

A 15th-century Bohemian reformer who set the stage for the world-changing reforms of Martin Luther



JAN HUS/JOHN HUSS

Born: circa 1373

Died: July 6, 1415

JAN HUS FORESHADOWED LUTHER BY 100 YEARS.

Like Luther, he opposed the abuses he saw in the Roman Catholic Church. What were those abuses? There were three chief ones: simony (the act of selling church offices or roles), the sale of indulgences (granting remission of sins in purgatory for a price) and making pilgrimages to view relics.

Hus' ideas were greatly influenced by the writings of John Wycliffe, an English scholar and theologian in the 14th century, whose teachings stressed the sole authority of Scripture.

Like Luther, Hus was called before an official church council and asked to recant, and like Luther, he could not in good conscience do that. He, too, was excommunicated. But unlike Luther, he was turned over to the secular authorities and burned at the stake. Before his death, Hus — whose surname means “goose” in Czech — prophesied, “To-day [sic] you will roast a lean goose, but [a] hundred years from now you will hear a swan sing, whom you will leave unroasted and no trap or net will catch him for you.”



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