



Forerunners of the Reformation

Acts 5:29–32

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered and said, “We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you put to death by hanging Him on a tree. ³¹“This One God exalted to His right hand as a Leader and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. ³²“And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God gave to those who obey Him.”

- 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 _____ to the papal _____, in which _____ rival popes each claimed to be the true leader of the church.

Peter 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 _____. They would later come to be called _____.
- The Waldensian movement was characterized by three key commitments:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

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

John Wycliffe (1324-1384)

- Known as the “_____” of the Reformation.
- Professor at Oxford.
- Led the effort to translate the Bible from the _____ into English.
- Thundered against Roman Catholic abuses.
- He rejected the doctrine of _____, and disapproved of both the sale of _____ and the mandatory _____ 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.
- Most English-speaking Christians take it for granted that we have the word of God in our own language. We can be thankful for faithful Bible translators, like Wycliffe and Tyndale, who labored to make the English Bible a reality.

Jan Hus (1369-1415)

- Jan Hus (or John Huss) lived in Bohemia, the modern-day _____.
- He was from a village called “Husinec” which means “Gooseville.” The bohemian word for “hus” means goose.

- Educated at the University of Prague, where he was influenced by John Wycliffe.
- Preached in the Bohemian language at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague.
- 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.
- 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.
- The phrase “Your goose is cooked” comes from his execution.
- A century later, Hus would have a significant impact on Martin Luther, who was nicknamed “the Saxon Hus.”

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 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.
- 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.