

**Revelation 16: 1 and 2: “John Hus helps Pour the 1st Bowl”, Sermon # 115 in the series
– “The Faithful and True Witness”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on October 19th, 2014, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

In the past two sermons that I have preached to you on this text I have attempted to show you that the pouring out of these vials by the angels mentioned, is a progressive declaration of the wrath of God upon the Antichristian system of Roman Catholicism and Liberal Protestantism. I believe the seven angels mentioned here represent those faithful pastors and ministers who boldly and publicly took their stand for truth against this false system; men who were greatly opposed, and suffered for the advancement of Biblical truth, and in some cases died for it. Their united public declaration of the wrath of God upon the false doctrines and false authority of the Church of Rome was, and is to this day, the pouring out of the wrath of God upon this system. Eventually, when the 7th angel pours out his bowl, the wrath of God against Rome will be complete. The identification and description of this false system as being the Church of Rome and her daughters, will be more carefully examined in Chapters 17 and 18. But the pouring out of the bowls, or vials, of wrath takes place in succession of time, by the numbers 1-7 in relation to the angel that pours them.

Each angel's pouring represents, I believe, a certain proportion of time relative to the 1260 days (or years) prophecy. I have said to you in past sermons that I believe that each of these bowls of wrath represents an approximate one hundred year period of time; a time which began at the birth of John Wycliffe in 1320 and has continued down through each century since; God declaring His wrath, through His appointed men, against some particular aspect or aspects of Rome's false doctrine and practice. These vials being poured out will have a cumulative effect; they have been gathering momentum as they go, and they will culminate in the entire overthrow and destruction of this system at the end of the 1260 years prophecy. After the slaying of the true Church's witness, and its resurrection 3 and a half years later, the Church in its witness will rise from the dead, and then she shall spiritually reign upon the earth for a thousand years.

But back in Chapter 15, verse 7, we saw that it was one of the four living creatures who gave to the seven angels these bowls of wrath to pour out. The four living creatures, I have told you before, are a hieroglyphic representation of a gospel minister. It was because those men who were true pastors in those first 560 years of the 1260 years, from 756 to 1316, could not openly teach and preach the true gospel and the true doctrines of the word of God with freedom, that the Reformation became absolutely necessary in order to promote the further forward progress of Christ's kingdom among the nations. It was their lives, their witness for truth, and their testimony to what was false in the Roman Catholic Church which led to their being persecuted and killed. For the most part, it was not until John Wycliffe appeared on the scene that any real personal confrontation in a public way by any person in ecclesiastical authority in the church of Rome began to take place. His labors, as the first of the great reformers, took place from about 1349 until his death in 1385. He lived in England, and yet he was the man who effectively began the Reformation of the Church.

The other man who greatly helped, in furthering Christ's true cause and kingdom, in pouring out this 1st bowl of wrath, was John Hus. It is his life and ministry that we want to focus on this afternoon. I would like us to 1st of all – Take a look at God's raising up the man who would pour out this bowl of wrath. 2nd – His beginning to pour out a bowl of wrath on Rome's doctrine, and its consequences. And then in the next sermon I will speak to you of his awful but glorious martyrdom. May God open our eyes us to see what it cost to reform the Church of Jesus Christ away from the false doctrines of Rome.

1st of all – Let's take a look at God's raising up the man who would pour out this bowl of wrath.

It is very important that all Christians study the history of the Reformation. And it is equally important that they remember the godly men who reformed the church. The history of what these

godly men did, having been set down in writing, should be learned by anyone who wants to help forward the cause and kingdom of Christ. There have been various ways in which the Roman Catholic church has deceived people into thinking that they are the true Church of Jesus Christ. Because of the spiritual discernment, which was given to John Wycliffe and John Hus way back in the years 1320-1420, the whole church of Jesus Christ was awakened to consider the problem of false doctrine. If this history is not remembered by us, the errors and heresies of the past will come back to greatly hinder the progress of truth and righteousness, even in our own day. The history of the Reformation is more than a study of great events. It was the re-discovery of the true gospel by great and godly men of that day who were not ashamed to proclaim the truth of justification by faith in Christ alone. In those days, chosen men of God began to see the depths of the truth of the Word of God concerning what a true Church was, as well. These men called for reform because they saw certain practices and doctrines of Rome were an abomination in the sight of God. With the birth of John Wycliffe came the dawning of the Reformation as I said to you in my previous two sermons. He brought the problem of this false system to light. He publicly opposed monasticism, transubstantiation, and the false authority of the popes.

It was not as though there were not those who opposed the Roman Catholic doctrine and the Papal authority before this time; there were. There were the Waldenses and the Albigenses, those heroic and valiant believers who took their stand for the truth of the Bible against Rome for hundreds of years before this. But although they took their stand for truth and valiantly defended it, they were in no position to bring about the Reformation of the Church which was needed. They were driven to flee away from the military forces sent against them from those countries in Europe who were sympathetic and obedient to the Papal directives to persecute them. They fled into the mountains of the Piedmont between Italy and France. And they were for many years chased and hounded and persecuted in the most awful ways. And yet notwithstanding all their sufferings, there was in the year 1260, according to the report of George Morrel, in his Memorials, above 800,000 persons that made profession of the faith of the Waldenses." And as late as 1655, they were still being heavily persecuted; so much so that John Milton wrote a poem concerning them entitled, *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont*:

"Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold; even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old, when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones, forget not: in Thy book record their groans who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled mother with infant down the rocks." "Their moans the vales redoubled to the hills, and they to heaven." "Their martyred blood and ashes sow o'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway the triple tyrant; that from these may grow a hundred fold, who having learned Thy way, early may fly the Babylonian woe."

This awful repression, suppression, and persecution of those holding to Biblical truth in opposition to the pope's making up doctrine and calling it true, is the setting into which John Hus was born. "John Hus, the famous Reformer of Bohemia, was born at Hussinetz (Husinecz; 75 miles south west of Prague) on or around July 6, 1369. His parents were Czechs." The historians Gideon and Hilda Hagstotz say: "His father died while John was still in his boyhood." "Early in her son's life, John's mother recognized an exceptional devotion to study." "She had no funds to support him in school, but nonetheless she encouraged him to obtain an education. Although a charity student, he determinedly entered the University of Prague, earning part of his way by singing. His main interest centered in the study of theology. Early in his college career he became an able debater. It was said of him that during all his growth as a scholar he remained humble and moderate in his relationships with others." "In 1393 he received the bachelor of arts degree, the next year he became a bachelor of theology, and two years later the University of Prague conferred the master of arts degree upon him." "He did not take any studies toward the doctor of theology degree, but turned to active participation in national and university affairs."

His ordination to the priesthood came in 1400, after which he became attached to the court in the capacity of chaplain to Queen Sophia. By 1401 he accepted the deanship of the philosophical faculty, and the following year he rose to be rector of the university. With this recognition of ability also came the appointment as preacher of Bethlehem Chapel." "This house of worship had been built and dedicated to the specific purpose of preaching to the citizens of Prague in their native tongue." "During all his life, Huss distinguished himself by constant application to duty and tireless devotion to preaching according to the Scriptures." "His conduct has been termed exemplary, his life blameless, and his personality winning." "Apparently this estimation of the man agrees with his life, for even his enemies did not attack his character during his life nor after his death." "What was it that led Huss into religious paths which diverged at first but slightly, then gradually further and still further from the then universally accepted authority of the church?" "The answer cannot be found in one word, nor even in one statement." "W.T. Selley and A.C. Krey present the following reason." "He criticized the church in Bohemia as Wycliffe had criticized it in England." "His views found all the more favor among his fellow Bohemians because the higher ecclesiastical offices in Bohemia were held by Germans." "The books of Huss show clear evidence of the influence of Wycliffe, whom Huss respected highly, though it is quite possible that he arrived at his opinions independently." (Medieval Foundations of Western Civilization, page 316.)

Well, God was preparing John Hus to be one of His greatest witnesses to truth in that generation. James Wylie in his *History of Protestantism* says this: "The true career of John Huss dates from about A.D. 1402, when he was appointed preacher to the Chapel of Bethlehem." "This temple had been founded in the year 1392 by a certain citizen of Prague, Mulhamio by name, who laid great stress upon the preaching of the Word of God in the mother-tongue of the people." "On the death or the resignation of its first pastor, Stephen of Colonia, Huss was elected his successor." "His sermons formed an epoch in Prague." "The moral condition of that capital was then deplorable." "According to Comenius, all classes wallowed in the most abominable vices." "The king, the nobles, the prelates, the clergy, the citizens, indulged without restraint in avarice, pride, drunkenness, lewdness, and every profligacy." "In the midst of this sunken community stood up Huss, like an incarnate conscience." "Now it was against the prelates, now against the nobles, and now against the ordinary clergy that he launched his bolts." "These sermons seem to have benefited the preacher as well as the hearers, for it was in the course of their preparation and delivery that Huss became inwardly awakened." "A great clamor arose." "But the queen and the archbishop protected Huss, and he continued preaching with indefatigable zeal in his Chapel of Bethlehem, founding all he said on the Scriptures, and appealing so often to them, that it may be truly affirmed of him that he restored the Word of God to the knowledge of his countrymen." "The minister of Bethlehem Chapel was then bound to preach on all church days early and after dinner (in Advent and fast times only in the morning), to the common people in their own language." "Obliged to study the Word of God, and left free from the performance of liturgical acts and pastoral duties, Huss grew rapidly in the knowledge of Scripture, and became deeply imbued with its spirit." "While around him was a daily-increasing devout community, he himself grew in the life of faith."

"By this time he had become acquainted with the theological works of Wycliffe, which he earnestly studied, and learned to admire the piety of their author, and to be not wholly opposed to the scheme of reform which he had promulgated." "Already Huss had commenced a movement, the true character of which he did not perceive, and the issue of which he little foresaw." "He placed the Bible above the authority of Pope or Council, and thus he had entered, without knowing it, the road of Protestantism." "But as yet he had no wish to break with the Church of Rome, nor did he dissent from a single dogma of her creed, the one point of divergence to which we have just referred excepted; but he had taken a step which, if he did not retrace it, would lead him in due time far enough from her communion."

2nd – Let us consider his beginning to pour out a bowl of wrath on Rome's doctrine, and its consequences.

Let us now understand that it was God who had chosen this instrument whom He had thus prepared; and He had raised him up to effectually begin the Reformation in Bohemia. Little did Hus know that He would be placed in the most Christ-like of positions; to suffer like His Master did, for the truth of God. And through that suffering, he would help John Wycliffe pour out this first bowl of wrath on what was false in Roman Catholicism. He would proclaim the gospel, and in preaching the word of God he would feel compelled to expose and confront the greatest system of counterfeit Christianity which Satan had ever devised; even the false practices of his own Church and the false Papal authority. He knew, the truth of the problem had to be declared.

The way that this began was that in 1409, great crowds of foreign youth were attending the University of Prague. And many of them were getting some form of scholarship or pay to come and fulfill a teaching office. Because of this the Bohemian students were being partially excluded from receiving these offices and benefits. There had originally been a proportion in the distribution of these emoluments and honors. (An emolument is salary, wages and benefits paid for employment or an office held.) According to the original constitution of the university, the Bohemians possessed three votes in regard to how these were to be distributed, and the other nations united, had only one vote. In the process of time, this was reversed; the Germans usurped three of the four votes, and the remaining one alone was left to the native Bohemian youth. Hus protested against this abuse, and he had the influence to be able to correct it there at the University. No sooner was this decree published, correcting the abuse, than the German professors and students to the number of 5,000 left Prague, having previously bound themselves to this step by oath, under pain of having the two first fingers of their right hand cut off. When this was heard of by the Pope at Rome, Alexander the 5th. He commanded the Archbishop of Prague, Sbinko, with the help of the secular authorities, to proceed against all who preached in private chapels, and who read the writings, or taught the opinions of Wycliffe. Upwards of 200 volumes, beautifully written, elegantly bound, and ornamented with precious stones – The Works of John Wycliffe – were by the order of Sbinko, piled upon the streets of Prague, and amid the tolling bells, publicly burned.

Wylie in his history says: “This act only inflamed the zeal of John Hus more.” “In his sermons he now attacked indulgences as well as the abuses of the hierarchy.” “A second mandate arrived from Rome.” “The Pope summoned him to answer for his doctrine in person.” “To obey the summons would have been to walk into his grave.” “The king, the queen, the University, and many of the important dignitaries of Bohemia sent a joint letter requesting the Pope to dispense with Huss’ having to appear in person, and to rather listen to his legal representative.” “The Pope refused to do this, and he went on with the case, condemned John Huss in absence, and laid the city of Prague under interdict.” (An interdict is an ecclesiastical censure that excludes from certain rites of the Church individuals or groups, who nonetheless do not cease to be members of the Church.) “Tumult was beginning to disturb the peace, and slaughter to dye the streets of Prague.” “What was Huss to do?” “Should he flee because he was a hireling, one who did not care for the sheep?” He could not do this. “But had not his Master commanded, ‘When they persecute you in one city, flee to another?’”

So he left Prague and retired to his native village of Hussinetz. “I have retired” he wrote, “not to deny the truth, for which I am willing to die, but because impious priests forbid the preaching of it.” “The sincerity of this statement was attested by the labors he immediately undertook.” “Making Christ his pattern, he journeyed all through the surrounding region, preaching in towns and villages.” “He was followed by great crowds, who hung upon his words, admiring his meekness not less than his courage and eloquence.” “The Church,” said his hearers, “has pronounced this man a heretic and a demon, yet his life is holy, and his doctrine is pure and elevating.” The next time I preach to you we will see this statement proved in John Hus’ awful but glorious imprisonment and martyrdom. It is for this reason, along with Rome’s treatment of many others like John Hus, that the first bowl of God’s wrath against that system of false religion, was poured out.