

Staunch Defender of the Infallibility of the Pope and Luther's Most Outspoken Adversary



JOHANN ECK

Born: Nov. 13, 1486 |
Egg an der Günz,
Germany

Died: Feb. 13, 1543 |
Ingolstadt,
Germany

WHEN LUTHER'S COLLEAGUE ANDREAS KARLSTADT ATTEMPTED TO DEFEND LUTHER FROM ECK'S ATTACKS, Eck and Karlstadt were invited to a public debate at the University of Leipzig in 1519. Because Eck's response to Karlstadt was a thinly veiled attack upon Luther himself, Luther was drawn into debating Rome's teaching of the authority and infallibility of the pope. Eck announced that anyone who questioned the pope's authority was aligning himself with Jan Hus, whom the Roman Catholic Church burned at the stake as a heretic in 1415. The debate between Eck and Luther was pivotal in defining the direction of the Reformation; here Luther first publicly stated that the pope and Church councils can err — therefore Christ Himself, as revealed in the Scriptures, had to be the sole authority for His Church.

After the Leipzig Debate, Eck devoted his energies to refuting the Lutheran "heresy." He drafted the papal bull, *Exsurge Domine*, which condemned Luther's teachings. Eck also helped draft the *Confutation against the Augsburg Confession*.



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