John Huss (or Jan Hus) c. 1370-1415

- John Huss begins lecturing on theology at Prague University and spreads Wycliffe's ideas.
- The theological writings of Wycliffe spread widely in Bohemia. Huss was greatly moved by them.
- Huss was especially impressed with the critiques against the power and dominion of the church in temporal matters.
In 1402 Huss was appointed preacher of the Bethlehem Church in Prague, where he preached in the Czech language.

This church was purely for sermons and held 3,000 people!

Huss’ sermons criticize the immorality of society and especially the clergy’s avarice and simony.
Abuses:
- attacked clerical power and privileges.

Membership:
- the Church is “the congregation of the faithful to be saved… the totality of the predestined” as distinct from the “church of the reprobate, headed by the devil.”
- Neither external membership in the Church nor churchly offices and dignities are a surety that the persons in question are members of the true Church.
- the Church is not that hierarchy which is generally designated as Church; the Church is the entire body of those who from eternity have been predestined for salvation.

On Church and State:
- separate spheres of civil and churchly power;

Celibacy:
- “Didn’t God ordain marriage as a means to satisfy the craving for love in all men?”
No Pope is the manifest and true successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles, if in morals he lives at variance with the principles of Peter; and if he is avaricious, then is the vicar of Judas, who loved the reward of iniquity and sold Jesus Christ . . .

“As for the argument that the Pope is the most holy father who cannot sin, I deny it; for it is our Father most holy, the Lord God, who alone cannot sin.”
In 1411 in Prague there developed a traffic in indulgences.

Huss, following the example of Wycliffe, opposed them in his *Cruciata*.

A few days afterward the people, led by Wok of Waldstein, burnt the papal bulls.

Huss, they said, should be obeyed rather than the fraudulent mob of adulterers and Simonists.

The faculty requested Huss to present his speeches and doctrines to the dean for an examination, but he refused. In the mean time the faculty had condemned the ideas of Huss.

in 1412, when he preached against the indulgences that the third Pope (now John XXIII) was selling with King Wenceslas to finance his struggle against the other two Popes, the king became angry with Hus. Now there was no protector.
Huss on Indulgences

“Man obtains forgiveness of sins by real repentance, not for money. “
“It is not possible for a priest to loose or bind anything, unless such loosing and binding takes place in heaven; . . .
The ignorant think that the priest binds and looses in time first and after him God. It is folly to have this opinion. God’s act of binding or loosing is absolutely first. And it is evident, it would be blasphemy to assert that a man may remit an offense done to so great a Lord, without the Lord himself approving the remission . . . “

“Nothing appears more godless to me than to commercialize the forgiveness of sins, to deceive... people that heaven might be bought for a few farthings.”
Other Hussite Doctrines

- **On Scripture**
  - Supported vernacular translations of the Bible.
  - the supremacy of the Bible's authority over the Church;

- **On The Eucharist**
  - Critical of traditional ceremonies and superstitious practices relating to the Eucharist.
  - Bread and wine remained bread and wine.
  - that Communion should be served "in both kinds," that is, both the bread and the cup.
  - The doctrine of transubstantiation is repugnant to me. Just as nobody can really create blood out of water and wine, so nobody can create flesh out of dough.”

The Chalice became a symbol of Hussism
In 1409 when the Council of Pisa was trying to depose the two Popes and elect a third, Huss and the reformers supported the move while the archbishop and the German faculty of the university (which outnumbered the Czechs) opposed it.

King Wenceslas of Bohemia changed the charter of the university to allow Czech votes to outnumber German votes. In response, the Germans withdrew to other universities, including founding the university of Leipzig.

Huss was now elected rector of the university of Prague.
The Beginning of the End, 1408-11

- 1408, Huss defends Wycliffe against condemnation. The archbishop brought his complaints to the Pope, accusing the Wycliffites as the instigators of all ecclesiastical disturbances in Bohemia.

- 1409 Pope issued his bull empowering the archbishop to proceed against Wycliffism— all books of Wycliffe were to be given up, his doctrines revoked, and free preaching discontinued.

"Even if I should stand before the stake which has been prepared for me, I would never accept the recommendation of the theological faculty."
Huss in Exile

- 1410 Huss banned from preaching in all chapels (and with that in the Bethlehem Church) as a Wycliffite
- He continued to preach in the Bethlehem chapel, and became bolder and bolder in his accusations of the Church.
- Interdict was pronounced against Prague.
- 1411, Huss is excommunicated and must leave Prague.
- The Bohemian nobles take up the cause and give Huss protection in their castles during the ensuing years until 1414.
- At the castle of one of his protectors Huss wrote treatises with the result that Bohemian Wycliffism was carried into Poland, Hungary, Croatia, and Austria.
Huss goes voluntarily, and with Imperial safe conduct, to a general council of the Church at Constance.

From the sermons which he took along, it is evident that he purposed to convert the assembled fathers to his own (i.e., Wycliffe's) principal doctrines.

In the beginning Huss was at liberty, but after a few weeks his opponents imprisoned him for seventy-three days, separated from his friends, chained day and night, poorly fed, and tortured by disease.
The Predestination “Errors” of John Huss
According to
THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

- 1 One and only is the holy universal Church which is the aggregate of the predestined.
- 21. The grace of predestination is a chain by which the body of the Church and any member of it are joined insolubly to Christ the Head
“Errors” of Huss, According to Council of Constance: Papacy

- 7. Peter is not nor ever was the head of the Holy Catholic Church.
- 9. The papal dignity has sprung up from Caesar, and the perfection and institution of the pope have emanated from the power of Caesar.
- 10. No one without revelation would have asserted reasonably regarding himself or anyone else that he was the head of a particular church, nor is the Roman Pontiff the head of a particular Roman Church.
- 12. No one takes the place of Christ or of Peter unless he follows him in character, since no other succession is more important ….
- 13. The pope is not the true and manifest successor of Peter, the first of the apostles, if he lives in a manner contrary to Peter; and if he be avaricious, then he is the vicar of Judas Iscariot…. 
- 20. If the Pope is wicked and especially if he is foreknown, then as Judas, the Apostle, he is of the devil, a thief, and a son of perdition, and he is not the head of the holy militant Church, since he is not a member of it.
- 28. Christ through His true disciples scattered through the world would rule His Church better without such monstrous heads.
On June 5 he was tried for the first time.

He acknowledged the writings as his own, and declared himself willing to recant, if errors should be proven to him. If his reasons and Bible texts did not suffice, he would be glad to be instructed.

After the trial several other attempts were made to induce him to recant, but he resisted all of them.

“I will recant if you instruct me by better and more relevant Scripture. Otherwise, I fear to do so, lest I be a liar in the sight of the Lord and also lest I offend my own conscience and the truth of God.”
The condemnation took place in the cathedral. After the performance of high mass and liturgy, Huss was led into the church. The bishop of Lodi delivered an oration on the duty of eradicating heresy; then some theses of Huss and Wycliffe and a report of his trial were read.

He protested loudly several times, and when his appeal to Christ was rejected as a condemnable heresy, he exclaimed, An Italian prelate pronounced the sentence of condemnation upon Huss and his writings.

Again he protested loudly, saying that even at this hour he did not wish anything but to be convinced from Holy Scripture.

He fell upon his knees and asked God with a low voice to forgive all his enemies.

Then followed his degradation--he was enrobed in priestly vestments and again asked to recant; again he refused.

With curses his ornaments were taken from him, his priestly tonsure was destroyed, and the sentence was pronounced that the Church had deprived him of all rights and delivered him to the secular powers.
Thus Huss was led away to the stake with a high paper hat upon his head, with the inscription “Heretic”.

At the place of execution he knelt down, spread out his hands, and prayed aloud.

Some of the people asked that a confessor should be given him, but a priest exclaimed, a heretic should neither be heard nor given a confessor.

The executioners undressed Huss and tied his hands behind his back with ropes, and his neck with a chain to a stake around which wood and straw had been piled up so that it covered him to the neck.

Thereupon the fire was kindled.
God is my witness, I have never taught that of which I have been accused by false witnesses. The evidence against me is false. I have never thought nor preached except with the one intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. I am willing, patiently and publicly to endure this dreadful, shameful and cruel death for the sake of the gospel and the preaching of thy Word. In the truth of the Gospel which I have written, taught, and preached I will die today with gladness. Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

- With uplifted voice Huss sang, "Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy upon me." When he started this for the third time and continued "who art born of Mary the virgin," the wind blew the flame into his face; he still moved lips and head, and then died of suffocation. His clothes were thrown into the fire, his ashes gathered and cast into the nearby Rhine.
Effect in Bohemia of Death of Huss

- The Czech people, who in his lifetime had loved Huss as their prophet and apostle, now adored him as their saint and martyr.
- A league was formed by certain lords who pledged themselves to protect the free preaching of the Gospel upon all their possessions and estates, and to obey the power of the bishops only in case their orders accorded with the injunctions of the Bible.
- The entire Hussite nobility joined the league, and if the king had entered it, its resolutions would have received the sanction of the law; but he refused, and approached the Roman Catholic league of lords, which was now formed, the members pledging themselves to cling to the king, the Roman Church, and the Council.
The news of the death of King Wenceslaus produced a revolution swept over the country; churches and monasteries were destroyed, and the ecclesiastical possessions were seized by the Hussite nobility.

Emperor Sigismund could get possession of his kingdom only by the power of arms. Hussite statesmen and army leaders had to leave the country, and Roman priests were reinstituted.

Apart from their religious aims, Hussites fought for the national interests of the Czechs.

The moderate and radical parties were united and they not only repelled the attacks of the army of crusaders, but entered the neighboring countries.
Four Articles of Prague

The program of the more conservative Hussites is contained in the four articles of Prague, which were agreed upon in July, 1420, and promulgated in the Latin, Czech, and German languages:

- (1) freedom of preaching;
- (2) communion in both kinds;
- (3) poverty of the clergy and expropriation of church property;
- (4) punishment of notorious sinners
Hussites Split Over the “Regulative Principle”

- Luther Like Ultraquists:
  - Only that part of Roman Catholicism that is forbidden by Scripture should be eliminated.

- Calvin Like Taborites:
  - Reject all in faith and practice of Roman Catholicism that cannot be established from Scripture.
  - They preached the *sufficientia legis Christi*—only the divine law (i.e., the Bible) is the rule and canon for man, and that not only in ecclesiastical matters, but also in political and civil matters.
Ultraquists

- The so-called moderates
- Ultraquists left the whole hierarchical and liturgical order of the Church untouched;
- Considered the moderate Hussites represented at the university and among the citizens of Prague
- emphasized the second article (wine)
- chalice became their emblem.
- They repelled two attacks on Bohemia and grew in power.

Portrait of a Lady
Taborites

- Taborites identified with the doctrines of Wycliffe, hated the monastic clergy, and, attempted to lead the Church back to its condition during the time of the apostles, which necessitated the removal of the existing hierarchy and the secularization of ecclesiastical possessions.

- They rejected therefore, as early as 1416, everything that has no basis in the Bible, as the adoration of saints and pictures, fasts, superfluous holidays, the oath, intercession for the dead, auricular confession, indulgences, the sacraments of confirmation and extreme unction, admitted laymen and women to the preacher's office, chose their own priests.

- But before everything they clung to Wyclif's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, denying transubstantiation, and this is the principal point by which they are distinguished from the moderate party.
The Taborites founded a city upon a neighboring hill, which they called Tabor; hence they were called Taborites.

Pope Martin V called upon all Christians of the west to take up arms against the Hussites, and there followed a twelve-years' war which was carried on by the Hussites at first defensively, but after 1427 they assumed the offensive.

Taborites were premillenial, believed the Lord’s return was imminent and that the RCC was the “whore of Babylon.”
In 1431 peace negotiations began with the Council of Basel.

After repeated negotiations between Basel and Bohemia, a Bohemian-Moravian state assembly accepted the *Compactata* of Prague in 1433.

Communion in both kinds was granted to all who desired it, but with the understanding that Christ was entirely present in each kind.

Free preaching was granted conditionally; priests must be approved and sent by their superiors, and the power of the bishop must be considered.

The article which prohibits the secular power of the clergy was almost reversed.

The Taborites refused to conform, and the Ultraquists united with the Roman Catholics and destroyed the Taborites in the battle of Lipan (1434).

Thus the reconciliation of Bohemia with Rome and the Western Church was accomplished, and now Sigismund first obtained possession of the Bohemian crown.
Another segment of Hussites, *Unitas Fratrum*, set up an independent organization in 1467.

It lasted until the Counter-Reformation.

Communicated with other Protestants after the outbreak of the Reformation, although it was later suppressed in the religious wars.

This group became the precursors of the Moravian church, later to become so influential in the life of John Wesley.
Luther's appearance was hailed by the Utraquist clergy, and Luther himself was astonished to find so many points of agreement between the doctrines of Huss and his own.
Bohemian Confession, 1575

- Under Maximilian II, the Bohemian state assembly established the *Confessio Bohemica*, upon which Lutherans, Reformed, and Bohemian Brethren agreed.

- At the time of the Reformation there is a move towards reconciliation between the Hussites and the Reformation;

- the *Confessio Bohemica*, the Bohemian Confession of Faith, closely follows the *Confessio Augustana*, the Confession of Augsburg, drawn up by Philip Melanchthon.
Catholics Defeat Remaining Hussites During 30 Years War, 1620

- The Thirty Years War started with fights between Catholics and Protestants in Bohemia

- Hussism was completely eradicated only after the battle at the White Mountain (Nov. 8, 1620) after which the Utraquist Hussites were “finally absorbed by the Roman Catholics.” (Britannica)
Who was right about the regulative principle? Those who say that whatever Scripture does not forbid is allowed or those who say whatever is not commanded in Scripture is not permitted?

If you’re a Taborite, do you want to sing only Psalms?

If you’re a Taborite, on what Biblical text do you justify having Sunday School?

If you’re an Ultraquist, is it alright to accommodate our culture in the church worship service? Where does Ultraquist-ism stop and being “seeker sensitive begin”?

How many church controversies today can be viewed as debates between Ultraquists and Taborites?

What Protestant denominations are the most Ultraquist and the most Taborite?

Do sacramental, ritualistic churches and contemporary casual churches like Calvary Chapels share being Ultraquist?