

**Revelation 16: 1 and 2; “The 1st Bowl of Wrath Concluded”, or “John Hus’ Glorious Martyrdom”, Sermon #116 in the series – “The Faithful and True Witness”,
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 26th, 2014,
in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

Last Sunday I began to describe for you the life of John Hus. I spoke about some of the preparatory work that God providentially ordained would take place in the life of this servant of His; and how John Hus began to pour out the first bowl of wrath upon the Antichristian system of Roman Catholicism with its false Papal authority. Let us remember, that in terms of God’s wrath which is being spoken of in these verses, that it is something that He holds within Himself and stores up within Himself until He wishes to release it and pour it out. And when it is fully poured out, in a coming day, it will be complete. Revelation 15: 1, just one chapter back, says this: “Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.” This shows us that what is being spoken of here is not the eternal wrath of God in hell, which is forever and ever, and it never ceases; nor is it ever complete. Rather this wrath is the wrath of God against the false system of Roman Catholic Antichristian doctrine and practice which has continued now for over 1250 years. This false doctrine has been Satan’s deception par excellence.

It is this false system, worked out in western Europe over the time of the 1260 days prophecy, which is the Antichrist predicted in the book of Revelation and also described in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. It is this system which has been the major roadblock, humanly and demonically speaking, which has effectually roadblocked the forward progress of the gospel, keeping it from having much more fruit among the nations of the world than it would, if Satan were bound. Someday Satan will be bound in respect to the nations. Someday Satan’s power to deceive the nations will be taken away from him, and what a glorious day that will be. But what I want you to understand is that God’s method of pouring His wrath out on this false system, has been for His servants, His preachers, to publicly declare what is false and sinful in this system, so that false Rome would be seen to be what she really is; a harlot (a false Church) riding a beast (a wicked political power subservient to the Pope’s wishes).

Let us see and understand that many are still being deceived by this wicked Antichrist. The “foul and loathsome sore” comes upon the men who have the mark of the beast, and those who worship his image. This sore is the outward evidence to the eyes of all discerning men, of the awful effects coming upon the minds and the hearts of those worshipping according to their false doctrine; these are sickening, and they are awful to behold. They will lead on to the eternal punishment of hell for all who hold to them. John Hus’ glorious martyrdom for the sake of the advancement of the truth of the gospel, was a great introduction to the pouring out of God’s wrath because through it, many came to see what a wretched religion this really was, that would lead men to put to death someone as godly as John Hus was. This is what I want us to think about together this afternoon. I would like us to look first at Hus’ pouring out the vial of wrath on Rome, which brought charges against him. 2nd - His awful imprisonment by Roman Catholic authorities, and then last we will look at John Hus’ glorious martyrdom. In the relation of these events I pray that you will better see why God was pouring out His wrath upon this false system. **1st of all – Let’s take a look at John Hus’ pouring out the vial of wrath on Rome, which brought charges against him.**

When we last took our leave of Hus, he had been summoned to appear before the Pontiff at Rome for his part in trying to see the Bohemians receive more of the scholarships and paid positions at the University of Prague where he taught. His influence at this time was very great. Hus chose not appear before the Pope, and was therefore found guilty because of this failure to

appear, and the whole city of Prague was placed under a Papal interdict; a kind of Church discipline for the whole city.

Wylie says: **“Prague looked like a city stricken with sudden and terrible calamity.** The closed church-doors — the extinguished altar-lights — the corpses waiting burial by the way-side — the images which sanctified and guarded the streets, covered with sackcloth, or laid prostrate on the ground, as if in supplication for a land on which the impieties of its children had brought down a terrible curse — gave emphatic and solemn warning that every hour the citizens harbored within their walls the man who had dared to disobey the Pope’s summons, they but increased the heinousness of their guilt, and added to the vengeance of their doom. “Let us cast out the rebel,” was the cry of many, “before we perish.” Tumult was beginning to disturb the peace, and slaughter to dye the streets of Prague. What was Huss to do? Should he flee before the storm, and leave a city where he had many friends and not a few disciples? What had his Master said? “The hireling flees because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” This seemed to forbid his departure. His mind was torn with doubts. But had not the same Master commanded, “When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another”? His presence could but entail calamity upon his friends; so, quitting Prague, he retired to his native village of Hussinetz. Here Huss enjoyed the protection of the territorial lord, who was his friend. His first thoughts were of those he had left behind in Prague — the flock to whom he had so lovingly ministered in his Chapel of Bethlehem. “I have retired,” he wrote to them, “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 avowal was attested by the labors he immediately undertook. Making Christ his pattern, he journeyed all through the surrounding region, preaching in the 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.”

So Hus went back to Hussinetz, but the trouble for him was only beginning.
Wylie writes again:

“The frightful picture which society now presented had a very powerful effect on John Huss. He studied the Bible, he read the early Fathers, he compared these with the sad spectacles passing before his eyes, and he saw more clearly every day that “the Church” had departed far from her early model, not in practice only, but in doctrine also. A little while ago we saw him leveling his blows at abuses; now we find him beginning to strike at the root on which all these abuses grew, if haply he might extirpate both root and branch together. It was at this time that he wrote his treatise *On the Church*, a work which enables us to trace the progress of his emancipation from the shackles of (*Rome’s*) authority. He establishes in it the principle that the true Church of Christ has not necessarily an exterior constitution, but that communion with its invisible Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, is alone necessary for it: and that the Catholic (*that is, the is the Universal*) Church is the assembly of all the elect. This tractate was followed by another under the title of *The Six Errors*. The first error was that of the priests who boasted of making the body of Jesus Christ in the mass, and of being the creator of their Creator. The second was the confession exacted of the members of the Church — “I believe in the Pope and the saints” — in opposition to which, Huss taught that men are to believe in God only. The third error was the priestly pretension to remit the guilt and punishment of sin. The fourth was the implicit obedience exacted by ecclesiastical superiors to all their commands. The fifth was the making no distinction between a valid excommunication and one that was not so. The sixth error was simony. This Huss designated a heresy, and scarcely, he believed, could a priest be found who was not guilty of it.”

Simony is the act of selling church offices and roles. The practice is named after Simon Magus, who is described in the Acts of the Apostles 8:9–24 as having offered two disciples of Jesus, Peter and John, payment in exchange for their empowering him to impart the power of the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom he would place his hands. The term also extends to other forms of trafficking for money in “spiritual things”.

“This list of errors was placarded on the door of the Bethlehem Chapel. The tract in which they were set forth was circulated far and near, and produced an immense impression throughout the whole of Bohemia. Another matter which now happened helped to deepen the impression which his tract on The

Six Errors had made. John XXIII. *drew up* a bull against Ladislaus, King of Hungary, excommunicating him, and all his children to the third generation. The offense which had drawn upon Ladislaus this burst of Pontifical wrath was the support he had given to Gregory XII., one of the rivals of John. The Pope commanded all emperors, kings, princes, cardinals, and men of whatever degree, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, to take up arms against Ladislaus, and utterly to exterminate him and his supporters; and he promised to all who should join the crusade, or who should preach it, or collect funds for its support, the pardon of all their sins, and immediate admission into Paradise should they die in the war — in short, the same indulgences which were accorded to those who bore arms for the conquest of the Holy Land. This declaration wrapped Bohemia in flames; and Huss seized the opportunity of directing the eyes of his countrymen to the contrast, so perfect and striking, between the vicar of Christ and Christ Himself; between the destroyer and the Savior; between the commands of the bull, which proclaimed war, and the precepts of the Gospel, which preached peace. Huss was not afraid to speak against the Papal system. He said: “Answer to this, you teachers who preach that the Pope is a god upon earth; that he may sell and waste in what manner he pleases the holy things, as the lawyers say; that he is the head of the entire holy Church, and governs it well; that he is the heart of the Church, and quickens it spiritually; that he is the well-spring from whence flows all virtue and goodness; that he is the sun of the Church, and a very safe refuge to which every Christian ought to fly. Yet, behold now that head, as it were, severed by the sword; this terrestrial god enchained; his sins laid bare; this never-failing source dried up; this divine sun dimmed; this heart plucked out, and branded with reprobation, that no one should seek an asylum in it.” This was a great part of the pouring out the 1st vial of wrath.

Now 2ndly – Let us take notice of His awful imprisonment by Roman Catholic authorities.

Hus was finally ordered to appear before a Church council at Constance in the year 1414. He was told in an official document issued by the Emperor Sigismund that he would receive safe conduct. But it turned out that this promise was a lie. Wylie says:

“On the twenty-sixth day after his arrival Huss was arrested, in flagrant violation of the imperial safe-conduct, and carried before the Pope and the cardinals. After a conversation of some hours, he was told that he must remain a prisoner, and was entrusted to the clerk of the Cathedral of Constance. He remained a week at the house of this official under a strong guard. Thence he was conducted to the prison of the monastery of the Dominicans on the banks of the Rhine.”

Listen to the Roman Catholic historian Poggius as he describes for us how Hus was treated:

“When I recently visited him, because I had heard that he was suffering from an illness, I was terribly taken aback to find him in such a dungeon. Imagine the corner tower above the Rhine bridge, the waters flowing about its foundation. Ten spans above the water you’ll see a small hole riveted thereto a grate of thick iron bars, through which, when the waves beat high, foam and drops splash into the dark chamber where Hus is sitting. It is necessary to descent thirty steps, the stairway being thrice protected by barred doors. Finally one comes to a narrow chamber, which is as long and broad as a man is high, barely leaving in the light by the draft hole toward the lake, where the above mentioned splashes come from. I stood for a while in this chamber, before I discerned its outlines and then I saw the poor prisoner, who huddled at my feet in the foul straw. Upon a ledge stood a bowl with porridge, upon which lay a black, wooden spoon; next to it stood an earthen jar, near it lay a crust of bread. When the prisoner lies down, his head and his soles almost touch the walls. His clothing is falling to pieces and if he wants to relieve his bowels he must sit upon a round stone hole, from which a bestial stink rises, until the high water forces out the excrements from under the vault, which often happens only after three or four weeks. “Who approaches my prison, except you, guard? If it is a messenger of death, his visit be highly welcome, as I would like to enter the home of my

Lord in peace!” said Hus in a hoarse voice when he saw two shadows before him. “Poor John,” I replied, “it is Poggius who is visiting you. To my great sorrow I have heard that you have fallen ill in prison, therefore it is proper

for me to look after you, so that you will not harbor ill feelings for me because of my summoning you, whereby I have delivered you into bondage, which has brought you a great deal of suffering.

At the same time I would like to ask you in your sorrow, if you have not become conscious of any false teachings or some other error, while thinking over your theories in this quiet solitude, since we all are human and are prone to make mistakes due to our vanity, pride, weakness or other unclean and ignorant qualities which we all are subject to from birth, and since no one need be ashamed of a change to genuine piety, nor may anyone be punished, be his belief what it may. Least of all your judges, just as the Lord, care to have you die, but they want that you desist from your hallucinations and that you will not persist in them and teach them, to the damnation of your soul and that of others, now and in eternity. Let us quietly talk about this, so that I may speak well about you to those under whose jurisdiction we stand according to divine and human laws.” While I spoke, the one I addressed rose slowly and leaned wearily upon my shoulder. “Your visit is worth much to me, for the sake of the kindness which brings you to me, honorable prior, because I have grown miserable in this dungeon, but I have never held the summons against you, which you have innocently brought to me and which I have followed guilelessly, sound in soul and body, only to waste away in the devilish claws of my enemies. Concerning my teachings and my words, my tongue has neither spoken a vain nor prideful word, nor any which I regret and I would never be ashamed to reconsider, in case I should find that I have erred or that my teachings were not rooted in the holy scriptures entirely. But I would like to beseech you to speak to my judges so that they might grant me a better housing than that which I am forced to inhabit, one, where I might look once more upon the blue arc of the sky before I die. And if it should be within your power and friendship to attain for me a public defense before the assembled gentlemen, for the sake of God, let me humbly beg you to do so.”

“Woefully I took leave of Hus and immediately hurried to Dominico, the Cardinal Legate. But this one’s mind was strongly set against the prisoner and he was glad to know him in that stinking hole, for which reason I left him and went to the Chief Marshal of the town of Constance to ask him, for the sake of the five wounds of Christ, to provide better quarters for the sick man. This man arose immediately, after hearing my supplication, from his easy chair, grasped the baton of his office and said. “No misdeed against a deserted stranger shall find support under my administration, as true as my name is Stuessi. A just victor honors even a defeated enemy.” After a short while Hus was led out of his dungeon into a decent chamber, but his feet almost refused to carry him, he swayed as he walked; listless and unused to the day was the light of his eyes, deathly pale his cheeks and loose what was left of his teeth, since eleven had fallen out due to the damp prison. The nails on his fingers were terribly long, because he had been unable to bite them off for many weeks; upon his skin was a crust of dirt which exuded an awful stench and his otherwise brown hair fell in white ringlets upon his rotting and torn garb. His shoes had rotted upon his feet and his shirt and loincloth had vanished. The rounded flesh which had covered his bones had shrunken and shriveled and he had become a picture of woe without equal, unrecognizable to those who had known him before.”

“Horror filled those who looked upon him and pitying people prepared a bath for him, brought shirts and clothing and refreshed him with strengthening foods, for which he could only thank them with tearful eyes. Thus passed three days in June of this year (1415), during which the fathers of the long heralded council were all assembled and the fifth day of June had been set as the first day of the general session, which decision had been announced at once to Hus, so that he might be prepared to answer to the charges which had been brought against him. Hus asked for a Bible to read from it the proof for his theories during the interrogations, but his request was not granted, nor was he allowed lead nor parchment to prepare his speech of reply; so he said: “What harm? I tell you, that, even if you would burn and exterminate the holy scriptures, I could replace them by heart, with the exception of the Chronicles. Therefore I am satisfied with my reason, for even if my body has been robbed of its vigor by incarceration, my spirit has retained its youthful wings, with the help of which I shall soar above the dust heaps.”

Now 3rd – Let us consider John Hus’ glorious martyrdom.

Wylie, the Church historian continues:

“THIRTY days elapsed. Huss had languished in prison, contending with fetters, fetid air, and sickness, for about two months. It was now the 6th of July, 1415 — the anniversary of his birth. This day was to see the wishes of his enemies crowned, and his own sorrows terminated. The hall of the Council was filled with a brilliant assemblage. There sat the emperor; there were the princes, the deputies of the sovereigns, the patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, and priests; and there too was a vast concourse which the spectacle

that day was to witness had brought together. It was meet that a stage should be erected worthy of the act to be done upon it — that when the first champion in the great struggle that was just opening should yield up his life, all Christendom might see and bear witness to the fact.

The Archbishop of Riga came to the prison to bring Huss to the Council. Mass was being celebrated as they arrived at the church door, and Huss was made to stay outside till it was finished, lest the mysteries should be profaned by the presence of a man who was not only a heretic, but a leader of heretics. Being led in, he was bidden take his seat on a raised platform, where he might be conspicuously seen in the eyes of the whole assembly. On sitting down, he was seen to engage in earnest prayer, but the words were not heard. Near him rose a pile of clerical vestments, in readiness for the ceremonies that were to precede the final tragedy. The sermon, usual on such occasions, was preached by the Bishop of Lodi. He chose as his text the words, “That the body of sin might be destroyed.” He enlarged on the schism as the source of the heresies, murders, sacrileges, robberies, and wars which had for so long a period desolated the Church, and drew, says Lenfant, “such a horrible picture of the schism, that one would think at first he was exhorting the emperor to burn the two anti-Popes, and not John Huss. Yet the bishop concluded in these terms, addressed to Sigismund: ‘Destroy heresies and errors, but chiefly’ (pointing to John Huss) ‘that OBSTINATE HERETIC.’”

“The sermon ended, the accusations against Huss were again read, as also the depositions of the witnesses; and then Huss gave his final refusal to abjure. This he accompanied with a brief recapitulation of his proceedings since the commencement of this matter, ending by saying that he had come to this Council of his own free will, “confiding in the safe-conduct of the emperor here present.” As he uttered these last words, he looked full at Sigismund, on whose brow the crimson of a deep blush was seen by the whole assembly, whose gaze was at the instant turned towards his majesty. Sentence of condemnation as a heretic was now passed on Huss. There followed the ceremony of degradation — an ordeal that brought no blush upon the brow of the martyr. One after another the priestly vestments, brought thither for that end, were produced and put upon him, and now the prisoner stood full in the gaze of the Council, sacerdotally appareled. They next put into his hand the chalice, as if he were about to celebrate mass. They asked him if now he were willing to abjure. “With what face, then,” replied he, “should I behold the heavens? How should I look on those multitudes of men to whom I have preached the pure Gospel? No; I esteem their salvation more than this poor body, now appointed unto death.” Then they took from him the chalice, saying, “O accursed Judas, who, having abandoned the counsels of peace, have taken part in that of the Jews, we take from you this cup filled with the blood of Jesus Christ.” “I hope, by the mercy of God,” replied John Huss, “that this very day I shall drink of his cup in his own kingdom; and in one hundred years you shall answer before God and before me.”

The seven bishops selected for the purpose now came round him, and proceeded to remove the sacerdotal garments — the alb, the stole, and other pieces of attire — in which in mockery they had arrayed him. And as each bishop performed his office, he bestowed his curse upon the martyr. Nothing now remained but to erase the marks of the tonsure. On this there arose a great dispute among the prelates whether they should use a razor or scissors. “See,” said Huss, turning to the emperor, “they cannot agree among themselves how to insult me.” They resolved to use the scissors, which were instantly brought, and his hair was cut cross-wise to obliterate the mark of the crown. According to the canon law, the priest so dealt with becomes again a layman, and although the operation does not remove the character, which is indelible, it yet renders him forever incapable of exercising the functions of the priesthood. There remained one other mark of ignominy. They put on his head a cap or pyramidal-shaped miter of paper, on which were painted frightful figures of demons, with the word Arch-Heretic conspicuous in front. “Most joyfully,” said Huss, “will I wear this crown of shame for thy sake, O Jesus, who for me didst wear a crown of thorns.” When thus attired, the prelates said, “Now, we devote thy soul to the devil.” “And I,” said John Huss, lifting up his eyes toward heaven, “do commit my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus, for thou hast redeemed me.”

Turning to the emperor, the bishops said, “This man John Huss, who has no more any office or part in the Church of God, we leave with thee, delivering him up to the civil judgment and power.” Then the emperor, addressing Louis, Duke of Bavaria — who, as Vicar of the Empire, was standing before him in his robes, holding in his hand the golden apple, and the cross — commanded him to deliver over Huss to those whose duty it was to see the sentence executed. The duke in his turn abandoned him to the chief magistrate of Constance, and the magistrate finally gave him into the hands of his officers or city

sergeants. The procession was now formed. The martyr walked between four town sergeants. The princes and deputies, escorted by eight hundred men-at-arms, followed. In the cavalcade, mounted on horseback, were many bishops and priests delicately clad in robes of silk and velvet. The population of Constance followed in mass to see the end. As Huss passed the episcopal palace, his attention was attracted by a great fire which blazed and crackled before the gates. He was informed that on that pile his books were being consumed. He smiled at this futile attempt to extinguish the light which he foresaw would one day, and that not very distant, fill all Christendom. The procession crossed the bridge and halted in a meadow, between the gardens of the city and the gate of Gottlieben. Here the execution was to take place. Being come to the spot where he was to die, the martyr kneeled down, and began reciting the penitential psalms. He offered up short and fervent supplications, and oftentimes repeated, as the by-standers bore witness, the words, "Lord Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

"We know not," said those who were near him, "what his life has been, but verily he prays after a devout and godly fashion." Turning his gaze upward in prayer, the paper crown fell off. One of the soldiers rushed forward and replaced it, saying that "he must be burned with the devils whom he had served." Again the martyr smiled. The stake was driven deep into the ground. Huss was tied to it with ropes. He stood facing the east. "This," cried some, "is not the right attitude for a heretic." He was again unbound, turned to the west, and made fast to the beam by a chain that passed round his neck. **"It is thus," said he, "that you silence the goose, but a hundred years hence there will arise a swan whose singing you shall not be able to silence." (He was prophetically referring to Martin Luther)** He stood with his feet on the faggots, which were mixed with straw that they might the more readily ignite. Wood was piled all round him up to the chin. Before applying the torch, Louis of Bavaria and the Marshal of the Empire approached, and for the last time implored him to have a care for his life, and renounce his errors. "What errors," asked Huss, "shall I renounce? I know myself guilty of none. I call God to witness that all that I have written and preached has been with the view of rescuing souls from sin and perdition; and, therefore, most joyfully will I confirm with my blood that truth which I have written and preached." At the hearing of these words they departed from him, and John Huss had now done talking with men."

"The fire was applied, the flames blazed upward. "John Huss," says Fox, "began to sing with a loud voice, 'Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' And when he began to say the same the third time, the wind so blew the flame in his face that it choked him." Poggius, who was secretary to the Council, and Aeneas Sylvius, who afterwards became Pope, and whose narratives are not liable to the suspicion of being colored, bear even higher testimony to the heroic demeanor of both Huss and Jerome at their execution. "Both," says the latter historian, "bore themselves with constant mind when their last hour approached. They prepared for the fire as if they were going to a marriage feast. They uttered no cry of pain. When the flames rose they began to sing hymns; and scarce could the vehemency of the fire stop their singing." Huss had given up the ghost. When the flames had subsided, it was found that only the lower parts of his body were consumed, and that the upper parts, held fast by the chain, hung suspended on the stake. The executioners kindled the fire anew, in order to consume what remained of the martyr. When the flames had a second time subsided, the heart was found still entire amid the ashes. A third time had the fire to be kindled. At last all was burned. The ashes were carefully collected, the very soil was dug up, and all was carted away and thrown into the Rhine; so anxious were his persecutors that not the slightest vestige of John Huss — not even a thread of his raiment, for that too was burned along with his body — should be left upon the earth."

"When the martyr bowed his head at the stake it was the infallible Council that was vanquished. It was with Huss that the victory remained; and what a victory! Heap together all the trophies of Alexander and of Caesar, what are they all when weighed in the balance against this one glorious achievement? From the stake of Huss, what blessings have flowed, and are still flowing, to the world! From the moment he expired amid the flames, his name became a power, which will continue to speed on the great cause of truth and light, till the last shackle shall be rent from the intellect, and the conscience emancipated from every usurpation, shall be free to obey the authority of its rightful Lord. What a surprise to his and the Gospel's enemies! "Huss is dead," say they, as they retire from the meadow where they have just seen him expire. Huss is dead. The Rhine has received his ashes, and is bearing them on its rushing floods to the ocean, there to bury them forever. No: Huss is alive. It is not death, but life, that he has found in the fire; his stake has given him not an entombment, but a resurrection. The

winds as they blow over Constance are wafting the spirit of the confessor and martyr to all the countries of Christendom. The nations are being stirred; Bohemia is awakening; a hundred years, and Germany and all Christendom will shake off their slumber; and then will come the great reckoning which the martyr's prophetic spirit foretold: "In the course of a hundred years you will answer to God and to me."

This, my friends, was a great part of the pouring out of the 1st vial of wrath.