as “the Poor of Lyons.” They would later come to be called “Waldensians.”

WALDO (1140–1210)

- The Waldensian movement was characterized by three key commitments:
 1. The authority of God's Word over the pope
 2. The need to translate Scripture into the common language of the people
 3. The ability of lay people to understand and preach the Word of God

WALDO (1140–1210)

- Waldo and his followers were persecuted by Roman Catholic authorities.
- In the 16th century, the Waldensians joined the Protestant Reformation.

John Wycliffe



WYCLIFFE (1324-1384)

- Known as the “Morning Star” of the Reformation.
- Professor at Oxford.
- Led the effort to translate the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English.

WYCLIFFE (1324-1384)

- Thundered against Roman Catholic abuses. He rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and disapproved of both the sale of indulgences and the mandatory celibacy of priests.
- Called the church to give up its property holdings, and the clergy to embrace a life of poverty and simple devotion to Christ.

WYCLIFFE (1324–1384)

- Taught that the true “invisible” church was made up of all true believers.
- Followers were known as Lollards.
- Died of natural causes, but was later exhumed and burned in effigy by Roman Catholic authorities.

WYCLIFFE (1324–1384)

- Like the Waldensians, Wycliffe emphasized:
 1. The authority of Scripture over the authority of the pope.
 2. The need to translate the Bible into the common language so that lay people can access it.

WYCLIFFE (1324–1384)

- Insisted Scripture is a better source of truth than the teachings of the pope.

Wycliffe: “[I believe] that a Christian man well understanding it, may gather sufficient knowledge during his pilgrimage upon earth; that all truth is contained in Scripture; that we should admit of no conclusion not approved there; →

WYCLIFFE (1324–1384)

(continued): “that there is no court beside the court of heaven; that though there were a hundred popes, and all the friars in the world were turned into cardinals, yet should we learn more from the gospel than we should from all that multitude; and that true sons will in no wise go about to infringe the will and testament of their Heavenly Father.”

WYCLIFFE (1324–1384)

Wycliffe: “Certainly, it were less cruelty to keep men from bodily meat and drink, and make them to die bodily, than to keep them from hearing the gospel and God’s commands, which are life to the soul. What accursed antichrists are these worldly prelates and curates, who curse men for preaching and hearing of holy scriptures.”

Jan Hus



HUSS mein Nam war / zu Prag ich / war /
Gotts wort Lehr erstlich rheim vnd klar /
Widur das Roubt komet vnd dard /

HUS (1369–1415)

- Jan Hus (or John Huss) lived in Bohemia, the modern-day Czech Republic.
- Educated at the University of Prague, where he was influenced by John Wycliffe.
- Preached in the Bohemian language at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague.

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HUS (1369–1415)

- Taught that Christ alone, not the pope, is the Head of the Church.
- Published these views in his work, *De Ecclesia (On the Church)*.
- Summoned to the Council of Constance to defend his views.

HUS (1369–1415)

Hus: “If the papal utterances agree with the law of Christ, they are to be obeyed. If they are at variance with it, then Christ’s disciples must stand loyally and manfully with Christ against all papal bulls whatsoever and be ready, if necessary, to endure malediction and death. When the pope uses his power in an unscriptural way, to resist him is not a sin, it is a mandate.”

HUS (1369–1415)

- Promised safe passage to the Council of Constance.
- After arriving in Constance, he was arrested, imprisoned, and eventually put on trial.
- In July 1415, Hus was burned at the stake.

HUS (1369–1415)

- The phrase “Your goose is cooked” comes from his execution.
- A century later, Hus would have a significant impact on Marth Luther, who was nicknamed “the Saxon Hus.”

Key Take-Aways

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- The Pre-Reformers were committed to the authority and sufficiency of the Word of God.
- They submitted to biblical authority over papal authority, and they sought to make biblical truth available in the language of the common people.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- This conviction about Scripture fueled their courage to confront Roman Catholic corruption and to endure persecution for the sake of Christ.
- Their commitment to the supremacy of Christ and the authority of His Word laid the foundation for the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

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