

A PREACHER'S PRIORITIES: JAN HUS AND LATE MEDIEVAL HOMILETICS

By

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To Katrina

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BRRP	Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice
Collecta	Sermones de tempore qui Collecta Dicuntur
FRB	Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum
MGH	Monumentum Germaniae Historica
MIHOO	Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera Omnia
Sermones	Sermones in Capella Bethlehem 1410-1411

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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Jan Hus (d.1415) is arguably the most famous individual in the history of the Czech nation and one of the most prominent personalities of the late Middle Ages. Beginning with his 1415 execution for heresy at the Council of Constance, Hus's legacy has been an ideological battleground for Hussites, Protestants, Catholics, nationalists, Marxists and historians of the medieval and modern periods alike. They have all claimed his memory from the moment of his martyrdom, with each group shaping, and in many cases, twisting the narrative to meet the ideological needs of their specific agendas. Often overlooked in the historiographical discussion is the value and content of the roughly 800 published sermons attributed to Hus, far more than any contemporary figure from the fourteenth and fifteenth century and one of the richest yet most neglected sources of late medieval Central Europe. Too frequently historians have picked through these sermons to support one agenda or another without closely examining their function as a whole. Yet, Jan Hus provides historians a unique opportunity to examine a preacher and his context over an entire career.

In the dissertation I examine Hus's sermons dated between his becoming the rector of Bethlehem Chapel in 1402 and his expulsion from Prague in 1412 to

investigate the foundation of his popularity in the pulpit. I argue that Hus's preaching reflected not the concerns of the heretic, reformer, or nationalist, as generations of historians have characterized him, but rather his sermons illuminate the priorities and concerns of a late medieval priest shaped by the political and religious turmoil that swirled around early fifteenth-century Prague. The dissertation illustrates how Hus shaped his sermons to reflect his understanding of his audience and how his approach evolved due to localized and external pressures towards the end of his ten-year career. Examining Hus the preacher undermines the all-too-common generalization of Hus the religious radical. The picture of Hus as preacher and priest deeply involved in the spiritual life of his congregation, as reflected in his sermons, stands in marked contrast to the traditional renderings of Hus as a popular nationalist and religious zealot. Too often historians have exaggerated Hus's radical leanings, ignoring his complete message. It is that message from the pulpit that molded his celebrity long before history witnessed the creation of Hus the martyr.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Theology and fable, compassion and anger, the ways of heaven and the ways of the street; the medieval world expected its preachers to understand and communicate all these things. A preacher needed to proclaim confidently the spectrum of Christian theology, doctrine, faith, and emotion to his audience in order to move the audience to spiritual conversion and renewal. The words of the preacher served as a bridge between the priest and the laity, the educated and the ignorant, and God and his people. Serving as that bridge, the secular preacher, as opposed to a cloistered monk or even a scholastic theologian, existed in an ever changing environment in which the preacher both shaped and was shaped by the surrounding religious, political, and cultural milieu. The scholar Peter Francis Howard describes late medieval Florentine sermons as developing from “a stream of ideas which originated not in the university or among the coteries of academies, but in the piazzas of the city.”¹ From 1402-1412, the Bohemian priest and academic Jan Hus preached in the similarly dynamic religious milieu of Prague. He functioned both as an academic and as a priest; consequently, his sermons reflected the concerns of both while still expressing sensitivity for the spiritual needs of his audience. Prague’s famous city squares, not unlike Florence’s piazzas, significantly influenced his words at the pulpit, and much of his preaching certainly focused on local and regional issues. The Politics of the Empire, the schism of the church, the tensions between Slavs, Germans, and Jews, the struggle between the mendicant orders and parish priests, the falsification of miracles, the spread of

¹ Peter Francis Howard, *Beyond the Written Word: Preaching and Theology in the Florence of Archbishop Antoninus, 1427-1459* (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi Sul Rinascimento, 1995), 2.

“heretical” ideas, and the divide between rich and poor all had significant influences on the city and its preachers. Hus’s career as a preacher reflected not only the religious and political turmoil of Prague at the turn of the fifteenth century, but also the fact that his message was analogous to his contemporaries throughout Christendom, and he preached in a city closely linked to the concerns of the later medieval world.²

The purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate the evolution of Hus’s sermons over the course of a decade (1402-1412) and to reveal the homiletic foundation of his popularity as a preacher. I argue that Hus’s preaching reflected not the concerns of the heretic, reformer, or nationalist, as generations of historians have characterized him, but rather his sermons illuminate the priorities and concerns of a late medieval priest shaped by the political and religious turmoil that swirled around early fifteenth-century Prague. I demonstrate various ways Hus shaped his sermons to reflect his understanding of his audience and how his approach evolved due to localized and external pressures towards the end of his ten-year career. The picture of Hus as preacher and priest deeply involved in the spiritual life of his congregation, as reflected in his sermons, stands in marked contrast to the traditional renderings of Hus as a popular nationalist and religious zealot. Too often historians have exaggerated Hus’s

² John Van Engen rightly uses Hus as an example of the growing decentralization of the fifteenth-century religious milieu into regional religious initiatives. Yet, prior to the departure of much of Prague University’s German population for Leipzig in 1409, Prague and the university were remarkably international in their focus and active participants in debates on the schism and broader theological discussions. One need only examine the remarkable reception and debate of the works of the English Oxford professor John Wyclif to recognize the external and broad focus of the university masters. Sources reflect a remarkable movement into and out of the university, with perhaps Matěj of Janov’s (d.1393) travels between the Universities of Prague and Paris being the most famous example of the period. John Van Engen, “Multiple Options: The World of the Fifteenth-Century Church,” *Church History* 77-2 (June 2008): 257-284. For a detailed examination of Matěj of Janov see: Vlastimil Kybal, *M. Matěj z Janova: jeho život, spisy, a učení* (Prague: Nauk, 1905). A more recent examination of his works in Prague and Paris include: Jana Nechturová, “Matij of Janov and His Work *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti*: The Significance of Volume VI and Its Relation to the Previously Published Volumes,” *BRRP* 2 (1998): 15-24.

radical leanings, ignoring his complete message. It is that message from the pulpit that molded his celebrity long before history witnessed the creation of Hus the martyr.

Historians have linked many medieval sermons and their preachers to their surrounding context, but they often treat sermons themselves as unique and independent events. Treating sermon texts in isolation removes them from their context and often leads to the exaggeration of themes that, when examined within the greater context, appear either more or less significant to understanding the preacher and audience. Naturally, not all sermons existed within a liturgically based collection as many preachers, including Jan Hus, occasionally preached at synods, university functions, church councils, or simply as guest preachers. Yet, it is important to distinguish isolated sermons from those that survive as part of a larger continuous collection. Historians have the ability to extract much more than the preacher's opinions on specific matters. Sermon collections tell how a preacher and an audience changed together.

There is no other source in the late Middle Ages that exemplifies the long-term relationship between preacher and audience as the sermons of Jan Hus. Historians have nearly ten contiguous years' worth of Hus's sermons at their disposal, which gives them the opportunity to see how the late medieval context shaped a preacher's overall career as well as the ways his career influenced the whole of Christendom. Hus is most remembered for heretical beliefs and a martyr's death. Nevertheless, the significance of his life, not just his death, is bound up in the way he exemplified the medieval preacher as the bridge between the clergy and the laity. Furthermore, only through Jan Hus can historians witness how a preacher constructed that bridge over an extended period of

crisis. Unlike many of his contemporaries throughout Europe, the sheer volume of Hus's surviving sermons allows for historians to uncover contradiction, inconsistency, and even moments of doubt that reflect not the triumphant martyr, but the priest struggling to protect his flock from the terrors of uncertainty.³

Historians' interpretation of Hus has been a contentious issue for centuries. From the late fifteenth-century Utraquist manuscript of the *Jena Codex* to the Vatican led investigation into Hus's orthodoxy in 1996, various ideological factions have attempted to clarify Hus's meaning to Bohemia.⁴ When considering his place in the context of Europe, however, historians have taken a limited perspective.⁵ Francis Oakley, for example, stated as recently as 1979, that "Given the ambivalence of [Hus's] own doctrinal formulations and the fact that he did not represent the truly radical wing of the

³ In his forthcoming chapter in the Brill *Companion to Jan Hus* (expected 2014), Pavel Soukup provides a detailed examination of just how many sermons can be attributed to Hus. He states that fourteen collections survive of Hus's sermons, with roughly 770 sermons currently preserved in publication. In terms of sheer volume, none of his contemporaries have such a surviving corpus. Pavel Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher" In *A Companion to Jan Hus*, ed. František Šmahel (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming 2014).

⁴ The *Jenský kodex antithesis Christi et antichristi, 1490-1510* or Jena Codex was created during a period of tension between the Kingdom of Bohemia and the Kingdom of Hungary and depicted images of the Hussite Movement, beginning with Jan Hus, as the true righteous Church. Prague, Knihovna Národního muzea v Praze, IV.B.24. For a complete narrative in English of the conferences surrounding the possible rehabilitation see Thomas A. Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 227-240.

⁵ The corpus of literature discussing Hus's relevance to Bohemia and religion in general is substantial. The earliest account of Hus is Peter of Mladoňovic's *Relatio* which provides a passion-like description of Hus's trial and death. Its English translation can be found in Matthew Sinka, *John Hus at the Council of Constance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965). The first historical approach demonizing Hus is Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Historia Bohemica*, ed. Joseph Hejnic and Hans Rothe, vol. 1 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2005). The most notable works on Hus in the Czech language are Václav Novotný, *Jan Hus I: život a dílo* (Prague, Nákladem Jana Laichtera, 1919–1921); Vlastimil Kybal, *Jan Hus II: život a učení* (Prague: Nákladem Jana Laichtera, 1923–1931); František Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1996); Jan Sedlák, *M. Jan Hus* (Prague: Tiskem B. Stýba, 1915); Josef Macek, *Jan Hus* (Prague: Svobodné slovo, 1961). The two most important non-Czech works on Hus in the last fifty years are Paul de Vooght, *L'Hérésie de Jean Huss* (Louvain: Bureaux de la Revue, Bibliothèque de l'Université, 1960); Matthew Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966).

Bohemian reform movement, the great puzzle about his life lies in his ending.”⁶

Although the circumstances surrounding Hus’s death are fascinating, to ignore the remarkable amount of surviving evidence of Hus’s life is to ignore how valuable Hus can be to understanding the late Middle Ages. His surviving writings and sermons not only tell the story of a martyr and living icon, but they invite the reader into the community of Prague and the broader Christian world at a time of tremendous tension and stress.

Recent scholarship has continued to investigate Hus’s life, but often scholars still push the narrative to its heroic and almost mythological end. Thomas Fudge, one of the most active recent scholars of the Bohemian Reformation, for example, places considerably more emphasis on the value of Hus’s life than Oakley. Yet Fudge has also been determined to show that Hus actively strove for martyrdom, interpreting Hus’s written tracts, sermons, and actions in the light of his future condemnation and death.⁷ For all his effort to create a more vibrant and useful picture of Hus’s life, Fudge still focuses on Hus’s last breaths at the stake in Constance.

This desire to match the sermons with Hus’s radical legacy and violent end has been a relatively common theme in the historiography. The discrepancy between Hus the pastor and Hus the radical even frustrated the leading Czech scholar František Šmahel who exclaimed in 1994 that, “We search in vain in these records [the sermons] for the critical attacks and daring assessments mentioned in various denunciations and

⁶ Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 295.

⁷ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 4.

charges.”⁸ Šmahel continues by asserting that Hus’s surviving sermons reflect his desire to teach, but he never suggests in this work that teaching may have actually been the primary purpose Hus’s preaching. Instead, Šmahel suggests that during their compilation to serve as preaching aids for Hus’s students that they were edited to be less polemical, implying that dramatic and controversial content must have been removed.⁹ Even if the recorded versions reflect a desire to teach, why should historians believe that their original oral presentation was dramatically different? For many historians it remains a frustrating reality that Hus’s sermons, although certainly polemical at times, do not consistently reflect a fiery radical bent on social upheaval and martyrdom.

Though Hus’s martyrdom is a pivotal moment in late medieval Europe, I would suggest that understanding his life is of equal value to historians. The value of Hus’s life is that he sheds a light on the relationship between priest and laity, church and state, Slav and German, and to some extent even Christian and Jew. His preaching serves as a window, albeit of imperfect glass, into his primary concerns and his understanding of his own audience. He undoubtedly knew well the culture, hopes, and fears of his audience and approached them in the manner he thought would best profit their spiritual lives.¹⁰

⁸ František Šmahel, “Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia.” In *Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530*, eds. Anne Hudson and Peter Biller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 243-244; Fudge makes a similar point. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 60.

⁹ Šmahel, “Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia,” 244.

¹⁰ Hus’s perspective on Prague is just beginning to be explored by scholars, and will lead to a renewal of and a wider appreciation for Hus in medieval scholarship. Two recent scholars have been working to develop a better understanding of the value of Hus’s works in understanding late medieval culture including: Marcela Kličova Perret, “Battle for the public mind: John Hus and the Hussite movement.” (PhD diss, University of Notre Dame, 2009); Pavel Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, (Prague: Filosofia, 2011).

My goal with this dissertation is to illuminate the complexity of Hus's preaching, specifically as it relates to his relationship with his audience. Through his sermons it is possible to examine specific ways in which he shaped and altered his preaching to reach his listeners in a manner relevant to the time and conditions. Hus's surviving sermons also allow cultural and social historians to look from the pulpit through his eyes to glimpse the audience that filled Prague's Bethlehem Chapel, his primary location for a decade of preaching in Prague. Investigating the audience in this indirect manner is one of the few clues historians have with which to construct a profile of Hus's listeners. Any knowledge obtained about his audience is critical as it was their reaction to Hus that later played such a key role in creating his legacy and elevation and his *de facto* canonization by the Utraquist Church.¹¹ The atmosphere and audience of the Chapel played a critical role in shaping Hus's preaching which in turn shaped his status as a popular charismatic preacher. The surviving sermons, although providing neither an objective nor a complete image of the residents of Prague, instead offer valuable insight into how Hus approached and adjusted to the needs of his audience. The sermons illustrate what themes he felt his audience needed and his conscious decisions on what approaches would best educate his listeners.

Preaching was the primary activity of Jan Hus for nearly a decade, from the time of his appointment as rector of the Bethlehem Chapel in 1402 until his expulsion from Prague in 1412. During that time, historians credit Hus with preaching between 3,000 -

¹¹ David R. HOLETON, "The Celebration of Jan Hus in the Life of the Churches," *Studia Liturgica* 25, 1 (2005): 32-59; Phillip Nelson HABERKERN "The Presence of the Past: History, Memory, and the Making of St. Jan Hus" (Ph.D. diss. University of Virginia, 2009). Craig Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2009), 101.

3,500 sermons, sometimes as many as three different sermons a day.¹² The chapel itself could contain an audience of roughly 3,000 and although attendance numbers do not exist, evidence suggests that not even excommunication could stop the residents of Prague from gathering to hear Hus preach.¹³ The exact number of sermons preached will never be known, but large numbers survive in collections of postils and fragmented notes. Hus's surviving sermons number somewhere over 770, of which at least 600 were intended for the Bethlehem Chapel audience.

Historians are fortunate to have such remarkable collections of sermons with which to work. None of the surviving sermons attributed to Hus survive in his handwriting. Rather it was Hus's students who preserved and copied the sermons and other texts to preserve them as models. The survival of so many collections reflects contemporary and later respect for his admirable talent in the pulpit. Historians believe that at the end of every year Hus edited his sermons into Latin collections commonly known as postils. He intended these books to serve as preaching guides for his students to emulate in their own sermons. Although it is impossible to know how much

¹²Anežka Vidmanová, "Hus als Prediger," *Communio Viatorum* 19 (1976): 66-67. Spinka, *John Hus*, 51. Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 6. The number of sermons actually preached by Hus becomes somewhat difficult to assess as Spinka suggests that an assistant often preached a number of sermons later in Hus's career at Bethlehem Chapel. Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 43. Soukup names the assistant as a one time student of Hus, a Master Nicholas of Miličín but points out that there is no clear evidence of an assistant before 1411. Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 7.

¹³ Obviously it is difficult to prove this point as Bethlehem Chapel never took roles or attendance records. The most compelling evidence of the Hus's continued popularity lies in three major areas. First, after Hus's first excommunication his enemies not only called for Hus's execution but also that the Bethlehem Chapel be torn down as well to make it impossible for his followers to continue to meet. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 118-121; Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 9. Second, despite excommunication, Hus's followers recorded and kept his sermons and letters from this period. Admittedly significantly fewer witnesses exist from this period, but those that do still suggest a healthy church body and interest enough to record the sermons. Finally, the success of the preachers replacing and following Hus in the Bethlehem Chapel such as Jerome of Prague and Jakoubek of Stříbro suggest that a considerable number of people continued to attend services at the chapel despite the threat of interdict and the expulsion of Hus. Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, 134.

Hus may have changed a sermon between the preaching event and its editing, the postils follow the liturgical calendar and known events fairly closely. They do not necessarily include every sermon for a year, and they tended to vary widely on how many sermons were included. Some collections appear to be a combination of individually themed sermon series such as Lenten sermons or on a common theme such as the Passion of Christ.¹⁴ Although sermons exist in which specific dates and locations have not been identified, most useful to this survey are those sermons which have reliable dates.

The earliest sermons attributed to Hus come shortly after his ordination in 1400. The so called *Puncta* collection consists of sermons from Advent 1400 through most of 1401, probably given as an assistant pastor at St. Michael's Church in Old Town Prague before Hus took over his position at Bethlehem Chapel. These sermons still have not been published in a critical edition, but can be found in eight different manuscripts.¹⁵ The earliest sermons from Hus's career at Bethlehem are commonly known as the *Collecta*. The sermons date from the liturgical year 1404-1405 and survive in nine manuscripts.¹⁶ Following the *Collecta* are the sermons of the *Passio domini nostri Iesu Christi* which includes some sermons that are believed to date to 1404 but primarily include sermons beginning in Advent 1405 through 1406. The *Passio* survives in

¹⁴ Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 13.

¹⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹⁶ *Magistri Iohannis Hus Sermones de tempore qui Collecta Dicuntur*, MIHOO 7, ed. Anežka Schmidtová (Prague: Academiae Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1959), 8-12. Many of these manuscripts are now digitized online at www.manuscriptorium.com.

twenty-two manuscripts.¹⁷ The *Lectionary Bipartitum* covers much of 1406-1407 and survives in eleven manuscripts.¹⁸ The twenty sermons of the *Sermones de Sanctis* date to 1407 and probably 1408, and this short collection survives in a remarkable 30 manuscripts.¹⁹ The final sermon collection from Hus's career at the Bethlehem Chapel is not a postil at all. Rather, the collection known as the *Sermones in Bethlehem* 1410-1411 is in fact the closest document historians have to a first-hand account of Hus's preaching. The sermons exist in two manuscripts that are similar to *reportationes*, or the word-for-word transcription of the sermon event. Somewhat ironically, however, the manuscripts present two different versions of the same sermons, suggesting that they were compiled from notes after the event and depended heavily on the scribe's memory to fill in the outlines. The basic structure and content for the sermon remained the same, but they have two substantially different styles of language.²⁰ The only complete publication of these sermons was by Václav Flajšhans, who unfortunately edited the two different manuscripts together into what he believed best represented the actual event.²¹ Hus's last Latin postil was the *Adumbrata* which was assembled at the end of

¹⁷ *Magistri Iohannis Hus Passio domini nostri Iesu Christi*, MIHOO 8, ed. Anežka Vidmanová-Schmidtová (Prague, Academiae Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1978). Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 13.

¹⁸ *Magistri Iohannes Hus Leccionarium Bipartitum. Pars Hiemalis*, MIHOO 9, ed. Anežka Vidmanová-Schmidtová (Prague: Academiae Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1988). Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 13.

¹⁹ *Sermones de Sanctis*, Spisy M. Jana Husi 7-8, ed. Václav Flajšhans (Prague: Nákladem Jos. R. Vilímka, 1907). Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 13.

²⁰ Eva Kamínková, *Husova Betlémská kázání a jejich dvě recenze* (Prague, Universita Karlova, 1963), 75-77.

²¹ Flajšhans did delineate changes in the published sermons to show differences between the two manuscripts. These differences have been taken into account when used and compared with the manuscripts as much as possible. *Mag. Io. Hus Sermones in Capella Bethlehem 1410-1411*, vol. 1-5, ed. Václav Flajšhans (Prague: Nauk, 1938-1941).

1412, and the two surviving manuscripts included sermons from just before and after his expulsion from Prague.²²

A significant number of sermon collections also survive outside of the Bethlehem Chapel context. Published editions of Hus's university and synodical sermons often include a variety of individual sermons that span Hus's career. The majority of the sermons have been most recently collected in Anežka Schmidtová's edited collection *Iohannes Hus Magister Universitatis Carolinae: Positiones, Recommendationes, Sermones*.²³ Perhaps Hus's most famous sermon collection is his Czech Sunday Postil, or more commonly referred to simply as the *Postil*. Completed in 1413 while in exile, the Czech Sunday Postil is essentially a Czech literary work adapted from previous sermons. The sermons lack the strong scriptural anchor of his earlier sermons as he appears to have had few of the glosses and texts previously available to him in Prague. Instead, these sermons are considerably more polemical than those from Bethlehem and do not directly relate to the community he left in Prague.²⁴ The final surviving sermon of Jan Hus is the sermon he was never able to preach. He prepared his *Sermo de Pacis* to preach before the Council of Constance. He intended the sermon to denounce his critics as disturbers of the peace of Christ and to defend his innocence.

²² *Magistri Iohannis Hus Postilla Adumbrata*, MIHOO 13, ed. Bohumil Ryba (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975). Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 12.

²³ *Iohannes Hus Magister Universitatis Carolinae: Positiones, Recommendationes, Sermones*, ed. Anežka Schmidtová (Prague: Státní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1958).

²⁴ *Magistri Iohannis Hus Česká Nedělní Postila*, MIHOO 2, ed. Jiří Daňhelka (Prague: Academiae Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1995). František Šmahel, "Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia," 244.

The opportunity to preach one last time never came, as the council had no intention of letting him speak freely.²⁵

I focus on two of the most complete sets of Hus's sermons, those from 1404/5 (the *Collecta*) and 1410/11 (the *Sermones in Bethlehem*) respectively. These collections represent the most comprehensive sermon collections from Hus's tenure at Bethlehem Chapel. The two liturgical periods from which they originated provide the starkest contrast concerning how the political and religious climate of the city influenced Hus's preaching style and homiletic content. Hus produced the *Collecta* during a time of relative peace, when he enjoyed a cordial working relationship with clerical and secular authorities. The *Sermones*, on the other hand date from the turning point in Hus's life where the archbishop and pope take the first dramatic steps against the perceived heresies in Bohemia, and Hus became the target for the enemies of philosophical realism, Wyclifite ideas, and the Czech reform movement. These sermons represent significantly different contexts for Hus, and yet they illustrate how his priorities remained fundamentally the same. The sermons illustrate how a medieval preacher reacted to his changing world, and through the life of Hus we can see how that world reacted to the preacher. Before we can analyze the sermons, first brief descriptions of Prague and Hus's life are necessary to put them into their proper context.

Prague 1370-1415

Jan Hus was born early in the 1370s in the village of Husinec (Goose Town) in southern Bohemia at a time of remarkable growth and stability in the kingdom. The

²⁵ Jan Hus, *Sermo de pace. Řeč o míru*, eds. František M. Dobiáš and Amedeo Molnár (Prague: Kalich, 1963). Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 11.

opportunities he had in life were due in large part to Emperor Charles IV (1316-1378) whose efforts transformed the nearby “city” of Prague into a suitable capital for the Holy Roman Empire at the heart of his lands and authority.²⁶ Prague developed along the banks of the Vltava (Moldau) river in a topographical bowl surrounded by overlooking hills and bluffs. To the North of the city, the river makes a dramatic double curve which narrows the waterway enough to provide a suitable location for a bridge just to the south. In that location, several different structures have stood from at least the late tenth century and turned Prague into a strategic location on East/West trade routes. At the start of the reign of Charles IV, only the oldest area later known as the Old Town was Prague proper. In the distance to the south from Old Town was the fortress of the Vyšehrad, built atop steep cliffs overlooking the river. Across the river stood Prague Castle, the seat of Dukes, Kings, and now Emperors, with the rapidly growing Lesser Town situated at the end of the bridge and directly below the castle. Villages, monasteries, and estates were scattered around the fortifications of Old Town Prague. The town had served as the center of power for the Přemyslid dukes and kings from the reign of Boleslav I (935-972). The city became the seat of a Bishop in 973, and rapidly grew into the ecclesiastical and spiritual center of the kingdom. The castle and town served as the seat of power of the Kingdom of Bohemia and expanded slowly through

²⁶ Many scholars point out that Prague was not really even a city before the reign of Charles. For more detailed studies on the transformation of Prague than what I am going to offer here see: David Mengel, “Bones, Stones, and Brothels: Religion and Topography in Prague under Charles IV (1346-1378)” University of Notre Dame, 2003; František Smahel, *Mezi Středověkem a Renesancí* (Prague: Argo, 2002); Lisa Wolverton, *Hastening Towards Prague: Power and Society in the Medieval Czech Lands* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); František Graus, *Die Nationen Bildung der West Slawen im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1980) among numerous others.

the tumultuous Přemyslid dynasty. The arrival of the Luxembourg Dynasty initiated rapid expansion to make it the capital of the Empire.²⁷

Charles was the child of a union of the powerful Luxembourg family and one of the last descendants of the native Přemyslid dynasty. By the time he inherited the crown of Bohemia from his father John of Luxembourg in 1346, he had already been the *de facto* ruler of the kingdom for two years. His father, more of a knight errant than a sitting monarch perished, both courageously and somewhat foolishly, fighting for the King of France at the Battle of Crécy.²⁸ Upon John's death, Charles took advantage of his Bohemian royal bloodline and established his rule from the safety of his familial seat of power.²⁹

Under Charles's rule, Prague became the political and cultural center of the Empire. He began construction of a cathedral, lobbied for an archbishop, and oversaw the foundation of a university. The city expanded as people streamed through its gates from all corners of the Kingdom of Bohemia and Europe in general.³⁰ Charles worked to link all parts of his empire to the new capital, even to the point of "requesting" gifts of relics from churches and monasteries outside of Bohemia to establish new saint's cults

²⁷ Zdeněk Měřínský and Jaroslav Mezník, "The Making of the Czech State: Bohemia and Moravia from the Tenth to the Fourteenth centuries," in *Bohemia in History*, ed. Mikulaš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41-43.

²⁸ King John of Bohemia (Luxembourg) associated closely with the French court, and often traveled Europe fighting in whatever wars he could join, generally on the side of the King of France. At Crécy, after he was reportedly wounded he commanded his retainers to tie him onto his horse to continue his charge against the English line, ultimately perishing on the battlefield. Ferdinand Seibt, "Die Zeit der Luxemburger und der Hussitischen Revolution (1306-1471)," in *Handbuch der Geschichte Der Böhmisches Länder, vol. 1*, ed. Karl Bosl (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1976-74): 378-379.

²⁹ František Kavka, "Politics and Culture under Charles IV" In *Bohemia in History*, ed. Mikulaš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 60.

³⁰ František Kavka, "Česka šlechta doby Karla IV a Praha ve Světle Domovního Majetka," in *Memoriam Josefa Macka (1922-1991)* (Prague: Historický ústav AVČR, 1996): 65.

in an effort to create a city representative of the Empire and, of course, to benefit financially from pilgrims traveling to his newly constructed holy shrines.³¹ In order to house his collected relics he imported artisans to create reliquaries and architects to design new churches and chapels. The city eventually even produced a unique “imperial style” of art whose influence spread throughout western and northern Europe.³² To find space for the new immigrants, workshops, markets, and houses of worship, Charles quadrupled the size of the city’s fortifications, enclosing villages and monasteries into the largest walled urban area north of the Alps. The city, which politically functioned as four distinct cities, included more fortified space than Paris, London, or Florence.³³ Population estimates for the city from this period range anywhere from 30,000 to roughly 100,000 people, which would have made Prague one of the ten largest cities in Europe.³⁴

Charles’s rapid expansion of Prague established it as one of Europe’s great cities, and a microcosm of the Empire formed within its walls. When Hus arrived in 1390, many of the institutions and building projects that Charles had planted had grown to maturity, with the exception of the cathedral which towered above the city but remained only half completed until the 1930s. In particular, the combination of the

³¹ David Mengel, “Emperor Charles IV (1346-1378) as the Architect of Local Religion in Prague” *Austrian History Year Book 41* (2010): 15-29, 22-26; David Mengel, “Remembering Bohemia’s Forgotten Patron Saint,” *BRRP 6* eds. David Holeton and Z. David (Prague, 2004): 17-32.

³² Typical of this style were human figures with expressive robust bodies, oval faces, prominent foreheads, and thin lips. Barbara Drake Boehm and Jiří Fajt eds., *Prague: Crown of Bohemia 1347-1437* (New York: Yale University Press, 2005), 54, 16.

³³ The cities were identified as Old Town, the area under the Castle was known as Lesser Town, the area enclosed by Charles became New Town, and the Castle and environs was known as Hradčany. Mengel, “Bones, Stones, and Brothels,” 33, 42.

³⁴ David Mengel provides a brief historiography of these numbers in his dissertation. *Ibid.*, 38. Also see: Petr Čornej, *Velké dějiny země koruny české* vol. 5 (Prague: Paseka, 2000), 32.

University of Prague and Charles's invitation to preachers such as the Viennese celebrity Conrad Waldhauser, led to a fertile environment and open atmosphere for popular preaching throughout his reign and a population that was used to the spectacle of charismatic preaching. Charles primed Prague's religious atmosphere for the later emergence of Hus.

Founded in 1347, the University of Prague attracted young students like Jan Hus from all over Bohemia and Christendom. The university was the first founded north of the Danube River and east of the Rhine, and it influenced the founding of numerous other universities in the Empire and Poland. Charles IV largely based Prague University on the University of Bologna as he brought in several Italian masters to conduct the first lectures. He created the university, however, to allow his subjects access to higher education without having to "beg for alms abroad."³⁵ Charles, being one of the most aggressive political schemers of the age, naturally had ulterior motives for his university as well; it was, of course, an integral part of his program to centralize imperial power and prestige in his new capital.³⁶ Charles was also interested in luring the best scholars and students to Prague, especially those of German, French, and Italian origin, although students and professors enrolled from as far away as England and the Low Countries.³⁷ The university governing structure was split into four distinct "nations," loosely based on the regions from which the students came. For example the local Czech speakers were

³⁵ Otakar Odložilík, *The Caroline University, 1348-1948* (Prague: Orbis, 1948), 14; also cited in Spinka, John Hus's Concept of the Church (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 11.

³⁶ Marek Gensler, "The Late Medieval University as an Institution of Learning: More Learning or More Institution?" in *Herbst des Mittelalters: Fragen zur Bewertung des 14 und 15 Jahrhunderts*, eds. Jan A. Aersten and Martin Pickave, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 31(Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004): 149-50; Seibt, "Die Zeit der Luxemburger und der Hussitischen Revolution (1306-1471)," 410-411.

³⁷ Seibt, "Die Zeit der Luxemburger und der Hussitischen Revolution (1306-1471)," 454-455.

included in the “Czech nation” with students from the kingdom of Hungary and points farther east. The other three nations were the Bavarian nation, the Saxon nation, and the Polish nation.³⁸ To lure the best students and scholars from abroad, Charles gave a three-to-one voting advantage to those on the rector’s advisory council from outside the Bohemian nation. The voting advantage left “foreigners” in *de facto* control of the university with the power to dictate courses of study.³⁹ This strategy successfully enticed scholars from across Europe to study and teach in the city and transformed Prague into a vibrant center for learning.⁴⁰ Between the founding of the university and the social and political disruptions following Hus’s death in 1415, Prague became one of Europe’s primary centers for book production and a focal point of the international transmission of ideas.⁴¹

Along with new opportunities for education, Charles IV in conjunction with the newly appointed first Archbishop of Prague, Arnošt of Pardubice, began what many historians have generally identified as the Bohemian “reform movement.”⁴² Bohemia

³⁸ Odložilik, *The Caroline University*, 16.

³⁹ Spinka, *John Hus: a Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 26.

⁴⁰ Šmahel, for example, describes educational system necessary to train the required scribes, copyists, and clerks necessary for the royal court, university, and numerous other religious institutions in Prague a rivaling Europe’s other educational centers. He cites the *Liber Ordinacionum Cleri*, a list of clerics achieving the lowest rank of acolyte in the diocese from 1395-1416, as identifying roughly 13,261 individuals produced through the diocese’s educational system. Šmahel, “Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia,” 240. Michal Svatoš has added to the discussion of Prague University’s international character and Hussite transformation in comparison to broad European trends in his article Michal Svatoš, “Cesta k Husitské Univerzitě: proměny Pražské Univerzity 14. a 15. století,” In *Zrození mýtu: dva životy husitské epochy*, Robert Novotný and Peter Šamal eds. (Prague: Paseka, 2011).

⁴¹ Prague’s central role in European book transmission has recently been confirmed by Michael Van Dussen, who carefully examined the transmission of ideas between Bohemia and England. Michael Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia: Heresy and Communication in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

⁴² For recent studies examining and in general promoting the concept of the Bohemian Reform movement see: S. Bylina “František Palacký a České Reformní Hnutí 14. století,” in F. Šmahel, E. Doležalové eds. *František Palacký 1798/1998. Dějiny a dnešek* (Prague: Historický Ústav AV ČR, 1999):

witnessed a renewed emphasis on effective preaching as Charles invited foreign preachers to his capital and founded numerous mendicant houses that gathered clerics from throughout his empire. One such preacher, the Augustinian canon Conrad Waldhauser (d.1369), came to Prague from Vienna to preach in German for the moral reform of the wealthy and the clergy.⁴³ His preaching inspired young priests and scholars from the fledgling university to take up the call for moral reform.⁴⁴ Inspired by Conrad, the priest Jan Milíč of Kroměříž (d.1374) left his bureaucratic position with the royal court to take up preaching with Charles's blessing. Milíč's most prominent contribution to Prague's religious scene was the foundation of the religious house of Jerusalem in an area of what had been one of Prague's seedier brothel districts.⁴⁵ Here he gathered a religious community of reformed prostitutes and clerics under his tutelage. Milíč emphasized asceticism, the practice of frequent communion within the house, and the house became an important preaching center. His extremism and criticism of local mendicants eventually brought about his denunciation as a heretic to the pope in Avignon. He departed for Avignon to defend himself in person but died from

113-121; Amedeo Molnar, *Jan Hus: Testimone della Verità* (Torino: Editrice Claudiana, 1973), 81; Kavka, "Politics and Culture under Charles IV," 67. For a reexamination of the question of Bohemian Reformation explicitly based on preaching see: Pavel Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, or Pavel Soukup, "Die Predigt als Mittel Religiöser Erneuerung Böhmen um 1400" In *Böhmen und das Deutsche Reich: Ideen- und Kulturtransfer im Vergleich 13-16 Jahrhundert*, ed. Eva Schlotheuber and Hubertus Seibert (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2009): 235-264.

⁴³ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 8.

⁴⁴ Mengel, "Emperor Charles IV (1346-1378) as the Architect of Local Religion in Prague," 22-26; Von Karl Bosl, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Böhmisches Länder vol 1: Die Böhmisches Länder von der Archaischen Zeit bis zum Ausgang Der Hussitischen Revolution* (Stuttgart: Anton Heirseemann, 1967), 467.

²⁴ Mengel, "From Venice to Jerusalem and beyond," 407; Peter Morèe, *Preaching in Fourteenth Century Bohemia: The Life and Ideas of Milicius de Chremsir and His Significance in the Historiography of Bohemia* (Slavkov: Eman, 1999).

illness shortly after his arrival. The community at Jerusalem failed to survive their charismatic leader's death.⁴⁶ Although Milíč's Jerusalem experiment faltered, his former supporters and disciples provided land adjacent to Jerusalem for the construction of the Bethlehem Chapel.⁴⁷ As a result of Charles's building program and his new emphasis on preaching and the burgeoning reform movement, the city saw a dramatic increase in the construction of chapels and houses of worship which provided new spaces for preaching in Latin and vernacular tongues.⁴⁸

After Charles's death in 1378, Prague experienced a period of uncertainty and decline. Charles's eldest son, Wenceslas, succeeded him as Emperor and King of Bohemia. His hold over the Empire, however, was not firm. Wenceslas IV exhibited neither the energy nor the authority of his father, and as a result, the nobles of the Empire stripped him of his title in 1400. The nobility imprisoned Wenceslas twice, in 1394 and 1402, allowing him to retain the throne of Bohemia each time, though only after making considerable concessions to his rivals.⁴⁹ By the time Hus arrived in Prague in 1390, the apex of the city's glory had passed, and imperial power and prestige had begun to flow out of Bohemia.⁵⁰ As Prague stagnated, many of the bureaucratic positions as well as the possibility of imperial patronage evaporated. That meant fewer artisans came to the city, and many others moved away seeking patronage

⁴⁶ Kaminsky, *A History of The Hussite Revolution*, 12-13.

⁴⁷ Spinka, *Jan Hus's Concept of the Church*, 42-3.

⁴⁸ Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, 159. Mengel, "Emperor Charles IV (1346-1378) as the Architect of Local Religion in Prague," 22-26.

⁴⁹ František Graus, "The Crisis of the Middle Ages and the Hussites," trans. James J. Heaney, *In the Reformation in Medieval Perspective*, Steven Ozment ed, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 97.

⁵⁰ Jaroslav Mezník, *Praha před husitskou revolucí* (Prague: Československá Akademie Věd, 1990), 88-89.

elsewhere.⁵¹ To make matters worse, two years into Wenceslas's reign in 1380, Prague experienced its worst plague epidemic of the fourteenth-century, having previously only experienced intermittent and relatively limited outbreaks.⁵² Ten years later Bohemia witnessed a rebellion of the nobility against the king, leading both to the king's imprisonment and marked tensions separating the inhabitants of Old Town and New Town.⁵³ František Graus has described Wenceslas's reign as Bohemia's descent into "crisis" which culminated in the Hussite Wars from 1419-1437.⁵⁴ The German scholar Melchior Vischer went so far as to say Prague rapidly became a "backwater" within a few years of Charles's death.⁵⁵ Although political unrest, economic decline, and pestilence devastated the kingdom, two key components of Prague's general unrest were ethnic tensions during the time of Wenceslas and the broad crisis in Christendom caused by the papal schism.

Although Prague had long contained considerable German speaking and Jewish minority populations, the city's rapid rise and faster decline led to considerable ethnic tensions between German, Slavs, and Jews.⁵⁶ Prague, like many Central European cities contained a large German minority that had begun arriving in the eleventh

⁵¹ Barbra Boehm points out the sudden appearance of the "imperial style" in architecture in Salzburg at this time and attributes it to the movement of Prague artisans. Boehm and Fajt, *Prague: Crown of Bohemia 1347-1437*, 50.

⁵² David Mengel. "A Plague on Bohemian? Mapping the Black Death" *Past and Present* (2011) 211: 3-34, 20.

⁵³ Mezník, *Praha před Husitskou Revolucí*, 93

⁵⁴ Graus, "The Crisis of the Middle Ages and the Hussites," 91.

⁵⁵ Melchior Vischer, *Jan Hus. Aufruhr wider Papst und Reich* (Frankfurt: Societäts-Verlag, 1955). 10.

⁵⁶ Leonard E. Scales, "At the Margin of Community: Germans in Pre-Hussite Bohemia" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Vol. 9, (1999): 327-352.

century. A large community of Jews had also begun settling in the Old Town during the reign of Charles IV, but many of the sources explored by historians tend to place more emphasis on German and Slavic relations.⁵⁷ By the late fourteenth century, sentiment and distrust began to grow among Prague's Czech majority concerning those perceived as outsiders; the distrust was particularly directed at speakers of German.⁵⁸ In the fourteenth-century, German speaking mendicant orders and their Slavic counterparts had spread throughout Prague and the rest of Bohemia, while maintaining linguistic separation.⁵⁹ Modern scholars frequently fail to agree on just which ethnic group was, in fact, dominating the other; the mere fact that there is such disagreement suggests that a dichotomy of oppressor and oppressed is insufficient to describe ethnic relations and identity.⁶⁰ An opposing view point, however, is that the majority of the people of the

⁵⁷ The first recorded Jewish settlement in Bohemia was in the year 968, but the population increased considerably under Charles. On the Jews in Medieval Bohemia see: Barbara Newman, "The Passion of the Jews in Prague: The Pogrom of 1389 and the Lessons of Medieval Parody," *Church History* vol. 81 (March 2012):1-26; Tomáš Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě* (Prague: Sefer, 2001).

⁵⁸ Graus, "The Crisis of the Middle Ages and the Hussites," 88.

⁵⁹ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 227-228.

⁶⁰ The arguments concerning the split between German and Slav in Bohemia are numerous. Czech scholarship, since the works of František Palacký, has tended to promote a narrative of Czechs striving against German speaking oppressors, while his rival Constantin Höfler described the Hussites as barbarically reacting against German culture. František Palacký, *Dějiny Národu Českého v Čechách a na Moravě* (Prague: Nakladatel B. Kočí, 1845); Constantine Höfler, *Magister Johannes Hus und der Abzug der Deutschen Professoren und Studenten aus Prag 1409* (Prague: F. Tempsky, 1864). For a detailed analysis of the rivalry of these antagonists see: Peter Morée, "Jan Hus as a Threat to the German Future in Central Europe: The Bohemian Reformer in the Controversy" In *BRRP* 4 (2002): 295-307. Interestingly the scholarship of a clear Sudeten German school has worked to place the Slavs and Germans on more equal standing. These scholars, including Ferdinand Seibt, Peter Moraw, and František Graus, have worked to create a balanced image of ethnicity in Prague that emphasizes a predominately harmonious cultural relationship between German and Slav. See: Ferdinand Seibt, "Hus und wir Deutschen. Zum 600. Geburtstag eines grossen Bekenner," *Kirche im Osten* 13 (1970): 74-103; Ferdinand Seibt, *Deutschland und die Tschechen: Geschichte einer Nachbarschaft in der Mitte Europas. Aktualisierte Neuauflage* (Munich: Piper Verlag GmbH, 1993); Peter Moraw, *Von offener Verfassung zu gestalteter Verdichtung: das Reich im späten Mittelalter, 1250 bis 1490* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1985). Robert Bartlett in his influential work on European colonization held Prague University as an exception, as he stated that most universities served to create cultural homogeneity, but Prague University seemed to have an opposite

kingdom of Bohemia existed in a “German and Slavic symbiosis” which allows for a possible hybridization of culture and language. Bohemia’s more vocal and more literate minority of agitators have possibly hidden this identity from historians as education and literacy would have solidified recognizable identities among the literati.⁶¹ It is clear, however, that Hus entered a heterogeneous city and university setting that, despite the efforts of the crown, on many levels remained divided by cultural and ethnic identity.⁶²

To add to the general unrest in the city, in 1378 the College of Cardinals precipitated the Western Schism. The cardinals, claiming to be under threat from a Roman mob, selected Urban IV (1378-1389) as the new pope in September. Regretting their choice, the cardinals withdrew from Rome and in September of that same year elected Clement VII (1378-1394) who took up residence in Avignon.⁶³ This sudden confusion forced Christendom’s political and spiritual leaders, along with all the laity, to choose a pope to recognize and then justify their decision. Among the laity, who were perhaps less concerned with the rivalry between Avignon and Rome, it meant an unclear apostolic succession. The schism called into question the legitimacy of the priests and thus the legitimacy of the sacraments they administered. The common interpretation was that a priest’s spiritual power emanated from his superiors in the

effect. Robert, Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquests, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350*, 289. Leonard Scales, argues in his 1998 article that, rather than a dominating minority, the German community was actually marginalized in that the German speaking population itself was not unified and, for the majority of the fourteenth-century, had actually been losing prestige and social power. Scales, “At the Margin of Community,” 327-352.

⁶¹ Heinrik Birnbaum, “The Vernacular Languages of East Central Europe in the Medieval Period,” In *The Man of Many Devices, Who Wandered Full Many Ways. Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak*, Balázs Nagy and Marcell Sebök (Budepest: Central European University Press, 1999), 394.

⁶² Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Czechs and Germans: a Study of the Struggle in the Historic Provinces of Bohemia and Moravia* (London: St. Martin’s Press, 1967).

⁶³ Oakley, *The Western Church in the Latter Middle Ages*, 55-67.

church hierarchy. Confusion at the apex of earthly church authority meant every individual parish had the potential for a sacramental crisis, and the validity of baptisms, reconciliation, the Eucharist, and the blessings of marriage remained uncertain for nearly forty years.⁶⁴

Wenceslas, for his part, stayed loyal to Rome until the Council of Pisa in 1409-1410. At Pisa, the cardinals attempted to force both popes to resign, and heal the schism by electing a third pope. Many European rulers were willing to support the council, with notable exceptions being some rulers of Iberia and Wenceslas's successor as Emperor, Ruprecht of the Palatinate (Wenceslas's chief rival).⁶⁵ Ironically, neither of the previous popes agreed to abdicate, meaning Christendom now had a third pontiff leading to further confusion. Wenceslas's decision to support the council would prove fateful in Hus's life, as the king granted remarkable authority to the university's so called "Czech reform party" in 1409 to win the university's official support for his change in papal allegiance.⁶⁶ Hus, as one of the more vocal members of the Czech nation, was well-known and popular enough to be elected rector of the university taking the position in the fall semester of 1409. This change of papal allegiance, however, meant that once

⁶⁴ David Zachariah Flanagan, "Extra Ecclesia Salus non est – Sed Quae Ecclesia? Ecclesiology and Authority in the Later Middle Ages," In *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)*, Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M. Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 337 and Graus, "The Crisis of the Middle Ages and the Hussites," 88. For detailed studies of the effects of the Western Schism at the regional and local level (excluding Bohemia) see: Philip Daileader, "Local Experiences of the Great Western Schism." In *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)*, Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M. Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 2009): 89-121; Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints, Visionaries of the Great Schism 1378-1417* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Alison Williams Lewin, *Negotiating Survival: Florence and the Great Schism, 1378-1417* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003); George Holmes, "Florence and the Great Schism," In *Arts and Politics in Renaissance Italy*, George Holmes, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 19-40; Robert Swanson, *Universities, Academics, and the Great Schism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁶⁵ Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, 62.

⁶⁶ Spinka, *Jan Hus's Concept of the Church*, 91, 92; Thomas A. Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride: The First Reformation in Hussite Bohemia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 5-11.

again the Archdiocese of Prague had to reevaluate the validity of the sacraments from the previous thirty-five years and convince the laity that the king and university were justified in their actions.

As Wenceslas tried to maintain his prestige and position in the Empire, Prague was rapidly turning into a tinder box of social, political, and religious unrest. Many historians have in essence described Hus as casting a match from his pulpit that would set the city and his own pyre aflame.⁶⁷

The Life of Jan Hus

Hus's origins remain somewhat mysterious despite the hints he left in his surviving corpus of sermons, tracts, and other writings.⁶⁸ As mentioned, Hus was born around 1370 in the village of Husinec in southern Bohemia, into a family of what scholars frequently describe, without evidence, as being of humble means.⁶⁹ Hus's level of education, however, almost certainly excludes the family from peasant status; rather they may have had free status with some funds at their disposal. It remains unclear as to whether Hus began his education in the nearby town of Prachatice as some historians suggest (despite any evidence that a school ever existed in the town), or whether the family moved to Prague in 1386 so that Hus could attend grammar

⁶⁷ This type of explication generally belongs to the nationalist perspective. Some recent scholars such as Thomas Fudge, continue to highlight Hus's rise to prominence as a major turning point in Prague and European history. Fudge fully acknowledges the long line of reform predating Hus in Bohemia, but he also places Hus, "in the crossroads of religious history in the Czech lands." Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 63. Fudge's biography of Hus, on the other hand works to define Hus through his stubbornness, disregard for authority, and a martyr's complex. His focus suggests that Hus may have been intending social and spiritual revolution through much of his career. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 4.

⁶⁸ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 9.

⁶⁹ Matthew Spinka, *John Hus: a Biography*, 21.

school.⁷⁰ Historians, however, are at least certain that Hus began his university education at the University of Prague in 1390.⁷¹

Beginning in 1390, Hus took three years to complete his Bachelor of Arts, with his studies centering on Scripture and Aristotle.⁷² In 1393, he began working toward his Master of Arts degree. By 1398, he was a full member of the Prague faculty and began his pursuit of a doctoral degree in theology. Almost as a side project, Hus earned a Bachelor of Divinity in 1404.⁷³ His relative youth was the only factor slowing his otherwise rapid rise, as Prague University awarded no doctorates of philosophy to individuals younger than thirty-five. By the time Hus reached that milestone, he had taken on considerable preaching responsibilities at the Bethlehem Chapel and was already embroiled in the scandal and politics that prevented him from earning a doctorate.⁷⁴

Perhaps the most important step in Hus's brief career was his ascension to the pulpit of the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague's Old Town. On March 14, 1402, two years after his ordination as a priest, Hus became the rector and primary preacher at Bethlehem Chapel. The responsibility for choosing the priest for the chapel fell to the oldest three Czech professors at the university, which suggests Hus already had considerable notoriety as he was ordained only in 1400.⁷⁵ The founders of the chapel,

⁷⁰ Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 7; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 9.

⁷¹ Spinka, *John Hus a Biography*, 25.

⁷² Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 11.

⁷³ Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 8.

⁷⁴ Spinka, *John Hus a Biography*, 54; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 12.

⁷⁵ Spinka, *John Hus a Biography*, 39.

followers and admirers of the Czech preacher Milíč of Kroměříž, created it in order that a priest could preach directly to the people in the vernacular tongue. The chapel, founded in 1391, enclosed a space combining three previously standing walls and covering a well, square, and a cemetery. The space could hold roughly 3,000 people and the founders gave it the name Bethlehem, meaning the house of bread, as they intended it to continue the Eucharistic and preaching ideals of Milíč's Jerusalem. Control of its pulpit was ceded to the masters of the Czech university nation, who appointed the chapel's rector.⁷⁶ It was from this location that Hus gained remarkable influence within the community, and his reputation as a great orator spread through the city.

As rector of the chapel, Hus maintained a remarkably busy schedule. Scholars generally believe he preached at least twice a day and occasionally as much as three times daily, along with lectures and duties for the university. It is also possible that at times he preached as a guest at other pulpits within and outside of the confines of Prague.⁷⁷ An accurate account of his total preaching activities is further complicated by the fact that Hus was assisted for at least a portion of this period by an assistant, Master Nicholas of Mičín.⁷⁸ Historians can also pinpoint one possible prolonged trip in the spring of 1403 to the Brandenburg town of Wilsnack when Hus was part of a

⁷⁶ Spinka, John Hus's Concept of the Church, 43; Bartoš, F. M., "První století Betléma," In *Betlémská kaple. o jejích dějinách a dochovaných zbytcích* (Prague: Společnost Husova Musea, 1922): 9-21; Otakar Odložilík, "The Chapel of Bethlehem in Prague: Remarks on its Foundation Charter" In *Wiener Archiv für Geschichte des Slawentums und Osteuropas*, (Graz-Köln: Hermann Böhlau, 1956): 125-141.

⁷⁷ Vidmanová, "Hus als Prediger," *Communio Viatorum* 19 (1976) 65-81, 66; Pavel Soukup, "Hus as a Preacher", 6; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 59; Jan Sedlák, "Husovo Kázání na Posvícení r. 1410" In *Studie a texty k náboženským dějinám Českým* 3 (Olomouc: Arcibiskupská Knihovna, 1915), 77-85.

⁷⁸ Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 7; Soukup here cites Bartoš, "První století Betléma," 9-21.

commission from Prague to investigate the reported occurrence of miracles.⁷⁹ For ten years, however, it seems Hus kept up an exhausting preaching schedule, even after the archbishop of Prague, Zbyněk of Hasenburk, commanded him to cease.

Hus's relationship with Archbishop Zbyněk had a remarkable influence on Hus's preaching, writing, and career through his tenure at the Bethlehem Chapel. In many respects Zbyněk was an ideal opponent for Hus. Zbyněk was a representative of the politically and financially motivated clerics whom Hus so often chided in his sermons. Zbyněk gained his first post at the age of fourteen as a prior of a religious house at Mělník and then also became a canon in St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague. With family wealth and prominence won almost exclusively through military activities, Zbyněk purchased the archbishop's seat in 1402.⁸⁰ This purchase was an obvious example of simony; a practice reviled by Hus, but typical in the medieval church.⁸¹ Despite this, Zbyněk and Hus seemed to have maintained a cordial relationship for a number of years. Perhaps largely due to the favor that the king granted reform preachers, the new archbishop was initially acquiescent to Prague's tradition of reform preaching and the reform stance of the Czech portion of the university.

The controversy over Wilsnack stands as the most dramatic example of the early alliance between the Archbishop and the university masters. In 1383, the priests of Wilsnack described the miraculous appearance of Christ's blood coming from the hosts,

⁷⁹ Unfortunately few details of commission survive in the records, including when it occurred and how long the commission took to give their recommendation concerning Wilsnack, and most importantly whether anyone on the commission actually went to Brandenburg. Hus preached frequently on false miracles, but it is unclear whether he actually journeyed there or not. No sermons of Hus's have been dated from the time of the commission in 1403, which supports the possibility that Hus was absent for much of that time. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 27.

⁸⁰ Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 55.

⁸¹ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 13.

in the wake of the church being pillaged and damaged by marauders. Within a few months, tales began to spread of candles miraculously lighting on their own, candles refusing to be put out, people being healed, and at least three resurrections of the dead. The local bishop of Havelberg confirmed the miracles and incorporated the site into his diocese and established it as a pilgrimage site. As large numbers of the faithful arrived in the town, the church quickly acquired the necessary income to not only repair earlier damage, but also to construct a massive new structure to make room for the incoming waves of pilgrims. Many of the surrounding dioceses and newly founded universities looked at Wilsnack with concern, and the site became a source of debate for over a century. It was repeatedly denounced and affirmed by subsequent bishops and popes well into the Reformation. The rise of protestant Germany in the sixteenth century, however, saw Wilsnack vilified once and for all as an example of superstition and clerical corruption.⁸²

In June of 1405, upon receiving the commission's report on Wilsnack, Zbyněk stood on common ground with Hus as the archbishop declared the Wilsnack miracles fraudulent and instructed all priests of the archdiocese to denounce them from the pulpit.⁸³ This agreement between the archbishop and the university led Hus to write perhaps the earliest academic denunciation of the Wilsnack miracles between 1405 and 1407; his *Tractus de sanguine Christi* denounced the miracles on philosophical grounds

⁸² Although with Archdiocese of Prague appears to be the first to denounce the miracles at Wilsnack in 1405, in 1412 the Synod of Magdeburg drew up ten articles questioning the truth of Wilsnack, the University of Erfurt denounced the site in 1451, and around 1450 alone over 50 documents analyzing the miracles were produced. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 26, 28, 44

⁸³ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 27.

rather than any analysis of the evidence. In this document, Hus argued against the validity of Wilsnack on realist principles that if Christ was made whole after the resurrection and ascended bodily into heaven, then no pieces of Christ could be left on earth.⁸⁴ Hus referred to the so called blood as “that red thing” and emphasized that, regardless of the blood’s identity, the Creator should be glorified and not the creation.⁸⁵

Within the next two years, however, tensions between university scholars over the works of John Wyclif and papal concerns over heresy in Bohemia placed the archbishop and Hus on opposite sides of an increasingly vitriolic debate.⁸⁶ Historians have tended to judge Zbyněk as remarkably unqualified for navigating the pressures of papal schism, royal indecisiveness, and the fierce debates over the works of the English scholar John Wyclif which dominated discussion at the university.⁸⁷ Zbyněk’s actions against the university’s protectors of Wyclif made the archbishop Hus’s first real opponent.

The history of Hus’s life and fate remain inescapably tied to the writings of the Englishman and Oxford professor John Wyclif (d.1384). Wyclif was a prolific preacher and writer who wrote notable academic tracts on realist philosophy. Wyclif was also harshly critical of clerical excess, papal authority, and most famously the doctrine of the Eucharist.⁸⁸ Unlike Hus, Wyclif became isolated because of his radical opinion and was

⁸⁴ Jan Hus, *De sanguine Christi*, ed. Václav Flajšhans, Spisy M.Jana Husi vol. 3 (Prague: Jaroslav Bursíka, 1903). Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 36-39

⁸⁵ Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 37.

⁸⁶ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 61.

⁸⁷ Spinka, *John Hus’s Concept of the Church*, 55.

⁸⁸ Spinka points to a 1411 text from Hus, in which Hus notes having studied Wyclif’s texts for roughly twenty years, which if accurate, means Wyclif’s writings were present at the university at least before 1391. Spinka, *John Hus’s Concept of the Church*, 35. Wyclif studies have become an industry of

compelled to leave Oxford in 1381. Wyclif was never officially branded as a heretic during his lifetime, but his writings carried with them considerable infamy, even before their official censure by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1411.⁸⁹ It is not entirely clear how quickly Wyclif's works reached Bohemia and found an audience within the university, but even those works previously denounced as heresy by Rome and Canterbury before Wyclif's death, were not officially labeled as heresy in Bohemia until 1403.⁹⁰ Hus and his fellow scholars, therefore, had free license to discuss, dispute, teach, and circulate Wyclif's ideas in Bohemia until Zbyněk banned the various tracts under pressure from Rome. The majority of the texts were philosophical, biblically oriented, and free from heresy, a fact leading Hus and most Czech scholars to assume that they could cautiously discuss the material regardless of Wyclif's branding as a heretic.⁹¹ The influence of Wyclif's writings on Hus is an issue that scholars have debated fiercely for well over a century. Many Protestant texts proudly asserted that the

their own over the last fifty years. Wyclif, like Hus, was once relegated to proto-reformer status. Scholars of Wyclif's numerous works have been producing narrowly focused monographs and articles at a considerable rate. Some of the best and most recent scholarship on Wyclif include: Ian Christopher Levy ed., *A Companion to John Wyclif: Late Medieval Theologian* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Ian Christopher Levy, *John Wyclif: Scriptural Logic, Real Presence, and the Parameters of Orthodoxy* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001); Stephen E. Lahey, *Philosophy and Politics in the thought of John Wyclif* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mishtooni Bose and J. P. Hornbeck, *Wycliffite Controversies*, (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2011); Edwin D. Craun, *Ethics and Power in Medieval English Reformist Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁸⁹ Gordon Leff, "Wycliff and Hus: A Doctrinal Comparison," in *Wyclif in his Times*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 105-107.

⁹⁰ Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 44. For detailed studies of the transferal of Wyclif's works to Bohemia see: Michael Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia: Heresy and Communication in the later Middle* (2012); Katherine Walsh, "Wyclif's Legacy in Central Europe in the fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries," in *Studies in Church History Subsidia* vol. 5 Anne Hudson and Michael Wilks eds. (Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society by B. Blackwell, 1987):397-417; Howard Kaminsky, "Wyclifism as Ideology of Revolution" *Church History* 32 (1963): 57-74; David HOLETON, "Wyclif's Bohemian Fate: A Reflection on the Contextualization of Wyclif in Bohemia," *Communio Viatorum* 32 (Winter 1989): 209-229.

⁹¹ Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 35.

path to the Reformation passed through England, Prague, and Wittenberg.⁹² Johann Losserth famously asserted, “That which Hus has deposited in the ways of theological knowledge...he owes almost exclusively to the Englishman from whose writings he has derived it.” In response to this assertion numerous Czech and international scholars have worked to assert Hus’s distinctness and to distance him from Wyclif. Yet the Englishman’s influence is impossible to completely ignore.⁹³

Most recent scholars certainly acknowledge Wyclif’s influence on Hus, but it is clear that Hus showed remarkable erudition and caution when incorporating the ideas of the Oxford scholar in his own works. In fact, many of the most radical ideas of Wyclif, some which the Council of Constance convicted Hus of holding, he actually rejected completely.⁹⁴ For example, Hus completely denied Wyclif’s doctrine of remanence (the rejection of transubstantiation and interpretation of the Eucharist as symbolic), and he repeatedly supported and promoted the sacred nature of the Eucharist in his sermons

⁹² Perhaps one of the most interesting English Protestant books linking Wyclif and Hus is: William Gilpin, *Lives of John Wicleff and of the Most Eminent of his Disciples: Lord Cobham, John Huss, Jerome of Prague and Zisca* (London: J. Robson, 1765). This book, based heavily off of Foxe’s problematic *Acts and Monuments* makes grand and ludicrous statements concerning the “warmth” and “native modesty” of Hus and his indebtedness and gratitude to Wyclif for opening his eyes. A second common example is Émile De Bonnechose, *The Reformers before the Reformation* (New York: AMS Press, 1980; reprint of 1844).

⁹³ Johann Losserth, *Wyclif and Hus*, tr. M. J. Evans (New York: AMS Press, 1980), xvi. Losserth’s primary opponent was Jan Sedlák who accused Losserth of outright academic fraud in: Jan Sedlák *M. Jan Hus* (Prague: Národní dědictví sv. Prokopa, 1915), iv, 267. Enrico Molnar, in his important article, “Wyclif, Hus and the Problem of Authority,” summarizes many Czech historians’s views on the connections between Hus and Wyclif. Molnar also points out, in defense of Hus’s independence from Wyclif, that such theologians as Masilius of Padua and Matěj of Janov were actually far more influential. Enrico Selley Molnar, “Wyclif, Hus and the Problem of Authority,” In *Jan Hus: Zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen*, ed. Ferdinand Seibt (Munich: Oldenburg, 1997), 168-170.

⁹⁴ Fudge, Jan Hus, 103-108, 142-144; Enrico Selley Molnar, “Wyclif, Hus and the Problem of Authority,” 167-177; Bernhard Töpfer, “*Lex Christi, Dominium und Kirchlich Hierarchie bei Johannes Hus im Vergleich mit John Wyclif*,” In *Jan Hus: Zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen*, ed. Ferdinand Seibt (Munich: Oldenburg, 1997): 157-167; Vilém Herold, “How Wyclifite was the Bohemian Reformation?” In *BRRP 2* (1998): 25-37; Vilém Herold, “Wyclif’s Ecclesiology in the Prague Context,” In *BRRP 4* (2002): 15-30.

and writings.⁹⁵ More important, therefore, than Wyclif's direct influence on Hus are the tensions Wyclif's writings helped to generate between the Archbishop and Hus, as well as the role those writings played in dividing the university into two warring factions of nominalist and realist scholars.

Hus's story is inseparable from the context of the University, as along with his preaching responsibilities, Hus was prominent among the leadership of the Czech nation and he oversaw numerous students. Historians often describe tensions at Prague University as a split between Czechs and Germans, although in reality the divide was not nearly so clean.⁹⁶ Realism, as promoted in the writings of Wyclif and generally accepted by Hus and the Czech faction, described all matter in terms of universals which are the reflection of divinely inspired "archetypes."⁹⁷ This philosophical approach to existence states that all objects are a reflection or shadow of God's perfect ideal. Therefore, just as God created man in his image (a reflection of God's divine

⁹⁵ Spinka, *Jan Hus' Concept of the Church*, 74; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 51. For more detailed analyses of Hus's position on the Eucharist see: Helena Krmíčková, "K pramenům Husovy kvestie de Sanguine Christi sub specie vini." In *Sborník prací Filosofické Fakulty Brněnské University* (Brno, Filosofická Fakulta Brněnské University, 1999, vol. 1998): 79-101; Thomas Fudge, "Feel This! Jan Hus and the Preaching of Reformation," In *BRRP 4* (2002): 107-126, 119; Olivier Marin, "Les Usage de la Liturgie dans la Prédication de Jean Hus" in *BRRP 6* (2007): 45-76, 54.

⁹⁶ The Czech scholar, František Kavka in his short history of Charles University identified realism in a Marxist way describing Wyclif and Hus as, "no longer in the service of ecclesiastical authoritarianism, but was the fruit of a great faith in reason as an instrument of social criticism" Kavka's German masters on the other hand were "found wanting" in progressiveness. František Kavka, *The Caroline University of Prague: A Short History* (Prague, Universita Karlova, 1962), 16. Many scholars point to the existence of the Dresden school within Prague as evidence of Hus's and the Wyclifite position's international and multicultural appeal, however, there is currently considerable discussions occurring on whether the school was any more than just one or two German scholars. On the Dresden School see: Ferdinand Seibt, "Hus und wir Deutschen. Zum 600," 74-103; Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 67. I am looking forward to the publication of Petra Mullová's article in a forthcoming volume of the *BRRP* entitled "Disseminating the Fallacy: The Story of the 'Dresden School'" which picks apart a considerable overreach in much of the historiography through close textual analysis and questions numerous generalities made by historians in describing the so called "Dresden School."

⁹⁷ Ivana Dolejšová, "Nominalist and Realist Approaches to the Problem of Authority: Paleč and Hus," In *BRRP 2* (1998), 49-56, 53.

perfection), so too then does a tree, bird, or keg of ale reflect a perfect design by God.⁹⁸ This adaptation of neo-platonic metaphysics relied on faith to accept the existence of things that could not be seen or necessarily understood. This allowed that the substance or what a thing actually is could be different than how something appeared which is known as its accidents. A significant part of Wyclif's denial of transubstantiation is rooted in his extreme interpretation of realist philosophy. When the Communion host became the body of Christ through transubstantiation, two typical understandings were that either the substance was changed without affecting the accidents or the substance was destroyed and became something else without affecting the accidents. Wyclif believed that this idea went against the principle of universals, as God would have to change or destroy the universal archetype of bread and consequently change all bread in substance.⁹⁹ Universals were God's design as creator, and a realist interpretation of existence could not accept the changing of those universals without the total disruption of creation.

Nominalism, on the other hand, as best described by scholars such as William of Ockham, viewed existence in terms of singulars rather than universals. This worldview relied on reason to prove existence; for example, if something looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, reason dictates that it is in fact a duck. This view, which prevailed throughout much of the Middle Ages, in a simplified form meant that something only exists if the senses can perceive it.¹⁰⁰ It also, allowed for God to change

⁹⁸ Genesis 1: 26-27 (*Saint Joseph Ed.*)

⁹⁹ Maurice Keen, "Wyclif, the Bible, and Transubstantiation," In *Wyclif in His Times* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 7-9.

¹⁰⁰ Samuel Harrison Thomson, "The Philosophical Basis of Wyclif's Theology," *Journal of Religion* 11: 1 (1931): 86-116.

reality at will. Nominalist philosophers saw their realist counterparts as imposing limits on God's omnipotence by stating that God was beholden to his own laws and universals. Nominalists saw existence as subject to change according to God's will; therefore, reason was necessary to comprehend creation, as God was free to alter reality at will.¹⁰¹

Within Prague University, the realist philosophy of Wyclif found greater acceptance among the Czech nation than the other university nations. Although the crown and bishop initially met the philosophical split with indifference, the radical nature of some of Wyclif's tracts, including references to the hierarchy of the church as the Antichrist, meant that the controversy soon drew in civil and ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁰² Open dialogue unraveled into petty name calling as the different parties made accusations of heresy against those of different philosophical inclination.¹⁰³ When word of heresy in Bohemia reached Pope Gregory in Rome and the ears of King Wenceslas, both put pressure on Zbyněk to expunge heresy from his diocese. Gregory called for the condemnation and removal of Wyclif's heresies, which included numerous critiques of the papacy.¹⁰⁴ Wenceslas, on the other hand, simply ordered Zbyněk to declare

¹⁰¹ Oakley, *The Western Church*, 145.

¹⁰² Leff, "Hus and Wyclif," 112-113.

¹⁰³ Odložilík, *The Caroline University*, 21; Vilém Herold, "Platonic ideas and "Hussite Philosophy" In *BRRP 1* (1996):13-17. For a discussion of Wyclifite stereotypes on the broader historiography in comparison with the textual evidence see: Ivan Müller, "Was Wyclif a philosophical Extremist?" In *BRRP 8* (2011):21-32.

¹⁰⁴ For analysis of Wyclif's papal critiques see: Mishtooni Bose and J. Patrick Hornbeck, *Wycliffite Controversies*, 2011.

Bohemia free of heresy and to ignore the “reckless” complaints of the various university factions.¹⁰⁵

In 1409, the situation between the Czech and German factions along with the rivalry between Hus and Zbyněk came to a critical point in the flurry of negotiations leading up to the Kutná Hora decree. In 1408, Christendom was preparing for a new general council in Pisa, with the intention of finally resolving the papal schism. Wenceslas, who despite a long family alliance with French crown, had sided with the Roman pope over the French-supported pope in Avignon. In order to push for an amicable resolution to the schism, diplomats crisscrossed Europe negotiating a possible solution. Pressure from French diplomats and the opportunity to snatch the imperial title back from Ruprecht swayed Wenceslas to throw his support behind the council. Zbyněk, however, desired that Bohemia maintain loyalty to the Roman pontiff. To hold sway against the archbishop, Wenceslas decided he needed the backing of the university and summoned delegates from the four university nations to join him at his residence in the wealthy mining town of Kutná Hora. As he listened to the nations’s various arguments, Wenceslas discovered that only the Czech nation would actually support his decision to change loyalties, and a university vote might actually undermine his proposed change of papal adherence. To preempt the university condemning the Council at Pisa, Wenceslas issued the Kutná Hora decree on January 18, 1409 to give the Czech nation governing power over the university by granting it three votes and effectively combining the three “foreign nations” into a German nation with a single vote. This act united the Czech university masters and the crown in defiance of the

¹⁰⁵ Spinka, *Jan Hus’ Concept of the Church*, 84-87.

archbishop.¹⁰⁶ In reaction to the passing of the decree an estimated one thousand German masters emigrated from Prague and the university. Clearly out of favor with the king, having had their privileges revoked, and with the university arguably in the hands of realist and Wyclifite heretics, many of the German masters departed and helped establish a new university in Leipzig in May of 1409.¹⁰⁷ In the wake of the scholarly exodus, Jan Hus remained as one of the most prominent figures of the Czech nation, and the faculty promptly elected him rector of Prague University in October of 1409. Yet, Hus only served a matter of months as rector, as the elevation of Alexander V to pope created a new ally for Zbyněk against the Czech scholars and Wyclifite heresies. The archbishop, now with the support of the new pope, renewed his efforts to root out heresy. Jan Hus, as the newly installed leader of the university, became a clear target as a symbol of Wyclifite heresy and infidelity to the archbishop.¹⁰⁸

With the departure of the German scholars, the controversy over Wyclif's teachings became more intense as the university and the archdiocese stood at odds. From spring 1410 through 1412, Prague witnessed repeated attempts by Jan Hus and other influential university masters to overturn papal bulls, first from Alexander and then from John XXIII, intent on eradicating the Wyclifite heresies. The point of no return came in June of 1410 when Zbyněk issued a papal ban ordering the presentation and burning of all of Wyclif's works along with a general prohibition of all preaching in private

¹⁰⁶ Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 70; Spinka, *Jan Hus' Concept of the Church*, 91-92; Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 66-67.

¹⁰⁷ Odložilik, *The Caroline University*, 22. See also a more detailed study in František Šmahel, "The Kuttenberg Decree and the Withdrawal of the German Students from Prague in 1409," *History of Universities* 4 (1984): 153-66.

¹⁰⁸ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 14; Spinka, *Jan Hus' Concept of the Church*, 93.

chapels, an act clearly targeting Bethlehem Chapel.¹⁰⁹ The chapel was designated as a private chapel, despite its royal charter and its university affiliation, because it was independent from parish control. Hus was one of the leading opponents to the bull, and his letters of appeal and his open defense of public discussion concerning Wyclif's ideas, led to his first excommunication. This condemnation initiated a five-year legal process that concluded with his martyrdom at Constance.¹¹⁰ With numerous appeals outstanding, Zbyněk excommunicated Hus along with other Czech masters repeatedly and attempted to place the whole city of Prague under interdict. By the summer of 1411, King Wenceslas was thoroughly annoyed by the proceedings, and he simply commanded that the archbishop be ignored. To force Zbyněk to drop his charges, Wenceslas stripped Zbyněk of land and wealth in order to cover the expense of books already burned under his authority. The king proceeded to bully the archbishop into relinquishing his position as arbiter over the university dispute and forced him to write to Pope John XXIII that there was no heresy in Bohemia outside of the disputed Wyclifite works currently being debated. Unwilling to remain in submission to the king and angered at being reprimanded for combating Wyclif's works that were anathema nearly everywhere else in Christendom, Zbyněk fled to Hungary to live out his life in exile. He died unexpectedly later that year at the age of 34.¹¹¹

Zbyněk's exile from Prague brought little relief for Hus, as an array of opponents continued to bring charges against him before Pope John XXIII, the papal curia, and

¹⁰⁹ Spinka, *Jan Hus' Concept of the Church*, 94-95

¹¹⁰ An observation aptly made and defended by Fudge. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 118.

¹¹¹ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 73-75; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 15-16; Spinka, *Jan Hus' Concept of the Church*, 99-104.

King Wenceslas. Zbyněk was by no means Hus's only opponent and numerous other enemies of Hus continued to work for his destruction. An array of cardinals and bishops were assigned to Hus's case and ecclesiastical courts in Vienna and at the papal curia in Bologna conducted legal proceedings against him in absentia beginning in 1411.¹¹² Perhaps most surprising is that after the Kutná Hora decree in 1409, the majority of Hus's harshest critics came from Czech circles, as the recently established unity of the university under a single nation effectively splintered into chaos. Former allies of Hus such as Stanislav of Znojmo and Štěpán Páleč, who had been champions of realist philosophy turned against Hus and the Wyclifite enthusiasts after being imprisoned in 1408 on a journey to argue the realist case before Pope Gregory in Rome. These two prominent Czech theologians returned in 1411 and became some of Hus's fiercest critics accusing Hus of holding Wyclifite heresies. Another prominent critic of Hus was Michael De Causis, initially an agent of Zbyněk. He continued to attack Hus by providing his services to various cardinals and Pope John XXIII. Hus countered accusation after accusation, but De Causis continued to restate, and in several cases invent, heresies that aligned Hus with Donatism, Waldensianism, or the extreme Wyclifite ideas such as the denial of transubstantiation.¹¹³ Although one might mention a host of other names, these three repeatedly appear in the sources and ensured that even with royal protection and favor, Hus in his writing and preaching was rarely off the defensive from 1410 to 1415.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 118; Kejř, *Husův Proces* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2000), 59-60.

¹¹³ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 38, 50

¹¹⁴ Numerous sources exist to find more information concerning Hus's other foes including: Zdeňka Hledíková, "Hussens Gegner und Feinde" In *Jan Hus: Zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen*

It was Hus's uncompromising principles that finally led to the souring of his relationship with King Wenceslas. On September 9, 1411, Pope John XXIII declared a crusade against King Ladislav of Naples in an attempt to destroy one of the few remaining adherents to John's rival Pope Gregory XII. To fund this crusade, John authorized the sale of indulgences and sent representatives to those areas that adhered to him.¹¹⁵ Hus openly condemned the sale of indulgences from the pulpit in Bethlehem in far more combative terms than earlier in his career.¹¹⁶ A few months later in 1412, Hus also wrote the treatise *De indulgentiis* in which he condemned the sale of indulgences and used the example of indulgences to demonstrate the possibility of papal error.¹¹⁷ The combination of the arrival of indulgence preachers in May and Hus's open resistance to their sale resulted in an outbreak of riots in the streets of Prague.¹¹⁸ The ensuing violence cost numerous lives, and King Wenceslas, who supported the papal bull, blamed Hus for the lawlessness and violence in the city.¹¹⁹ When John XXIII threatened Prague with interdict in early autumn for harboring Hus, Wenceslas removed his protection, and Hus left the city.¹²⁰

(Munich: Oldenburg, 1997), 91-103; Pavel Soukup, "Mařik Rvačka's Defense of Crusading Indulgences from 1412" In *BRRP* 8 (2011): 77-97.

¹¹⁵ Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 109.

¹¹⁶ Before 1411 indulgences rarely appear in Hus's sermons, and when they did it was often in comparison between indulgences to the preferred choice of true repentance. By 1411, Hus has begun denying indulgences validity in their entirety. Fudge also points out the shift in Hus's indulgence stance, Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 11.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹¹⁸ Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 110.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 120; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 102

¹²⁰ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 75. The relationship between Hus and John XXIII consisted of several letters as well as vitriol. Eustace Kitts conducted a study on the two men in

With Prague under interdict as long as he remained within its walls, Hus withdrew to the countryside where, despite the edict of excommunication, he found nobles willing to give him refuge and a place from which to work. It was while in exile that he composed the most controversial and polemical of his writings. Away from responsibility for the Bethlehem Chapel and the tensions of Prague, Hus began synthesizing his ideas in an attempt to garner support and clearly express his concerns for the wider Christian Church. The most famous of these works is his *De Ecclesia*, a controversial work which borrowed heavily from Wyclif and redefined Christ's Church along the lines of a spiritual elect as opposed to the hierarchy governed by the pope. The most controversial of his statements, was his assertion that any pope, even when Christendom only had one, may not necessarily be part of the elect, and therefore not a true member of the Church. Within this work he also disputed the accusations of his enemies, and through the employment of scripture, the words of the Church fathers, and logic, Hus attempted to dismantle his foes' arguments. Hus's volatile conclusion that, "if an inferior does not discern the works of his superior to be virtuous, he [the inferior] is not bound to believe that he [the superior] is a member of the church" was a defense of his refusal to obey papal summons as well as a direct challenge to the authority of his accusers.¹²¹ A second key work Hus produced in exile was *De Simonia*, his scathing critique of church practice, also closely linked to a Wyclif work of the same name.¹²² Hus produced

1910 in his work: Eustace J. Kitts, *Pope John the Twenty-Third and Master John Hus of Bohemia* (New York: AMS Press, 1978).

¹²¹ *Unde si subditus non cognoscit sui prepositi sua virtuosa opera, non tenetur credere.* Jan Hus, *De Ecclesia*, trans. David Schaff (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1915), 50; Jan Hus, *Tractus De Ecclesia*, S. Harrison Thomson ed. (Cambridge: University of Colorado Press, 1956), 38.

¹²² Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 292. Matthew Spinka ed., "On Simony," in *Advocates of Reform* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953).

numerous other works while in exile and free from the time constraints of his preaching duties, including yet another collection of sermons to serve as examples for other preachers.¹²³ Yet, not surprisingly, it was these more confrontational works that predominantly served as the key evidence for Hus's final condemnation at Constance, for his detractors drew heavily from them at trial.¹²⁴

Hus finally faced his accusers at the much-discussed Council of Constance in 1415.¹²⁵ Upon the death of Ruprecht of Bavaria in 1413, Wenceslas's younger brother Sigismund became Holy Roman Emperor. Sigismund immediately turned his attention to finding a solution for the schism and called for a general church council to meet at the town of Constance. Along with the delicate negotiations concerning settling the schism, the council also moved to deal with a number of accused heretics. Sigismund invited Hus to the conference with a promise of safe conduct, but upon his arrival the cardinals ignored Sigismund's promise, claimed jurisdiction, and imprisoned Hus. He languished in a prison cell for nearly a year as his accusers worked to assemble their case. During this time Hus sent numerous letters to Bohemia, but was unable to produce much other

¹²³ Hus's sermons from exile, edited and collected in what scholars commonly refer to as the *Postil* or more precisely Hus's Czech Sunday *Postil*, are the most frequently analyzed and studied collection of Hus's sermons due to the polemic context of Hus's exile, their original survival explicitly in Czech, and that scholars see them as representative of Hus at his most theologically mature, obviously and ironically shortly before death. I, however, avoid these sermons in this dissertation because their context is fundamentally different than the other collections and do not reflect Hus as the priest of Bethlehem Chapel. Pavel Soukup agrees with me and defends this interpretation in his forthcoming chapter. Soukup explains that Hus's *Postil* from exile should be considered an exclusively literary work. Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 13.

¹²⁴ Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 252.

¹²⁵ Numerous books have been written fully focused on and analyzed Hus at the Council of Constance. Much of the debate over Hus's trial concerns the legality the trial itself. Perhaps one of the most frequently cited works is Paul de Vooght, *L'Hérésie de Jean Hus*, which argues that although Hus was generally orthodox, his writings in *De Ecclesia* pushed him into heresy. A second important work is Jiří Kejř, *Husův Proces*. Kejř also argues that Hus's trial and execution was legally permissible based on Hus's teachings and the legal tradition of the period.

work.¹²⁶ He hoped for a chance to address and dialogue with the council directly. His trial, however, consisted of myriad separate accusations, and he was given only one single opportunity to recant of all of the charges combined in total. Many of the accusations were simply untrue, and were actually positions held by Wyclif but denied by Hus. There were enough points, however, from Hus's own writing that a total denial of the writings was impossible, and Hus was found guilty.¹²⁷ Although he had a sermon written and prepared for the council, the cardinals never gave him the chance to preach a final time.¹²⁸ On July 6, 1415, Hus burned at the stake in Constance, and the council ordered that his ashes be spread out on the lake to prevent any of his disciples from taking relics to honor his memory.

Chapter Synopses

This dissertation examines some of the least recognized themes of Hus's homiletic legacy by developing four previously ignored critical topics. These themes provide insight into Hus's efficacy as a preacher in the late medieval world. The surviving sermon texts provide a tool through which to examine the priorities that Hus felt fulfilled his responsibilities to his flock and best fulfilled their needs. When the sermons are examined as a corpus, the evolving religious and social concerns of both preacher and audience stand forth prominently.

¹²⁶ For the collection of letters see either in Václav Novatný ed., *M. Jana Husi Korespondence a Dokumenty* (Prague: Nákladem Komise Pro Vydávání Pramenů Náboženského Hnutí Českého, 1920) or the letters translated into English in Spinka, *Letters of John Hus* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972).

¹²⁷ For the list of charges see: Matthew Spinka, *Jan Hus at the Council of Constance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).

¹²⁸ Jan Hus prepared his "Sermon for Peace" and even wrote Sigismund asking for the chance to present it to the council. Soukup, "Jan Hus as Preacher," 11.

Chapter 2, “The Self-Promotion of Jan Hus: Preaching and Authority,” compares Hus’s preaching to broad trends in European preaching and also looks at how he established his authority from the pulpit. Historians primarily cast Hus as a fiery preacher who challenged a corrupt papacy and subsequently perished in flames at the Council of Constance in 1415. Hus’s challenge to the bishops, cardinals, and pope, through whom he was officially licensed to preach, meant that Hus needed to justify his continued presence in the pulpit through alternative means. Nevertheless, even after excommunication in 1410, his popularity as a preacher remained strong. While in exile Hus continued to preach throughout southern Bohemia, corresponded frequently with Bethlehem Chapel and his allies in Prague, and produced many of his most copied works.¹²⁹ However, without the authority of the papacy behind him, Hus was forced to defend and define his position in the pulpit on his own. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold; first I examine how Hus’s sermons fit into the broader corpus of late medieval preaching and how his rhetorical strategies compared to approaches of his contemporaries. Second, I trace Hus’s definition of and standards for an ideal preacher, his declared ability to live up to his own standards, and his defense of his own authority as a preacher. By means of calculated strategies of self-promotion, he both asserted his authority to preach to his audience and polemically defended his pulpit from outside attack. I argue that by regularly referencing his own homiletic style, behavior, and purpose, he established himself as the exemplum of the proper and godly preacher, and on this basis, he subsequently drew his own authority. I argue that, Hus never deliberately sought martyrdom. Rather he merely understood that in order to fully

¹²⁹ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 95-96.

defend his position, he would have to face the very real possibility of death at the hands of his foes. As that possibility became a greater threat, his sermons began to reflect an increasing comparison with Christ. Hus utilized a messianic image of one who accepted death as part of the road he was born to walk. This inflammatory preaching in response to his critics, created an expectation of the ultimate sacrifice from which he was unwilling or unable to withdraw. He effectively preached himself into a corner, and saving his own life through recantation would have meant assuming an unacceptable level of hypocrisy.

Chapter 3, "Priests and Pharisees: Clerical Criticism in Context," addresses the common simplification of Hus as a mere critic of clerical immorality. Although this description is fitting at times in his career, historians have often exaggerated his negative position on his fellow clergy in anticlerical terms. When taken out of context, Hus's statements and writings can be made to support this position as he was often critical of sinful priests. This assessment of his fellow clergy, however, was inseparably linked to a broader clerical dissatisfaction in Christendom as well as common and ancient tropes rooted in Scripture. Late in Hus's career, one sees a more aggressive and polemical use of rhetoric concerning priestly corruption, but a general interpretation of Hus's entire career as anticlerical fails to recognize Hus's integration with broader trends in Christian preaching and scripture. To illustrate Hus's complex stance and shifting position on clerical corruption, I first examine the evidence historians have relied on to portray Hus as a fierce critic of the clergy. Second, I compare his 1404-1405 sermons along with two of his university sermons to create a closer and more nuanced understanding of how Hus's sermons illustrate his concern for his fellow clergy. Hus's

criticism of clerical sin began with homilies on pre-assigned scriptural readings over which he had little influence, those homilies were not inherently anticlerical. His 1404-1405 sermons reveal that, with some exceptions, he criticizes clerics in a pattern consistent with tropes based on Scripture or popular stereotypes of medieval clerics, rather than some deep-seated prejudice that had been waiting to find an outlet. In contrast to the dominant narrative of Hus as anticlerical, he in fact shows considerable empathy toward the clergy as a whole. Finally, I examine the evolution of Hus's more intense and polemical critique of the clergy later in his career.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 are entitled "Hus and the Threats to the Flock." Although historians have primarily remembered Hus for his clerical admonitions, he described a wider array of villains as a warning to his listeners. Hus frequently referenced beings, both human and supernatural, that were all too eager to aid the sinner on the path to hell, not the least of which was the Devil himself. Although pervasive in Hus's sermons, his common references to the Devil remain unexamined in all studies on Hus to date. When references to the Devil appear, they have either been examined as part of Hus's critique and condemnation of a sinful church or linked to broader eschatological tropes; the wider implications have been ignored. In my estimation, historians have all but dismissed Hus's frequent references to the Devil and the forces of evil. Perhaps examining Hus's supernatural concerns makes him appear too medieval in his thinking, a view that would seem unattractive to the majority of scholars who have attempted to frame him in a context more enlightened to modern sensibilities. Yet as unappealing as it might be to some scholars, it is intellectually dishonest to deny Hus's reliance on descriptions of supernatural beings who had power

over mankind. Furthermore, it is, at best, a gross over-simplification and at worst, fallacious reasoning to assume all mentions of the Devil are simply references to the church's corruption. There is, therefore, a rather large piece missing from our understanding of Hus – a piece I hope to supply. Through the examination of his explicit and literal references to the Devil, the Antichrist, and various other perceived threats such as Jews and women, I seek to illustrate the wider context of the vision of spiritual warfare that Hus described taking place outside the walls of Bethlehem Chapel.

In Chapter 6, "Sin and Repentance," I examine how Hus tempered his audience's fears of damnation by referring to the penitential process. The need for and achievement of forgiveness was a significant and consistent thread woven throughout Hus's preaching. Within the context of schism and controversy, Hus adapted Peter Lombard's stress on the "virtues of penance" and emphasized personal repentance over sacramental confession. Examination of Hus's sermons on the topics of sin and repentance reveals that Hus engaged his audience with an interpretation that was simple and distinctly non-sacramental in order to encourage his audience toward personal moral reform. In this way his sermons differed greatly from his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, the *Super IV Sententiarum*, in which he presented a far more orthodox view of sacramental confession. In all matters of sin, repentance, and satisfaction, Hus called his listeners to true conversion and repentance by pointing directly to God as opposed to the service of his fellow priests. Since the Western Schism (1378-1417) undermined the foundations of sacramental authority by disrupting the apostolic succession, this reinterpretation of repentance provided a certain path to forgiveness and salvation that may have been met with considerable favor on the part of

the laity. Because Hus's sermons minimized the role of priests in direct response to the daily concerns of his flock, his position in the community gained even more significance.

CHAPTER 2 ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY: HUS ON PREACHERS AND PREACHING

Jesus sent [his disciples] to preach as stated in Luke 9 “in all cities and places they encounter.” But today’s priests do not obey this call, because now they are not sent to preach or to collect men, but rather they go forth to fill up the purse. Jesus sent preachers who consider the welfare of the people and honor of the Lord. If truly a priest preaches for the purse, accepting money, he is sent not from Jesus but from Mammon. If truly on account of the gullet, so he may live luxuriously, he is sent from Belial; if truly he preaches to bring himself glory, he is from Satan. October 28, 1411.¹

Jan Hus preached on this theme in his last recorded sermon of the 1411 liturgical year. In the face of excommunication and the threat of interdict against Prague, Hus never strayed from his duties as a preacher to his congregation. Through repeated controversy and scandal Hus maintained a rigorous preaching schedule, and historians who often agree on little else can at least agree that he was a prolific preacher.² Hus

¹ Misit Jesus, quoad predicacionem...Luce 9 “in omnem civitatem et locum, quo erat transiturus.” Cuius nunc fit oppositum, quia nunc ad visitandum mittuntur, non ad predicandum, non eiam ut aggregent homines, sed bursas impleant. Jesus illum mittit, quem saulus populi et honor Domini ad predicandum ducit; si vero pro pera predicat, ut pecuniam accipiat, non a Jesus, sed a Mamone mittitur. Si vero propter gulam, ut delicate vivat, tunc a Beele mittitur; si vero propter superbiam, tunc a Sathana. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 5, 132. He certainly continued preaching at the Bethlehem Chapel until mid-1412.

² One need only open a book on Jan Hus to read that he was a successful preacher. Works that focus primarily on Hus’s preaching, however, are relatively rare in comparison to more general studies. Two of the earliest examinations of Hus’s preaching are Jan Sedlak, *M. Jan Hus* and Václav Novotný and Josef Kybal, *M. Jan Hus: Život a Učeni*. Sedlak analyzed each set of sermons in minimal detail, but he did look at how they coincided with the specific events of Hus’s life, without reliance on generalities. Perhaps the most useful part of Novotný and Kybal’s work as it concerns sermons is Kybal’s listing of major themes found in the primary sermon collections, which is cited in a majority of later publications on Hus. Kybal, however, tends to over-emphasize Hus’s criticism of the clergy and ignore more general themes. Also of great value is Vidmanová, “Hus als Prediger.” This rather short article provides a useful overview of the surviving manuscripts collections, published material, and some observations made from the surviving texts. The recent works of Thomas Fudge have also been heavily based on the surviving sermon collections and are greatly concerned with Hus as a preacher. Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, (2010), and Fudge, “Feel This!,” 107-126. Also of value is Olivier Marin’s article, “Les Usage de la Liturgie dans la Prédication de Jean Hus,” 45-76. Marin conducts a narrowly focused but useful textual analysis to illustrate the role the medieval Bohemian liturgy played in Hus’s preaching. The most reliable scholar working currently working on Hus’s preaching is Pavel Soukup. His forthcoming chapter for the 2014 Brill, *A Companion to Jan Hus* entitled “Hus as Preacher” synthesizes a tremendous amount of international scholarship on Hus’s preaching and will be an important stepping off point for all future scholarship on Hus’s sermons. Soukup puts the number of

was a master of his craft, and much of his corpus of sermons was clearly constructed to convince his audience of that fact.

This chapter examines two major themes concerning Hus's establishment of authority through preaching. First, it examines Hus's preaching in the larger context of the medieval sermon. In particular, it demonstrates how Hus's sermons established his authority through function and style. Second, it illustrates how Hus utilized content concerning preachers and preaching to portray himself as the ideal preacher. By tracing both the construction of his sermon and the content of his preaching about the preacher's role through the sermons, one gets a sense of how Hus created the sermons to solidify and protect his authority in the Bethlehem Chapel.

Hus and the Medieval Sermon

Preachers throughout Christendom commonly stressed the significance of the homiletic art, and medieval sermon guide books, known in the Latin as *ars praedicandi*, often expressed in detail the critical role of preachers in leading people to salvation.³ How a priest then relayed that importance to the audience, however, varied depending on the orator. Preachers such as Hus often established their own styles for promoting their preaching talent and authority. One possible way for a preacher to stress the importance of the sermon was through a humility trope, which expressed his unworthiness. These tropes illustrated a reliance on the Holy Spirit, and also directed attention to the divine inspiration of the sermon.⁴ On the complete opposite end of the

published sermons at 770, this is not including the sermons of the *Puncta* that are still waiting critical editing and an establishment of an accurate number.

³ D.L. d'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons diffused from Paris before 1300* (New York: Clarendon, 1985/repr. 2002), 8.

⁴ Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 59; Howard, *Beyond the Written Word*, 43.

spectrum, other famous preachers, such as the two Florentine preachers Giovanni Dominici (d.1420) and Bernardino of Siena (d.1444), likened their voices to the voice of God. Rather than rely on expressions of humility, Bernardino, for example, famously stated that all one needed for salvation was “to hear *Fra Bernardino*.”⁵ Hus attempted to tread a careful path between self-exaltation and self-deprecation while promoting his preaching to his audience in Bethlehem Chapel. Hus certainly never stated that his was the voice of God, but rather emphasized God’s voice in the Gospel message along with his own skill at sharing that message. These were common and powerful portions of Hus’s message to his audience, and they played a critical role in establishing his authority at the Bethlehem Chapel.

Hus’s homiletic themes and content at Bethlehem Chapel resembled the sermons of his more mobile charismatic contemporaries. Many charismatic preachers traveled from place to place with invitations from civic institutions to preach temporarily in a city.⁶ Few charismatics had opportunities to develop roots or to preach long-term to the same audience. In large part, this was due to the predominance of the mendicant orders in promoting popular, almost revivalist, preaching events.⁷ Bernardino of Siena, for example, frequently relocated from city to city in Northern Italy, often with only limited opportunities to impress his audience. To insure he had the greatest possible impact, he

⁵ Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers: Giovanni Dominici (1364-1419) and Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 37.

⁶ Ottó Sándor Gecser, “Preaching and Publicness: St. John of Capestrano and the Making of his Charisma North of the Alps,” In *Charisma and Religious Authority*, ed. Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010): 149.

⁷ D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 4, 34; D’Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities*, 104-105

commonly boasted of his preaching skill and reputation in each new location.⁸ John of Capistrano (d.1456) also moved throughout Italy and Central Europe preaching with a similar need to introduce himself and establish his authority as far from his birth place as Poland.⁹ The Dominican friar, Vincent Ferrer (d. 1419), left the papal court of Benedict XIII in 1399 and wandered Europe as a prophet for nearly two decades.¹⁰ Indulgence preachers, begging friars, and Waldensians crisscrossed Christendom, attempting to gain the notice of audiences large and small throughout the later Middle Ages.¹¹

Jan Hus, on the other hand, generally stayed within the confines of the city. Despite the fame of many itinerant preachers, the majority of preaching in the Middle Ages was done by priests in their own parishes. Hus, however, is one of the few to gain considerable notoriety as a preacher while remaining in a single venue for nearly a decade. The Bethlehem Chapel, founded in 1391 from the walls of three other buildings and a roof which covered a formerly open air cemetery and well, served as the site for

⁸ Cynthia Polecristi, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy*, 21, 66; Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*, 52; Gecser, "Preaching and Publicness," 156-157.

⁹The most detailed biography of John of Capistrano is Hofer, Johannes, *Kapistran: Ein Leben im Kampfum die Reform der Kirche*, 2 vols. 2nd ed. Ottokar Bonman ed. (Heidelberg: Kerle, 1964-65). Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, 125; Gecser, "Preaching and Publicness," 148-159.

¹⁰ Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints, Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378-1417* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 78.

¹¹ Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, 19; Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 45. For more general studies of the late medieval religious milieu see: Van Engen, "Multiple Options: The World of the Fifteenth-Century Church," 274; Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, 179. Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Links between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women's Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, With Historical Foundations of German Mysticism*. Trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 163; and Malcom Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation* (Oxford and Maldon: Blackwell Publishing, 2002).

his pulpit for ten years.¹² This meant that many people probably heard Hus repeatedly, perhaps even daily, over an extended period. As a result of Hus's relatively stable pulpit, he was able to promote and build on his reputation as an authoritative preacher over time. His sermons reflect an environment where he did not need to blatantly assert his authority in every sermon. Hus had the luxury of using a variety of themes and strategies to insure that the audience gave his words the utmost respect. Therefore, to examine how he intentionally constructed his authority through his preaching, one needs to look beyond individual sermons to witness how his sermons functioned as a collective whole.

Hus derived a part of his authority through expounding on the technique and value of proper preaching. Hus, on occasion, described the value of the preacher's profession to the audience, which consequently established his position to listeners as the ideal preacher. Hus consistently expressed the importance of his words to his audience, and through his preaching he demonstrated his attributes of humility and authority from his own pulpit. In this respect, Hus differed little from his contemporaries or medieval preachers in general, but the circumstances of Hus's life led him to emphasize his authority to a far greater extent as his career progressed. Indeed, as his authority to preach increasingly came under attack, his self-promotion became more a matter of justifying his place at the pulpit rather than convincing listeners of the efficacy of his preaching. Hus, however, is remarkably consistent in his message, and one witnesses common themes and similar preaching strategies between the sermons of the *Collecta* of 1404-1405 and those of the *Sermones in Bethlehem* from 1410-1411.

¹² Jan Sedlák, *M. Jan Hus*, 95.

Hus proclaimed his authority through interconnecting rhetorical strategies that buttressed his position at the pulpit. Despite the dramatic change of tone resulting from the instability of his life in 1411, his self-promotion consistently drew on similar themes and tropes.

Hus perceived the preacher to be the instrument of God's will on earth and stated that "knowledgeable and eloquent priests are the gift of God."¹³ Illustrating Hus's expressed motivations and strategies for promoting his sermons reveals the larger purpose that he assigned to them. More simply stated, understanding *why* Hus preached brings clarity to what Hus preached. Hus's sermons generally reflected three major themes concerning the promotion and authority of the preacher. First, Hus perceived his preaching of the Gospel as critical to the spiritual life of the church. Therefore, he devoted significant attention to addressing the proper way to preach. Second, Hus argued his authority derived from scriptural mandate that the primary task of the followers of Christ is to preach. This call to preach played an even greater role and evolved into one of Hus's defenses as his enemies increased in number. Finally, Hus linked effective preaching to a life devoted to preaching in imitation of Christ and the authority that resulted from a moral life in his image. Hus's willingness to promote himself in related but ever more radical ways played a critical role in establishing his public persona and celebrity status as God's messenger on earth.

Historians have tended to generalize the importance of Hus's preaching by pointing out his use of the vernacular or his immersion in controversy. Perhaps most frustrating was that scholars, until recently, failed to question why Hus gained such

¹³Donum eciam Dei est sciencia et eloquencia sacerdotis. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 26.

notoriety in the first place. Famous and frequently cited twentieth-century scholars of Hus, such as František Bartoš, Howard Kaminsky, Vlastimil Kybal, Matthew Spinka, and Paul De Vooght, used the sermons to investigate doctrinal issues rather than focusing on the sermons themselves. They saw Hus as a leader of a movement already in motion with popular interest present at its inception.¹⁴ This may be true, but the sermons themselves functioned within a more complex context, and until recently, no one had tried to understand the functionality of the sermons themselves. Thomas Fudge's article "Feel This!" is one exception in that it attempts to analyze the development of an emotional connection to the audience. His article, however, focuses on the "preaching of reformation," which discusses Hus as a force of change while failing to take account of the mundane.¹⁵ To better understand how Hus promoted his preaching, my focus is to illustrate how Hus described his value as a preacher, his stated reasons for success, and how they established his position in defiance of authorities. Through his consistent emphasis on the power of his preaching, Hus defended his place at the pulpit both before and after his own excommunication.¹⁶ Hus desired that his audience accept him as the exemplum of the ideal preacher, and the surviving evidence and his enduring legacy suggest he succeeded. To his audience, Hus personified the ideal preacher called by Christ.

¹⁴ More teleological than simply linking Hus to an organized Bohemian reform movement, Kaminsky describes Hus as the recognized leader of a "revolutionary movement" implying a Marxist inspired interpretation that Hus promoted far more than simple religious morality and reform. Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 52.

¹⁵ Fudge, "Feel This!," 108.

¹⁶ Hus explicitly lays out his defense of preaching in his letter written to John Barbatus and the People of Krumov located in Václav Novatný ed., *M. Jana Husi Korespondence a Dokumenty* (Prague: Nákladem Komise Pro Vydávání Pramenů Náboženského Hnutí Českého, 1920), 91 and translated in Spinka, *Letters of John Hus*, 50-53.

Of course, Hus was but one figure in the vibrant world of late medieval preaching, of which Bohemia was a small but active part. Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Prague saw a remarkable number of prominent preachers.¹⁷ Bohemia witnessed a renewed emphasis on effective preaching because of the actions of the Emperor Charles IV (1346 -1378) who invited charismatic preachers to his capital. Preachers, such as Conrad Waldhauser (d. 1369), entered an ideal environment to inspire young scholars from the fledgling Prague University. As a result of Charles's building program and his new emphasis on preaching, the city saw a dramatic increase in the construction of chapels and churches that provided new spaces for preaching in both Latin and the vernacular.¹⁸

In the wake of Prague's rapid transformation into imperial capital along with its rapid decline, the city witnessed a dramatic revival and general emphasis on public preaching. Preachers such as Milíč z Kroměříž (d.1374), Matěj Janov (d.1394), Tomáš of Štítýň (d.1401) all made considerable names for themselves before Hus. Others such as Jerome of Prague (d.1416), Jakoubek of Stříbro (d.1420), Johlín z Vodňan (d.1416), Nicholas of Dresden (d.1416) and the orchestrator of the first defenestration, Jan Želivský (d.1422), were all contemporaries of Hus or gained notoriety in the wake of his death.¹⁹ Although many preachers gained fame in this era, numerous others left only anonymous sermons or are forgotten to history. Roughly 140 sermon collections survive

¹⁷ John Van Engen, "Multiple Options: The World of the Fifteenth-Century Church," *Church History*, 77 (June 2008): 257-284; Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, 77; Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, 68-69. Fudge, "Feel This!", 108.

¹⁸ Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra* 159. Mengel, "Emperor Charles IV (1346-1378) as the Architect of Local Religion in Prague" *Austrian History Year Book* 41 (2010): 22-26.

¹⁹ There are a fair number of preachers whose names are known for this period of Prague, but those without significant surviving material will not be mentioned here.

with Bohemian origins from 1350-1450; a dramatic increase considering what little exists from Bohemia before this time.²⁰ As a result, Jan Hus began his career as one preacher in a city of many, and as a late-comer to a city that had seen decades of fervent charismatic and reform-minded preachers.²¹ At the start of his career, little distinguished Hus from other preachers as his contemporaries in Prague and throughout Christendom held similar inspirations, sources, and models.²²

The medieval sermon and the practice of preaching have recently drawn considerable interest from historians.²³ The re-examination of sermon texts has opened new inquiries concerning both what the documents can reveal and how they correspond to the public act of preaching. Various theoretical approaches have pushed the limits of what sermons can tell the historian. Recent applications of performance theory, medieval psychology, and sociology have generated both new questions and new answers concerning the value of medieval sermons to European religious life. These theoretical innovations have become common in the last two decades as historians examine medieval homiletics with new perspectives that illuminate the relationship

²⁰ Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 1-2

²¹ Morée, *Preaching in the Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, 15. Rudolf Říčan, *Johán z Vodňan: Křižovník Kláštera Zderazského* (Prague: Nakladem Vlastním, 1930), 9-11.

²² Soukup, "Die Predigt als Mittel Religiöser Erneuerung Böhmen um 1400" In *Böhmen und das Deutsche Reich: Ideen- und Kulturtransfer im Vergleich 13-16 Jahrhundert*, ed. Eva Schlotheuber and Hubertus Seibert (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2009): 263.

²³ The most fundamental text in recent medieval homiletic studies was assembled under the direction of Beverly Mayne Kienzle for Brepols in 2000. The volume, *The Sermon*, combines many of the premier scholars in sermon studies to analyze medieval sermons as a genre by period and geographic location. Although it discusses medieval sermons from Italy, Spain, England, France, Germany, and Scandinavia, the volume makes no attempt to engage with Bohemian preaching. Much of its analysis, however, is relevant due to the common influences shared throughout Europe. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *The Sermon* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000).

between the medieval preacher and his audience.²⁴ The vocalized sermon was a common point of contact between the laity and clergy and a critical component of medieval religious instruction. Priests could be heard throughout the day in fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Prague, with one such popular destination being Jan Hus's Bethlehem Chapel.²⁵

Recently historians have examined the sermons from many late medieval preachers for new details on medieval religion and society.²⁶ Historians, with some exceptions, tend to reference Hus's sermons only in the context of theological heresy and political reform, if at all.²⁷ Reevaluating Hus's sermons, however, will create a better understanding not only of Hus and Prague, but also of what he shared with

²⁴ Much of Weber's theories on charisma are found in Max Weber's "The Nature of Charismatic Authority and its Routinization" reprinted in *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers*, ed. Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). Other excellent recent approaches to preaching include: Claire M. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures: Preaching Performance and Gender in the Late Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Stephen J. Milner, "Rhetorics of Transcendence: Conflict and Intercession in Communal Italy, 1300-1500" in Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin, ed. *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200-1450* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010); Carolyn Muessig ed., *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages* (Boston: Brill, 2002).

²⁵ Spinka, *Jan Hus' Concept of the Church*, 13-21; Mengel, "Emperor Charles IV (1346-1378) as the Architect of Local Religion in Prague," 22-26, Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 22-23.

²⁶ Examples include: Augustine Thompson, "From Texts to Preaching: Retrieving the Medieval Sermon as an Event," in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Boston: Brill, 2002): 89-125, 14. Franco Mormando, *Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Nancy Van Deusen, *Dreams and Visions: an Interdisciplinary Enquiry* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), Peter Francis Howard, *Beyond the Written Word*, 1995).

²⁷ Although this is a common theme in the historiography, the most recent works to primarily focus on Hus's sermons in the context of heresy and reform are Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 57-73; Thomas Krzenck, *Johannes Hus Theologe, Kirchenreformer, Märtyrer* (Zürich: Muster-Schmidt Verlag, 2011), 56-79; Peter Hilsch, *Johannes Hus. Prediger Gottes und Ketzer* (Regensburg: Friedrich-Pustet, 1999). Surprisingly, numerous recent studies of medieval preaching have ignored this wealth of sources. Along with its absence from Kienzle's, *The Sermon*, no Bohemian sermons were examined in the recent edited works: Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin ed., *Charisma and Religious Authority*, 2011; Thomas L. Amos; Eugene A. Green; Beverly Mayne Kienzle ed., *De Ore Domini: Preacher and the Word in the Middle Ages*, (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989); or Carolyn Muessig ed., *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, (Boston: Brill, 2002).

contemporary preachers throughout Christendom. Hus utilized and continued many general medieval trends, while he simultaneously adapted the traditional model to suit his particular role and circumstances. Hus's sermons also reflect a Christendom-wide growing deviation from the idealized form as exemplified in typical preaching handbooks.²⁸ Hus, at times, follows medieval sermon conventions, but more often his sermons and homilies vary radically in length and style.

The format of the ideal medieval sermon changed little in theory between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. An examination of the form of the typical Sunday sermon, as highlighted in the *Ars Praedicandi* of Thomas of Salisbury (c. 1210) for example, lists seven major components.

1. Prayer for divine aid
2. Protheme
3. An introduction of the theme
4. Theme (Generally a scriptural quotation)
5. Statement of parts/divisions of the Theme
6. The development of the parts/divisions
7. Conclusion²⁹

The organizational scheme changed little in three centuries in comparison to the preaching conventions of Jean Gerson. Gerson's sermons commonly consisted of:

1. Verse (Text of the Day)
2. Protheme (Either a prayer or second text)
3. Intro to the theme-use of the theme
4. Announcement of the divisions (usually in three parts)
5. Amplification of the parts; including subdivisions
6. Summary
7. Final Exhortation³⁰

²⁸ Phyllis B. Robert points out that fifteenth-century teaching manuals show considerably more concern for relating to the audience and for vernacular preaching than their predecessors, which suggests a greater concern for priests to relate to and influence their audience. Phyllis B. Robert, "The *Ars Praedicandi* and The Medieval Sermon" in *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Boston: Brill, 2002), 52.

²⁹ As discussed in Robert, "The *Ars Praedicandi* and the Medieval Sermon," 49.

Hus's sermons often followed a similar pattern, but he also tended to vary the number of divisions and the lengths of individual sections. How close Hus came to the model sermon often depended on the context of the sermon, the date in the church calendar, and even the time of day. Often Hus's Sunday sermons followed this pattern closely, but on lesser feast days or midday sermons, Hus's homilies often followed a narrower theme without subdivisions. When considering the manuscripts, especially those from 1410-1411, it is critical to recognize that the organization of the sermon also depends on the accuracy of the students who recorded it.³¹

In contrast to Hus's popular preaching, his university and synodic sermons generally followed closely to the scholastic model with a more formal and structured format, including a series of required proof texts.³² A scholastic sermon is organized more in the manner of:

- Introduction
- Division (three parts)
- Part A-Sub Division 1
- Proof from authority
- Proof by reason
- Subdivision 2
- Proof by exemplum
- Proof by allegory

³⁰ D. Catherine Brown, *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 12-14. Also used as example of a typical late-medieval sermon in Thomas Worcester, "Catholic Sermons," in *Preachers and People in the Reformation and Early Modern Period* ed. Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2001): 4.

³¹ Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, 134; Kamínková's textual analysis of the manuscripts of the Sermons in Bethlehem 1410-1411, for example, illustrates how the same sermon could be recorded in different styles and with different types of language leaving a question as to which manuscript was actually more accurate. Eva Kamínková, *Husova Betlémská kázání a jejich dvě recenze* (Prague, Universita Karlova, 1963), 75-77.

³² Examples of these sermons are assembled in the collection: Jan Hus, *Iohannes Hus Magister Universitatis Carolinae: Positiones, Recommendationes, Sermones*, ed. Anežka Schmidtová (Prague: Státní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1958).

- Division 2 (repeat form of Subdivisions)
- Division 3 (repeat form of Subdivisions)
- Conclusion³³

Rarely did Hus's popular preaching follow such a rigid structure. The creators of model sermons, in fact, expected them to be adjusted for time and place and designed the models so that their function and audience was "indeterminate."³⁴ These sermon models might have been the base, but the expectations and necessities of the context led to actual recorded sermons appearing rather different.

Part of the irregularity in applying labels to Hus's preaching comes from his combination of the homily and sermon genres. In general, historians refer to surviving records of his preaching as sermons, although that label is not entirely accurate because the surviving sermons are more complex than that label suggests. In preaching a sermon, the medieval preacher was expected to follow a short textual quotation and carefully divide it while providing useful exegesis on all subsequent parts. A homily, on the other hand, was less formal. It often was so informal that historians differ significantly on how to define the term homily. What a historian sees as the primary purpose of the homily dictates the subsequent definition. Phyllis B. Robert, for example, describes the medieval *homilia* simply as a broad explanation of a text explained phrase by phrase.³⁵ James L. Murphy, however, describes it as preaching intended to retain a feeling of conversation between the preacher and audience. He styles it as "void of rhetoric" and as preaching designed to end simply at any point without detracting from

³³ Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 315; Siegfried Wenzel, "Academic Sermons at Oxford in the Early Fifteenth Century," *Speculum* 70, No. 2 (April, 1995): 305-29, 311.

³⁴ D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 8; Robert, "Rhetoric and Preaching," 52

³⁵ Robert, "The Ars Praedicandi and the Medieval Sermon," 44.

the theme.³⁶ Beverly Kienzle laments that all too often, “distinguishing the homily from the sermon can lead to sweeping generalizations or painstakingly detailed elaborations of difference.”³⁷ In the end, the nuances of the two formats make their precise labeling a trivial exercise in the context of Hus’s preaching. Although historians often refer to Hus’s postils as a collection of sermons, the fact is that Hus utilized both approaches and combined aspects of the two, meaning that either label is applicable to the source material.

Although the majority of Hus’s sermons were transcribed or copied in Latin, much of Hus’s legacy is linked to his preaching in the vernacular.³⁸ The primary evidence of Hus actually preaching in the vernacular is the Bethlehem Chapel charter itself, which designates the spacious building for that purpose. Historians commonly mention that one could only hear Czech preaching in Prague at either the Wenceslas Chapel in Saint Vitus Cathedral or at the Bethlehem Chapel across the river in Old Town.³⁹ Quite likely, although generally unexplored, is that mendicant preachers in the city may also have preached in the vernacular. The fact that Hus used Czech hardly seems adequate to explain his popularity and charismatic reputation. Preachers commonly used at least some form of the local vernacular throughout Europe as early as the twelfth century in what David d’Avray describes as “market place vocabulary.”⁴⁰ This deliberate form of speech would have utilized shared or utilitarian words to form a synthesis of common

³⁶ Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 298-99.

³⁷ Kienzle, *The Sermon*, 162.

³⁸ Vidmanová, “Hus Als Prediger,” 66, 74.

³⁹ Spinka, *Jan Hus’s Concept of the Church*, 43; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 58

⁴⁰ D’Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 8.

tongues. Historians have eventually considered successful medieval preachers, in general, as “linguistic and cultural hybrids” able to make themselves “a bridge between the lettered and unlettered.” Scholars have also noted that preachers who are cultural outsiders and without knowledge of the vernacular are routinely ridiculed in popular literature.⁴¹ Another possibility is that Prague had an abnormally high level of Latin literacy in the early fifteenth century closely linked to the disproportionate number of clerics which suggests the possibility that the vernacular was unnecessary for much of Hus’s audience.⁴² Transcriptions of Hus’s sermons offer little help in deciphering what language he actually used, as scribes occasionally recorded certain words and phrases in Czech or Latin. In some instances they are in direct apposition while in others they continue the sermon in a different language. It is impossible to know if Hus used both languages in those instances, left the vernacular or Latin as a note for himself, or if the aberrations reflect insertions by the copyists.⁴³

Hus’s exact words are also not always evident. Only the record of a French ambassador’s attempt to resolve the papal schism remains in what scholars commonly accept to be Hus’s own handwriting.⁴⁴ Historians tend to believe that Hus compiled many of the postils himself at the end of the liturgical year and distributed them for

⁴¹ D'avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 7; Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 57-59, 63.

⁴² Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 32; Šmahel, “Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia,” 240. Foreign scholars such as the English born Lollard, Peter Payne, (or has he was known in Prague: Petr Engliš) developed quite a career in Prague and even advanced to a position of leadership among the Hussites despite severe limitations in his ability to speak Czech. His example clearly shows the value and utility of the Latin language for communication in Prague. Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 67.

⁴³ This commonly appears in the texts of the *Sermones in Bethlehem* for example on the second Sunday of Advent the text reads “*species dicitur mollicies miekost-et patet bene inferius.*” *Mollicies* and *miekost* are both referring to a weakness or softness. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 30. Visible in manuscript form: Knihovna Národního Muzea, XVI F 4, 295r.

⁴⁴ *Autograf M. J. Husi*, intro F. M. Bartoš (Prague: Státní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1954), 28.

copying as models for other preachers, but tracing any of the surviving manuscripts to an original by Hus is impossible.⁴⁵ Many other collections of Hus's sermons exist because students and admirers in the audience would either attempt to record a sermon verbatim or assemble it later from notes into a *reportacio* of the sermon.⁴⁶ The result is multiple versions of individual sermons, each reflecting different tones, styles, and experiences. This leaves the finer details of Hus's preaching in doubt because one cannot be certain which transcription is more accurate.⁴⁷ What is generally consistent in the manuscript tradition is the incipits and themes discussed in the sermons; but any argument based on the details of language is generally untenable because of inherent uncertainty.

As previously mentioned, the majority of Hus's sermons survive in the form of postils. These postils usually contain a collection of sermons preached over the course of a liturgical year, and their compilers intended them to serve as examples for the benefit of other preachers. Substantial collections remain in both Czech and Latin, and many have been published.⁴⁸ They do not exist for every year Hus preached, nor do those that exist necessarily contain every sermon from a specific year. In many circumstances, the creators of the various postils are unknown, and Hus's actual

⁴⁵ Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 14.

⁴⁶ Šmahel, "Literacy and Heresy in Bohemia," 243; Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, 131.

⁴⁷ Eva Kamínková in her brief study concludes that one may reliably assume the more interesting and exciting manuscripts were probably recorded closer to the actual event, either present or shortly after. Although Hus's reputation as a popular preacher might suggest this, her evidence is circumstantial and ignores the notion that sermons could be made more exciting after the fact. It also assumes that we have some idea about what the audience would respond to, which is simple speculation. Kamínková, *Husova Betlémská Kázání a Jejich Dvě Recenze*, 75-77.

⁴⁸ Please see the introduction or bibliography for complete listing of published sermon texts.

involvement in their creation remains a mystery. Surviving postils are copies from earlier compilations or notes with generally obscure origins. The most likely explanation is that students and followers copied and distributed sermons attributed to Hus. Likely, they translated Czech postils into Latin to reach a larger audience, specifically among the non-Czech speaking students and scholars at the university or for wider circulation across Christendom.⁴⁹ These postils vary from manuscript to manuscript, suggesting that they cannot be treated as literal transcriptions of the sermons and, therefore, require caution from historians.

Despite these challenges associated with homiletic source material, gathering significant evidence from the sermons is possible. Even though a careful linguistic dissection of the text is not possible, historians can trace with some confidence Hus's general concepts and themes. One such theme is Hus's self-promotion from the pulpit. He commonly discussed the necessary components for proper preaching, which he represented, while criticizing in general terms an ineffective and uninspired alternative. Yet, Hus described a far greater purpose for his preaching than the condemnation of clerical opponents or problematic church practices. To Hus, preaching the Gospel was the purpose of the universal church, and the failure to do so was a rejection of Christ's mission to the apostles and a rejection of Christ himself. This loss of focus, according to Hus, had grave repercussions in a church fractured by schism and under growing influence of the devil among both the laity and the clergy.⁵⁰ Hus summarized this point in May of 1411 in his letter to John Barbatus in which he wrote, "Relying on that, I

⁴⁹ Vidmanová, "Hus Als Prediger", 67; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 58; Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 11

⁵⁰ Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 261.

desired in preaching to obey only God rather than the pope or the archbishop and the rest of the satraps opposing the word of Christ, 'Go into all the world,' etc. I made this remark so that you may know how to oppose the devil's dogs."⁵¹

Hus did not hide his intentions for his sermons, and he often spoke with great simplicity and clarity as to why he felt his preaching was of utmost importance. In the wake of charges of heresy and excommunication in 1410, Hus frequently justified his continued preaching in the context of his sermons. Lacking the bishop's blessing, Hus explicitly placed his authority to preach on God's command found in Luke 9, which states, "He summoned the Twelve and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal."⁵² Hus interpreted Jesus's command to the apostles as a command to him as well. The result is a correlation between the promotion of his work as a preacher and the buttressing of his authority to preach. This trend did not start in 1410, but it can be traced in different forms through Hus's career, only increasing in frequency and polemical style as his critics became bolder.

Hus on Preaching and Preachers

Hus considered proper and effective preaching as a sign that a preacher's authority derived from God. In particular, Hus illustrated his authority to his audience by describing his own competency. Therefore, by teaching his audience how to identify proper preaching, Hus seems to have intended that others recognize him as the model. On February 14, 1405, in the afternoon sermon of Sexagesima (the second Sunday

⁵¹ Translated by Matthew Spinka in Spinka, *The Letters of John Hus* (Manchester: Rowan and Littlefield, 1972), 53.

⁵² Luke 9, 1-3 Saint Joseph Edition New American Bible.

before the start of Lent), Hus explained to his audience how a priest should plan a good sermon. Hus provided his six *cautelae* (cautions) to follow when preaching.⁵³ He explained that caution is necessary to preach the Gospel correctly and to ensure that the audience understands the message. Hus's advice consisted of six statements:

- Do not argue in falsehoods; they murder the spirit of the listener.
- Do not make false accusations in order to make yourself a modern apostle.
- Think well before you speak.
- Do not use noxious words; the sermon should be pleasing and useful.
- Flee from wordiness.
- As for speaking in time, measure the place and the listeners, because in Eccles. 3 it is written: "A time for speaking and a time for silence." And again: "The wise will be silent until the proper time, the boasting fool ignores the time."

At the end of this list, Hus stated, "These conditions alas! We do not especially observe in our preachers. Some fabricate false indulgences and reliquaries for deceiving people, while others deceive through visions and miracles, some even praise their life only, as if pseudo-apostles and badly find fault in strangers."⁵⁴ The rest of the rather short sermon expounds on Paul's glorification of God through the Holy Spirit and his reliance on truth. The first half of this sermon, however, revolved around the presentation of the cautions and the scriptural exemplum that support them. The list serves as an example of the fascinating relationship between Hus and his audience. Hus's reference to wordiness may have invoked any number of smiles, smirks, and further interactions with his audience, especially if they appreciated the irony that a number of Hus's sermons are

⁵³ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 104-109.

⁵⁴ Has condiciones heu non observamus nos presertim predicatores, alii falsas indulgencias et reliquias pro decipiendo populo, alii visiones et miracula fabricant, velud pseudoapostoli magnificantes eciam vitam propriam et vituperantes nequiter alienam. Ibid., 106, 107.

considerably long. The witnesses of the sermon (both the audience present and manuscripts recording the event) provide no suggestions as to Hus's delivery, yet the content itself generates numerous questions.

In this sermon, Hus included some of, although certainly not all, the characteristics of good and poor preaching. He discussed preaching in detail within the context of the sermon, while telling his audience what they should expect from both him and other preachers. Hus did summarize this list with serious, albeit vague, complaints of priestly failures, such as promoting false indulgences and relics, along with such generalities as fabricated visions and miracles. However, without specifics, as appear in his later sermons, one is left to assume Hus has tapped into both a common trope associated with the late medieval clergy and the specific rhetorical need for a negative example to create a foil with which to compare the qualities of the Apostle Paul.⁵⁵

Hus's cautions illustrated his concern for his primary craft at the Bethlehem Chapel and his goal of effectively preaching the Gospel to his audience. Many late medieval preachers employed a humility trope in the pro-theme of a sermon. The expectation of a medieval protheme was that it set the stage and purpose of a sermon.⁵⁶ This often declared the preacher's unworthiness to preach but reliance on inspiration from God and the authority of the scriptures.⁵⁷ Likewise, Hus often asserted

⁵⁵ Numerous works have pointed out the prevalent use of the "corrupt priest" in medieval sermons. For example see: Christopher Ocker, "Contempt for Friars and Contempt for Jews in Late-Medieval Germany," in *Friars and Jews in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Steven J. McMichael and Susan E. Meyers (Leiden: Brill, 2004): 119-145, 125; Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, 19, 122; Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 143-166. Hus provided in his later sermons specific examples of priests around him.

⁵⁶ Moreé, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, 160; Robert, "Rhetoric and Preaching," 49-50, Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 325.

⁵⁷ Howard, *Beyond the Written Word*, 43.

his authority to preach in his prothemes. This most commonly appears in the form of immediate references to the scripture and exemplum from authorities. In the example of the cautions, Hus immediately based his sermon on the authority of the Apostle Paul through the citation of Second Corinthians, chapter twelve. Hus began the sermon, “The Apostle teaches these words to every man, so that they might not preserve uncertainty over certainty; so they might unite the unknowing with the knowledge of God; so they might not presume to preach their own mighty deeds.”⁵⁸ Citations of this type then typically continue throughout the sermon, rooting all major statements from Hus in the authority of scripture, the patristic fathers, and doctors of the church. This common approach, known as the “golden chain of citation,” allowed preachers to base their authority on the words of scripture, church fathers, and well-known theologians. In this way, a preacher’s words followed a chain of authority that linked his sermon most commonly to the words of Jesus Christ himself.⁵⁹ Hus relied heavily on this approach in every sermon and homily, yet in conjunction with the use of citations he deviated at times from strict scriptural citation and included references such as the cautions that supported his position at the pulpit by illustrating his competence in the preacher’s art.⁶⁰

In the example of the cautions, Hus highlighted his own aptitude for preaching as evidence of his authority. The first two *cautelae* focus on the truthful authority of the preacher, and the final four discuss characteristics of the effective sermon. By stating

⁵⁸ Hiis verbis Apostolus docet singulos homines, ut incerta pro certis non asserant et incognita sciencie Dei comittant et de se magna non predicent nec presumant. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 106.

⁵⁹ Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 14

⁶⁰ In this way, Hus is similar to, but perhaps more modest than Bernardino of Siena and Giovanni Dominici. Nirit Debby shows that these preachers quite openly equated their voice with the voice of God. A level of promotion Hus never reached. Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*, 39.

these points, Hus shared his personal standard in preaching and informed his audience why his preaching was superior to an assumed ineffective alternative. For example, by placing significant emphasis on not telling lies, Hus obviously must be telling the truth. By stating the importance of brevity in speaking, Hus suggested his sermons must be an appropriate length to avoid wordiness. By stating that one must preach at a proper time, Hus implied that times exist when pulpits should be silent and preachers should consider the audience in that decision. Hus may be simply pointing out with this statement that preaching serves no purpose when the intended audience is not present to listen. By defining bad preaching through the cautions, Hus effectively draws attention to his own preaching prowess.

Spread throughout Hus's sermons is a wide assortment of remarks concerning other attributes necessary for proper preaching. One common ingredient Hus stated as necessary for a successful sermon is love. He explained to his audience that "a sermon without love (*karitate*) is not fruitful."⁶¹ This element in Hus's sermons stands out more clearly in his early sermons than in the later polemical ones. Hus undoubtedly was aware of the need to express love within his sermons. *Caritas* as a rhetorical device did not exist in classical oratory; rather, it was introduced through the Church fathers in works frequently cited by Hus. One of the primary preaching concerns for the likes of Augustine and later Gregory was that the rhetorical preaching techniques employed in Christian sermons often originated in the works of Cicero and other classical pagan writers. These techniques appealed to the audience's sense of reason, but the Christian preacher needed to reach his listeners' souls. The Church fathers, therefore, viewed

⁶¹ Ostendit autem primo Apostolus, quod sermo non est fructuosus sine karitate, cum dicit: Si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum." Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 112.

Christian love as the bridge between the preacher and his listeners which led to conversion.⁶² Hus was clearly aware of this requirement and spoke quite beautifully, stating, “But just as the clear sun surpasses the brightness of other stars, thus should love (*caritas*) exceed all.”⁶³

A separate requirement for proper preaching is humility. Hus stated on March 1, 1411, [it is] “the devil who tempts us with pride in our speech... therefore repent of these [sins] and be humble in speech.”⁶⁴ Hus’s concern for the sins of voice appeared again on March 15 in a sermon discussing the powers of Satan and demons. Here, Hus described the devil as a wolf lunging to kill by the throat (meaning temptations of speech) because it is by the throat that the preacher spreads the Word of God.⁶⁵ Although Hus considered humility a key aspect in any component of imitating Christ, he specifically asserted its necessity for preaching. In this respect, humility is a critical part of establishing a preacher’s authority, and although Hus placed himself in the role of the ideal preacher, his emphasis on humility need not contradict his self-promotion. The sermons suggest that Hus did not declare himself above any other specific priest, nor did he declare himself above the Gospel.⁶⁶ Hus displayed his humility not through grandiose statements of piety, but through his emphasis on the Gospel and his projection of Christian morality. As a form of self-promotion, Hus hoped by emphasizing

⁶² Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 291.

⁶³ Sed sicut solis claritas claritatem aliorum excedit siderum, sic caritatis debitum Omnia debita antecellit... Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 96.

⁶⁴ Primo propter superbiam, qua dyabolus temptavit, se ut mittat...contra illam data est nobis oracio, ut sicut superbia est inicium omnis peccati Eccli X et quia est aliquando peccatum, ideo penitencia eius est humilis oracio. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem. vol. 3, 21*.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 99.

⁶⁶ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 63-64.

the value of humility that his audience would recognize his own modesty. This approach, although not unique, stands in sharp contrast to certain previously mentioned medieval charismatics.

Yet another concern for Hus was the content of a sermon, in particular that a preacher should never lose the Gospel message. As previously illustrated in the *Sexagesima* sermon containing the *cautelae*, Hus decried the preaching of fables and fabricated revelation. He addressed this point again in his sermon on the eleventh Sunday after Easter in 1405. Early in the text, he argued that “a preacher preaches the Gospel, not a show or a fable, nor of false spoils, but that people with eager mind might receive the Gospel, and that those preaching and listening both stand in faith of the Gospel.”⁶⁷

Hus’s emphasis on the message, although certainly not surprising, reveals two significant characteristics concerning the preacher and his audience. First, Hus definitively stated that the power of his preaching comes directly from the power of the Gospel. According to Hus, the power of the Gospel and the people’s desire for its message drew in his listeners. For example, in the afternoon sermon on Sunday, May 16, 1405, Hus addressed that power and how his audience should receive it. The sermon survives with vibrant imagery and an emphasis not on the preacher, but rather on the listener. Hus referred to the promise of the Gospel as delightful, and he called

⁶⁷ Iste namque est ordo predicacionis, ut predicator predicet evangelium, non ludicra, non fabulas, non spoliū mendacia, et populus intenta mente accipiat evangelium, et quod predicans et audiens stet pre fidem evangelio, et tercio, quod uterque bene operans secundum evangelium salvetur. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 425-426. Hus’s meaning of fables seems fairly straight forward as he himself rarely seems to have indulged in non-scriptural narratives when he preached. Spoils, when appearing in scripture, are often interchangeable with a prize. In this case, Hus is probably referring to earthly rewards for faith as opposed to heavenly gifts.

the listeners to “study the word, elicit the senses.”⁶⁸ This use of sensory language, although employed somewhat infrequently, exists in multiple places within Hus’s sermons. It never referred to the reception of Hus’s preaching alone, but rather attempted to evoke a sensory response to the Gospel and to Christ himself. The invocation of the senses when referencing the suffering of Christ is quite common throughout medieval sermons and is certainly not unique to Hus.⁶⁹ Yet, this is a notable component of Hus’s preaching and should not be overlooked. The application of the rhetorical “four senses of interpretation” was also a common motif in traditional oratory. When referring to the use of the senses, Hus may also be implying the literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical senses that had long occupied an essential place in scholastic university educations.⁷⁰

The second characteristic of Hus’s preaching was his emphasis on preaching as necessary for a sinners’ acceptance of the Gospel. The Gospel should be the central point of the sermon, and Hus commonly alluded to himself as a conduit of that message. To illustrate that point, Hus offered up numerous scriptural examples.

Repentance is a major recurring theme throughout his sermons, and he often referred

⁶⁸ Quid ergo hiis delectabilius esse potest quam quod Dominus at in presenti lectione: ‘Amen, amen, dico vobis: Si quid peccaveritis Patrem in nomine meo, dabit vobis.’ Pensa verba, elice sensum, ut puta quis, quomodo, quid, per quem et a quo petat. Schmidová, *Collecta*, 225-26.

⁶⁹ Lawrence F. Hundersmarck, “Preaching the Passion: Late Medieval ‘Lives of Christ’ as Sermon Vehicles” In *De Ore Domini: Preacher and the Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos; Eugene A. Green; Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989): 151-2, 159. Rachel Fulton provides a broad analysis of emotional and sensory language in relation to Christ in the Middle Ages. She argues that writers of religious texts in the Middle Ages intended their readers to slowly process each word and to apply their senses and emotion to evoke a strong reaction to the experience of reading. I would argue that preachers such as Hus might have intended a similar response to their preaching of the Word, especially as Fulton clearly shows it as a common expectation throughout the High Middle Ages. Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 156.

⁷⁰ Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 327; Harry Caplan, “The Four Senses of Scriptural Interpretation and the Medieval Theory of Preaching,” *Speculum* vol. 4. No. 3 July (1924): 283-284.

to the value of preaching in the context of sin and conviction. Hus invoked John the Baptist on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, stating, “Behold the great preacher calling to repentance... behold the call to penitence in works that serve us as an example,” and he subsequently described John’s success in bringing Herod to repentance through a sermon.⁷¹ On the fifth Sunday after Easter 1405, Hus preached on James 1 and similarly highlighted the necessity of preaching to lead sinners to repentance. Reflecting on the passage, he first stated, “James shows, that the word of God having been received is able to save the spirit. In this it is shown, however, that the word having been received justifies nothing, if not completed through work.” Hus continued in this sermon to quote Jesus in Luke 6, stating that, “All who come to me and listen to my sermons, and act on them, I will show you what they are like.”⁷² Hus used this opportunity to explain how the faithful are to act upon the messages of sermons, and implied the importance of repentance among other themes. One unusual interpretation is his insertion of preaching into the well-known parable of the wise and foolish builders from Luke 6. This parable describes two builders, one who builds a house on sand and another on solid rock. Naturally, the building on rock weathers the flood while the flood destroys the other. By explaining the parable of the wise and foolish builders, Hus implied that the building should be constructed on the preaching of Jesus Christ. He described how the audience should react, “for thus he places the foundation on a high rock, above which he erects four walls of hope. First, the builder hopes to conquer all

⁷¹ Ecce predicacio vocans ad penitenciam...Ecce clamor sive vocacio ad penitenciam in opera exemplata.” Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 54, 56.

⁷² In superiori epistola ostendit Iacobus, quod verbum Dei susceptum potest salvare animas. In hac autem ostendit, quod verbum susceptum non iustificat, nisi opere compleatur... Omnis, qui venit ad me et audit sermones meos, et facit eos, ostendam vobis, cui similis sit. Ibid., 220.

bad virtue from the beginning, second to remain stable in adversity...third hoping to live to accomplish all merits of Christ himself and fourth finally hoping to remain with Christ in glory.”⁷³ Hus made the rejection and conquering of sin the first step of acting on the preaching of Christ. The sermon continued by expounding on the sin of those who failed to build the first wall upon the foundation. The necessity of preaching for repentance is only one of many tasks entrusted to the preacher and is of particular importance in what Hus commonly referred to as Christ’s mandate to preach.

Hus described to his listeners a clear mandate from scripture for preaching. He explained that God demands that his followers preach, and failure to do so had dire consequences. In a sermon on Matthew 21, given as the second sermon for Palm Sunday 1405, Hus exhorted his fellow preachers, referring to priests in and away from his audience, to call upon the people to prepare for the Lord’s coming declaring, “O preachers, speak and wish not to be silent.”⁷⁴ Hus based this sermon on how Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem as told in Matthew 21, fulfills the prophecy of the Messiah entering Jerusalem, as foretold in Isaiah 62. The chapter, steeped with eschatological imagery, foretells the coming of the Messiah. Hus, however, focused not on the coming of Christ or even the waiting of the church but rather placed his emphasis on the need for the people to hear of the coming of the kingdom.⁷⁵ This sermon sheds light on how Hus considered his role in the church to be militant. Hus and his fellow priests must

⁷³ Sic enim point fundamentum supra petram, super quo spem secundum quatuor parietes erigit, primo sperans omnia mala virtute fundamenti vincere, secundo in adversis stabiliter permanere... Tercio sperans omnia merita Cristi sibi ad vitam proficere et quarto sperans cum Cristo in Gloria finaliter permanere. Ibid., *Collecta*, 221

⁷⁴ “O predicatores, dicite et nolite silere.” Ibid., 171.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 170-71.

announce the coming of the Lord. Their duty was to inform and warn the people of Prague to prepare for the arrival of the king.

Just as good sermons could lead people to God, Hus often put considerable emphasis on the role of bad preaching or the absence of preaching to lead people astray. To cite an early example, Hus preached on Sunday July 17, 1405:

Notice how the crowds gathered and listened fervently to the word of God. So that they could hear, they knocked one another over in attempts to get close to Jesus. Their zeal was caused by the power of the Word of God as well as by their love for it. Today, however, hearers of the Word falter. The clergy preach myths and lies that the crowds like to hear. But because the people are not hearing the Truth of God, they can neither see him, nor love him. This is reminiscent of what Paul reported in 2 Tim. 4: "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."⁷⁶

Hus argued that if priests will preach the Gospel, the people will come to hear them, but in the absence of sound preaching, the people will turn to the fables mentioned by Paul. In Hus's time these could easily include indulgences, relics, or possibly popular superstitions.⁷⁷ Also quite likely is that Hus referenced his personal encounter with priests deceiving the laity from the pulpit. Historians generally consider this statement as a direct reference to Hus's examination of the fraudulent Wilsnack miracles, which he

⁷⁶ Et nota, quomodo ferventer audiebant populi verbum Dei, quia ita, ut irruerent ad Iesum, id est cumulatim se trudendo prosternerent, Causa fuit veritas verbi Dei et bonus affectus populli. Et quia hec due cause deficiunt, nam clerus predicat fabulas et populus excellencius quam verbum Dei audiat illas, ergo fervor audicionis verbi Dei et sic amor Dei deficit in populo et in clero impletur vox Pauli 2 Thim. 4 "Erit" inquit, "tempus, cum sanam doctrinam non sustinebunt, sed ad sua desideria coacerbabunt sibi magistros, prurientes auribus et a veritate quidem auditum avertent, ad fabulas autem convertentur." Ibid., 337-338.

⁷⁷ Recent scholarship has begun to uncover late medieval superstitious beliefs such as magical remedies and protections. Although little evidence seems to have been uncovered for popular superstition in Prague itself, documents in Germany such as the *Tractus de Superstitionibus Magica, Sortilegiis, etc.* are dated to c.1400 and suggest clerical concern for superstitions in neighboring Bavaria. Michael D. Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2013), 8, 36.

investigated as part of an inquiry sent by the Archbishop Zbyněk to investigate a series of reported miracles in Brandenburg. The priests of Wilsnack had declared that their eucharistic hosts were shedding the blood of Christ and as a result had profited considerably from flocks of pilgrims hoping to witness the miracle themselves. The investigation concluded that the priests had been falsely claiming miracles in order to lure pilgrims for financial gain.⁷⁸

Hus illustrated that along with a failure to combat false doctrines, the absence of proper preaching is problematic to the Christian life. In 1405, he, on occasion, pointed out the danger of the absence of preaching for both the laity and the clergy. For example, on the sixteenth Sunday after the Feast of the Trinity, Hus discussed the spiritual failures of the people of Ephesus who, upon the departure of Paul, “fail [in] the spiritual journey having been deprived of so great an apostle and preacher who comforted them while instructing them the ways of the Spirit.”⁷⁹ Following that thought, Hus, a mere two weeks later, chided priests who avoided the pulpit. He decried the failure of priests and the danger to priests who stray from preaching the Gospel by explaining that “the learned clerics should observe such words, those who crave silence, they do not preach, they place the light of knowledge under the bed of destruction, under the way of avarice, and under the worldly vessel of fear and in secret

⁷⁸ Vidmanová, “Hus Als Prediger”, 73; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 27; Spinka, *John Hus’s Concept of the Church*, 59; Sedlak, *M. Jan Hus*, 104-05; Oakley, *The Western Church*, 240. For a more general discussion of Wilsnack without significant mention of Bohemia see: Bynum, *The Wonderful Blood*, 2007.

⁷⁹ Et tunc tercio potuissent deficere a spirituali ambulacione, privati tanto apostolo et predicatore, qui eos inambulacione spiritus instruens confortabat. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 485.

private religion.”⁸⁰ Criticism for priests who did not preach was common throughout the Middle Ages, as writings from Guibert of Nogent (c.1084) and Thomas Aquinas (d.1274) attest to the selfishness “of those refusing to aid sinners through preaching.”⁸¹ Prague itself was in the midst of a revival, and the renewed emphasis on preaching may have resonated with his audience as part of the current atmosphere of reform.⁸² By upbraiding clergymen who were failing to fulfill Christ’s mandate, Hus indirectly underscores his own commitment to preaching.

In 1411, with Hus excommunicated and forbidden from preaching, he dedicated more of his sermons to defending his right to preach. With the removal of his official authorization to preach, Hus worked harder to demonstrate his authority.⁸³ He went so far as to describe his enemies’ attempts to prevent his preaching as the work of the Devil. He stated on March 8 that, “the devil opposes the way and does not wish us to hear the word on Sunday. Others who do not wish this are limbs (*membra*) of the Devil.”⁸⁴ Hus used the biblical calling to preach as a shield, defending himself against both the official prohibition, as well as charges of disobedience. By placing himself under the higher calling to preach, Hus justified his own disobedience of the

⁸⁰ Ista verba notare debent docti clerici, qui quietem querunt, ne predicent qui lucernam sciencie ponunt sub lecto accidie, sub modio avaricie et sub vase mundani timoris et in abscondito religionis private. Ibid., 517.

⁸¹ Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 275.

⁸² For the most recent compilation and reconsideration of the growing emphasis on preaching in late medieval Bohemia see Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, 68-92.

⁸³ Clair M. Waters discusses the conflict between authorization and authority in more general terms with a gendered component. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 2.

⁸⁴ Et dyabolus opposite modo non vult nos verbum Dominicum audire, ne illud implentes salvemur. Qui ergo aliis sic volunt, sunt membra dyaboli. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 63.

ecclesiastical injunction banning him from the pulpit.⁸⁵ Furthermore, his continued presence at the Bethlehem Chapel demonstrated to the congregation his willingness to defy the authorities for the sake of the Gospel. From the beginning of his public career, Hus consistently emphasized the necessity of preaching. The 1410-1411 sermons show how little his opinion on that matter had changed. Later sermons merely reflect an ever-more hostile environment, which compelled him to address the issue of authority directly.

The sermons penned during Hus's final years at the Bethlehem Chapel continued to build on the idea of God's command to preach, but with greater intensity. He went so far as to suggest in 1411 that the primary action of any priest should be the preaching of the Word. This may seem somewhat surprising, especially as Hus was a stalwart defender of the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. In this context, Hus seems to have been primarily critical of votive masses done specifically for the financial gain of the clergy.⁸⁶ Hus considered those activities as mere distractions from preaching the Word. He stated on July 12, 1411:

When the crowd rushed...etc... We are good Christians, but when we stray from those two mandates, we stray from Christ. We priests are intended to preach. Yet we abandon the Word of God on account of ceremony, the mass (missacionem), and the desire for earthy riches. If you have not renounced this sin, you are putting yourself in even greater danger. Some of you believe greatly in our mass and you speak of riches that do not compare to the way and the Word of God, and in doing so you

⁸⁵ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 71-72.

⁸⁶ Preaching on the sacraments can be found throughout Hus preaching, for example. A number of secondary works have also been written specifically on Hus's views on the sacraments including: Stanislav Sousedík, *Učení o eucharistii v díle M. Jana Husa* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 1998); Jiří Kejř, "Teaching on Repentance and Confession in the Bohemian Reformation" *BRRP* 5. Part 1(2002): 89-115; Marin, "Les usage de la liturgie dan la predication," 54, 64.

have neglected God's listeners. You, who are endowed with the instruction to preach, have withdrawn from your responsibilities.⁸⁷

Hus began to tie the mandate to preach explicitly with the preaching and imitation of Christ. Using a statement of Bernard of Clairvaux, Hus stated, "It follows: 'therefore because they hold no order, for that reason they go where nothing is ordered, and always they inhabit perpetual horror.' And why? Because we are not imitating Christ, who is working for our salvation."⁸⁸ This statement concludes a lengthy sermon on preaching and the failure of corrupt priests. Hus borrowed extensively from Gregory and Bernard throughout this sermon to describe a people without the guidance of a worthy preacher. He commonly alluded to humanity's propensity for sin and, although not always linked explicitly to an absence of preaching, one may easily recognize repentance as a primary goal of his preaching. The previous passage also serves to introduce another major theme that he used to support his authority to preach: the example of Christ.

Scripture is full of examples of individuals preaching, and Hus commonly linked himself to the qualities of well-known preachers from the Old and New Testament. He often drew examples from biblical and early church figures, specifically to reference the power of preaching. Reflection on Paul's rhetorical abilities, for example, appears in a

⁸⁷ Cum turbe irruerent etc. Si enim hec duo pensarem iam dicta, boni christiani essemus. Quia vero ab his duobus mandatis Christi declinamus, nos sacerdotes propter cerimonias, missacionem et cupidinem lucri temporalis verbum Dei, quod predicare nobis precepit delinquimus. Similiter vos, non derelinqentes peccata et in illis periclitantes estimatis, vos tantum nostris missacionibus confidentes et oracionibus, quas precio non modico comparatis et verbum Dei et eius audicionem negligitis, ymmo vos sic dotantes a verbi retrahitis predicacione. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 265. The word *missacionem* in this text is probably referring to votive masses or masses given for financial gain. It is unlikely that Hus is belittling the liturgical mass for the laity.

⁸⁸Subdit: 'Quia igitur nullum tenant ordinem, ideo ibunt, ubi nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat.' Et quare? Quia Christum non imitamur, qui laborans pro nostra salute... Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 265.

number of places in his sermons. He described Paul's exemplary preaching as a military captain exhorting his soldiers. Describing preaching in military terms as motivation for fighting against evil is a technique Hus commonly employed in his wider corpus. In 1405, however, the theme appeared only occasionally, and like many themes involving threats to the faithful it grew in frequency through Hus's career.⁸⁹ On Quadragesima Sunday in 1405, Hus described Paul in these military terms:

The Christian soldier trains to march into battle against the wickedness of demons and the sharp blade of vice. For this reason, the Apostle in the epistle, just as a high captain, leads prudently with exhortation to the soldiers of the highest king. Thus the Lord most high speaks to prepare his legitimate soldiers for fighting...⁹⁰

By likening Paul to a military commander, Hus elevated the status of all proper preachers, and thus promoted himself.

Although Hus mentioned the preaching careers of both Paul and John the Baptist on multiple occasions in 1405, direct reference to the preaching of Christ is sparse. In one sermon, Hus compared the work of Christ and Satan. "For Christ hunts the soul through his preaching, which Jeremiah 16 describes as a chase to give blessing. But the Devil hunts for the purpose of giving damnation."⁹¹ This sermon, however, was predominately concerned with themes of repentance and only has a rather weak connection to the model of Christ and his preaching as the sermon continued. By 1410,

⁸⁹ The widespread use of this metaphor in the period is treated by Pavel Soukup in, "Metaphors of the Spiritual Struggle Early in the Bohemian Reformation: The Exegesis of the *Arma Spiritualia* in Hus, Jakoubek, and Chelčický," in *BRRP* 6 (2007), 87-110.

⁹⁰ Quia nunc cristane milicie exercitus ad pugnam egreditur contra nequicias demonum et acies viciorum, ideo Apostolus tanquam capitaneus summi ducis prudenti exhortacione animat in epistola milites summi regis. Sic enim precepit supremus Dominus loqui suis militibus legitime pugnantibus...Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 121

⁹¹ Nam Cristus venatur animas per predicatores suos, de quibus ait Ier. 16: "Mittam eis multos venatores et venabuntur eos de omni monte," scilicet superbie, "et de omni colle avarice, de cavernis petrarum" luxurie...Sed dyabolus venatur ad dampnacionem. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 441.

however, Hus's primary example of godly preaching was the recorded words and acts of Christ. This is not to say that a Christ-centered model was absent from his previous preaching, for it is not unusual to find it referenced in the context of humility and resistance to temptation, but his explicit connection between the example of Christ and preaching remained unrefined.⁹² After his excommunication in 1411, he relied mostly on explicit parallels with Jesus Christ to illustrate what and how a preacher preaches.

Hus's self-comparison to Christ clearly developed after his life became the center of controversy. His sermon of July 12, 1411, focused entirely on how a cleric should preach in comparison to Christ. Hus placed his primary focus on the example of Christ and gave a sermon that explained how imitating Christ affected preachers and their audience. An obvious undercurrent in the sermon was Hus's defense of his decision to continue preaching, despite being forbidden by the ecclesiastical authorities. The scriptural basis of this text is Luke 5, which describes a scene where Jesus's audience grew so large that he was forced to preach from a boat off the shore. He drew two general conclusions from this passage:

First, the words of Christ were attentively heard by the people; you likewise press forward to hear the Word of God. Second, Luke shows that Christ was diligent in regular preaching. These two interpretations are brought to you... so that you may hear the word of Christ with compassion, so that you may be fulfilled by work in him, so that by the sermon you may believe, and so that together we may teach and preach everywhere using that example of Christ, the one who preaches standing in the sea!⁹³

⁹² Ibid., 143.

⁹³ Primo quia verbum Chirsti diligenter auditor a populo: hoc teneatis, ut similiter exemplo istorum pro verbi Dei audicione instetis. 2 ostenditur, quod Christus fuit diligens in assidua predicacione. Hec duo ex utraque parte tamquam nobis memorabilia derelicta teneamus, ut benivole vos verbum Christi audiat (et hoc est, ut id impleatis opera, quod creditis sermone)- et ut similiter ex caritate illud doceamus et predicamus ubique exemplo Christi, qui illud in mari stans predicavit. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 264.

Hus said that although evil attempts were made to hinder him from fulfilling his duties, the presence of a large and enthusiastic audience vindicated his preaching. He supported himself further by citing Chrysostom, who said that just as, “the sign of a good farmer is the barn having been filled, a sign of good preaching is the church full of listeners. Therefore, because Christ is the best preacher in word and sermon, because from nothing he is able to mend, for that reason listeners and the crowd press forward, as they listen to him. From the power of his word, therefore, is the preacher so great; he is worthy of our imitation.”⁹⁴ Following Chrysostom, Hus concluded that the size of Christ’s audience proved him to be a great preacher. Hus then applied that same idea to himself and the size of his own audience. The insistence that the presence of so many listeners is the sign of good preaching is a remarkable addition to his expectations of a good preacher and one of his most obvious references to his own rhetorical abilities and the context of Bethlehem Chapel.

To accuse Hus of pride in pointing to his own success as justification for his defiance of superiors is tempting. Yet Hus, at least in preaching, is consistent in crediting the presence of his audience of the Bethlehem Chapel to his preaching the Gospel of Christ. He placed the story of Jesus’s sermons into the world of his audience by accusing priests of failing to preach the Word of God and of failing to follow Christ.

The necessity of preachers to imitate Christ is a repeated theme throughout Hus’s later sermons. Historians have often described Hus as a critic of clerical immorality, and a considerable portion of that critique was concerned with how

⁹⁴ “Signum boni agricolae est theca komara ferta; signum boni predicatoris est ecclesia auditoribus plena.” *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 264-65.

preachers failed to model the life of Christ.⁹⁵ On March 1, 1411, Hus preached, “From whom each minister of Christ should himself first, conform however much he is able, so he might imitate Christ well and to teach as he lives, so that he is humble, chaste, tolerant, and thus to others just as Christ, yet not totally and equal to Christ.”⁹⁶ Later, on March 22, Hus again made the comparisons. “And therefore know those listeners and preachers are imitators of Christ. So if one from pure intentions wishes good to men, then they know that he is sent from God.”⁹⁷ The claim that preaching authority derives from personal morality is hardly new to Hus. Personal morality was a cornerstone of mendicant preaching in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as well as justification for preaching by such groups as the Waldensians.⁹⁸ He elaborates on the older tradition by negatively asserting that those preachers not leading moral lives have no authority and are leading the flock astray. Hus placed the immoral preachers in direct opposition to righteous, telling his audience that the moral preacher should “be open, stand always to the point of death, preach against the evil priests, who are not preaching to bring the people [to repent] of their sins, from their failure those priests are given over in the end

⁹⁵ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 63; Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 62; Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 40.

⁹⁶ Unde quilibet primo ministro Christi debet se, quantaum potest, conformare, ut vivat bene et Christum imitetur, ut sit humilis, castus, paciens et sic de aliis sicut Christus, non tamen totaliter et eque perfecte sicut Christus. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 28.

⁹⁷ Et ergo cognoscendi sunt imitatores Christi, auditores et predicatorum, ut si unus predicat pura intencione propter salutem hominum, tunc sciat quia a Deo missus est. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 137.

⁹⁸ Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 6. It is also one of the reasons that many historians have looked for Waldensian influence in the Bohemian reform, with inconclusive results. See: Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra*, 44-67; Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 125; Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 37-41.

to death. They are placed in the dung heap, and having been disgraced and bound together, they are finally stoned.”⁹⁹

One witnesses the complete deployment of Hus’s defense in two documents of late May, 1411. The first was a sermon and the second was a letter dated by Spinka to the following day that further defended his place at the pulpit.¹⁰⁰ On May 24, the sixth Sunday after Easter, Hus preached on John 15: 26, which states, “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.”¹⁰¹ This chapter of John tells of Christ’s prophecy to his apostles concerning how they would be hated by the world. This is a powerful message, and Hus developed the verse into a long sermon concerning the persecution of the faithful. He returned to many of his previous arguments explaining how the world hates those who speak the truth and how those speaking the truth inspired by the Holy Spirit need not fear. This is a polemical and defensive sermon where Hus, without explicitly naming his enemies, countered charges against himself while focusing heavily on questions of authority.

The sermon began by setting the biblical context leading to Pentecost. Hus described the mental and emotional state of the apostles explaining that they were “abandoned, because of the absence of their lord, saddened on account of a future with certain persecution, that Jesus Christ had foretold to them, ignorant because they did

⁹⁹ De patet, quod stetit usque ad mortem, quia predicans contra sacerdotes malos, qui non peccata populis predicabat, postea ab eis est morti datus et in sterquilino positus et fedatus et concatenatus et finaliter lapidatus. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 124.

¹⁰⁰ Spinka ed., *The Letters of John Hus*, 50.

¹⁰¹ Cum autem venerit paracletus quem ego mittam vobis a Patre Spiritum veritatis qui a Patre procedit ille testimonium perhibebit de me... *Vulgate*, John 15, 26.

not know scripture perfectly, fearful because they did not believe they would receive help to persevere in the truth of Christ, and by this they all were defective.”¹⁰² He closely followed the theme of truth from this point forward in the sermon. He explained that the Holy Spirit speaks through the mouths of the faithful before earthly authorities and that the faithful need not fear to speak the divinely inspired truth. The forces of evil, on the other hand, work against the truth. Hus explained, “And, therefore, from the opposite position the Devil is the fighter of the truth. Therefore, they who pursue the defense of the truth, they are from the Holy Spirit and thus of God, those who pursue truly, so that the truth of the law of God might be oppressed and might be crushed, they brought forth from their leader the Devil and Antichrist.”¹⁰³

Slowly through the sermon, Hus began to speak more in the first person and relate the sermon explicitly to the present. For example, he referenced his own relationship with the Holy Spirit. He stated, “Because by inspiration you are with me, in my preaching and works, you see my bodily profession of truth and will give to me the testimony for conversion.”¹⁰⁴ Here he has interjected himself in place of the apostles as one being directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was common for medieval preachers to insert contemporary examples into their sermons. In the past, he inserted examples of Christendom, Bohemia, Prague, the university, and even Bethlehem Chapel while often

¹⁰² ‘Desolati,’ inquam per absenciam Domini sui, contristati propter future certitudinis persecucionem. Quam eis predixit Deus Christus, ignari, quia scripturam perfecte nesciebant, timidi, quia se in assistencia veritatis Christi perseverare non credebant-et hec omnia sunt defectus. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 135.

¹⁰³ Et ergo ab opposite dyabolus est inugnator veritatis. Qui ergo instant pro veritatis defensione, sunt ex parte Spiritus S. et sic Dei, qui vero instant, ut veritas legis Christi conculcetur et opprimatur, sunt ex parte ductoris dyaboli et Antichristi. *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁰⁴ Quia ab inicio mecum estis, sc. mee predicacionis, laboris et veritatis professionis me corporaliter videntes et michi conversantes testimonium perhibebitis. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 137.

alluding to his own role. In this sermon, at a time where he certainly could relate to feeling persecuted by the Devil and Antichrist, Hus is applying the Gospel example directly and explicitly to himself.

The remainder of this sermon is built around the phrase “thus and now,” as discussed with the strong connections he drew between himself and the apostles, along with a forthright denial of ecclesiastical power to excommunicate him or any other Christian. Hus developed these themes while drawing his audience into his own suffering as he transformed them into apostles and himself into the role of Christ. He described a direct corollary between himself and his audience as he explains that the followers of Christ who “frequently heard his sermons were excommunicated.”¹⁰⁵ Hus followed this train of thought:

Thus and now... At the time of Christ and in modern times, there are people who envy Christ's authority and people who ignore God's knowledge and God's command that there be preaching everywhere. These people cast the faithful out of the Synagogue; they cast the faithful out of the wicked assembly. But those faithful who have been cast out should not be afraid of this happening to them, for if it does, they will not feel ashamed, even though evil confuses their hearts. The first element of Excommunication is being denied communion. That is followed by de facto expulsion. The fact is that Christ, our head, was himself cast from a community of evil. He was treated as harshly as a seducer or a vagrant, and then he was cast out from the gates of the city, and hung on the wood of the cross. This was similarly done to his apostles. Thus and now, excommunication, no matter what words are used to label it, means only that one is separated from communion with the Church.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Qui sermons eius visitabat, excomunicabatur... Ibid., 138.

¹⁰⁶ Sic et nunc, qui habent zelum suorum statutorum, sc. Ut non predicetur in locis privatis, non secundum scienciam Dei, qua ubique iubet predicari, Christi fideles faciunt extra synagogas, que sunt ecclesia malignancium, eiciunt. Non tales timeant, quia finaliter non verecundabuntur, quamvis nunc coram malis confunduntur. Excommunicacio est extra comunionem primo verbo eieccio et deinde facto expulsio. Quod factum est Christo, capiti nostro, quii primo verbis est eiectus extra malorum comunitem tamquam seductor et eroneus-et deinde facto, quia ipsum extra portas civitatis eicientes in lingo cruces suspenderunt. Similiter suis apostiolis hoc fecerunt. Sic et nunc dicitur excomunicacio i. e. extra comunionem ecclesie separacio... Ibid., 138-39.

Hus explicitly illustrated how especially under excommunication his life and preaching continued to imitate Christ. Just as the world rejected Christ, so too did the world reject Hus. This is an obvious continuation of Hus's reliance on the model of Christ. He declared to his audience that because he spoke the truth and because his listeners hear the truth they must be prepared to face persecution and excommunication as a sign they are following Christ's will. He even asserted the lack of mortal sin in his own life, declaring his own total innocence as an ultimate defense against his critics.

The other form of excommunication is physical, people who have been excommunicated find that, consequently, others avoid speaking to them. They are denounced on account of manifest sin. If, however, they have committed no mortal sins, then excommunication does not have that ostracizing effect. Therefore, if on account of the Word of God one is excommunicated yet does not have mortal sin present within him, then he should not fear frivolous denunciation, because that is not the law. He will not falter, having already gained the kingdom of heaven. If any of Christ's true disciples are excommunicated unjustly, Christ says to them, "You will be cast from the synagogue, you will be expelled, just as they expelled me."¹⁰⁷

Hus described excommunication in terms of his imitation of Christ, providing key evidence that he, like Christ, preached the truth and like Christ was being persecuted in his own time. As a final component to this sermon, Hus turned the tables on his accusers by declaring that they are excommunicated themselves. He denied the authority of those attempting to drag him from the pulpit by arguing that they are excommunicated not by the Church militant, but by God directly, "and these who are excommunicated are not able to excommunicate, not if he has in himself mortal sin,

¹⁰⁷ Alia est excommunicacio moralis, qua quis excommunicatur ab hominibus: denunciatur propter peccatum manifestum sic, ut homines devitent ab illius conversacione. Qui si non habet in se peccata mortalia, excommunicacio non nocet illi. Et ergo si propter verbum Dei quis excommunicatur et no habet in se manifesta peccata, non debet timere illam frivolam denunciacionem, quia illa non ligat, sibi introitum regni celorum claudendo. Et ergo hic dicit Christus de illa excomuciacione frivola, que fulminari debebat in dicipulos suos: "Abseque synagogis facient vos",eicientes, sicut me eiecerunt. Ibid., 139.

because Isaiah 59 says 'your sins divide you from your God.' From whose grace you have been separated."¹⁰⁸

Hus's declaration that neither he nor his followers need fear excommunication is reiterated in a letter to his staunch supporter John Barbatius (Bradáček) and the people of Krumlov and may have been written the following day of May 25. Hus summarized his reason for his continued preaching. In the letter he declares:

It is obvious from this that those who prohibit preaching are false witnesses and guilty of sacrilege, and consequently excommunicated by the Lord, according to the declaration of the prophet pronouncing excommunication, 'They who wander from Thy commandment are accursed.' As far as my case is concerned, Jerome says in his letter to Rusticus, the bishop of Narbonne, 'therefore let none of the bishops, puffed up with envy of diabolical temptation, be angry when the priests occasionally exhort the people, or when they preach in churches-as has been said- if they pronounce blessings upon the people. For I would answer him, who would refuse me these things: whoever does not wish that priests do what God enjoins them to do, let him declare that he is greater than Christ!'"¹⁰⁹

Here, once again, Hus compares himself with Christ and takes a further step that those declaring him excommunicated are themselves excommunicated and deprived of their authority. In his sermons, Hus seems to have moved from defending his preaching authority to simply promoting his superiority over other preachers to the point of

¹⁰⁸ Et hac peccatum, quia Ysai 59 dicitur: "Peccata vestra inter vos et Deum vestrum diviserunt" a cuius gracia estis separate. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 5, 139.

¹⁰⁹ Ex his videtur, quod prohibentes praedicare sunt falsi testes et sacrilege et per consequens a domino excommunicati, juxta dictum prophetae excommunicationem pronuntiantis: Maledicti, qui declinant a mandatis tuis. Et quoad meum propositum Hieronymus ad Rusticum Narbonensem episcopum dicit: Nemo hinc epsicorporum invidia diabolicae tentationis infletur, irascatur, si plebem interdum presbyteri exhortentur, si in ecclesiis praedicent, si plebi, ut dictum est, benedicant; etenim abneganti mihi ista sic dicam: Qui non vult facere presbyteros, quae jubentur a deo, dicat, quod majus est, Christo. Novatný places this date during the month of May, Spinka on the other hand gives this letter a more precise date, but it is unclear whether he based this dating off of the sermon. Novatný, *M. Jana Husi Korespondence a Dokumenty*, 91. Translated in Matthew Spinka ed., *The Letters of John Hus*, 50.

rejecting the notion that he could be removed from the pulpit, for he declared that the mere attempt would result in the excommunication of the one who tried.

An Alternative Path to Martyrdom

Examining how Hus promoted his pulpit at Bethlehem Chapel places his defiant statements of 1411 in the context of his entire preaching career. Hus built his preaching reputation, as many preachers before him did, on the examples of Christ and Scripture. The unique circumstances around Hus's preaching, however, pushed him to change relatively standard rhetorical analogies into more dramatic and forceful sermons. He continued to promote his style of preaching and adapted it to defend his place as a virtuous preacher. A looming question is whether Hus intentionally increased the defiance within his preaching to promote a situation where the controversy could only result in victory or martyrdom. Did he want to die for his belief? Did he want his listeners to die for his belief?

The historian must not push Hus too quickly to martyrdom at Constance. Placing Jan Hus on an inevitable path to the stake may be easy, but no one can be completely sure what Hus's precise motivations were. One cannot help but marvel at his willingness to describe himself in a role that would seem to have no alternative but to end in martyrdom. However, Hus was hardly the first or only preacher to highlight his willingness to die for his beliefs. What must not be forgotten is that he was quite capable of adapting to the situation and context of his audience. His self-promotion from the pulpit drew on his listeners' expectations, many of which he explicitly encouraged. As he came under increasing pressure from his enemies, Hus described himself in a way that brought him ever closer to the place of Christ before his audience. Especially tempting is to examine Hus's preaching on the Holy Martyrs and on feast days, such as that of

Saint Lawrence, and to jump to the conclusion that he was prophesying his own fiery end.¹¹⁰ Hus remarked on martyrdom numerous times in his career, but it seems unlikely that earlier references are synonymous with the desire to die.¹¹¹ When a historian considers Constance as the defining point in Hus's short life, sermons on martyrs seem to give evidence that he was seriously considering putting his feet on the path to martyrdom early in his career.¹¹² Yet, his sermons reveal a priest who built on Christian rhetoric that glorified and employed martyr stories frequently in the liturgical year. In fact, tales and images of martyrdom permeated medieval Christian culture, with the most common examples dating to earliest Christian martyrs. Brad Gregory goes so far as to suggest that in the fourteenth and fifteenth-centuries, prior to Hus's execution, opportunities to die for one's faith had "virtually vanished."¹¹³ Richard Kieckhefer even described martyrdom as having transformed into a "pious dream" and a "fantasy."¹¹⁴ Hus probably was even fully aware that Wyclif perished from natural causes, despite his label as a heresiarch. Hus may have stated that he was "prepared to stand unto death,"

¹¹⁰ Examples of sermons discussing martyrdom include: The ninth Sunday after the Trinity 1405, in Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 400; the first Sunday after Easter 1411 in Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 52, and Hus's sermons on the Holy Innocents which appears in Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 168 but according to Flajšhans it also appears nearly in its entirety in the collections of the *Puncta* manuscripts and *Sermones de Sanctis*.

¹¹¹ Brad Gregory, *Salvation at the Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 65.

¹¹² Thomas Fudge is the most recent example of a scholar discussing Hus in terms of a "martyr complex." Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 4.

¹¹³ Gregory, *Salvation at the Stake*, 27.

¹¹⁴ Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 67; 66.

yet that hardly reflects a desire to die.¹¹⁵ Thomas Fudge believes that Hus did have an expectation of death, as there may have been frequent executions linked to the inquisitorial trials of suspected Waldensians in Southern Bohemia and provides estimates for the burning of heretics throughout Europe.¹¹⁶ Alexander Patchovsky, in his study of the inquisition states that Bohemia saw roughly 200 executions of heretics in the fourteenth-century, but that number seems rather exaggerated.¹¹⁷ Some may question these deaths' prominence in the minds of Hus and his contemporaries for two reasons. First, foreign and past instances of fiery deaths would have not likely been widely remembered, as few reports would have circulated and the events, outside of the actual location, were probably quickly forgotten. Second, Hus would have identified himself with the Christian martyrs praised in hagiographic *vitae* and art of the period. Although certainty is difficult, he probably felt nothing in common with foreign heretics who did not support the truth of the Word of God, but rather perished in error. Hus never considered himself a heretic. Even though he probably would not have condoned their deaths, he likely did not identify with those who most closely shared his fate.¹¹⁸ Hus's reverence for martyrdom reflected a desire to conform to the examples of Christ, the

¹¹⁵ De patet, quod stetit usque ad mortem, quia predicans contra sacerdotes malos, qui non peccata populis predicabat, postea ab eis est morti datus et in sterquilinio positus et fedatus et concathenatus et finaliter lapidatus. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 124.

¹¹⁶ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 139

¹¹⁷ Alexander Patschovsky, *Quellen zur Böhmisches Inquisition im 14. Jahrhundert*. (Weimar: Herman Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1979), 21.

¹¹⁸ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 109.

Apostles, the saints, and the Christian fathers as those were the images and tales on which he preached and those examples permeated Christian and Bohemian society.¹¹⁹

In front of the Bethlehem audience, the turbulent context of Prague pushed Hus to develop his early forms of promotion to more dramatic lengths than the previous incarnations. His invoking of Christ's death in an analogy with his own pending fate suggested a similar conclusion waited for him. This, however, does not suggest that Hus was actively seeking that fate at Bethlehem Chapel. Rather, his well-documented reaction to his detractors was to refuse compromise.¹²⁰ Compromise or recantation at the council would have clearly deviated from the words of his sermons and tainted his own legacy with the same hypocrisy he frequently decried in others. Rather, Hus created his own persona in imitation of Christ that effectively trapped him into an ending of either acquittal or death. This is not to suggest his ideas might not have changed after interdict and exile, but to burden Hus with a martyr complex is to disregard the complexity of his preaching and his position in the pulpit. Hus's sermons do not suggest that he wanted to die for his beliefs, although willingness to die may be a different matter. If death was his goal, then why not present himself for judgment at the papal curia in Rome when summoned for trial in 1411?¹²¹ Unfortunately, attempting to argue what Hus thought is a challenging proposition.

¹¹⁹ This desire in the late medieval context is perhaps best illustrated by the hagiography of Saints in imitation of Christ. See Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and their Religious Milieu*, 1984; and the large amount of saintly icons and relics being produced and brought to Prague, See David Mengel, "Remembering Bohemia's Forgotten Patron Saint," and Stejskal, Karel, and Karel Neubert, *Umění na dvoře Karla IV* (Praha: Artia, 1978).

¹²⁰ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 131-32. Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 148-49.

¹²¹ Kejř, *Husův Proces*, 59; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 118.

One may also rightfully question how far Hus expected his audience to follow his example and the analogy of Christ and the apostles. Only one account exists of Hus's actions while his disciples faced death. In May of 1412, Prague authorities arrested three young students for protesting and rioting against the sale of indulgences. Sources from the period suggest that Hus attempted to plea for their lives. The officials at the Old Town Hall assured him they would face only minor punishment, but after Hus left the city council, an executioner beheaded the students on King Wenceslas's order.¹²² The sources suggest, at the very least, that when his followers had the opportunity for martyrdom, Hus attempted to prevent it. If historians consider that Hus's sermons may reveal a preacher caught up in the moment, then likely his audience may have been as well.

In conclusion, the sermons of Jan Hus provide a critical insight into how his popularity developed. Today, historians attest to his fame as a preacher, without fully understanding how his sermons and homilies functioned as a whole. If one takes the time to examine how Hus's preaching functioned, then how Hus created his own persona and generated his authority from the pulpit becomes clearer. Hus's successful promotion of the proper way to preach, of God's mandate to preach, and of preaching in imitation of Christ served to position him as a priest who followed the law and Gospel of Christ. Therefore, he presented himself as a worthy successor to the Apostles. Hus was a masterful preacher, and his sermons attest to his ability to shape, and meet, his audiences' expectations to the fullest extent. Hus proclaimed to his audience that "the

¹²² Primary source attributed Dr. John Náz translated in Spinka, *John Hus at the Council of Constance*, 219-220. Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 120; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 102.

gift of God is eloquent and knowledgeable priests,” and Hus, likely, declared this statement in the most appropriate, eloquent, and knowledgeable way possible.

CHAPTER 3 PRIESTS AND PHARISEES

No more damning sentence could have been pronounced against the territorial power of the popes, or the temporal power of the clergy. Five centuries after the Hussite sermons the Catholic clergy has mended none of its ways.¹

---Benito Mussolini
John Huss the Veracious

Whether as an outspoken and harsh critic of priestly hypocrisy or a moral crusader calling for fellow priests to imitate Christ fully, Jan Hus has been linked indelibly in both history and mythology to criticism of the clergy. Numerous historians have employed Hus's sermons as a prime example of the call for clerical reform in the early fifteenth century. Descriptions of his relationship with the clergy ranged from the blatant nationalistic anticlericalism of Mussolini to generalizations of Hus's preaching as "rigorous moralism."² Other scholars, such as David Atwood, have combined his anticlericalism with his anti-papal stance summarizing Hus as one who "demystified the institutional church" or as in the case of Vlastimil Kybal who described Hus as "attacking the vulgar opinions of Catholics at the time."³ Regardless of how his critique of the clergy is defined, it leaps out from Hus's surviving texts as one of the major recurring themes of his career. His criticism of the practices of simony, his irritation at blatant clerical hypocrisy, and his doubts concerning papal legitimacy support a compelling

¹ Benito Mussolini, *John Huss the Veracious* (New York: The Italian Book Company, 1939), 31.

² Perhaps the most famous author to proclaim Hus's anticlerical legacy was Benito Mussolini whose 1913 book, *Giovanni Huss il Veridico*, served as a scathing indictment of the Catholic church and a mirror for turn of the century Italian society, with significant revisions and a comical *El Duce* revering preface added in a 1939 edition . Pavel Helan analyzes the text and relevant historiography in his article, Pavel Helan, "Mussolini looks at the Bohemian Reformation," *BRRP 4* (2004): 309-316. Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, 294

³ Atwood, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren*, 75. Josef Kybal, M. *Jan Hus: život a učeni –Díl. II učeni napsal* (Prague, Nákladem Jana Laichtera, 1919-1921), 179.

argument to label Hus as an outright opponent to the ecclesiastical structure of the medieval church and as a thorn in the side of a sinful church.⁴ In fact, finding generalized statements summarizing Hus's career in relation to his critique of the clergy is not uncommon. Statements such as "Hus saw the chief danger to the church lay in the evil lives of the clergy," ignore much of the apparent complexity that appears from comparisons between the early and later source material.⁵ Scholars have often highlighted Hus's attacks on sinful clerics as his primary purpose, essentially ignoring other themes and the gradual and rational development of Hus's expressed views. Yet the evidence does not support these extreme, but all too common oversimplifications. Šmahel's confession, "We search in vain in these records for the critical attacks and the daring assessments mentioned in various denunciations and charges" illustrates that scholars need to readjust their expectations of Hus in the pulpit.⁶ This chapter illustrates the nuance that many historians have overlooked concerning Hus's legacy as a clerical critic, as it has never been examined giving full consideration to the scriptural context or his evolving position over time.

Studies of Jan Hus over the centuries have tended to fall into one of two distinct historical narratives: nationalist and Reformation, both of which strongly emphasize opposition to the Roman Catholic Church. Historians writing in a nationalist narrative

⁴ Jan Hus, "On Simony" In *Advocates of Reform from Wyclif to Erasmus*, ed. and trans. by Matthew Spinka (Phillidelphia: Westminster Press, 1953); Jan Hus, *De Ecclesia: The Church*, trans. David. S. Schaff (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1915). Matthew Spinka is the most prominent English speaking historian to argue Hus's role as a great denouncer of clerical and papal "wickedness." Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 3. This idea is also heavily promoted by both Marxist and nationalist narratives.

⁵ Kitts is one of many examples of a reform-centric interpretation of Hus's career. Kitts, *Pope John XXIII and Master John Hus of Bohemia*, 34.

⁶ Šmahel, "Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia," 243-44.

have often highlighted Hus's condemnation of a sinful clergy, claiming that it represents the moral superiority of the Czechs in their struggle against the sinful foreign influences of the fractured papacy and the higher clergy.⁷ Scholars writing within the Reformation narrative have emphasized Hus as a reforming voice among the morally bankrupt clergy and as a martyr to the cause of reform in Europe.⁸ Certain writings of Hus, alone and isolated from the overall timeline of his preaching career, certainly reflect a controversial and condemning tone against a sinful clergy. For example, Hus's work "the Booklet of the Priest's Master Cook," probably written in 1414, is a scathing satirical text that replies to charges against Hus by pointing out his challengers' hypocrisy from the perspective of a priest's cook.⁹ Yet, these theological and polemical writings, mostly originating after his exile, present a limited picture of the reformer and reflect a static

⁷ Peter Morée, "Jan Hus as a Threat to the German Future in Central Europe: The Bohemian Reformer in the Controversy between Constantin Höfler and František Palacký," In *BRRP vol. 4* (2002): 300-303. One of the key and dominant texts in this narrative was written by the first Czech president. T.G. Masaryk, *Jan Hus: naše obrození a naše reformace* (Curych: Konfrontace, 1979). Tightly bound with the nationalist narrative is the Marxist narrative which took a similar view to Hus as the leader of a proto-communist movement as Communism's defining feature is the intellectual and economic antagonism of papal power. Karl Kautsky, *Communism in Central Europe in the time of the Reformation* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1959), 2-3.

⁸ Attempts to portray Hus as the progenitor of the Protestant Reformation are generally ignored in recent scholarship, although many historians and theologians have placed the origins of Reformation movements with Hus and his contemporaries. Examples of the Hussites in the Reformation narrative include: Herbert Brook Workman, *The Dawn of the Reformation. Vol. 2: The Age of Hus* (London, AMS Press, 1902); Renate Riemeck, *Jan Hus. Reformation 100 Jahre vor Luther* (Frankfurt am Main: Stimme Verlag, 1966). Most recently historians have been keeping Hus in the context of a Bohemian Reformation which often continues through Comenius and the battle of White Mountain. Craig D. Atwood links Hus to the Czech Brethren in, *The Theology of the Czech Brethren from Hus to Comenius*, (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009). Although Atwood's recent work is limited to a Bohemian and Moravian context, it still uses Hus as the start of a future reform movement rather than a product of his time. A work that attempts to briefly summarize Hus's preaching is Václav Novotný and Josef Kybal, *M. Jan Hus: Život a Učení* (Prague, Nákladem Jana Laichtera 1919-1921). Perhaps the most useful part of this work as it concerns sermons is Kybal's listing of major themes found in the primary sermon collections, which is cited in the majority of later publications. Kybal, however, tends to over-emphasize Hus's criticism of the clergy as a predecessor of the Reformation and ignores more general themes.

⁹ Jan Hus, "Knížky proti knězi kuchmistrovi," in *Drobné spisy české*, MIHOO 4 (Prague: Academiae Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1985).

belief system without regard to Hus's own changing opinions.¹⁰ His sermons over a wide variety of subjects drew in his audience, and they won for Hus a leading role among Bohemian reformers. He also adapted his sermons according to the changing religious and political climate, and attempts to classify his sermons through only static generalizations miss the remarkable evolution illuminated by these sources. Hus can serve as an excellent example for late-medieval preaching, and the narrower anti-clerical and reform labels diminish the broad historical value of his sermons.

Hus's preaching in general supports the recent reinterpretation of medieval anticlericalism as too diverse and complex to define in general terms.¹¹ Despite historians' statements to the contrary, Hus's condemnation of the sins of the clergy did not seem to draw significant counter criticism from the wider clergy until after he had become entangled in Wyclifite theology and royal politics.¹² In fact, historian Christopher Bellitto, goes so far as to suggest that Wyclif, Hus, and the Waldensians could be reinterpreted as "pro-clerical" because of their higher expectations for the clergy.¹³ Many late-medieval critics of the clergy commonly set expectations so high as to be nearly impossible to achieve.¹⁴ If Peter Mladonovic's account of Hus's trial is accurate, Sigismund himself thought in 1415 that Hus's expectations were unrealistic and, in a

¹⁰ In addition to *De Ecclesia* and *On Simony*, Hus's polemical tracts and letters serve to support this generalization.

¹¹ John van Engen points out that Anticlericalism is a nineteenth-century creation. But the attitude, if not the -ism, exists from the beginning of Christianity. John Van Engen, "Late Medieval Anticlericalism: the Case of the New Devout," *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 19.

¹² Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 14; Spinka, *Jan Hus' Concept of the Church*, 93.

¹³ Christopher M. Bellitto, "The Reform Context of the Great Western Schism," In *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378-1417)*, Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M. Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 317.

¹⁴ Van Engen, "Late Medieval Anticlericalism," 28.

remark to Hus said, “Jan Hus, no one lives without crime.”¹⁵ Hus’s critique of his contemporaries shared many of these same characteristics and expectations through much of his career.

Hus’s call to repentance and calls for reform were typical of the European wide call for reform in the fifteenth century. An analysis of his sermons reflects his employment of common, late-medieval tropes concerning a sinful priesthood that were familiar to the laity and clergy within the Bohemian and European context. These tropes are rooted in scripture and are not unique to Hus, fifteenth-century Bohemia, nor European clergy at large as they often appear in literary works such as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy* but also numerous less well known texts.¹⁶ R.I. Moore suggested that any who “denounced the power, the corruption, and the claims of the church were assured a warm popular reception” over the course of roughly five centuries.¹⁷ The clergy commonly employed tropes either in self-critique or in conflict among themselves, such as the rivalry between mendicant friars and parish priests.¹⁸ Throughout Christendom, criticisms of the priesthood originated from within their own ranks and were expressed from the pulpit. Preaching critically against a sinful

¹⁵ “*Iohannes Hus, nemo sine crimine vivit.*” Peter Mladoňovic, “*Relatio*,” in *FRB 8: Petri de Mladoňovic Opera Historica nec non Alia de M. Iohannes et M. Hieronymo Pragensi Relationes et Memoriae*, ed. Václav Novatný (Prague: Nákladem Nadání Františka Palackého , 1932), 95.

¹⁶ Historians have done similar regional studies on anticlericalism throughout Europe. A small useful sample includes: Ben Prasons and Bas Jongenlen, “Better than a sack full of Latin: Anticlericalism in the Middle Dutch *Dit es de Frensie*” *Church History & Religious Culture* 89, 4 (2009): 431-453; Daran Barrow, *The Stereotype of the Priest in the Old French Fablary: Anticlerical Satire and Lay Identity* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005); Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane, “Archiepiscopal Inquisitions in the Middle Rhine: Urban Anticlericalism and Waldensianism in Late Fourteenth-Century Mainz,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 92 no. 3 (July 2006): 197-224.

¹⁷ Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 114.

¹⁸ František Šmahel, “The Hussite Critique of Clergy’s Civil Dominion” in *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 85.

priesthood is widespread throughout French and English sermons dating to the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.¹⁹ Geert Grote, the famous Dutch preacher, became a deacon in order to preach, but openly refused ordination as a priest because he declared that most clerics who took vows were hypocrites.²⁰ Often, the same scandalous revelations and accusations were adapted and proclaimed from the pulpit over the course of generations. In the early fifteenth century, numerous tropes were reinvented and repeated in light of the over-arching crisis of the papal schism.²¹

Calls for reform originating from clerics themselves were typically conservative in nature and securely grounded in the writings of the Church fathers and scripture.²² The call to reform and repent among clerics had been standard practice since the eleventh century, and those calls appear unceasingly in the sources.²³ The clergy never denied the need for a clerical caste, and John van Engen even questions whether they could conceive of a world without a priest.²⁴ Hus's statements calling for the reform of the

¹⁹ Larissa Taylor points out effectively that contemporary sermons from France also reflect concerns of clerical sin and also denounce such practices as indulgences. She also states that abuses mentioned in sermons were often exaggerated, but also frequently based on legitimate complaints. Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 19, 122, 142. Claire Waters suggests that self-criticizing clerics may have employed these tactics in order to gain a sense of unity with the audience by suggesting empathy with lay people in a shared disgust in the state of the Church. Claire Waters, *Preaching Performance and Gender in the Later Middle Ages*, 144. The fourteenth-century Bohemian morality play *Mastikař* makes several jokes about the immorality of monks and the sweet aroma found in Monk's latrines. Jarmila F. Veltruský, *A Sacred Farce from Medieval Bohemia: Mastikař* (Ann Arbor: Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies: The University of Michigan, 1985), 375.

²⁰ Van Engen, "Late Medieval Anticlericalism: the Case of the New Devout," 22-23.

²¹ Belitto, "The Reform Context of the Great Western Schism," 303-331. František Graus, "The Church and its Critics in the Time of Crisis," ed. and trans. Dorothea A. Christ, in *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter A. Dykema and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 68.

²² Cameron, *The European Reformation*, 39.

²³ Graus, "The Church and its Critics in Time of Crisis," 68.

²⁴ Van Engen, "Late Medieval Anticlericalism: the Case of the New Devout," 26.

clergy, especially early in his career, were an echo of centuries of Christian reform, including the previous half-century in Bohemia.²⁵ Hus was one of a number of clerics who “demanded purification” of the church in a city, that in the wake of the reign of Charles IV, was the third largest “clerical city” in Christendom.²⁶

The reform legacy of Jan Hus and the anticlerical nature of the Hussite Wars (1419-1437) have meant that the faults of Prague’s clergy have received considerable scrutiny from historians. Prague’s clerics received criticism from contemporaries and from historians for the luxury of their buildings, the scandal of their greed, and their failure to practice celibacy. Studies have estimated that between 1379 and 1382 roughly 20% of the priests of the archdiocese maintained a concubine.²⁷ Marxist historians, such as Josef Macek, declared that many of the city’s brothels were actually owned and managed by clerics as further evidence of their corruption and exploitation of the people.²⁸ More recent scholarship by David Mengel, however, has shown that Prague’s parishes actively worked to end prostitution, but it was the protection of the city’s magistrates that kept the brothels in business.²⁹ Despite the clerical reputation for greed and luxury, many young priests had little income themselves. The rapid expansion of parishes and benefices under Charles IV came to an end during the reign of Wenceslas, leaving many young priests to languish without an appointment. The two

²⁵ De Vooght, *L’Hérésie de Jean Hus*, 71; Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství*, 68-92. František Graus suggests that “it is difficult to find a genre in medieval life where criticism of the church and clerics is absent.” Graus, “The Church and its Critics,” 70.

²⁶ František Šmahel, “The Hussite Critique of Clergy’s Civil Dominion,” 83-85.

²⁷ Čornej, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české* vol. 5, 62; Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce* vol. 1, 252.

²⁸ Josef Macek, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia* (Prague: Orbis, 1958), 15-16.

²⁹ David Mengel, “From Venice to Jerusalem and beyond: Milíč of Kroměříč and the Topography of Prostitution in Fourteenth-Century Prague,” *Speculum* 79. 2 (2004): 407-442, 414.

principal ways for a new priest to support himself was to either serve at a parish in place of an absentee priest for a fraction of the normal compensation, or hope that death created a vacancy.³⁰ Of course, poor priests could rarely afford the payments often required to obtain a single benefice while many of the wealthier prelates could hold multiple parishes and benefices while collecting income from all. This meant that the reviled practice of simony not only corrupted the souls of the established clerics, but the holding of multiple positions left many priests destitute. Few priests had the acumen and connections within the university to gain a pulpit by reputation in the manner of Hus.³¹ Šmahel utilizes the *Liber ordinacionum cleri*, which maintained a record of students from the archdiocese who achieved the lowest priestly rank of acolyte, to deduce that from 1395 -1416 nearly 13,261 new priests were ordained, at a rate of roughly 630 ordinations a year.³² This number does not include the large number of mendicants, foreign trained priests, and university scholars who were also present in the city and part of the clergy. The problems of the clergy simply could not be ignored and their activities are a prominent theme in texts from the era. The desire to reform the clergy was genuine among Prague's preachers, but during Hus's career the shepherds of the church faced a much broader crisis as well.

Hus's career was also encompassed by one of the most divided times in the history of the Western Church. Prague, much as Charles IV intended, became a microcosm of the Empire even under schism. The schism divided the city's priests and the university into different factions. These factions were often loyal to the papal

³⁰ Čornej, *Velké dějiny země koruny České* vol. 5, 61.

³¹ Šmahel, "Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia," 239-240.

³² *Ibid.*, 240.

claimant representing their points of origin, which added to the already tense relationship between the Bohemian university nation and the German nations before the Kutná Hora decree in 1409. As the clergy of the city reflected the diversity of the Empire and university, a wedge certainly existed between the city's clergy regardless of the official stance of King Wenceslas.³³ Along with the schism, much of Prague's preaching tradition since the time of Conrad Waldhauser is rooted in clerical reform. Many of the noteworthy Bohemian preachers of the era infused their sermons with clerical critique, creating an environment in which priests with questionable morals were being shamed before the laity.³⁴ Further tensions revolved around the Bethlehem Chapel itself, as Hus's preaching was drawing parishioners away from their local parishes which reduced attendance and created tension with the parish priests.³⁵

The fact that Hus was highly critical of the clergy is well documented and indisputable. As expected, considering his reputation, Hus spoke openly and frequently about the clergy within his sermons. Historians, however, have rarely considered his preaching about the clergy and their failings within the context of a group of sermons or even within the context of a single sermon, choosing instead to focus on single lines taken out of context. Hus could be exacting and cold in his accusations, but for him the saving of souls was something that he, and those who influenced him, did not take lightly. In conjunction with such criticism, however, Hus's early sermons also display substantial empathy with and concern for the spiritual well-being of his fellow priests and students. Several times in his preaching Hus alluded to the difficulties of the

³³ Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce* vol. 1, 256-258

³⁴ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*. 8.

³⁵ Soukup, "Hus as Preacher," 8-9.

priesthood, such as in his sermon from February 7, 1405 informing clerics of the difficulty of their call to go from a life of leisure to the location of the Devil.³⁶ Throughout his career, he commonly linked his clerical critique to the examples provided by the Gospels. Where one sees significant change from his sermons from 1405/1406 that illustrate a reserved admonishment of clerical sin based exclusively on general scriptural examples, to his later works that offer condemnation for his fellow clerics. Hus's later sermons in 1410/1411, on the other hand, reflect increasing frustration and anger with clerics who aligned themselves against him.

Hus was clearly scathing in his criticism of his opponents, but he consistently remained tethered to his scriptural prompts stemming from the liturgical calendar, and assaults upon the priesthood were hardly his sole purpose for the sermons. Hus's critique of the clergy before the general audience of Bethlehem Chapel began in far less radical terms than historians often portray. In his early sermons, Hus compared the contemporary clergy to New-Testament Pharisees. This critique, which intensified over the course of his turbulent career, rejects the changing context in which he delivered his exposition.

A Stern but Empathetic Warning: 1404-1407

Hus's early sermons, although filled with calls for repentance and moral reform, simply do not reflect attitudes of one generalized as the "denouncer of the faithless clergy."³⁷ Though the words of the sermons were almost completely his choice, much of his preaching was based on themes and scriptural readings that he was required to

³⁶ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 104.

³⁷ De Vooght, *L'Hérésie de Jean Hus*, 64.

explain to his audience. Hus as a relatively young and inexperienced priest naturally kept his critique of all sin, not just clerical, tethered to the scriptural readings. Between 1404 and 1407, Hus's sermons repeatedly developed from Christ's frequent criticism of the Pharisees, and Hus's own critique often reflected the employment of carefully constructed analogies between the New Testament and fifteenth-century Prague. His use of anticlerical tropes to explain Christ's interactions with the Pharisees were a rational decision to make the Gospel relevant to his audience. The image of the Pharisee was relatively common in Hus's sermons, but that religious position only had one clear contemporary parallel for late medieval Christians: the priest. The Pharisees of the New Testament represented a corrupt spiritual authority that Hus commonly employed to show examples of hypocrisy and sin. Any individual could easily apply this description to the stereotypical, sinful clergy of Hus's time.³⁸ A significant question, however, is whether that description should be applied in all cases.

Hus's concerns about the spiritual failures of his fellow clergy appear as a common theme among the relatively early collections of his sermons. Hus's recorded words reveal a growing distress and a changing attitude toward clerical sin over the course of his career. Hus's clerical critique early in his career is hardly pervasive. A zealous reformer against the failings of the clergy would not be expected to miss clear opportunities to point out ecclesiastical sin. Overt criticism of the clergy, however, only appears sporadically during 1405, and, as we will see, a number of sermons in which one might expect a mention of clerical corruption avoid the topic altogether.

³⁸ Geert Groote also employed this analogy with priests stating that "Chief of Pharisees are those who distort Scripture and simple faith." Van Engen, "Late Medieval Anticlericalism," 25.

Hus's concerns for the sins of the clergy expressed in his sermons for the liturgical year 1404-1405 are conspicuous, and they are clearly an intricate part of his general message to his audience. Yet direct condemnations of sinful priests before the diverse audience of the Bethlehem Chapel are rather sparse, and often merely a part of a broader theme, and directly relate to the scriptural reading. A fitting example is his sermon during the fourth week of Advent in 1405 when Hus described John the Baptist's call to "three estates of penitence" as references to the clergy, the warriors, and the King. Hus used the example of John the Baptist's preaching to illustrate the pervasive need for penitence in even the most powerful men of society. Hus cited Matthew 3: "And seeing the many Pharisees and Sadducees arriving to be baptized, John the Baptist said to them, 'progeny of vipers, who warned you to flee the coming wrath? Therefore make true fruit of repentance.'" In his sermon Hus observed, "Behold the calling of repentance to the clerics. For the Pharisees and Sadducees were of the religious literati."³⁹

These lines appear as a stark reminder to clerics to repent. Unfortunately, the words on the page give no indication as to how Hus may have spoken these words. Hus may have made this comment emphatically as a stern and explicit warning to the clerics or since it falls at a clear break in the text, perhaps it was included merely as an afterthought. Without really considering the rest of the sermon, this single line seems menacing. But Hus does not mention the clergy again until nearly two pages later in the text. When Hus returned to clerics in his conclusion, he stated: "Behold I call all to

³⁹ Et sequitur: "videns autem multos phariseorum et saduceorum venientes ad baptismum suum dixit eis: Progenies vipperarum, quis demonstravit vobis fugere a ventura ira? Facite ergo dignum fructum penencie." And "Ecce ad penitenciam clericorum vocacio. Pharisei enim et saducei errant literati religiosi." Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 55.

repent in common, except for the most sharp of clerics, since he names them the progeny of vipers and they may be buried in unquenchable fire.”⁴⁰ Here, Hus specifically condemned the most sharp (*acerrima*) of clerics, a label that the audience could have interpreted in any number of ways. Hus made clear his connection between the Pharisees of the New Testament and his contemporaries, but he hardly made a blanket condemnation and drew no other specific parallels. Hus’s warning also was pertinent because his audience undoubtedly included a significant number of students and priests. Hus’s audience certainly was far more diverse than just clerics, and despite the stern warning he issued to the clerics, he discussed a wide range of other sinners before mentioning clerics again. Hus included the clergy in the call for repentance that he meant for all people; that general message continued throughout the liturgical year.

With the words of John the Baptist, Hus shaped his own general call for penitence. Despite his sharp warning for clerics, he intended to have a broader audience for his message. This sermon simply does not place a singular focus on the condemnation of clerics, as seen in later sermons. Along with warnings for soldiers, tax collectors, and others, he also drew attention to John’s condemnation of Herod, which he offered as a warning to all royalty. He stated, “Behold! Mark the Evangelist clearly testifies, how he [John the Baptist] called Herod to penitence and especially through his sermons Herod was moved to repentance...”⁴¹ In these texts, Hus echoed the words of Scripture, as well as the prejudices and concerns of Mark, and from his own words, he offers only a warning without personal condemnation.

⁴⁰ “Ecce vocacio ad penitenciam communiter omnium, sed acerrima clericorum, cum et progeniem vipperarum eos nominat et igne inextingwibili eis de proximo comuniatur.” Ibid., 56

⁴¹ Ecce testatur plane Marcus ewangelista, quomodo vocabat Herodem ad penitenciam et qualiter Herodes eius sermonibus fuerat ad penitenciam inclinatus, si in proposito perstitisset. Ibid., 56.

Hus's inspiration for this particular warning to the clergy stemmed from Mark's description of John's call to the Pharisees and others mentioned in Scripture. In regard to the clergy, Hus chose to direct his critique at anonymous contemporary priests. His reliance on the clerical critique to frame the scriptural Pharisees suggests that he considered the vast majority of biblical criticisms of Pharisees as applicable to at least some of the clergy if not generally to all. If all of Hus's sermons are studied and the contemporary clergy is substituted in place of Pharisees, plenty of references to sinful clerics are evident. These examples serve as contemporary comparisons that Hus utilized in a variety of contexts to make the words of Jesus applicable to medieval Christendom. In the *Collecta*, especially, Hus's broad exegesis of the scriptural texts, which included but were hardly dominated by the Pharisee analogy, illustrates his broader pastoral concerns. For a preacher whom many historians described as almost obsessed with clerical reform, it is remarkable that Hus did not specifically address concerns about the clergy again for nearly five months.

In July of 1405, Hus addressed clerical failings with a brief statement. Anchored securely in proof texts from Augustine, he made a standard rhetorical argument of cause and effect concerning the correlation between hearing the Word of God and internalizing the Word. Hus laid the majority of the blame for humanity's failure to accept the Word not on the clergy, but on the pervasiveness of sin. Hus does, however, briefly criticize clerics for failing to teach properly. He stated:

People convert because of the true word of God and their love of good. Yet both of these reasons fail because the clergy preach fables... as Paul said in 2 Timothy 4: "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears

want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths."⁴²

Hus clearly equated the preaching of myths with contemporary preachers; he opined that as a result of those preachers not focusing on the Gospel, the people turned away from repentance and God's love. Scholars have tended to interpret Hus's references to myths as examples of church practice or ritual not deriving from Scripture.⁴³ Reformation issues that historians have long linked to anticlericalism, such as relics and indulgences, may come first to mind, but there is no concrete evidence that Hus was overly concerned about those matters in 1405.⁴⁴ Indulgences, in particular, played a key role in Hus's repudiation by Wenceslas IV in 1412, but they rarely appear in sermons before 1410.⁴⁵ Linking him to indulgences and traditions not based in Scripture serves as a convenient, but too often exaggerated, link to the Reformation. Likely, Hus simply linked his sermon to his text from Second Timothy. Also possible, of course, is that Hus may have been referring to prevalent superstitions

⁴² Causa fuit veritas verbi Dei et bonus affectus populli, Et quia hec due cause deficient, nam clerus predicat fabulas et populas excellencius quam verbum Dei audiat illas, ergo fervor audicionis verbi Dei et sic amor Dei deficit in populo et in clero impletur vox Pauli 2 Tim 4: "Erit," inquit, "tempus, cum sanam doctrinam non sustinebunt, sed ad sua desideria coacerbabunt sibi magistros, prurentes auribus et a veritate quidem auditum avertent, ad fabulas autum convertentur." Ibid., 338.

⁴³ Spinka highlights Hus's declaration the foolishness of those who "buy indulgences, masses, and [entrance into] monastic orders wishing to be pious by the piety of others." Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 48-49. Kybal, *život a učeni*, 179. This link is also often added in large part due to Hus being considered in conjunction with the focus on scripture of the later Utraquist/Hussite movement. Hus, however, never attested to *Sola Scriptura*, only its preeminence. Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 338. Also there is an early misconception that Hus actually followed the doctrine of remanence as promoted by Wycliff, and therefore included the Eucharist among believed myths. Loserth, *Wiclif and Hus*, 103-104.

⁴⁴ Numerous scholars emphasize Hus's critique of indulgences. De Vooght, *L'Hérésie de Jean Hus*, 223; Novotný and Kybal, *M. Jan Hus: život a učeni*, 273; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 11, 13.

⁴⁵ In the whole of the *Collecta* indulgences are mentioned a single time. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 107.

in the context of medieval Prague or referencing the Wilsnack miracles, but he declined to provide any specifics.⁴⁶

Hus continued the sermon with a comparison of the sea and the world of sin by expounding on the Apostles' experiences on the Sea of Galilee and on ever-moving and swirling whirlpools of sin. He constructed these observations from Luke 5, where the men in two boats attempt to gather in the fish as Jesus commanded. Hus employed Bede and Augustine to illustrate how the boats represent the church of Jews and Gentiles, and the fish being pulled into the boats are the elect being taken from the turbulent water of sin.⁴⁷ Hus explained that the image of Peter and the apostles bringing the fish from the water represents the responsibility of the church, perhaps as a reminder to the clergy of their responsibilities in the apostolic tradition.⁴⁸

Although Hus's references in the *Collecta* to clerical corruption are relatively common and easily linked to the scriptural context, there are also numerous sermons where obvious bridges to clerical sin exist but are left unexplored. For example, in the previous sermon, Hus briefly described the Apostles' abandonment of their wealth and possessions in order to follow Jesus.⁴⁹ This might seem an opportune time to needle priests concerning luxury, and yet the text suggests that Hus let it pass without any explicit correlation to excess or hypocrisy in the clergy. On the other hand he rarely missed opportunities to point out the failure of priests to follow the example of Christ in

⁴⁶ The Miracles at Wilsnack play an important role in Late Medieval Bohemia and the Empire at large. For a detailed study of the broader reaction to the hoax see: Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond*, 2007.

⁴⁷ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 338-339.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 340-341.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 339-340.

his later sermons.⁵⁰ The absence of such an admonishment in this particular sermon suggests that Hus's priorities were simply more diverse than clerical reform. An alternative interpretation, however, might suggest that Hus did not need to address clerical sin explicitly to have it still reach the audience. Perhaps Hus employed subtlety at this stage in his career by leaving criticisms unsaid, with the understanding that many of the audience, both lay and cleric, could have deduced the correlation themselves. Yet attempting to read between the lines of a sermon to add an absent theme does not provide real evidence, and the more secure interpretation is that Hus was simply unconcerned with chiding clerics at that time. The point is that reading unvoiced critique into Hus's sermons is possible, but generally if Hus wanted to make a point concerning clerical greed, he usually made it overtly. An examination of a sermon the following week, however, illustrates that Hus was not above subtle and unvoiced criticism, especially when it pushed the boundaries of orthodoxy.

On the sixth Sunday after Trinity Sunday, Hus preached from Romans 6:3, "Brothers, because we are baptized in Jesus Christ, we are baptized in his death." His purpose in the sermon was to expound on the close relationship between Jesus's death and the sacrament of baptism. To that end, he employed numerous quotations from Ambrose and Remigius of Auxerre, describing the powers of heaven present in baptism. Obviously, priests are included, and Hus quoted Remigius:

But this is noteworthy because surrounding baptism are three visible entities, obviously the priest, the physical body to be baptized, and the water. There are also three invisible entities: faith, spirit, and the absolution of sins through remission granted by the Holy Spirit. The priest

⁵⁰ In comparison, Hus's sermon on Luke 5 in 1411 never gets past the first line of scripture as his entire sermon is about the crowds rushing to hear Jesus speaking and the failure of the clergy to imitate Christ in preaching the word as will be discussed later on. Flajšhans, *Sermons in Bethlehem* vol. 4, 264.

administers the baptism while the angel of the Lord does the work and makes the promise [that the sins are forgiven].⁵¹

Hus also quoted Ambrose saying:

Renounce the devil and his works, the world and its luxury, so that your voice is held with delight not in the tomb of death, but in the book of life. Consider those Levites, consider the priests, and consider the highest priest. Do not reflect on the figure of the body, but instead consider the mystery of grace. The angel at hand has announced that grace, just as it is in scripture. The lips of the priests, however, guard knowledge and they create the law from their own words. The angel does not deceive anyone, nor does it deny anyone. The angel, who announces the kingdom of Christ and life eternal, is not announcing hope just to you; it is announcing and beckoning to all.⁵²

Taken together, these two major citations illustrate how Hus was shifting attention to the role of God in the sacrament instead of the priests. These statements do not necessarily pertain to an anticlerical position, but rather are a reaction to the problematic schism of the church. Hus's minimization of the priestly role in baptism, rather than an affront to the clergy, may also reflect his attempts to address his audience's concerns about the validity of their clergy. The texts in the sermon, although including priests, place a far greater emphasis on the spiritual powers present, powers derived from the authority of the Trinity. Hus presented God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as the primary actors in baptism with the priest simply officiating. The Ambrose quotation also minimizes the value of the priest while the angel is the one who shares

⁵¹ Sed et hoc est notandum, ut ait Remigius, quod circa baptismum tria sunt visibilia, scilicet sacerdos, corpus baptisandum tria sunt visibilia, scilicet sacerdos, corpus baptisandum et aqua, et tria invisibilia: fides, anima, que abluitur a peccatis, et Spiritus sanctus, quo angelus Domini operator et promissionem a baptisando suscipit. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 344.

⁵² Renunciasti dyabolo et operibus eius, mundo et luxurie eius, ac voluptatibus tenetur vox tua, non in tumulo mortuorum, sed in libro vivencium. Vidisti illic levitam, vidisti sacerdotum, vidisti summum sacerdotem. Noli te considerare corporum figuram, sed misteriorum gratiam, presentibus angelis locutus es, sicut scriptum est, quia labia sacerdotis custodiunt scienciam et legem exquirunt ex ore ipsius, quoniam angelus Domini est omnipotentis. Non est fallere, non est negare. Angelus est, qui regnum Crisiti et vitam eternam anuncciat, non spem tibi anunccians, sed innuere." Ibid., 345

the message. Hus shed some light on what he hoped his audience would gain from these texts: “What you have from these venerable words is that the visible work of the priest is to hold the place of the high bishop, namely the place of the Lord Jesus Christ...”⁵³ This is certainly not a scathing condemnation, and despite Ambrose’s suggestion that the priest guards the truth with his lips, Hus never expounds on it or even mentions it again in the remainder of the sermon. This seems less like anticlericalism and more like a reaction to the broader context of a divided Christendom as will be further explored in chapter six.

Like the July sermon, this sermon may or may not have had an unspoken clerical critique. David D’Avray, in his work on medieval rationality, suggests that preachers could tap into a “matrix of ideas,” meaning any single comment by a preacher may relate to numerous unspoken ideas which could be understood by the audience. These connections might originate from the shared experience of the preacher and audience or a common understanding of the topic. In other words, Hus need not be explicit in leading the listeners to conclusions, but he may have relied on their shared context to achieve his point.⁵⁴ Hus’s reputation suggests that perhaps those in the audience might have interpreted his reference to the priest as something akin to an inside joke among the listeners, but the simplest explanation suggests that Hus was more concerned with convincing listeners of the power of baptism, rather than with convincing them of the

⁵³ Ex verbis huius sancti haves, quid visibilis operator sacerdos, tenens locum summi episcopi, scilicet Domini Iesu Christi... Ibid., 345.

⁵⁴ D.L. d’Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities: A Weberian Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 31.

sinfulness or faults of the officiating clergy.⁵⁵ One aspect is absent in both of these examples is any mention whatsoever of Pharisees. Without any mention of the New Testament's most common clerical villain, Hus offered no direct allegory concerning clerical sin.

In the course of the *Collecta*, the link between Pharisees and the clergy returned to prominence once again in Hus's substantial sermon given during the week of the sixth Sunday after the feast of the Trinity. He used Matthew 5 as his text, in which the Pharisees served as an example of false piety and hypocrisy:

It had been understood that since the Pharisees wrote the law, they are also the ones who explained the letter of the law. The Pharisees, however, were declared to be above all others. Because they fulfilled the law in the eyes of the people, they were seen as separate from the people. For the Pharisees were divided from the community of ordinary people through custom and work. They hid their faces so that they might appear to men as having fasted, as truthfully told in Matthew 6. And they praised [God] dramatically, glad that they were not like other men. These included those Pharisees, who in the temple might be heard to speak to themselves as shown in Luke 18, "God, I give thanks to you, because I am not as this other man." Behold, the division from men. "I fast during the Sabbath, I give the tenth of whatever I possess." Behold, an exceptional life. The Lord said to his disciples concerning those scribes and Pharisees, "Unless your justice abounds more than that the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."⁵⁶

⁵⁵Spinka was convinced that Hus was fully capable of using subtle tactics to criticize his enemies. The most obvious example is Hus' use of a text from Wyclif for the majority of his university sermon in 1410. Spinka claims that his sermon reflects Hus's desire to illustrate his critics' ignorance of Wyclif by preaching it in front of them to the glee of his allies. Spinka, *Jan Hus and the Czech Reform*, 40. Flajšhans claimed the existence of a sermon concerning baptism exactly five years later for the sixth Sunday after Trinity Sunday with the same biblical verse. Unfortunately, the title and verse is all that remains of the sermon making a comparison impossible.

⁵⁶Ubi sciendum, quod scribe errant, qui legis literam exponebant, pharisei autem dicebantur, qui ultra alios legem ad oculum populi inpleant et inde dicti sunt pharisei quai divisi. Phares enim idem est quod divisio. Divis enim errant a comuni plebicula per habitum et opera. Exterminabant enim facies suas, ut apparerent hominibus ieiunantes, ut dicit Veritas Matth. 6, et gaudebant pompaticae, quod non qui temple orabat hec apud se Luc. 18: "Deus, gracias tibi ago, quia non sum sicut ceteri hominum." Ecce, vite singularitas. De illis ergo scribis et phariseis pretendens Dominus dixitdiscipulis suis: Nisi habundaverit iusticia vestra plus quam scibarum et phariseorum, non intrabitis in regnum celorum. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 351-52.

As with earlier passages, one might easily connect this to the clergy of Hus's time. As shown in the earlier examples, references to the Pharisees in the text often led Hus to apply the analogy to his contemporaries. He did not provide a simple and immediate connection, as he did in the earlier Advent sermon, but his pattern suggests that the audience could assume that a reference to the Pharisees allowed for a direct link to Hus's contemporaries. The remainder of the sermon focused on themes of justice and the dangers of evil thoughts. Hus borrowed substantially from Augustine and Jerome, among others, to illustrate his major points. Finally, in the conclusion of the sermon, Hus makes the expected link between the clergy and the scribes and Pharisees:

Therefore, most blessed, and especially we of the priesthood, who not only offer but also accept the sacred offering at the altar, which is truly the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, we should flee the hatred of our brothers, we should clear our hearts of anger. If we do not we may be with Judas Iscariot in perpetual damnation. However, we give and accept the [Eucharistic] offering of eternal life and we are overflowing with justice greater than the scribes, since we have been blessed by our Savior in the secular affairs of the world.⁵⁷

In the context of the sermon, Hus is explicitly using the Pharisees, or the interchangeable label scribes, to warn clerics how not to behave. At this time in Hus's preaching, he did not necessarily equate the priesthood with New Testament Pharisees, but he offered the allegory to serve as a warning to the priests in the audience. As in his previous sermons, Hus employed the Pharisees of Scripture as a warning of what priests had the potential to become. The Pharisees are an example that Hus specifically directed at his fellow priests and *literati*. He frequently used minimal but significant

⁵⁷ Quare, karissimi, et presertim nos, presbiteri, qui non solum offerre, sed magis accipere volumus munus sacratissimum de altari, scilicet corpus Iesu Christi Domini, quam fratrum odia, mundemur corda ab ira, ut non cum Iuda Scarioth in damnationem perpetuam, sed pro vita eternali munus illud offeramus et accipiamus habundantes in iusticia supra scribas et phariseos prestante Salvatore nostro in secula seculorum benedicto. Ibid., 363.

statements that could appear pages apart in a sermon. These lines perhaps served to remind those priests and students in his audience, who may be ordained or better educated than the laity, to not think they are free from the need for repentance.

The reference to Judas Iscariot, despite being mentioned only in the conclusion of the sermon, may also be noteworthy. Hus frequently used the Apostles as examples of how one was to serve Christ, and consequently also as examples of good clerical conduct. Judas is an obvious stain on the apostolic tradition and the authority of the priesthood. A reminder of Judas's fate may have served as a powerful metaphor for the corruption of the clergy and Christ's betrayal by one who was entrusted with the Gospel. Hus may have intended his use of Judas as a warning to the clergy to not have too much pride or security in their sanctity as priests. It may have also been a subtle insinuation that those priests who have failed to follow Christ are as guilty as Judas.

The sermon's conclusion obviously provided a carefully orchestrated link to the clergy, but it should not overshadow the fact that Hus still wrote the majority of the sermon to be relevant for a broader audience. Hus's warning to the clergy was continuous, but only insofar as the message of repentance and resistance to sin was relevant to the entire audience. Once again, despite strong language and a severe warning against the snares of sin and Satan, Hus did not directly condemn anyone, but instead offered the opportunity for repentance and eternal life.

A final example from Hus's 1405 sermons came roughly five weeks later with Luke 18 as the primary liturgical inspiration. The reading is the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. According to most interpreters the former represents pride and the latter humility. Hus pointed out the natural difference between the two and provided a

relatively basic exegesis expounding on Christ's words in the text and borrowing heavily from Augustine. What makes this sermon especially significant is Hus's reference to "*noster phariseus*," which provides a clear link between the text and contemporary Bohemia. Hus stated:

Our Pharisees clearly excel in these things: they approve the robbery of widows by means of depriving them, they plunder the sacrament through performances and lies, they steal the bread and they consume it, they illicitly scatter the destitute and the patrimony of Christ. They do not consider that they themselves are the source of injustice, and if they are lightly admonished, they assault the heavens with clamoring protests. And as for adultery, they neigh at others' wives... That Pharisee in Scripture says, "I give a tenth of all which I possess." Our Pharisees say, "I receive a tenth of all, which I do not possess." The Pharisee of Scripture gives and fasts much. But our Pharisee should see that what he gives is insignificant or nothing; he receives much but rarely or never fasts.⁵⁸

In this sermon, Hus clearly engaged with issues of adultery, greed, and charging for sacraments and compared at least some clerics to the Pharisees, although the comparison need not be limited to priests alone. Yet, Hus's explicit link between contemporary and New Testament Pharisees is more directly stated in this sermon than in any other from this liturgical year. This is not, however, a blanket condemnation nor necessarily a general description.

At the end of the sermon, Hus differentiated between two types of clergy. His conclusion created an image of penitence and conversion in action. He stated:

Truly, if all modern Pharisees were ascending like the second, perhaps Christ might judge against them. But now Pharisees- priests, brothers, and monks -hear that the prayer of the tax collector is more acceptable to

⁵⁸ In quo videtur nostros phariseos excellere, qui rapinam viduarum per devolucionem approbant, propter sacramenta spoliant, per ludicra et mendacia panem diripiunt egencium et prarimonium Cristi dispergunt illicite et consumunt, injusticiam, quam ipsi faciunt, non considerant, et si leviter tacti fuerint, clamoribus celos pulsant. Et de adulterio, quo ad proximorum uxores hiniunt, quid lerimias dixerit, volo silencio pertransire. Ille dixit: Decimas do omnium, que possideo. Dicat noster phariseus: Decimas recipio omnium, que non possideo. Ille multum dedit, multum ieiunavit. Videat Phariseus, qui modicum vel nichil dat, multum recipit et raro aut nunquam ieiunat. Ibid., 431-2.

the Lord than that of the Pharisee. Therefore, the clergy might agree with the tax collector, they might come as children, so they might be received by the Lord, who says, "Permit the children to come to me." Therefore, they come as children. They come as the sick to a doctor. Those of perdition come to redemption. They come! No one may hinder them, for Christ's mercy is demonstrated when that wise tax collector descended from the temple, forgiven because of his troubled confession of sin; the Pharisee, meanwhile, is falsely secure in the act of enumerating his merits.⁵⁹

This final image equates "modern Pharisee" with the sinful clergy of Hus's time. Those clerics who repent humbly in recognition of their sin may be likened to the forgiven tax collector. Hus incorporated priests and monks in what he described as an ongoing movement toward repentance; nevertheless, the generic labels force one to consider whether he has a specific example of either. What is clear in Hus's sermon is he definitely recognized a link between Pharisee and priest, which he provided for his audience as a direct link between the Scriptures and the large clerical community of contemporary Prague.⁶⁰

Hus and the Clerical Audience

When faced with an audience of his fellow clergy, Hus changed his approach significantly in tone. This change of genre is more evident with two university sermons given three years apart, in 1407 and 1410. These sermons, both with Matthew 5 as the

⁵⁹Vere si omnes pharisei moderni duos ascendentes, priusquam Cristus docuerat, vidissent, Cristo contrarie forsitan iudicasset. Sed iam discant pharisei, sacerdotes, fratres et monachi, quia plus publicani quam pharisei oratio Domino est accepta. Ergo accedant publicani, veniant parvuli, audiatur Dominus, qui dicit: "Sinite parvulos venire ad me." Veniant ergo parvuli, veniant langwidi ad medicum, veniant perditii ad redemptorem, veniant! Nemo prohibeat, nam magis iustificatus descendit de temple publicanus ille peccatorum confessione sollicitus quam phariseus meritorum enumeratione secures, quamvis etiam gracias Deo egerit diens... Ibid., 433-434.

⁶⁰D.L. Avray goes so far as to refer to "a passion for similitude" coming out of thirteenth-century mendicant sermons. This meant that many preachers were trying to create as many analogies out of scripture as possible as they prepared sermons, a trend easily visible in Hus's time and style. D.L. Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars: Sermons Diffused from Paris Before 1300*, 9. In a similar way, Robert Scribner describes the common employment of a binary structure in popular preaching which necessitates the description of an opposite to any positive example. What he refers to as the "spiritual wolves" Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk*, 56.

scriptural base, discuss the role of the clerics within the community, highlighting the expectations of the clergy and the severe penalty for those who meet judgment for having failed in their duties. The Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) served as a cornerstone of Hus's preaching career and of medieval preaching, in general.⁶¹ Hus returned to the Sermon on the Mount repeatedly, especially when discussing the priesthood. Christ's own recorded sermon allowed Hus to illustrate both proper preaching and proper behavior for clerics. He also voiced Christ's exhortation of "you are the light of the world" on multiple occasions, but only two sermons exist with *Vos Estis Sal Terre* as the scriptural inspiration, and both were given at the university and addressed to students and his fellow clergy.⁶²

When faced with an audience comprised exclusively of clergymen, Hus changed his approach to praise explicitly the good priest and blame the bad priest in simple terms with little room for innuendo. In his university sermon *Vos Estis Sal Terre*, Hus described the expectations of the laity and the clergy. After a brief explanation of the properties of salt, courtesy of Isidore of Seville (d. 636), Avicenna (d. 1037), Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), and Saint Jerome (d. 420), Hus proceeded to illustrate Christ's love for those biblical figures who are not Christ's Apostles. Hus highlighted the Roman Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant in Matthew 8 and the woman at the well from Matthew 15; he praises Zacchaeus from Luke 19 for repenting of his sins as a tax

⁶¹ Within the 90 sermons of the *Collecta*, Schmidtová marked the use of 97 proofs from Matthew chapters five through seven. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 607. For a broader study of the use of the Sermon on the Mount, including significant influences on Hus see: Jaroslav Pelikan, *Divine Rhetoric: The Sermon on the Mount as Message and as Model in Augustine, Chrysostom, and Luther* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001).

⁶² Jan Hus, *Johannes Hus Magister Universitatis Carolinae: Positiones, Recommendationes, Sermones*. Ed. Anežka Schmidtová, (Prague: Státní Pedagogické Nakladatelství, 1958), 114,149.

collector, Mary Magdalene for her repentance and devotion, and finally, the thief crucified next to Christ.⁶³ These examples represented Christ's magnanimity for what Hus described as the laity of the early Church. These people are outsiders and sinners but show great faith and serve as examples for the clergy in his audience.

For Hus, the examples of Christ praising the laity serve as a stark contrast to the numerous criticisms Christ lays at the feet of his own chosen apostles. Hus begins his own litany of accusations: "Behold, how he [Christ] has praised the actions of worldly men, but he has never blamed them so greatly as spiritual men."⁶⁴ This indictment of the clergy and of the Pharisees, in particular, initiated a systematic discourse concerning both praise and conviction that dominates the majority of his sermon. The message is fairly uniform and simplistic as Hus explained the power and prestige of the priesthood while cautioning the clerics in attendance against the dangerous heresy resulting from misunderstanding that power. He cautioned against the corruption of the priests who were responsible for administering the sacraments.⁶⁵ Despite the obvious concern for sinful priests, this sermon struck a delicate balance of critique and praise as Hus expounded on the joy and privilege of the priesthood through quotations from Augustine, "Oh happy priests, if only you lived life joyously! Oh heavenly ministry, that through you the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit work through your indescribable ministry, at one and the same moment that same God, who presides in heaven, he is the sacrifice in your hands!" Hus's quotation of Augustine continued: "Therefore priests

⁶³ Schmidtová, *Iohannes Hus Magister*, 114

⁶⁴ "Ecce, quomodo laudavit seculares homines ab effectu, sed nunquam eos tam expresse ad tantum vituperavit sicut spirituales." *Ibid.*, 115

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 116

should beware diligently, their eyes which see the one seeing all, they should not be inclined to living with vanity, nor should the tongue of those men, which through their words brings down the Son of God from heaven, speak falsehoods or other things against God or a harmful word, nor should the hand, which is dyed in the blood of Christ, be polluted by the filth of sin.”⁶⁶ Hus also borrowed from Chrysostom: “We clothe ourselves in Christ through them [the priests]; they are joined through the Son of God himself and are made a member of his blessed head. Therefore we must reverence them more than king and judges and more honorable are they than parents, because they are the authors of divine regeneration and they reconcile us to God, who is frequently angry, through their intercession and return us to peace.”⁶⁷ Hus concluded outright that his goal with this sermon “was for the praise of the good priest and the blame of the bad.”⁶⁸

This sermon given during his ascent to public prominence illustrated Hus as a growing public figure carefully maintaining vague neutrality that condemns no one directly and is safely dominated by proof texts with little of his own analysis. The Hus who wrote this text had not yet faced the charge of heresy over his defense of Wyclif nor faced interrogation by the inquisition. At this time Hus had few enemies and was

⁶⁶ O felices sacerdotes, si feliciter vixeritis! O celeste ministerium, quod per vos Pater et Filius et Spiritus sanctus operator super tam ineffabili ministerio vestro, quod uno eodemque moment oidem Deus, qui preidet in cello, in minibus vestris est in sacrificio! Cavere ergo debent sacerdotes digenter, ne oculi eorum, qui vident Omnia videntem, inclinentur ad videndum vanitatem, ne lingua euorum, wue loquendo deponit e cello Dei Filium, loquatur mendacium vela liquid cotra Deum vel proximum aut inutile verbum, ne manus, que intinguntur sanguine Cristi, polluantur sorde peccati.” Ibid., 116.

⁶⁷ “Per ipsos Cristum induimur, per ipsos Dei Filio coniungumur et membra illius beati capitis efficimur. Quomodo ergo isti nobis non solum reverend magis sunt quam reges aut quam iduces, sed et magis erunt honorabiliores quam parentes, quia nobis sunt divine regeneracionies auctores et ipsum Deum frequenter iratu sua nobis itercessione conciliant et placatum reddunt.” Ibid., 117.

⁶⁸ “De laude boni sacerdotis et de vituperio mali patet in sermone sinodali, qui incipit Sate succincti. Ibid., 118.

part of a large university community of ordained priests with an exciting future ahead.⁶⁹ At the time of this sermon, he had been a priest for seven years and was only beginning his rise to prominence. Perhaps because of his relative youth and inexperience, Hus kept this sermon carefully anchored in proof texts and avoided specific details of clerical transgressions that might have ruffled feathers. Within three years, however, Hus matured into a confident and more belligerent preacher with the tone of his sermons changing dramatically.

In summary, Jan Hus clearly used scriptural references about the Pharisees to voice criticism concerning clerical failings during 1404/1405. When faced with an audience of all clerics, as in his university sermon of 1407, Hus spoke directly to the point and chided the clerics directly while urging them to repent of their lust, avarice, and apathy.

Despite Hus's dramatic statements, oversimplifying him as disenchanting with the clergy in general would be wrong. Hus's criticism was part of a larger issue of repentance and aversion to sin. The clergy attending Bethlehem Chapel were part of Hus's flock, and although his warnings in his early sermons were stern, few of them reflected the venomous language Hus would later use. He, like many preachers throughout Bohemia and Europe, attacked clerical immorality at various times, but primarily when the liturgical readings made such critique a logical part of the sermon's exegesis. This link between scripture and clerical critique is quite common among many of Hus's contemporaries, as well.⁷⁰ He chooses instead to focus on his primary concern

⁶⁹ Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 8.

⁷⁰ Jean Gerson is the most famous contemporary vocal critic of clerical abuse as evidenced by his sermon "On the Life of Clerics" in which he addressed in a single sermon numerous themes that are

of repentance. The fact that Hus can describe clerics as accepting the role of the tax collector and coming down from the temple forgiven may reflect a belief that the clergy is returning to Christ. Nevertheless evidence is clear that the events and betrayals following Hus's entrance into a leadership role in the Bohemian university nation, led him to be more combative and assertive when preaching because of his growing disgust.

Hus's sermons originating after 1410 reflect a more complex environment surrounding him. This trend is reflected in many of his topics, such as his self-promotion from the pulpit as well as his treatment of the clergy. Hus was in a different position within Prague University and the Empire. In the preceding three years, Hus became the symbol of a Bohemian reform movement, and his opponents accused him of holding and teaching the heresies of John Wyclif. He served briefly as the rector of Prague University in late 1409 and early 1410, but pressure from Archbishop Zbyněk, the inquisition, and the accusations of heresy, of which he was acquitted in June, forced him from the position.⁷¹ In 1410, Hus was in a stronger place of leadership; cleared by the inquisition, highly regarded by students and professors alike, and enjoying royal protection. He had also unfortunately developed considerable enemies among the

echoed in Hus's preaching, such as simony and greed. Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 182-183. For an interesting summation of contemporary French examples see: Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, 121-22.

⁷¹ Historians know little of Hus's brief time, perhaps a semester, as rector of the university as the pages of the rector's book from these years allegedly went missing after the Battle of White Mountain in 1620. It was also believed by Palacký and other Czech historians that Hus may have been rector also as early as 1402, but this probably resulted in confusion from the documents when Hus became rector of Bethlehem Chapel. Spinka, *John Hus. A Biography*, 102 footnote 27.

clerics within Bohemia and at the papal curia.⁷² This changing religious milieu elicited from Hus a complex response to his fellow clerics that became more personal, combative, and urgent as his career and popularity waxed.

To illustrate Hus's changing tone in the pulpit, one may look at his university sermon entitled "*Vos Estis Sal Terre*," preached in August of 1410 and only three eventful years after his 1407 sermon and mere months after his acquittal by the inquisition. Hus gave this sermon in not only a different tone, but also with a much stronger presence of his own voice, along with a considerable amount of material borrowed directly from John Wyclif.⁷³

Hus began this sermon in the same manner as his earlier version, with a detailed explanation of the qualities of salt. He initially maintained a similarly neutral tone to the early sermon as he began the sermon with an explanation of the physical properties of salt by quoting Isidore of Seville and Avicenna. This sermon, however, became significantly more polemical as Hus described the clergy's responsibility to be worthy of their office. Hus declared the failure of the clergy as a root cause of sin:

Therefore, the root cause of the Devil's reign over the peoples is the sin of the prelates of the church. For in such a circumstance the mediator between God and the people -the one who makes satisfaction for the sin of the people and the one who educates ignorance- is deficient.⁷⁴

⁷² A number of recent studies have emerged focusing on Hus's enemies including: Zdeňka Hledíková, "Hussens Gegner und Feinde," in *Jan Hus: Zwischen Zeiten Völkern, Konfessionen* (Munich: Oldenburg, 1997); Pavel Soukup, "Mařík Rvačka's Defense of Crusading Indulgences from 1412," 77-97.

⁷³ Matthew Spinka points out that multiple paragraphs of this sermon are taken directly from the writings of Wyclif, and he supposes that Hus chose these passages to taunt his opponents with the orthodoxy of Wyclif's words without the opponents to the reform party actually knowing. Spinka argues that even though large parts are borrowed, Hus should receive full credit for the presenting the ideas Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 37.

⁷⁴ *Radicalis itaque causa regnacionis dyaboli super gentes est peccatum prelatorum ecclesie. Deficit enim tunc inter Deum et populum mediator, pro peccato populi satisfactor et ignorancium informator*, Schmidtová, *Iohannes Hus Magister*, 151.

He offered no gray area or excuses as he accused the priesthood of pouring forth lies and of knowing the truth while simultaneously attacking those who preached the truth.⁷⁵ Hus promised retribution against sinful and destructive priests, equal to that of Sodom, and he invoked God's wrath against them, stating that, "the case of the Sodomites is almost of a more forgivable sort."⁷⁶ Perhaps most representative of both Hus's current security and his recognition of growing opposition is that he concluded by appealing to the authority of King Wenceslas and Emperor Sigismund to enforce reform and stifle the sinful power of errant priests.⁷⁷ Wenceslas was consistently the protector of the Czech reform movement, in the tradition of Charles IV, as long as local reformers could rebuff charges of heresy and did not conflict with his programs.⁷⁸ Hus appealed for help to powers above the contentious local Archbishop Zbyněk and Pope John XXIII who instigated the destruction of Wyclif's works in Prague and oversaw the charges of heresy against Hus. Hus conducted a war of words with his ecclesiastical superiors, and his sermon to the university reflected his frustration with the environment in Prague and his perception of the Devil's work accomplished through the clergy and threatening the spiritual life of the church.

A Growing Vitriol: 1410-1412

Along with Hus's university sermon, his growing belligerence is clearly marked in his popular sermons of the period. Contentious events and a menacing atmosphere surrounded Hus's preaching in 1410/1411 at the university and Bethlehem Chapel. His

⁷⁵ Ibid., 154.

⁷⁶ Racio autem est pene premissibilioris Sodomitarum, quia illi inpediebant generacionem filiorum naturalium, quorum aliqui nascerentur forsitan dyaboli filii. Ibid., 154

⁷⁷ Ibid., 156

⁷⁸ Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform*, 40

sermons reflect a growing antagonism that plays a prominent role for him while he preached roughly twice a day and almost without interruption from November 1410 until October 1411. Within this context listeners might expect the sermons from the pulpit in Bethlehem Chapel to reflect Hus's battle with ecclesiastical sin and corrupt practices. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, numerous historians have illustrated repeatedly Hus's drive to change the practices of the clergy.⁷⁹ Yet his criticism of clerical sin continues to be overstated by many scholars. Possibly, the exaggerations occur because the texts present his critiques in such colorful language that they stand out in the context of more bland pastoral themes. Hus's clerical critique was prominent in the sermons, but it remained only part of his broader message.

Without question, Hus's sermons were far more condemnatory and provocative in their denunciations of sins among the clergy beginning in 1410. His employment of Pharisee tropes also continued in conjunction with his growing concern with the clergy. By tracing Hus's continued reference to the Pharisees, it becomes clear he reinforced the trope as common theme, but with far more vitriol, specificity, and frequency. Hus's words from 1410-1411 were often polemical to the extreme and predominantly responsible for Hus's association with an anticlerical label and a historiography dominated by the reform narrative.

One excellent example is Hus's sermon on March 18, 1411. His chief text is Matthew 15, 1: "In that time Pharisees came from Jerusalem saying, 'Why do your

⁷⁹ Once again Thomas Fudge serves as the most recent example of this common conclusion. In summarizing the radicalization of Hus's preaching, Fudge provides eight one sentence examples not only criticizing the sinful clergy but illustrating some of Hus's most powerful language. These statements fall between December 1410 and October 1411, and although Fudge only points to these as Hus's "most severe and cutting invectives" the fact that He summarizes 268 sermons located in Flajšhans edition with eight one sentence examples begs the question of what the specific context of those statements is and on what other topics Hus might have been preaching. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 63.

disciples transgress the law of the elders, for they do not wash their hands?” Hus’s sermon closely follows the theme of the Gospel passage in illuminating the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and in pointing out that although they are washed on the outside, they are unclean in spirit. The sermon is roughly divided into three parts: the first part discusses the hypocrisy of presenting an appearance of holiness to disguise a sinful existence; the second part focuses on the laws of man versus the laws of God; and the final paragraphs of the sermon address the failure of the Pharisees to teach and lead because they are blinded to true righteousness. Parts one and two, although with significant specific references to the Pharisees, are applicable to all Christians. Hus quotes Augustine: “Does the good woman wish to have good sons, daughters, clothes, shoes?” He continues, “I ask is your shoe before your soul!”⁸⁰ This citation, along with several others, targets a general audience by condemning false piety in general. When Hus provided his own words he perhaps inferred a more specific target for his criticism. “You hypocrites, you who when under the specie (body of Christ) simulate holiness and disguise iniquity, then you transgress the laws of God, as your purses are enriched and filled up.”⁸¹ This statement is in reference to Priest’s charging for sacraments, a fairly common practice denounced as simony by John Wyclif in his text *De Simonia* and preachers in Prague since the sermons of Waldhauser, Milíč, and obviously Hus.⁸² This

⁸⁰Bonam mulierem vis haber, bonos filios?, filiam, tunicam, et caligas?” Et subdit: “Rogo, prepone animam tuam calige tue!” Flajšhans, *Sermones in Bethlehem* vol 4, 120.

⁸¹Ypocrite, sc. Qui sub specie simulate sanctitatis paliastis iniquitatem: tunc mandatum Dei transgredientes errant, ut suam bursam ditent et impleant. Flajšhans, *Sermones in Bethlehem* vol. 4, 120

⁸²Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 8, 11. Hus most famously addresses the selling of Masses as simony in his 1413 text “On Simony,” translated from the Czech by Matthew Spinka. In it he states that, “The heirs of Judas are those who sell God’s spiritual gift, saying either in so many words or by some sign: What will you give me for consecrating your church, or for celebrating a Mass, or for granting you absolution, or for baptism or confirmation, or for the body of God...?” In Spinka, *Advocates of Reform*, 208.

simple statement is somewhat buried within citations (from scripture, Gregory, and Ambrose against the failings of the Pharisees), yet it clearly illustrates that Hus was linking his contemporaries to the biblical Pharisees.

Many of the later critiques in the *Sermones* allow for colorful translations and reflect the views of a severe critic of the clergy. Thomas Fudge selected eight genuinely strong insults from the *Sermones* to illustrate the tone of the period. These insults included comparing sinful priests to swine, bulls in heat, and parasites, as well as various allusions to greed. Perhaps one of the most violent images Fudge included was the statement that all bad priests “deserve hanging in hell.”⁸³ A larger segment of the sermon provides some of the context for the quotation.

Thus there are many spiritual pastors who say they are delighted to die for their sheep because the good do not withdraw from offering their lives. Surely, those that are not faithful to his Lord Jesus Christ, should therefore be suspended in the inferno. Christ is the shepherd over all the faithful sheep, who feed principally on that green pasture of the word and his body and blood.⁸⁴

This statement appeared in the sermon of April 26, 1411. Like so many others, the statement was a part of a discussion prompted by the assigned reading of the day. The reading from John 9 was concerned with the blind man who was healed by Jesus but rejected by the Pharisees. Hus focused the early portion of the sermon on the faults of the Pharisees. When he made this statement, it was not part of some tirade against the clergy, but rather part of his broader pastoral message to the audience.

⁸³ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 63-64.

⁸⁴ Numquid illi non sunt in inferno suspendent. Debent igitur fidelis esse Domino suo Jesu Christo, qui est pastor pro omnium ovium fidelium, quos principaliter ille pascit pastu verbi et corporis et sanguinis sui. Flajšhans, *Sermones in Bethlehem* vol. 4, 78.

Hus harshly denounced sinful clerics also within the pastoral context of his preaching. With a harsher tone for his contemporaries, one also witnesses severe labels attached to New Testament Pharisees:

Therefore just as Christ -having been rejected- proved to be the true shepherd to those sheep blind from birth ..., the Pharisees having been thieves and robbers –proved themselves not to be shepherds. After Jesus healed the blind man a certain man from the Pharisees said that “[That healed man] has demons and he is mad! Do you hear what he says?” Others more truthfully and unaffected said, “Demons do not speak this way.” Thus and now it is, that you imitators of the Pharisees preach their evil as to try to label as demons those who have discerned the simple truth and speak truthfully. The words and the voice are from the Holy Spirit and not from demons.⁸⁵

Similar to the 1404-1405 sermons in the *Collecta*, he continued to echo his criticism of the clergy based on the day’s liturgical reading. Hus’s critiques, although more degrading and certainly intended to catch the attention of the clergy still primarily stemmed from the Pharisaical trope and linked the present to the New Testament. This link has been essentially missed by scholars and left out of analyses of the sermons.⁸⁶ Without considering the scriptural prompt, scholars have placed too much emphasis on Hus’s stinging insults and have missed how Hus’s clerical critique built off of his ever-present pastoral duties at the Bethlehem Chapel. Yes, Hus showed more anger and frustration after 1410, but too often the focus on this emotion has overshadowed the fact that Hus was continuing in his primary mission of caring for his flock. This distinction is

⁸⁵ Ut ergo Christus ostendat se verum esse pastorem illius ovis eiecte, ceci nati, et phariseos esse fures et latrones et non pastores, locutus est presens ewangelium-et post illud subdi, quod cum hec dixisset, dixerunt quidam ex phariseis, “Demonium habet et insanit! Quid eum auditis?” Alii vero, sc. simplices, dixerunt, “ Hec verba non sunt demonium haventis.” –Sic ut nunc fit, quod imitators phariseourum predicatorum eorum maliciam urgentes de omnium habere dicunt, simplices vero agnita veritate dicunt, quod verba, que locuntur, sunt a Spiritu S. et non a demonio. Ibid., 77.

⁸⁶ De Vooght, *L’Hérésie de Jean Hus*, 149, 150, 152, 153, 154, 171. Spinka, *John Hus’s Concept of the Church*, 113-114; Kybal, *M. Jan Hus: život a učení*, vol. 2.2, 278, 312-97.

even clearer when one compares the university sermons and witnesses how Hus directly addressed his peers. His tone changed dramatically in a mere three years. Scholars of Hus have latched onto that personal, combative, and urgent response and far too often have used it to define Hus and define his entire career.

A Frustrated Priest

Reforming the morality of the clergy was a continuous theme throughout Hus's preaching career. If one examines that critique within the context of the greater corpus of sermons, any generalization about Hus's preaching in terms of clerical reform or anticlericalism fails to include the far ranging topics of interest for the diverse audience at the Bethlehem Chapel. Hus was not an anticlerical zealot calling for an end to the clergy, nor did he mock and criticize without purpose. If examined in isolation from his academic writings, polemical writing, and his sermons in exile, Hus's Bethlehem sermons reveal the public persona of a shepherd deeply concerned for the welfare of all his flock. This flock included clerics, especially the students and young scholars of the university, along with the rest of Hus's lay audience. His early sermons not only brought attention to clerical sin, but also occasionally served to express hope and optimism as seen in Hus's powerful image of the clerics marching to Christ as the sick going to a doctor. Comments on priests repenting of their sins become noticeably absent in 1410-1411.⁸⁷

Hus did not arbitrarily decide to deride and insult clerics. As was expected of most medieval preachers, Hus constructed his sermons and homilies to educate his audience on the day's assigned readings. He effectively tapped into widespread tropes

⁸⁷ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 434

and his audience's frustration with the schism and clerical greed to reach his audience. This included his frequent correlation of the Pharisees and scribes with contemporary priests. This rhetorical exercise meant that many of Hus's anticlerical statements should be interpreted as being one part of his varied approach to preaching, and not a stand-alone agenda. His parallel construction between priests and Pharisees commonly utilized tropes that were familiar to a Bohemian audience, and also could be found in sermons throughout Europe. Hus's early criticism of the clergy was essentially indistinct from preaching throughout Europe, and should not be examined disproportionately from his larger message.

Even within the broader purpose of Hus's sermons, by 1410 the belligerent language used by Hus is impossible to ignore. Despite his more combative tone, he does not abandon his pastoral responsibilities to his audience. Much like the evolution of his self-promotion and authority discussed in the second chapter, his rhetoric becomes more extreme, but continues to rely on the same framework and concepts as earlier in his career. When examined in their proper context, Hus's clerical critique is nearly always part of a larger message and commonly linked to the scriptural prompt. His condemnation of "priests who have no honor in their ministry, because they live lives of scandal" is reflective of the increased pressures brought to bear against Hus because of his struggles with the Archbishop and the multiple impositions of anathema.

Hus's critique of his fellow clergy is certainly obvious in his sermons and, if accurately recorded, even the label ascribed by Pope John Paul II to Hus of "an important reformer for the life of all the churches" certainly encapsulates a significant

part of Hus's clerical critique found in the corpus of sermons.⁸⁸ Over the course of his career, such criticism should be considered in its proper context and acknowledged as neither pervasive nor arbitrary. Throughout his career, Hus employed his criticisms as part of an effort to convert souls. His rhetoric of criticism or clerical reform is continuous throughout his corpus of sermons, but his sermons are not defined by that critique. Unfortunately, much of Hus's legacy has been dominated by narratives that pigeonhole Hus as an anticlerical reformer. Hus pointed out the errors of those who shamed the bride of Christ, but he preached on so much more. Looking past the components of the supposed reform agenda allows Hus's preaching to provide remarkable insight regarding how sermons, in general, functioned. Without the reform or anticlerical label, Hus can serve as one of the most prolific preachers of the Middle Ages and provide insight to the preaching ritual that dominated medieval religion and society.

⁸⁸ This quotation of John Paul II is attributed by David Holeton to a sermon given in Czech and Italian on March 12, 2000. Holeton, who was in attendance, gives the quotation in his Introduction to *BRRP 3* (2000), 11. Thomas Fudge calls the quotation into question as that sentiment is not expressed in the written transcript of the sermon, and he has found no corroboration for the quotation. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 320.

CHAPTER 4 THREATS TO THE FLOCK: HUS AND THE DEVIL

For Christ hunts the soul through his preaching, which Jeremiah 16 describes as a chase for blessing. But the Devil hunts for the purpose of damnation.¹

Awareness and discussion of the forces of evil were a major part of medieval culture in art, literature, and, of course, sermons from the pulpit.² In much the same way that Hus's sermons reflected the political and religious disputes surrounding his authority, his sermons also maintain a consistent focus on the spiritual threats to his audience's salvation. These spiritual threats either worked directly to tempt and destroy souls or served to inhibit the gospel indirectly. Joan Young Gregg points to an "unholy trinity" that permeated medieval preaching.³ Her trinity consists of devils, women, and Jews, but in the context of early fifteenth-century Bohemia, the list of the gospel's adversaries covered an even broader range of threats. Gregg's "trinity" is certainly present in Hus's preaching, but several other significant foes can be identified during the duration of Hus's career. Prague, redesigned by Charles IV to be a microcosm of the Empire, reflected the Empire's political, social, and religious division. Tensions between Christians and Jews, Germans and Slavs, secular and mendicant priests, and the wealthy and poor all contributed to distrust between groups within the city walls. Add broader issues such as the schism of the church, Ottoman gains to the South, and

¹ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 441

² The most complete study of the Devil and other evil forces is that of Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984). A recent useful study of evil in medieval art is Nathalie Nabert, *Le Mal et le Diable: Leurs Figures à la Fin du Moyen Age* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996).

³ Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 4.

recent outbreaks of plague and widespread concern for the end times and the reign of the Antichrist seems justified. The spiritual adversaries, about whom Hus chose to warn his flock, reflect the reciprocal nature of Hus's sermons. The environment of Prague clearly influenced Hus's portrayal of the world outside the Bethlehem Chapel's doors, while he prepared his sermons to influence that environment in turn.

Obviously, the chief threat to the faithful was the Devil, as understood from Scripture and popular culture. Although frequent, Hus's references to the Devil in the context of his preaching remain unexamined. Historians have typically ignored the wide range of diabolical forces which appear in Hus's sermons. They frequently limit their analysis to the development of the previously discussed anticlerical narrative, rather than addressing Hus's use of diabolical imagery for its own sake.⁴ Hus's conflict with the contemporary church is of great importance during this period, but unfortunately when the discussion of the Devil and the variety of spiritual threats appears in studies of Hus, they are referenced only as a figurative part of his critique of the church, rather than as a literal message about the power of Satan. An evil priesthood was just one foe in a considerable list of enemies that Hus implied were waiting outside the doors of Bethlehem Chapel. Hus summarized this world of spiritual conflict in dramatic fashion on March 1, 1411, stating that, "who therefore wishes to be a faithful soldier of Christ, it is necessary that he should fight in order to conquer his foe, so that his head might be crowned by Christ, who is the head of all the elect- while the Devil is the head of all the

⁴ For example, Matthew Spinka only mentions the Devil only twice and both times in reference to Hus's criticism of the Church. Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 148, 246. Similarly, Thomas Fudge touches briefly on Hus's thoughts on the Devil multiple times in his biography, but never really attempts to combine Hus's thoughts into coherent theme or discuss how Hus employed diabolical imagery. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 36-40, 93.

damned.”⁵ Why did Hus employ such a wide range of spiritual threats and diabolic references in conjunction with his preaching? What effect did he hope it would have? The imagery of the Devil, Antichrist, and assorted foes played a pivotal role in giving purpose both to his preaching and his audience. Hus’s surviving sermons do not convey the words of a great storyteller or that of a man describing a mystical encounter with God.⁶ Rather, Hus’s sermons often can be read as an exhortation to his listeners to prepare themselves to resist the attacks of internal and external spiritual foes. His sermons describe the opponents with whom his flock must contend.

One of the great motivators of late medieval communities seems to have been the the fear of the “other.”⁷ Social, political, and economic outsiders could, and frequently did, find themselves as targets of religious condemnation throughout the Middle Ages.⁸ Preachers across Europe used the images of both human and supernatural foes as obstacles to salvation that needed to be resisted and overcome.⁹ The use of what Thomas Worcester calls “pulpit terrorism” was a common feature in the later Middle Ages and exemplified in the preaching of a figure such as Bernardino of

⁵ Qui ergo vult esse fidelis miles Christi oportet, ut pugnet, ut vincat et ut coronetur a capite suo Christo, qui est caput omnium electorum-et dyabolus similiter est caput omnium dampnandorum... Flajšhans, *Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 21.

⁶ Perhaps the clearest contrast in this regard is between Hus and the popular preacher Bernardino of Siena. Bernardino is described as having been both a remarkable story teller as well as one who incorporated mysticism into his preaching which listeners reportedly described as a “spell created by his honeyed tongue” or as “stupefied” which Cynthia L. Polecritti described as the preacher’s and audience’s goal all along. Cynthia L. Polecritti, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and his Audience* (Washington D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 62, 82.

⁷ R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford, UK; New York: B. Blackwell, 1987), 70, 72, 100; Soukup, “Metaphors of the Spiritual Struggle Early in the Bohemian Reformation: The Exegesis of Arma Spiritualia in Hus, Jakoubek, and Chelčický” in *BRRP 6* (2007), 105.

⁸ Thomas M. Izbicki, “Pyres of the Vanities: Mendicant Preaching on the Vanity of Women and its Lay Audience,” in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, eds. Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Gren, Beverly Mayne Kienzle, (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), 346.

⁹ Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 20-21.

Siena (d.1444) and Girolamo Savonarola (d.1498) with their vivid descriptions of divine wrath and fearful demons.¹⁰ Hus also used similar imagery in his preaching. Perhaps in contrast to an abstract message of terror, Hus gave his audience corporeal and relevant threats to salvation, such as sinful authorities, clergy, and any unrepentant persons clinging to mortal sin. He then imbued those earthly foes with the supernatural qualities of the Devil and the Antichrist. Hus never addressed these terrors solely with the purpose to frighten his listeners, although he certainly could have utilized fear alone as a powerful incentive. Rather, he seems to have intended them to motivate his audience to engage in spiritual warfare, and he encouraged them to pick a side in the struggle for souls between Christ and the Devil.

Hus's preaching drew a considerable audience, perhaps, in part, due to his frequent descriptions of the earthly and supernatural foes trying to destroy them. Hus gave his flock common enemies, a common purpose, and united them in the spiritual battle against evil.¹¹ By defining the enemies of the faithful in his sermons, Hus encouraged his audience not just to be servants of God, but "conquerors for God."¹²

As described in Chapter 3, scholars have paid significant attention to Hus's critique of a corrupt clergy. Yet, in addition, Hus also devoted significant time in his sermons to warn against demons, the Antichrist, fallen women, Jews, heretics, schismatics, witches, and, of course, the Devil himself. In analyzing Hus's frequent

¹⁰ Thomas S. J. Worcester, "Catholic Sermons," 5, 7. Marmando, *The Preacher's Demons*, 220.

¹¹ Sociologist Phillip Smith suggests, "Love of the Charismatic leader often seems to be predicated on hatred of the evil against which they fight, and indeed will be magnified as this perceived evil intensifies and is incarnated in a specific 'folk devil.' One cannot have a charismatic leader without the presence of evil as well. Essentially, for a salvation narrative to exist, a people must need saving. Therefore, theoretically, Hus's use of diabolical enemies provides his audience the necessary foe against whom to unite under his leadership. Smith, "Culture and Charisma," 103.

¹² Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 50.

references to the Devil and the Devil's allies, one cannot help but notice the pervasive references to spiritual warfare and the critical role that theme played in his sermons. The next two chapters examine how Hus employed spiritual opponents at the Bethlehem Chapel to motivate his audience and how his use of these foes evolved over his career.

The lack of historiographical interest in Hus's use of diabolic imagery in his preaching is relatively unsurprising as the Devil had begun to disappear from serious theological and philosophical discussions in the Late Middle Ages.¹³ Jeffry Burton Russel points out that theologians had nearly abandoned the topic of the Devil by the thirteenth century, and by the late fourteenth-century, the topic had been virtually expelled from serious theological consideration altogether. The great scholastic thinkers and realist philosophers downplayed the Devil, and late medieval religious sources, typically dominated by nominalism, mysticism, and humanism, ignored Satan completely.¹⁴ By the turn of the fifteenth-century, Erasmus was already arguing that the Devil could be "anything that deters us from Christ and his teaching."¹⁵ Late Medieval theologians, however, can be a poor indicator of popular religious beliefs, as their intellectual exercises tended to push them farther from the general beliefs of society.¹⁶

¹³ Pavel Soukup discusses the broader use of the military imagery against the Devil in Bohemian preaching in his article, Pavel Soukup, "Metaphors of the Spiritual Struggle Early in the Bohemian Reformation: The Exegesis of Arma Spiritualia in Hus, Jakoubek, and Chelčický" in *BRRP* 6 (2007), 87-110.

¹⁴ Russell, *Lucifer*, 275. Peter Stanford, *The Devil: A Biography* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 150-152.

¹⁵ Stanford, *The Devil*, 184.

¹⁶ Van Engen, "Multiple Options," 279.

Hus was certainly an academic in the scholastic tradition that de-emphasized the Devil, but that image must be reconciled with the reality that Hus preached on the diabolic menace in a majority of his sermons. Historians of the nationalist and Protestant tradition such as Palacký, Masaryk, and Spinka frequently ignored this aspect of Hus's preaching, probably as it might have fallen under a category of medieval superstition.¹⁷ It is encouraging that historians have recently placed far more emphasis on these previously ignored categories. For example, Heiko Oberman's examination of Martin Luther's near obsession with the Devil sparked a reevaluation of Max Weber's influential claim that the Protestant Reformation led to the "disenchantment of the world."¹⁸ Hus's employment of diabolical imagery also needs to be understood in a way that includes the context of not just philosophy and theology, but wider medieval culture and popular belief in a present and active Devil.¹⁹

¹⁷The works of Palacký and Masaryk represent perhaps the epitome of a National and Protestant Hus, as both men described Hus as a Czech working against the foreign Catholic influences. T.G. Masaryk, *Jan Hus: naše obrození a naše reformace* (Curych: Konfrontace, 1979). Fudge observes that Palacký, the most influential nationalist and Protestant historian, hardly examines Hus's spiritual teachings, and instead described him in terms of a political and social reformer. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 215. This treatment of Hus influenced dozens of following historians, who continued to ignore this component Hus's medieval context. Spinka also roughly fits this form, although with far less of a national agenda, but even Spinka conducted much of his work just before the formation of the German protectorate and after the war leading to a decided stance of Czech exceptionalism.

¹⁸ Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 102-106.

¹⁹ Studies of this sort have been conducted concerning the Reformation, including: Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1987, 1994) 133-135; Robert Scribner, "Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas," in Robert Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation German* (London: Hambledon Press, 1987), 49-79; P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, "Rational Superstition: the Writings of Protestant Demonologists." In *Religion and Superstition in Reformation Europe*, eds. Hellen Parish and William G. Naphy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 174; Peter A. Morton, "Lutheran Naturalism, Popular Magic, and the Devil," in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle eds. (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012); Gary K. Waite, "Demonizing Rhetoric, Reformation Heretics and Witches Sabbaths: Anabaptists and Witches in Elite Discourse" in *The Devil in Society in Premodern Europe*, Richard Raiswell and Peter Dendle eds. (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2012). There is significantly less for the late Middle Ages: Michael D. Bailey, *Fearful Spirits*,

Despite late medieval theological disinterest in the Devil, preachers concerned with the salvation of the masses frequently utilized diabolic imagery. The threat of the Devil and his minions was a common theme in popular preaching of Italy and Central Europe.²⁰ “Pulpit terrorism” was a fixture of popular preaching, and the rhetoric of fear was a standard method for effecting conversion. Robert de Basevorn, the influential fourteenth-century scholar of Oxford and Paris, included the need for a “terrifying tale” and reminders of the “Devil’s desire to hinder the word of God” in conjunction with a variety of other rhetorical techniques for “winning over the audience” in his *Ars Praedicandi* of the mid-fourteenth century.²¹ Bernardino of Siena kept the Devil “omnipresent” in his sermons and frequently described the horrors of plague, war, and other tragedies as evidence of the Devil’s imminent victory.²² Milíč approached the Devil as an internal destroyer of the soul that needed to be battled on the personal level.²³ Hus certainly drew on many of the same influences and rhetorical devices. In this manner, Hus’s preaching might be less typical of a fifteenth-century academic and more closely aligned with the sensationalism of popular medieval preachers.

Hus interpreted the uncertainty of the age through the metaphor of spiritual warfare. With his own embattlement and excommunication, his desire to persuade his

Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 230-232. This remains a considerable void in Bohemian scholarship.

²⁰ Russell, *Lucifer*, 275, Larissa Taylor suggests that the Devil was greatly minimized in French preaching, predominantly due to the influence of scholasticism at the University of Paris, Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ*, 117 .

²¹ Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 346, 349; Anne T. Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching and the Coming of the Reformation* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 72.

²² Marmando, *The Preacher’s Demons*, 2.

²³ Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, 150.

audience of the spiritual threat to their salvation increased in severity and urgency. The challenges Hus faced within the political and spiritual milieu of Prague seem to have had a tremendous impact on his preaching. Hus's own use of threats to the flock evolved in much the same way as his promotion of his authority and his approach to clerical corruption. Two changing components of his "pulpit terrorism" were whom he chose to represent as the spiritual "other" and the frequency with which he employed certain threats. Hus's expressed concern was not just with sin, but with the earthly manifestations of evil personified in the Devil and his followers. Tracking these terms and exploring how he used them help to reveal the growth of Hus's polemical preaching as he worked towards the salvation of his flock at Bethlehem.²⁴

To highlight the complex approach Hus had to this topic, I am dividing his treatment of the powers of evil into two chapters: the Devil and the Devil's servants. In many cases, these terms are used in close conjunction, but to better analyze each, they will be addressed thematically while noting specific relationships among them. By describing multiple classifications of spiritual antagonists, Hus preached about a frightening world filled with foes, a flock in need of the salvation, and the redemption that Christ offered. Hus's use of threatening imagery may have nurtured within the congregation a belief that individuals were part of God's will in conquering evil on earth.

²⁴ Fudge uses the term radicalization of his sermons. I am not convinced this term is completely accurate. I think polemical is simply more accurate as the growing sharpness of Hus's language is deriving from the events occurring around him. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 59. Paul de Vooght described Hus's change as a growing "violence" although this also may be too sharp, as all references to violence seem to refer to spiritual conflict. Paul de Vooght, *L'Hérésie de Jean Hus*, 64-71. Spinka states that "there is no essential or radical change in his views throughout his public ministry. Although I acknowledge remarkable consistencies in Hus approach, I disagree with Spinka and recognize that Hus does change his tone and to his views to some extent. Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 384. Essentially, therefore, I argue that Hus did change his views and perspective over his career, but extremist words such as "radicalization" create a picture of Hus that ignores his rational approaches to aggravating circumstances.

Such a belief could help motivate the audience to return day after day. Furthermore, this may have been part of the reason listeners were so eager to defend their gallant preacher from criticism, excommunication, and threats from 1410 onward, especially if they perceived attacks on their priest and inspiration as the active interference of Satan.

The Devil

In Hus's sermons, no supernatural opponent is as frequent or as terrifying as the Devil. The Devil permeates Hus's sermons as an ever threatening presence actively destroying humanity and with works that surround the faithful. For Hus's audience, this supernatural villain provided an overarching nemesis which they viewed as the origin of evil. Unlike a corrupt clergy or many of the other terrors of the world, the Devil could be actively fought through spiritual means. More importantly, Hus could assure his audience of victory over the Devil, as Christ had already accomplished this task. In his unsettled world of early fifteenth-century Christendom, he could apply the Devil to any number of topics relevant to his audience in Prague. He presented the Devil as the foe that every individual was required to fight for their personal salvation and preached to encourage his listeners in their struggle against evil.

Hus derived his imagery of the Devil from a wide variety of scriptural, patristic, and popular sources.²⁵ Hus's sermons, therefore, frequently touched on ideas concerning the role and authority of the Devil as he found them in the writings of Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bede. Specifically the question of who bears responsibility for the surrounding evil of the world.²⁶ Hus also incorporated several of

²⁵Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 42

²⁶ Unfortunately, little work has been done to expressly compile all of Hus's influences. The three theologians named here are frequently cited by Hus concerning theology of the Devil and are singled out

Wyclif's realist concepts concerning the Devil. Hus placed the power to restrain or free the Devil in God's hands; but, as with many of Wyclif's philosophical extremes, Hus never expressed Wyclif's most radical conclusion. Critics accused Wyclif of stating that "God ought to obey the Devil" which was derived from Wyclif's insistence that God installed all earthly authorities for them to be obeyed regardless of morality, including the Devil as the prince of the world.²⁷

Hus varied widely in the roles he assigned the Devil. Some sermons focus squarely on the great spiritual adversary, while others relegate the Devil to a brief, passing mention. The Devil, however, was rarely absent from Hus's sermons. He referred to the Devil by many names and used the terms Devil, Satan, and Lucifer interchangeably, generally labeling in accordance with names given in his proof texts. Hus most commonly employed references to this most destructive foe in four primary forms. First, he described the Devil as a near-equal opposite to Christ, often as either a king or as a metaphorical body incorporating all sinners. Second, Hus relied on images of the Devil as a beast which devours and consumes. Third, he often spoke of the Devil in the context of sin either as the tempter or instigator, and fourth, as the inevitable companion and tormentor of the unrepentant. All these descriptions of the Devil are closely connected to Hus's reliance on martial imagery, with which he described the Devil as a foe to be conquered.

A prominent question for Christian theologians before Hus was what exactly was the limit of the Devil's power. At the root of this dilemma is whether the Devil is the

by Russell for being three of the most influential figures in the medieval understanding of the Devil. Russell, *Lucifer*, 98-100.

²⁷ Russell points out that Wyclif's followers saw fit to attempt to explain and mediate the statement giving it some credence. Russell, *Lucifer*, 238.

prince of this world and has dominion over humanity because of original sin, or whether the Devil works with the permission of God as exemplified in the book of Job.²⁸ In many ways, Hus's sermons, benefitted from the ambiguity of Christian theology as it allowed him, depending on his desired emphasis, to depict either a terrifying, unstoppable force or a diminutive nuisance compared to the far greater power of Christ. The role and powers of the Devil, as detailed in any given sermon, depended on its specific goal and message. The flexibility of diabolical references, therefore, meant that he presented his audience with a variety of manifestations of the Devil.

Hus frequently described the Devil as the opposite of Christ. The lordship and authority of the Devil, over both sinners and evil forces, was a fundamental relationship described in his sermons. One example is in Hus's sermon from the third week of Lent in 1406. His scriptural text from Luke 11 states, "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined."²⁹ For Hus this was an ideal text to expand upon the threat of the Devil to the "kingdom of the soul." The brief sermon was dominated by an intricate comparison between the soul and a kingdom contested by two rulers. He began, "At this time there are two opposing kings, fighting continuously for the kingdom. Certainly the first is Christ, who is the King of Kings reigning with humility. The second is the Devil, the king who is reigning above all the sons of pride."³⁰ Hus continued by describing the destruction the Devil may cause as the ruler of the soul, and the restoration occurring in a soul ruled by Christ. This is an example of how he frequently utilized the typical

²⁸ Ibid., 99.

²⁹ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 145.

³⁰ Cum sint duo reges opposite, pro regno continue decertantes, videlicet Cristus, qui est rex regum, regnans in humilibus, et dyabolus, qui est rex super omnes filios superbie, regnans in superbis... Ibid., 145.

rhetorical approach of presenting a simple dichotomy that could be easily understood by the audience.³¹ Therefore, when he discussed examples of good actions, thoughts, or beliefs, they almost always warranted corresponding evil examples. This should not be confused with the dualistic approach of the Manicheans or Bogomils in relation to the Devil. Hus never suggested that a strict equality exists between the Devil and Christ. Instead, he commonly described the two in an adversarial relationship with each other.³²

In this sermon, Hus went to considerable lengths to construct suitable dichotomies to illustrate the impending threat to his listeners' souls. He supported the sermon, loosely based on Luke 11, with only an exemplum he attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux.³³ He focused on the specific threats of the Devil as a usurper of Christ's throne. With considerable detail, he described Christ and the Devil competing for the title of king, with one affecting the spirit for good and the other for evil. Hus portrayed the reign of the Devil upon the soul as usurping "the king" (reason personified), despoiling and abducting "the queen" (free-will personified), diminishing "the fortresses" of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, and finally depleting the senses that "guard" the soul against all demonic suggestions. Hus gave special attention to the sense of hearing, calling it "the gate," which the Devil closes to "restoring counsel" or sound preaching.³⁴ This analogy, especially with the incorporation of the Gospel

³¹ Perhaps one of the most interesting examples of this is Gregory the Great's *Cura Pastoralis* which provides thirty-six rhetorical pairs to be considered by the preacher. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 294-95.

³² Among other sources specifically on the Manicheans or Bogomils, the most useful description of these supposed beliefs is that of Russell, *Lucifer*, 43-48.

³³ Schmidtová points out that the citation which Hus attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux does not actually appear in any of the known works of Bernard. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 147

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 145-147. Without evidence to suggest otherwise, Hus, himself, possibly invented this long analogy. This makes it a relatively rare example of an analogy not attributed to one of the Church fathers.

message of how Jesus can repair all of the damage inflicted upon the kingdom, seems to be particularly apt for a royal city, such as Prague. The people of Prague, only four years prior in the summer of 1401, had been besieged by an army from Meissen as the city was caught in the various conflicts revolving around imperial politics.³⁵ The rest of the sermon reflected a city at war and included a call to arms. Hus exclaimed that as the true king, Jesus Christ, “assembles citizens, in order to follow his command in such a manner that all are united in their duty. And when Christ in this way guards the highest kingdom with strong arms, all come together in the peaceful bonds of charity.”³⁶

Hus’s portrayal of the Devil and Jesus as a tense and uncertain rivalry of near equals forced his audience to choose a side. This remained true throughout the *Collecta*. In the course of the liturgical year, Hus described the Devil and Jesus in semi-dualistic terms three more times, but never again did this theme dominate a sermon as happened that third week in Lent, 1405. The following week, Hus preached on Christ as the Lord of servants and the Devil as the lord of slaves. Two final descriptions of the relationship between Christ and the Devil came much later in the liturgical year in two different sermons. The first showed how one cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6), and the second illustrated the Pharisees as having been inspired by the Devil, the “adversary of Christ” (Matthew 22).³⁷ These final two sermons reflect Chrysostom’s considerable influence, and nearly all of the diabolology in the texts are direct quotations.

³⁵ Seibt, “Die Zeit der Luxemburger und der Hussitischen Revolution (1306-1471),” 488-489. Čornej, *Velké dějiny země Koruny české* vol. 5, 72.

³⁶ Sic enim Christus rex colligit regnicolas ut secundum eius imperium taliter in officiis suis uniti. Et dum Christus fortis armatus taliter custodit regni atrium, in pace sunt omnia colligate vincula caritatis. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 146.

³⁷ Ibid., 150, 477. Quis enim poterat dare consilium contra Christum nisi dyabolus, qui erat adversarius Christi? Ibid., 594.

The words of Chrysostom, as attributed by Hus, clearly mark the dichotomy between Christ and the Devil by listing the many ways where Christ and the Devil oppose each other. Hus quoted Chrysostom: “If only they would hear the voice of the Lord: you do not have the ability to serve two lords the same, and therefore certainly there are two Lords and as contrary as God and the Devil, of virtue and vice, spirit and flesh, heaven and earth, freedom and avarice, God and Mammon...”³⁸ The use of this rhetorical dichotomy allowed Hus to create an image of good versus evil that called on the listeners to choose a side. Yet, this was only one motivational component in Hus’s description of the Devil for establishing a clear dichotomy was only part of Hus’s preaching strategy.

Considerably different than the lordly Devil, Hus also used an alternative scriptural description of a savage and devouring Devil. The most obvious scriptural example of the Devil as a consuming beast is found in 1 Peter 5: 8 where Peter states, “Your opponent the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” Hus cited the passage twice in 1405-1406.³⁹ Hus stated during the fourth week of Advent in 1405, “In this desert live several beasts, the Devil who devours sinners altogether, to which 1 Peter 5 says, ‘He circles seeking whom he will devour.’ And Hosea 2, ‘I will place them in a thicket, and wild animals will devour them.’”⁴⁰ Hus used the same passage on the third Sunday after Trinity in 1406 with greater detail:

³⁸ O utinam audirent hanc vocem Domini: Nemo potest duobus dominis simul et semel bene servire, dominis quidem duobus et sic contrariis us Deo et dyabolo, virtuti et civio, spiritui et carni, cello et mundo, liberalitati et avaricie Deo et mamone... Ibid., 478.

³⁹ 1 Peter 5, Saint Joseph ed.

⁴⁰ In hoc deserto seva bestia habitat, dyabolus, que cunctos devorat peccatores, de quo 1 Pet. 5 dicitur: “Circuit querens, quem devoret.” Et Oz. 2, “Ponam eam in saltum et comedet eam bestia agri.” Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 58-59.

Be sober, as not to ruin the entire body, and watch so that the spirit may not fall asleep and thus be consumed by the Devil. For in fact the word Devil is from “dya,” that is two, and from bolus which is “bites,” for he bites man twofold, in body and in spirit, while he clearly defiles both through suggestion. For when he brings mortal sin in the spirit, he kills it sharply, and when he forces the flesh into the external act of sin, he kills the flesh itself more sharply than the teeth of a lion.⁴¹

In a similar vein, Hus often linked the Devil with the image of a wolf. The antagonist in the form of a wolf coincides well with Scripture’s imagery of Christ as the Good Shepherd, a theme commonly revisited in Hus’s sermons. Therefore, nearly every description of Jesus as the Good Shepherd correspondingly necessitates mention of a wolf. One example is from the third Sunday after Trinity, when Hus stated:

Ponder, therefore, oh sinner, especially because the Good Shepherd searches for his sheep...he searches sweating with blood, crying tears, he searches in the place of dread on the Mount of Olives. He searches in this world of vast solitude. He found him in the desert, that is hell, where the wolf had thrown him [the sheep], but he was not able otherwise to rescue the found [sheep] except as a shepherd. The sheep might be executed, and while placed in the shackle of the cross, the approaching wolf would be seized, so that the sheep would be snatched away from the jaws of the wolf by means of the sheep.⁴²

The Devil as wolf metaphor appeared yet again on the seventeenth Sunday after the Trinity when Hus addressed the issue of clerical sin: “The truth of the matter is that even now the Devil deceives clerics through these snares, and he retains much of the

⁴¹ Sobrii estote, ne corpus illecebrose corruat, et vigilate, ne spiritus obdormiat et sic dyabolus utraque mordeat. Dicitur numque dyabolus a dya, quod est duo, et bolus morsus, quia dupliciter mordet hominem, in corpore et anima, dum videlicet utraque per suggestionem comaculat. Dum enim peccatum mortale in animam inducit, ipsam mordaciter mortificat, et dum carnem ad actum peccati extrinsecum ingerit ipsam dente leonis acius ferit. Ibid., 311. Admittedly keeping Hus’s sheep clear is a difficult task, I believe the second sheep in the passage is actually a reference to the Lamb of God. It is also a reference to Jesus taking the form of a man to save us. Therefore, Hus is saying that the sheep (Jesus as human) saved the sheep (mankind).

⁴² Pensa ergo, o peccator, qualiter ovem bonus pastor quesivit, ubi quesivit et ubi invenit. Quesivit sudans sanquine, plorans lacrimis, quesivit in loco horroris monte Oliveti, in loco vaste solitudinis huius seculi. Invenit in deserto, id est in inferno, ubi lupo eam deicerat, sed inventam aliter erripere non poterat, nisi ut pastor. Efficeretur ovis, et dum in pedica cruce poneretur, lupo accedens caperetur, ut sic ovis per ovem a lupi faucibus erriperetur. Ibid., 317.

whole world in his traps. The wolf, by knife and snare, deceives the mouse. And would that the Lord might preserve me!”⁴³ The Devil as a beast is consistent with scriptural imagery and patristic sources, but the image of the devouring Devil is also starkly found in forms of popular religion and art throughout medieval and early modern Europe.⁴⁴

Finally, the most common form of the Devil described in Hus’s sermons is that of the deceiver and tempter. As one might expect, Hus closely linked the Devil with temptation and sin.⁴⁵ He described Satan as both an active tempter as well as a passive entity waiting on the choices of the sinner. Hus used the Devil at times merely as a location or in conjunction with hell. One example from 1405 is a sermon on the theology of baptism, Hus warned, “No one sinning mortally has been buried with the Lord, for the sinner lives with sin, and thus he is buried in the grave of the Devil with the Devil.”⁴⁶ He often used examples of this sort to illustrate the value of repentance and the consequences of a sinner’s action. These types of examples say more about the sinner than the Devil.

More frequently appearing than descriptions of the passive Devil, Hus’s warnings of an active tempting Devil certainly provided a more vivid threat and fear for the audience. Hus commonly described the Devil as either leading or tempting a soul into

⁴³ Re vera iam clericos dyabolus per hanc decipulam decipit et retinet plures quam totus mundus aves laqueo, lupos falcastro et decipulam decipit et retinet plures quam totus mundus aves laqueo, lupos falcastro et decipula decipti mures. Et utinam me Dominus custodiret. *Ibid.*, 512. Perhaps in this context falcastro means tooth, rather than knife, as the word choice is questionable.

⁴⁴ Russell, *Lucifer*, 79, 254.

⁴⁵ Richard Kieckhefer explains the presence of the Devil in much of the hagiography of Saints in the high and late Middle Ages. The common theme in many of these reports is the constant harassment by the Devil and the joy that saints had in their torment. Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls*, 53.

⁴⁶ Et patet, quod nullus peccans mortaliter est cum Domino consepultus, nam ut sic vivit peccato, et sic in supulcro dyaboli cum dyabolo sepelitur. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 346.

mortal sin. Various sermons included the Devil as one who hardened hearts, tempted through lust, clothed with pride, and sought out curious souls to ensnare through suggestions. He even described a conniving and patient Devil who waits unwearingly to strike at particular moments of weakness. Hus stated, “The Devil may return at any time with great curses, so that he might lead the [sinner] having done wrong into warmer and greater sins.”⁴⁷ This is in regard not only to clerical sin, but in 1405 especially, these sermons warned all Christians of the Devil’s lies and deceits. Hus created an unsettling image of a physical world filled with “the traps of the Devil” through near constant warnings of ever present temptation.⁴⁸

The value of this terrifying diabolic threat was that Hus kept his audience constantly on guard as a righteous community under siege by the evil of the world. Hus often addressed the traps, temptations, and corrupting influences of the Devil in terms of martial conflict. The use of military metaphors was common both in the general Christian preaching tradition and in the specific Bohemian context by preachers such as Milíč z Kroměříž. For Milíč, however, the battle with the Devil was one that was individual and personal; this was an internal battle that all individuals must face to free their lives from sin.⁴⁹ Although Hus would in large part agree, much of his preaching added an external component –the Devil attempting to deceive and conquer the individual and the community as a whole. The individual may face internal battles, but Hus often described a war for the souls of all Christendom.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 79, 241, 247, 453. Quod autem ait Dominus: abierunt, ostendit, quod dyabolus aliquando cessat a magna vexacione, ut calidius inducat in maiora peccata. Ibid., 453.

⁴⁸ Et cum quis omnes homines ad etatem rationis pervenientes fuering in laqueis dyaboli, etsi non omnes tamen quam plures... Ibid., 549.

⁴⁹ Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, 150.

The struggle against Satan and his allies could appear in the sermons as both an internal and external battle. Hus, however, subtly shifted his use of the imagery of spiritual warfare over time. In the sermons of the *Collecta*, the Devil was undoubtedly the principal foe confronting the faithful. In no sermon does Hus address this spiritual battle more explicitly than in the sermon for the 21st Sunday after Trinity. This sermon was based on Ephesians 6, where Paul exhorts the faithful to “put on the full armor of God.”⁵⁰ The analogy of the armor of God served as the pretext to preach an exceedingly long sermon focused on spiritual warfare against the Devil. Hus began by listing eight ways that God equips and supports his soldiers in battle, and he followed each with a number of supporting scriptural proof texts. Hus described God’s eternal presence on the field of battle, God’s rapid healing of wounds (allowing soldiers to return quickly into battle) and the carrying of the crucifix as the banner of God’s army, to name a few examples. The military allegory continued in great detail before the foe finally appeared:

With the arms of God, however, comes virtue and no one is able to put on moral virtue, if not clothed in the Lord Jesus Christ, because [Paul] shows that Christ requires those virtues to be put on as the base. And with love itself, because through God is love to be equipped for sharp cuts and by love is one armed in the safest defense. Paul shows this in respect to Christ himself and thus is total victory having been written through love. Man should with the garment having been put on, that garment being Christ, follow the Spirit... to put on grace surpassing the Devil. Yet, armor is still not the best way because the Devil himself is the strongest creature fighting against Christ, who conquered him. [The Devil], therefore, seeks to pay lavishly, and because he has the experience of first having been overcome [by Christ]; he invades anywhere where he might create a second outpost with the proper conditions to interfere in the temporal world...⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ephesians 6, 10-17, Saint Joseph ed.

⁵¹ Ubi precipit Apostolus arma induere, non quelibet, sed Dei. Cum autem Dei armature sit virtus et nemo potest virtutem morale induere, nisi inuderit Dominum Iesum Christum, patet, quod oportet Christum illam virtutem fundamentaliter induere. Et cum ipse sit caritas, qui Deus, et caritas sit armature invasive acutissima et armature defensiva tutissima, patet, quod ipsi Cristo et sic caritati tota Victoria est

Hus continued his sermon by addressing the ways in which the Devil attacks the soldiers of Christ and how the soldiers of Christ are further equipped for victory. The Devil's main weapons include pride, lust, and deception all leading to a myriad of damnable sins. Hus also briefly described the Devil's use of insult against the faithful stating that in comparison with worldly temptation, "that battle is light against the insults of the Devil."⁵²

Hus concluded with a broad allusion concerning spiritual warfare in the context of the blatant corruption of the fractured early fifteenth-century church. In the last lines, he chose to address the place of the papacy and clergy in this army of Christ. After addressing the sin of pride and describing the useless weapons of the world, Hus advised the papacy on how to fight evil:

Therefore the pope and his clerics may fight that one (the Devil) by the sword, having put on the earlier arms. And without a doubt they will be able to resist all adversaries and all battalions of the Devil, because thus God will fight principally in such a way among them, with the sword that is the Word of God and the Holy Spirit...⁵³

Hus declared that pope and clergy could conquer through faithfulness to God's word. He also insinuated that the clergy may not be prepared for spiritual battle, an easy conclusion to make considering the clerical disorder during time of the schism. Hus expounded on this critical view of the papacy considerably more in successive years

ascribenda. Debet autem homo huiusmodi indumento, scilicet Cristo, indutus consequenter tam secundum animam quam secundum corpus virtutes indurare gracia superacionis diaboli. Nec hoc est modicum, quia ipse spiritualiter pugnando contra Cristum creatura potissima, quem qui vicerit, mercedem largissimam consequentur, et quia habet consuetudinem primo hostem prosternendi, quem invadit, ideo stacio secundum rectitudinem affectus spritualium et temporalium...Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 561.

⁵² Quasi diceret Apostolus: Quamvis pugnare debemus contra carnem, mundum et hominem, tamen illa pugna est levis contra insultum dyaboli. *Ibid.*, 562.

⁵³ Illo ergo gladio pugnt papa et sui clerici, armis induti prioribus. Et sine dubio non poterint eis resistere omnes adversarii et pentrabunt omnes cuneos dyaboli, quia ut sic pugnabit in eis principaliter Deus, cum ille gladius sit verbum Dei et Spiritus sancti, qui est secula gloriosus. *Ibid.*, 566.

and offered far harsher criticism as he developed the theology on which he based his most controversial work, *De Ecclesia*, in 1413. In this 1405 sermon, however, Hus did not necessarily express any deep resentment, but rather he concluded with a stern warning. He cautioned of the Devil's threat, but he also optimistically alluded to a possible victory through God's word and the Holy Spirit. To achieve this victory, Hus instructed his listeners on how to spiritually prepare for the damaging blows from the weapons of the Devil. If the battle was lost, Hus also offered hope to those who failed in their struggle and were conquered by the Devil, "Therefore the one who is captive to the Devil, may be liberated because Christ is the most powerful king."⁵⁴

The papacy and the clergy were not the only ones included in the allegory as soldiers of God. Hus described the laity as the foot soldiers and promised rewards for their faithful service in battle. Conversely, those who served the enemy would receive their just rewards. In Hus's sermon on the Seventh Sunday after Trinity, he described the payment reserved for those who are soldiers of Christ and those who are soldiers of the Devil. This sermon borrowed heavily from a discussion on justice attributed to Bede which reiterated that those who decide to serve the Devil would receive just rewards for their service. Hus enumerated evil's reward colorfully:

First...the lack of divine vision, second the maggot of eternal putrefaction, third the fire of combustion, fourth the frigid severity, fifth the image of terror, sixth the shame of confusion, seventh the duration of all eternity. Behold, soldiers of the Devil, witness your many payments, drill with courage so as to later descend into Gehenna.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Si ergo quis est captivus a dyabolo, ipse liberabit, quia Cristus rex potentissimus. Ibid., 137.

⁵⁵ Primum enim stipendium erit carencia divine visionis, secundum vermis eterne corrosionis, tercium ardor combustionis, quartum austeritas frigoris, quantum terror ymaginis, sextum rubor confusionis, septimum in omnibus eternitas duracionis. Ecce, miles dyabolis, cernis multa stipendia, exerce miliciam, ut descendas postmoum in gehennam. Ibid., 367

As for the alternative payment to the soldiers of Christ, Hus stated, quoting directly from Bede, that “therefore because those who serve as soldiers accept payment...the elect accept from the grace of God: faith, or love, or whatever good works they have.”⁵⁶ Once again, Hus employs a dichotomy, by comparing the wretched payment of the soldiers of the Devil with the blessings of the faithful.

Using the *Collecta*'s military imagery, Hus often illustrated the way that the Devil could be defeated. For example, on February 28, the First Sunday of Lent in 1406, Hus stated:

The traveler of this world is taught the example of his leader Jesus Christ to struggle with manly vigor against the Devil, as having been bathed in sacred baptism and confession conquers the Devil, just as the Christ having been baptized conquered temptation of appetite, of vain glory, of avarice in the desert, in the temple, and on the high mountain. For this Christ leaves this example behind for his soldiers, so coming near to service of the Lord they prepare their spirit for the temptations of the Devil.⁵⁷

In 1405, Hus often described the religious reality around him in terms of conflict, with the central role played by the Devil and his minions. The Devil, as either the stately lord or ravenous beast, was put to flight by the armies of God. Hus clearly included all true Christians in that army and his audience may have accepted their own role by listening to their captain exhorting them from the pulpit to do battle with the forces of the Devil.

⁵⁶ Ideo, quia illi, qui militant, propriam mercedem accipiunt, quidquid autem electi habent, totum a gracia mercedem accipiunt, quidquid autem electi habent, totum a gracia Dei accipiunt: sive fidem, sive caritatem seu quodcunque opus Dei accipiunt: sive fidem, sive caritatem seu quodcunque opus bonum habeant. Ibid., 367 Although Bede is cited many times in this sermon, Schmidtová suggests that whatever works Hus took these from is unknown.

⁵⁷ Docetur viator exemplo ducis sui Iesu Christi contra dyabolum dimicare viriliter, ut lotus baptismo sacre confessionis vincat dyabolum, sicut Christus baptizatus vicit temptantem de gula, de vana Gloria, de avaricia, et hoc in deserto, in templo et in monte excelso. Christus suis militibus, ut accedentes ad servitum Domini animas suas ad temptationem dyaboli preparant. Ibid., 127

In the *Sermones in Bethlehem* collection of 1410-1411, a number of themes continue to be recognizable from the *Collecta*. Hus's preaching from the *Sermones* reflects a period of considerable stress through his employment of a wider variety of diabolic imagery and an approach that seems far more polemical and eschatological than just four years prior. With frequent accusations against him in Prague and at the papal curia and the first excommunication being placed against, Hus presented a far bleaker picture of spiritual battle. He portrayed accusations and attacks as the work of the Devil and Antichrist attempting to silence him. In doing this, he revisited a number of common themes from his earlier sermons, along with new approaches. His new preaching strategies reflect not only his participation in a political and spiritual war of words between the university and Archbishop, but also possibly reflect a greater desire to employ Wyclifite theory at the pulpit as only the pro-Wyclif party remained in power in the university.⁵⁸ Overall, Hus continued to employ the Devil as the foe against whom he was personally engaged and leading his listeners against.

One noticeable way that Hus's diabolology in 1410-1411 was similar to his earlier works is in the frequent application of the relationship between Christ and the Devil. Hus continued to refer to the Devil in terms of being the opposite of Christ, including the frequent employment of martial language. For example, he briefly mentioned in his sermon of March 1, 1411, that, "just as Christ is the head of his soldiers-the Devil is the

⁵⁸ Some scholars suggest that Hus purposefully began inserting non-contentious orthodox ideas of Wyclif in order to goad his critics. This is evidenced in the well-known university sermon "Vos Estis Sal Terre" from 1410, but may also be readily occurring in Hus's general sermons. Loserth in his oft reviled study *Wiclif and Hus* rightly points out that numerous connections exist between Wyclif and Hus in Hus's sermons, to the extent that Loserth claims outside of a few exceptions Hus "consulted no other works but Wyclif's," Loserth, *Wiclif and Hus*, 110-11; 282; Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, 298.

head of the damned.”⁵⁹ Hus, of course, was not limited to martial imagery but also used the spiritual analogy of the heart as the home of Christ or of Satan. Hus stated on March 4, 1411, that “whosoever is a man without mortal sin, now the Devil passes from him and he is in fact the home for Christ. When truth falls in mortal sin, then immediately the Devil enters into the heart and it is in fact the home of the Devil.”⁶⁰ Hus continued to express this near-dualistic relationship in the sermons, but he also began to prefer different metaphors and analogies over those he used in 1405-1406. For one reason or another, Hus began referencing the soldiers of the Devil less while putting a greater emphasis on the analogies of the limbs and sons of the Devil instead. Perhaps he interpreted the troubling environment around him less in terms of armies and more in terms of the direct influence of the Devil and Antichrist in the words and actions of his enemies.

The contrasting description of the limbs of Christ and the limbs of the Devil appear more frequently in the *Sermones* with relatively specific references to context. The body of the Devil was a common Christian motif at the time, drawn from the patristic sources that incorporated all sinners into union with the Devil standing in both contrast and mimicry of Paul’s image of the body of Christ in his epistles.⁶¹ A similar metaphor is that of the sons or children of Christ opposing the sons of the Devil. Hus seemed to have found considerable use for the motif as it appears frequently in his later

⁵⁹ Qui ergo vult esse fidelis miles Christi oportet, ut pugnet, ut coronetur, a capite suo Christo, qui est caput omnium electorum-et dyabolus similiter est caput omnium dampnandorum ... Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 21.

⁶⁰ Et sic quicumque homo est sine mortali peccato, iam dyabolus exivit ab eo et factus est domus Christi. Quando vero incidit in peccatum mortale, tunc statim dyabolus intrat in cor illius et factus est domus dyaboli...Ibid., 42.

⁶¹ Russell, *Lucifer*, 81.

preaching. Fewer references are made to these metaphors of body and family in 1405.

The one primary exception from the *Collecta* is Hus's sermon on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity:

Anyone following the spirit of God, is guided, led, or driven to work in virtue, these [individuals] are adopted by the Son of God through grace from God. In contrary, someone driven by the spirit of the Devil to work evil, is the son of the Devil. For just as the spirit of God drives the good to do good...the spirit of the Devil urges the evil to do evil.⁶²

On March 14, 1411, Hus closely reflected the earlier passage in a sermon vehemently denouncing a sinful church. The sermon began with reflections on Luke 15, the parable of the prodigal son, and here he began his exegesis by placing Christ in the role of the father, stating that "Christ Jesus 'has two sons:' the innocent and the mortal sinner; and allegorically, the Jewish people and the gentiles." He continued:

The second son represents a pile of sinners, that despite being his creation, they will not have a place in the house of the Father in eternity- and it follows that these contrary ones are called such sons. First they are the malignant church (*ecclesia*), second the city of Babylon, third the synagogue of Satan and thus to others the appropriation of evil.⁶³

Although Hus began with mortal sinners as sons of Christ, through proof texts from Augustine and the Epistles of Paul, he united them into being one with the Devil:

And [Jesus] comes from God the Father. And with all the Saints he adheres tightly to one city of that region. The Devil is in the city of Babylon, and that is his city, and should he himself finally enter the kingdom, he will rule in it. 1 Cor. 6. 'He who adheres to God, is one spirit-

⁶² Quicumque enim spiritu Dei aguntur, id est reguntur, ducuntur or inpelluntur in virtutum opera, hii filii Dei sunt adoptive per gratiam ex Deo geniti, sicut e contrario quicumque spiritu dyaboli aguntur in malo opere, hii filii dyaboli sunt. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 378.

⁶³ In illo tempore dicit Jesus discipulis suis: "Homo quidam" Christus Jesus "habuit duos filios" innocentem et peccatorem mortaliter; et allegorice: populum Judaicum et gentilem. –Secundus autem filius, peccatorum cumulus, quamvis sit filius eius creacione, tamen non manebit in domo patris sui in eternum –et secundum hoc diversimode nominator talis filius. Primo de aliis appropriacionibus malorum. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 90.

and he who adheres to the Devil, he is his son' and thus the Devil incarnate...⁶⁴

This sermon, building off the familiar theme of the city of God, is a perfect example of Hus's growing use of polemic in his preaching. The city of Babylon was often allegorically substituted for Rome, and Hus's reference to a single city may have been in relation to his rejection of the summons to Rome to stand trial.⁶⁵ Whereas in 1405 Hus warned of the onslaught of the Devil, by this point in 1411 he no longer preached hope for the church of the papacy, but he had begun explicitly associating them in general terms with the Devil as his children and followers.

References to the sons of the Devil also appear in connection with those in mortal sin. He commonly used the term "son of the Devil" in conjunction with those guilty of mortal sin, and at times specifically referring to a corrupt clergy. Hus gave this title to those guilty of pride, envy, lust, and numerous other sins that, in some cases, he described as sins that transform a "Son of Christ" into a "Son of the Devil."⁶⁶ The assumption may be that those sinners who merited damnation served as examples of how individuals are corrupted; but Hus went a step further in a number of examples,

⁶⁴ Et abiit-a Deo Patre et sic ab omnibus sanctis et adhesit uni civium regionis illius i. dyabolo, qui est civis Babilonie, que est civitas eius, que finaliter debet esse regnum ipsius, in qua regnabit. 'Adhesit' 1 Cor. 6: 'ui adhesit Deo, unus spiritus est-et qua adheret dyabolo, fit filius eius et sic dyabolus incarnatus-Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 92.

⁶⁵ Joachim of Fiore first links the Babylon of the Antichrist to Rome in the late twelfth century. Emerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981), 61. Petrarch first linked Babylon to Avignon as the "Babylonian Captivity," a label which may have easily followed the papacy thereafter. Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, 38. The frequent late medieval references to Babylon also sprang out of the expectation of an imminent false pope and the impending fulfillment of the book of Revelation. Bernard McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Hundred Years of the Human Fascination with Evil* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 174.

⁶⁶ Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 55, 246; vol. 4, 114.

going so far to state that these people were actually the incarnate flesh of the Devil.⁶⁷ By linking sons of the Devil to the living flesh of humans, Hus combined analogies to contrast the body of the Devil with the body of Christ and gave his audience a physical representation of evil to defeat.

Hus used the imagery based on the limbs of the body of the Devil more often in the *Sermones*, as opposed to a single reference to the “body of the Devil” in the *Collecta*.⁶⁸ This reference to the Devil’s minions perhaps directly relates to Hus having specific opponents in mind as he preached. He used the “limbs” metaphor in a sermon from January 25, 1411, in which he compared lepers and evil priests: “How many more of them should we fight? When they become the infected limbs of the Devil, they finally are expelled as members of the sons of Jesus Christ, and yet now they nevertheless lurk among us.”⁶⁹ He again used the metaphor on March 8, 1411 in reference to the preaching of the Word of God: “The Devil opposes the Way and does not wish us to hear the Word...others who wish this are the limbs (*membra*) of the Devil.”⁷⁰ In this respect, all sinners are not just spiritual threats to the audience of Bethlehem Chapel, but they are, in fact, part of the Devil’s deceptions. Hus described those limbs of Satan as intermingled with the faithful and intended to corrupt and lead to damnation. Hus

⁶⁷Ex quo ergo Deus nos ita dignificavit, ve ergo illi homini, qui sic existens dingus se indignificat per peccata moratalia et filius dyaboli efficitur, ymmo fit dyabolus incarnates... Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 114.

⁶⁸ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 573.

⁶⁹ Quanto magis fugere debemus illos, qui sunt infecti lepra peccati mortalis in anima, quia tales, cum sunt membra infecta dyaboli, finaliter a membris Jesu Christi filiis eicientur, qui tamen nunc latent inter ipsos. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 224.

⁷⁰ Et dyabolus opposite modo non vult nos verbum Dominicum audire, ne illud implentes salvemur. Qui ergo aliis sic volunt, sunt membra dyaboli. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 63.

described those in mortal sin as having not only a close relationship with the Devil, but also a shared identity and purpose. His descriptions of those in sin imbued the fallen with the Devil's power and mission. This mission exemplifies Hus's preference for simple dichotomy, as the Devil's mission to corrupt the faithful parallels and opposes the mission Hus explicitly gave to his audience.

As he did in his sermons from 1404-05, Hus saturated many of his 1411 sermons with martial language and imagery. Many of these later images are markedly similar to his earlier ones, but a more explicit connection can be seen to Hus's experience and considerably more emphasis on the need to fight and conquer the influence of the corrupt clergy on the Holy Mother Church. A specific example of his later use of the military analogy is his sermon from the First Sunday after Easter, April 19, 1411. This sermon is based on John 20, where Jesus appeared to his disciples twice inside their locked room and spoke in the two encounters: "Peace be with you." The purpose of Hus's sermon was to define the meaning of peace and contrast Christ's gift of peace with the conflict revolving around Hus's excommunication. He defined the peace of Christ as something that is only attainable after personal victory over the world:

He offers peace, he who comes on account of peace. For if there is discord among men and angels and God- none of them would be able to end it. For if Christ was not born, reconciling man to God and angels, then no one could be sanctified. He came so that no one is detained in darkness after death, as he showed to St. John the Baptist. Christ gives peace to everyone and from their purgatory the holy fathers were led out. Therefore, these are our enemy. We conquer the flesh, the world, and the Devil, so that we arrive to that peace.⁷¹

⁷¹ Discordia enim fuit inter homines et angelos et Deum-et nullus illam potuit sedare, nisi Christus nasceretur, hominem reconciliando nullus illam potuit sedare, nisi Christus nasceretur, hominem reconciliando Deo et angelis, quia nullus tam sanctus fuit prius, quin non in tenebris detineatur post mortem, ut patet de S. Joohanne Baptista. Quibus Christus pacem dedit et de purgatorio sanctos patres educendo suos. Ergo hic inimicos nostros, carnem, mundum et dyabolum vincamus, ut ad pacem illam perveniamus. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 50.

Hus clearly emphasized that peace is only attained by enduring the struggles of the physical world. He then linked contemporary corrupt priests and their sins explicitly to the persona of the Devil. In this sermon, he posed a rhetorical question to the audience:

And because he says, 'Just as the Father sent me, I send you.' This so that you might confess the truth, you might not proclaim judicial dominion, not to pursue avarice, but so you might suffer in my likeness. Therefore, in what manner does he now send evil priests? Surely he does not send them for accumulating positions and pursuing avarice. Who from these reasons are gaining from the priesthood? Certainly nobody. Because the devil Mammon sends such. Who therefore perspires of Avarice, they are sent from Mammon, who of pride, they are sent from Satan and Lucifer, who of luxury, they are sent from Asmodeus, who in truth are sent for the gullet, they are sent from Bale, the devouring idol.⁷²

Hus concluded the sermon by borrowing extensively from Bernard of Clairvaux, linking the failures of the clergy with the ongoing spiritual battle, which Hus commonly referenced:

Therefore, Holy Mother Church does not have peace from the persecution of heretics, from the persecution of Jews, no it does not have peace from hypocrites simulating holiness. Bernard says, 'Once it was forthcoming, but now that he comes the time is fulfilled. Behold my bitterness in peace most bitter. First bitter in the martyr's death, bitterer after being in conflict with heretics, most bitter now in the morals of the house, but also of falsehood, of Christians and false sons, rectors of the Church posing themselves as the militant. They do not fight, they are not able to fight, therefore they grow stronger, therefore they having multiplied are above us, they are an intestinal and incurable plague of the Church, and difficultly cured-and for that reason in bitter peace it is most bitter.'⁷³

⁷² Et quia dicit, "Sicut me misit Pater, ego mitto vos," sc. Ut veritatem fateamini, predicetis, non dominionum iudicialiter, non avariciam sectemini, sed ad instar mei paciamini. Qualiter ergo misit nunc sacerdotes malos? Numquid ad accumulandum prebendas et avaricie insitendum, qui ea de causa sacerdotium sunt adepti? Certe non, quia Mamone dyabolus misit tales. Qui ergo insudant avaricie, missi sunt a Mamone; qui superbe missi sunt a Sathana superbo et Lucifero; qui luxurie, missi sunt ab Azmodeo; qui vero gule, missi sunt a Beele, voraci ydolo. Ibid., 51.

⁷³ Non habuit ergo s. mater ecclesia pacem ab hereticorum persecucione, a Judeorum persecucione, iam non havet pacem ab ypocritarum sanctitate simulate. Unde dicit Bernardus, "Olym predictum est, nunc tempus implecionis advenit. Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima. Amara prius in nece martirum, amarior post in conflict hereticorum, amarissima nunc in moribus domesticorum, sed fictorum, christanorum et false se filios rectores ecclesia fingencium militantis. Non fugare, non fogere eos

This sermon also helped illustrate the complexity of the web of foes Hus described. The Devil is at the root of all the world's woes; yet, Hus rarely portrayed the Devil as a lone belligerent. Satan's body and sons are common agents, and within this sermon Hus alluded to Jews, heretics, and evil priests as part of the Devil's servants in the world.

Hus's sermons attempted to awaken his audience to their embattled state, but simultaneously Hus also tried to assure them of their preordained victory. To achieve this end, Hus at times mitigated his own fearsome description of the Devil's power. When he chose to console his audience, he comforted them in the fact that their victory was essentially assured by elaborating on the complex relationship between God and the Devil.

In two separate Lenten sermons from 1411, Hus expounded far more explicitly on the authority and power of the Devil in relationship with God. In 1411, Hus waded into the traditionally muddy philosophical waters of nominalism and realism to preach on the source of the Devil's power and authority. Hus carefully trod between two of the great influences in his theological development: John Wyclif (d.1384) and Peter Lombard (d.1160). He generally adhered to a realist position on the Devil, which granted God ultimate authority and unrestrained power in the universe.⁷⁴ This meant that God allowed evil and the acts of the Devil to occur. Wyclif, however, was a far more radical realist who took realist principals to extremes, often reaching dangerous heretical positions in the eyes of established church. Since Wyclif ascribed a total omnipotence and the subsequent responsibility for all evil to God, God has the ultimate

potest, ita invaluerunt, ita multiplicati sunt super nos, intestina et insanabilis plaga ecclesie, que difficulter curator-et ideo in pace amaritudo eius amarissima..." Ibid., 53.

⁷⁴ Russell, *Lucifer*, 279.

responsibility for the Devil, evil, and sin.⁷⁵ Many of Wyclif's deductions that church leaders condemned as heretical stem from his realist stance on theology. This includes his denial of transubstantiation and his controversial assertion that because God grants the Devil authority over the earth, God should obey the Devil.⁷⁶ A doctrine of predestination is also a ready by-product of this theological stance which, since God is all-knowing, counters the generally nominalist principle of free will.⁷⁷ Peter Lombard, on the other hand, viewed the Devil as one who chose an evil path with free will, and he concluded that all humans also have the free will to choose evil or good.⁷⁸

Hus's attempt to moderate between the two extremes essentially appears in 1410. Prior to Kutná Hora in 1409, Prague University was divided between nominalist and realist factions, which also closely corresponded to a divide between German and Czech speakers. By 1410, many of the German nominalist scholars had abandoned Prague, leaving Hus surrounded by likeminded colleagues who generally agreed with realist principles.⁷⁹ This gave Hus an opportunity to begin experimenting with ways to make Wyclif's realism more acceptable to a wider nominalist audience. With the departure of the German nominalists, Hus seems to have been more inclined to preach

⁷⁵ Dolejšová, "Nominalist and Realist Approaches to the Problem of Authority," 53.

⁷⁶ Russell, *Lucifer*, 283.

⁷⁷ Russell, *Lucifer*, 282. Wyclif explains the theology for this choice in *De Domino Divino* where he states "If a creature has dominium over anything than God already has dominium over it. So any created dominium follows upon the divine dominium." Translation from Stephen E. Lahey, *Philosophy and Politics in the thought of John Wyclif*, 68. *Ex quo sequitur quod dominum Dei mensurat, ut prius et presuppositum, Omnia alia assignada: si enim creatura haet dominum super quid quum, Deus prius habet dominum super idem; ideo ad quodlibet creature dominum sequitur dominum divinum, et non econtra.* Iohannis Wycliffe, *De Dominio Divino Libri Tres*, ed. Reginald Lance Poole (London: Trübner and Co, 1890), III, 19.

⁷⁸ Russell, *Lucifer*, 175. Peter Lombard, *Libri IV Sententiarum* (Florence: Claras Aquas, 1916), 289, 416.

⁷⁹ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 24.

with moderate elements of realist theology concerning the Devil in his sermons to the Bethlehem audience. In particular, rather than completely and unequivocally denying free will, as Wyclif did, Hus carefully tempered realism with the semi-nominalism of Peter Lombard. In effect, Hus serves as a fascinating hybrid of the two schools of thought, for he generally tried to apply and rectify both approaches. Ivana Dolejšová describes Hus, as having come from a background in realist thought which allowed him to epistemologically stand as both realist and nominalist. This is because of the broad realist view of authority that all beliefs, traditions, and scriptures could transcend from God. Pure nominalists, on the other hand, held a rigid view of the unquestioned authority of the church and councils as the current manifestation of divine authority. If the church and the councils wielded divine authority, then there could be no transcendent authority, in other words the power and authority the Devil wielded were illusion and false.⁸⁰ Consequently, in Hus's view, the Devil's authority is not directly from God as that would also contradict the authority of the church.

The first example of his moderate position is a sermon dated from March 8, 1411. In this warning, Hus said, "Through sin, [the Devil] has been given power from God himself by means of great sins, so he might vex man from defending himself."⁸¹ Hus acknowledges that the Devil is too powerful for man to repel, but neither does he call man defeated. In this way he affirmed man's free will to struggle against the Devil while acknowledging man's ineptitude without the help of God. By placing agency, if not

⁸⁰ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 30; Ivana Dolejšová, "Nominalist and Realist Approaches to the Problem of Authority: Paleč and Hus," 49-54.

⁸¹ Non enim dyabolus est illius potestatis, quod potest illabi ipse anime, quia nichil potest illabi ipsi anime, nisi solus eus. Sed per peccatum habet potestatem a Deo sibi datam propter tale peccatum, ut vexet hominem illum assistentem sibi. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 61.

self-reliance, in man, Hus showed a further unwillingness to follow Wyclif's extreme stance on predestination, at least in his sermons.⁸² Hus addressed the power of the Devil again with an analogy on March 15, 1411:

On the strength of the Devil in Job 40, "None have power above that one on Earth, who thus is created so that he might fear nothing." Nevertheless his is a magnitude of strength, yet he is not able to hurt man, if man himself does not wish to consent. And the Devil is comparable to a dog that is powerless to bite, if he is not approached – if approached he may bite. For thus the Devil is not able to conquer anyone with sin without that sin first being consented to.⁸³

Whereas in 1405, the Devil was a lion or monster looking to devour, in 1411 this sermon Hus reduced Satan to a mere chained dog. Again, he put considerable emphasis on the free will of the sinner to, in effect, pet the dog. Simply stated, the Devil remains ever-present, but those in mortal sin have not necessarily been consumed by a prowling Devil, as Hus suggested in 1405; rather he would have said they made a choice to serve the Devil and sin. This is a revealing standpoint for Hus to have taken, and although in the end this made the Devil less of an immediate threat to the faithful, it made those misguided sinners who surrounded the faithful that much more menacing to the listening audience. The emphasis shifted onto the sinners who, of their own volition, chose sin and the service of the Devil. Hus intended his audience to be much more aware of sin and the sinners around them. Those sinners included Hus's enemies

⁸² Although predestination is a rare topic in his sermons, it does play a prominent role in his work *De Ecclesia*. He essentially cites Augustine in his development of his idea of the predestinate, but avoided the topic in his sermons. Among detailed discussion, Hus defines predestination in his 1413 writing as, "For the omniscient God, who has given to all things their weight, measure and number, has foredetermined how many shall ultimately be saved." Hus, *De Ecclesia*, 4.

⁸³ De fortitudine dyaboli Job 40, "Non est potestas supra illum in terra, qui factus est ita, ut nullum timeat." Actamen quantitatis fortis est, non tamen homini potest nocere, nisi ipse velit consentire. Et comparator dyabolus cani in cathena, qu nullum mordere potest, nisi quis accedat ad illum-extunc mordet eum. Sic eciam dyabolus neminem vincere potest peccatis, nisi quis consenciat illi. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*. vol. 3, 101.

actively working towards his excommunication and destruction. His diminishment of the Devil's power placed the blame for the ongoing disruption squarely on the sinful choices of the Archbishop and others working against Hus. These sinners threatened the faithful in many forms, and Hus gave them a larger role as his preaching became more polemical. They could take many forms in Hus's sermons, but one of the most prominent is the Antichrist.

CHAPTER 5
THREATS TO THE FLOCK: THE ANTICHRIST AND EARTHLY SINNERS

The Antichrist

Hus described the primary opponent of his flock as the Devil, but his preaching on the Antichrist added a physically present and terrifying entity to his warnings for the faithful. Just as the Devil was essentially the opposite of the Trinity's spiritual nature, Hus's concept of the Antichrist combined interwoven threads of humanity and divinity that mimicked the nature of Christ. In the mysterious person(s) of the Antichrist, Hus portrayed a physically present evil that was corrupting the church and was partly responsible for the tribulations that befell Hus and others of the Czech reformers beginning in 1410. Although the entity of the Antichrist may appear side by side with the Devil within martial analogies, many of Hus's references to the Antichrist serve to frame his own resistance to the Archbishop and the papal curia. In addition to calling upon his audience to resist the Devil, the Antichrist became a foe whom Hus could frame as an example of his own defiance and action against the forces of evil.

Antichrist is a word that frequently appeared in medieval eschatological discussions. Theologians, preachers, and others generally referenced Antichrist in two overlapping ways. One may encounter the term in reference to the nominal Antichrist, denoting the name of the final single enemy of Christians at the time of the Apocalypse. The other meaning, perhaps more commonly used by preachers such as Hus, was as a broad label for anyone working against the faithful or leading a faithless life, a use which dramatically diminished eschatological implications.¹ Usually one can decipher Hus's

¹ Richard Kenneth Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981). 4.

use of the word from the context of the sermon, although at times it is entirely possible that Hus's use of "the Antichrist" was intended to allow for multiple interpretations. Regardless, the word Antichrist is synonymous with evil.² Before the Protestant theologians of the sixteenth-century redefined the term to refer almost exclusively to the papacy, it had a myriad of designees in the Middle Ages, including Muslims and heretics.³ Medieval writers also frequently applied the label of Antichrist to all false and hypocritical Christians.⁴ Although this word has its origins in the first and second epistles of John, the Latin Church fathers used the term sparingly, with only few references in western theological texts (outside of Ireland) before the early twelfth century.⁵ Twelfth-century Christian writers' increasing concern for Antichrist was one aspect of the unsettled nature of society in the wake of the dynamic changes in social and political structure of the High Middle Ages.⁶ By the time of Hus, the Antichrist had played a significant part in the religious discussion in European print culture, popular culture, and preaching.⁷ Bernard McGinn's research revealed that widespread

² McGinn, *Antichrist*, 2.

³ McGinn points out that the reformation created a "polarization" of how Protestants and Catholics conceived antichrist, as Catholics often maintained the medieval broad concept while Luther and other reformers commonly made the identification of the pope as antichrist a primary tenant of belief. It is interesting, however, that by the Late Middle Ages Jews were nearly exempt from the antichrist concerns. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 199-201.

⁴ Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, 63.

⁵ Bernard McGinn, "Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages," in Werner Verbeke et al eds. *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia Series 1 Studia 15 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 15. Richard Kenneth Emmerson views the growing concern over antichrist as developing a century later. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, 62.

⁶ McGinn, "Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages," 16.

⁷ Jan Wyclif, *Operis Evangelici liber tertius et quartus sive De Antichristo liber primus et secundus*, ed. Johann Losserth (London: Trübner, 1896); other works entitled *De Antichristo* were also written by Anselm (12th century). The most famous Bohemian representation of the Antichrist appeared in the late fifteenth century, in the Jena Codex which uses imagery of Hus and the Hussite Wars to illustrate

predictions concerning the arrival of the Antichrist gained traction in Europe in the years 1346, 1347, 1348, 1360, 1365, 1375, 1387, 1396, 1400, 1417, and 1418.⁸

The idea of the Antichrist was a prominent part of the Bohemian religious conversation prior to Jan Hus. It appears in the texts of numerous Bohemian sources over roughly two centuries.⁹ A clear example can be seen in the illustrations of the Velislav Bible created circa 1340.¹⁰ This illuminated Bible dedicates several pages to contrasting a charming, beautiful, and deceptive Antichrist, who with evil intent, imitates Jesus and looks nearly identical to the adjacent figure of Christ. The Velislav Bible first depicts the Antichrist as a tonsured monk leading his flock of goats and demons with a jagged and fierce-looking shepherd's crook. The mendicant orders had been a target of reform preachers in Prague since Waldhauser denounced a number of their practices, including their hypocritical claim of poverty.¹¹ The mendicants also remained a source of irritation for local preachers through the time of Hus. The Antichrist is not portrayed as a bishop or member of the high clergy, but rather appears as a mendicant, and the image quite possibly reflects urban tensions between parochial clergy and the transient mendicant orders usurping local preaching authority and stealing parishioners.¹²

the Bohemian struggle against the Antichrist in the fifteenth-century. It is officially known as the *Jenský kodex antithesis Christi et antichristi, 1490-1510*. Prague, Knihovna Národního muzea v Praze, IV.B.24.

⁸ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 173.

⁹ Peter Nejedlý points out in his philological analysis of the term *Antikristus* that outside of the preaching context it also can be found in a number of saint's lives, including that of Milič z Kroměříž. Peter Nejedlý, "K Vývoji Substantiva Antikrist(us) ve Staročeské Slovní Zásobe" in *Zrození Mýtu: Dva Životy Husitské Epochy*, ed. Robert Novotný and Petr Šámal, et al (Prague: Paseka, 2011), 287.

¹⁰ Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, XXIII.C.124, fol. 146r.

¹¹ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 8.

¹² McGinn, "Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages," 18. The tension between university preachers and mendicants was Europe wide as even Jean Gerson portrayed mendicants as "one of the

Successive images show the Antichrist as an exact image of Christ, mimicking Christ's actions, but recognizable by the ever-present demons standing with the on-lookers or whispering inspiration in the Antichrist's ear.¹³

The idea of Antichrist played a considerable role in the life of Milíč z Kroměříž, who wrote the *Libellus de Antichristo* as a defense against the Roman inquisition, which had imprisoned him for his eschatological preaching concerning the Antichrist and the papacy. Milíč, who seems to have firmly believed that the Antichrist was in the world and corrupting the church, traveled to Rome not to condemn, but to warn the pope of the Antichrist's influence on the church. Milíč made no specific accusations, but he only highlighted scandals and corruption that he believed disseminated directly from the Antichrist's influence. Either his audience with the pope or his interview with the inquisition allayed many of his fears, and upon his return from Rome, he never again preached or wrote concerning Antichrist.¹⁴ Later that century, Matěj of Janov (d. 1394) included a biography of Milíč written between 1384 and 1394 as part of his *Regulae Veteris et Novis Testamenti*. Matěj described Milíč as a fervent opponent of an imperial Antichrist in the form of Charles IV. Matěj also believed the Antichrist was present in his time, and he used Milíč as a mouth-piece for his own concern that the high clergy and imperial authorities were all in his clutches. Milíč asked who the Antichrist was, and Matěj readily provided an answer.¹⁵ Hus, a late entry into the Bohemian discussion on

great plagues of the Church." Nancy McLoughlin, "Gerson as a Preacher in the Conflict Between Mendicants and Secular Priests," in *Brill Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 250.

¹³ *Ibid.*, "18.

¹⁴ Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, 37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29-40.

Antichrist, had to engage with the same questions. His eventual descriptions of the Antichrist were similar to those of the Bible, Milíč, and Matěj. Contrary to the path of Milíč, Hus's preaching about the Antichrist increased substantially as his career progressed.

Most biographies of Hus draw attention to the fact that one of the false accusations adversaries repeatedly made against him was a belief that he had explicitly referred to the pope as the Antichrist, a charge he denied:

No I did not say that, but I did say: If the pope sells benefices, if he is proud, greedy, and in other ways contrary to Christ, then he is the Antichrist. For if they are lacking, in so far as they seek to be, then all these popes are the Antichrist; for there are good popes, such as Saint Gregory. He was not the Antichrist, nor was he at any time, as I estimate.¹⁶

Although many biographies absolve Hus of his outright portrayal of the pope as Antichrist, one can clearly see, if the record is accurate, that Hus certainly insinuated that the current pope(s) was (were) the Antichrist, for he accused the papacy on multiple occasions of greed, pride, and sin.¹⁷

Despite his denial of calling the pope the Antichrist, references to Antichrist abound in his works, and Hus was adept at making implications. His interest and concern for Antichrist, however, become a late addition to his preaching. In the sermons of the *Collecta*, the Latin *antichristus* makes only a single appearance. In August of

¹⁶ *Non dixi, sed dixi: Si papa vendit beneficia, si est superbus avarus et aliter in moribus Christo contrarius, tunc est antichristus. Sed absit, quod exinde sequatur, quod omnis papa sit Antichristus; bonus enim papa, ut S. Gregorius, non est Antichristus, nec fuit umquam, ut aestimo.* František Palacký, *Documenta Mag. Johannis Hus* (Prague, F. Tempský, 1869), 170.

¹⁷ Of the English works on Hus, Spinka, *Jan Hus's Concept of the Church*, 84-85; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 15-16; Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 40 all emphasize Hus's denial of the charge and essentially absolve Hus of the charge. Unfortunately, Kejř does not address this point directly in *Husův Proces*.

1405, Hus preached a sermon based on 1 Corinthians 10, reiterating Paul's message to not become too confident in one's own righteousness:

And you know, since the time of the ascension of the Lord and to the day of judgment one is called to following his singular duty to whatever end of the world, for as a response to the final age of the world we should take our morals seriously, so that as we approach nearer to the end, we might undertake to be great without the world and we might resist the force of the Devil and the laws of the Antichrist, because Paul says concerning caution: 'therefore whoever considers themselves secure, should take care not to fall.'¹⁸

This passage clearly highlights an eschatological context for the Antichrist which called for the listener to beware the day of judgment. The purpose of this passage, along with the bulk of the sermon, is to explain the scriptural passage. It does not offer any significant additional insight than a relatively simple explication of the text. In addition, this is the only point in the sermon where the word *antichristus* appears, and the significance of the laws probably refers to Chapter 7 of the book of Daniel where Daniel has visions of four great beasts that are given dominion over the earth.¹⁹ This could also be a reference to the commands of the beasts from Revelation 13.²⁰ The sermon does, however, have the brief call for resistance that is a common component of Hus's sermons referencing the Devil and will remain prominent in his career. His general disinterest in expanding on these connections suggests that the single reference to the Antichrist was negligible for achieving his actual goals for the sermon.

¹⁸ Et scias, quod totum tempus ab ascensione Domini usque ad diem iudicii vocatur secundum singulas partes eius finis alicuius seculi, nam corespondenter ad etatem ultimam seculi debemus gravitatem servare in moribus, ut, de quanto accedimus ad finem propinquius, de tanto minus secularia curemus et forcius dyaboli et Anticristi resistamus legibus, quia dicit pro cautela Paulus: Itaque qui se existimat stare, videat, ne cadat. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 401

¹⁹ Dn 7: 7-14, New Jerusalem Edition.

²⁰ Ibid., Rv. 13,

The limited use of the Antichrist in the *Collecta* could probably be linked to any number of factors. Yet, just as Hus preached on authority, priesthood, and his relation to local and broader and religious currents, he obviously did not yet feel a need to emphasize eschatological portents. This may relate to either his personal understanding of the world or possibly his understanding that stressing eschatological ideas would be ineffective with his audience. Unlike the ever-present Devil and the human failures of priests, warnings of Antichrist generate a much darker tone that judgment is imminent. Hus's sermons suggest that at least around 1405 he might not have felt that was the case.²¹

In the *Sermones in Capella Bethlehem* references to the Antichrist are more frequent, with at least fifteen different sermons referencing this evil. Although these numbers pale in comparison to the proliferation of references to the Devil, the polemical context of 1410-1411 clearly influenced Hus to address the dangers of the Antichrist in a number of specific ways. Hus's primary interpretation of the Antichrist was an earthly physical foe that worked to corrupt the church in correlation with human sinners. In particular, Hus used two recurring and related concepts: false authority and hypocrisy.

Hus used the idea of law and authority several times to illustrate that those individuals acting as the Antichrist issued laws contradictory to the law of God and Christ. For example, on March 8, 1411, in a sermon on the laws of God and the laws of the Devil, Hus stated:

²¹ The case has been made by Peter Morée that the very act of preaching itself had deep eschatological implications. Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia*, 151-153. Although, I tend to agree with him, at the same time there is an apparent level of urgency that appears in Hus's later sermons that lead me to believe that a generalized statement of that sort does not allow for dramatic shifts in emphasis from sermon to sermon.

You know- or you should know- which precepts I gave to you, to serve the living God and to expect his day of judgment, because he wrote much on the day of judgment and Antichrist. For it says in 1 John, 2, 'Now Antichrist exalts in his members.' And it says in Isidore, that whoever does not accept the faith of Christ but is only imitating, he is now in fact the Antichrist.²²

On March 18, 1411, Hus revisited the topic again:

Therefore, you who transgress the law of God and are great authorities, whichever of your traditions were handed down from God, they are the most wise, most prudent, and most benevolent. God, in giving his law to his faithful, will not oppress them. Therefore, whoever may say that any legislation in itself supersedes the law of Christ, he is in fact the Antichrist.²³

Zbyněk's preaching ban of February, 1411 was the closest significant event in Hus's life to these sermons. Although Hus did not mention the ban directly, it is entirely possible that these sermons reflect Hus's public response to the Archbishop.²⁴ This is clearly a reference to the clerical misuse of authority as well as an explanation of his defiance of the preaching ban. Yet, the similarity between this 1411 reference and the 1405 reference cannot be ignored. Both highlight the misuse of authority as an evil behavior common to Antichrist. Hus may deliberately have emphasized it in relation to the events of February, 1411.²⁵ His explanation together with his open defiance against the

²² Scitis-aut scire devetis-que precept dedi vobis, sc. servire Deo vivo et expectare diem eius ad iudicium, quia ipsis specialiter scripsit multa de die iudicii et Antichristo. Nam dicit Jo. I ep. 2, "Iam Antichristus in suis membris mirificat." Et dicit Ysidorus, quod quicumque accepta fide Christi ipsum non imitator, iam eo facto est Antichristus. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 64.

²³ Quare et vos transgredimini mandata Dei que sunt maioris auctoritatis, quam tradiciones vestre, cum sint tradita a Deo sapientissimo, prudentissimo et benivolentissimo, qui in dando legem suis fidelibus suos non agravabit. Quincunque ergo dicere quod ipse in legislacione aaliquid superadderet legi Christi, eo facto ipse est Antichristus. *Ibid.*, 121.

²⁴ Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 103.

²⁵ Emerson suggests a number a common medieval understanding of the Antichrist is his creation of new laws. Emerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, 90-91. An interesting link between law and antichrist made by McGinn is a fifth-century text *Testament of the Lord*, written in Syriac it describes the Antichrist as the "Lawless One" who will do miracles and change most of his form at will. McGinn, *Antichrist*, 69.

Antichrist may have served as a powerful example for his audience, thus making them aware of their immersion in the battle against evil.

This relation between the Antichrist and false authority continues through 1411 with two other significant references that link corrupt prelates to Antichrist. In June, Hus placed those guilty of simony on the same level of sin with heretics, schismatics, and “the worst of Antichrist.”²⁶ On August 24, 1411, Hus again mentioned evil prelates’ links to Antichrist: “Therefore, Christ is showing in the Gospel, that whoever may be the humblest, poorest, and most chaste, in the manner of Christ, that person will be the greatest prelate and most worthy in God’s heart. Whoever contradicts the life of Christ is a not a great prelate, but one of the Devil and Antichrist.”²⁷

In addition to the recurring concept of false authority, Hus also regularly discussed the Antichrist’s penchant for hypocrisy. In his estimation, hypocrisy made one a “member of the Antichrist,” and in the case of bishops and priests, he referred to them as “false brothers, not sons of Christ but of Antichrist.”²⁸ Hus expounded rather indiscriminately against sinful clerics with the label of Antichrist. For example in early March, 1411 he preached:

For Matthew 24 says, ‘Pseudochrists will arise and give great signs, as if that were possible, for the elect of God will be lead into error.’
Pseudochrists come and the members of Antichrist lie hidden from sight and simulate religion. For just as Christ came into the world in humility, he alone is able to be known as an apostle through his humility, not the

²⁶ Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 166.

²⁷ In ewangelio ergo ostendit Christus, quod qui fuerit humillimus, pauperrimus, chastissimus, sicut Christus, quod talis erit maximus prelatus et dignissimus coram Deo. Qui vero Christo vita contriaretur talis non eius esset prelatus, sed dyaboli et Antichristi. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 5, 4.

²⁸ Qui fratres sic facientes vere sunt fratres imitators Christi; quodsi non, sunt membra Antichristi. Quid ergo de falsis fratribus, non Chrisiti sed Antichristi, dicitur, qui nedum seminant, sed semen volunt conculcare. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 1, 89.

Pharisees and scribes. For just as now those that are known as great prelates are in fact of the Antichrist.²⁹

Unlike the broad use of diabolical imagery, Hus's references to Antichrist in the *Sermones*, seem deliberately targeted against his critics and the Archbishop. One reason for this may simply be that by early 1411, Hus could no longer endure the corruption and hypocrisy of those attempting to silence him. Perhaps some of the more radical individuals around Hus may also have influenced his preaching at this time. Individuals such as Jerome of Prague, Jakoubek of Střibro, and Nicholas of Dresden had begun generating far more subversive ideas than those of Hus.³⁰ Jakoubek even openly declared the pope to be the Antichrist, signaling the imminent apocalypse.³¹ Peter Nejedlý suggests that "Antichrist" at this time was becoming a common pejorative term. The title was used so often in the context of the schism that even Hus's use of the label may have amounted to little more than petty name calling.³²

Perhaps to add more significance to the label of Antichrist, Hus also offered some caution to his audience about Antichrist's reach. On Easter Sunday 1411, he preached a lengthy Easter sermon, with a clear warning that even those of faith may still turn away from God and serve evil. He stated:

Therefore, not all follies of Antichrist are avoided by Christ's faithful. They [under Antichrist's sway] go forth excelling in mortal sin, because through

²⁹ Qui Pseudochristi et membra Antichristi latenter veniunt sub specie religionis simulate: nam sicut Christus veniens in mundum venit humiliter, qui solum fuit cognitus ab humilibus apostolicis suis, non a phariseis et scribis, sicut etiam nunc facta Antichristi non cognoscuntur a magnis prelatibus, se dab humilibus solum... Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 41.

³⁰ McGinn, *Antichrist*, 184; Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 55; Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství*, 225-226, Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 79-80, 136-137.

³¹ Fudge suggests that it was Jakoubek's declaration of the Pope as the Antichrist that was misattributed at Constance to Hus. Fudge, *The Magnificent Ride*, 79.

³² Nejedlý, "K Vývoji Substantiva Antikrist(us)," 288-89.

their sins they are excommunicated, sentenced while alive if not from man then from God, as said by the prophet in Psalm 118 “they are cursed who stray from your commands.”³³

Despite an increased emphasis on the powers and presence of Antichrist, Hus does not fail to remind his flock that other threats are lurking to destroy their souls. The Antichrist represented those disguised as Christians, but also exhibited traits that clearly reflected his direct critics. Hus, however, also addressed numerous others wallowing in obvious mortal sin. They also serve as a threat and warning for Hus’s audience.

Women, Sodomites, Jews, and Heretics

Although Hus’s descriptions of the Devil and the Antichrist served as imminent warnings to his audience, he also described a wide array of sinners that exemplified the fallen among the faithful. He warned listeners of the supernatural Devil or the eschatological Antichrist, yet these two tropes hardly address all temptation and woe that permeated the physical world. The Devil works in many ways, and Hus attempted to keep his audience informed about the wide variety of corporeal threats that could lead to sin. His sermons also reflected the daily interaction of the audience of Bethlehem Chapel with those whom devoted Christians considered outsiders or tempters. In particular, interspersed in Hus’s preaching were numerous tropes concerning women, Jews, heretics, sodomites, and even the rare mention of a witch.³⁴ His approach to these groups involved numerous inconsistencies and conflicting

³³ Non ergo omnes fulminaciones Antichristi sunt a Christi fidelibus advertende, nisi ille, que procedunt ex precedencia peccati mortalitatis, quia viva sententia qui dicit per Prophetam Psalm 118, “Maledicti, qui declinant a mandatis tuis.” Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 9.

³⁴ Although not found within the Sermons of the *Collecta* or the *Sermones* an explicit mention of Witches does appear in Hus’s postil of Saints Day Sermons assembled in 1412-1413. Jíří Daňhelka ed., *Mistr Jan Hus česká sváteční kázání*, 67.

generalizations in a manner common to medieval preaching.³⁵ Yet, those under the sway of sin played a critical role in Hus's theme of spiritual conflict. The Devil had defeated many, and now, mired in earthly sin, vanquished sinners would attempt to take the faithful with them to hell.

Hus could characterize the Devil and Antichrist as absolutely evil, but mortal and familiar sinners within the confines of Prague necessitated a more complex rhetorical approach. Hus was inconsistent from sermon to sermon in generalizing mortal sinners and outsiders as enemies to conquer. Despite Hus's dire warning concerning temptresses, sodomites, and Jews, his dramatic language of spiritual warfare was generally absent from these topics. Although he still called for resistance to these evils, he did not employ the rhetoric of warfare in relation to these groups. Instead, Hus described those marginalized by sin as examples of Satan's triumph over those in mortal sin. Within his sermons he set mortal sinners apart from the faithful flock of the Bethlehem Chapel and through that symbolic removal of the ungodly, he affirmed the righteous position of his audience as a moral community separated from the evils of the world.³⁶

Any attempt to generalize about Hus's opinions on women and Jews is especially problematic. His descriptions of the two groups ranged between evil and saintly and were, as such, inconsistent from sermon to sermon. Hus rarely differentiated his

³⁵ D'Avray points out in his seminal study of mendicant preaching before 1300 that completely contradictory statements concerning the generalization of groups of people are not uncommon in the same sermon. D'Avray, *The Preaching of the Friars*, 30.

³⁶ Max Weber described this separation as one of the critical components of a charismatic leader/disciple relationship. By forming the united community against a clear "other," the group is then capable of being called into action. Max Weber, "The Prophet," in *Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 253. Philip Smith, elaborates on this point by suggesting that an evil must be present for a charismatic leader to be effective, a component readily available in Hus's sermons. Smith, "Culture and Charisma," 103.

terminology; and although both the Latin and vernacular had specific terms for even varying ranks of prostitute, he seems to have rarely employed them in his surviving sermon texts.³⁷ Likewise, there is no defining vocabulary that distinguishes between the Jews of the Old or New Testament and those contemporary Jews in Prague. In other words, his references generally lacked precision leaving the listener unclear whether he meant the Jews of Jesus's time or those living nearby. The listener would have had to pay close attention to the context of the sermon to understand Hus's intentions. Therefore, any attempt to assign a general interpretation of the words woman and Jew are problematic, as they took on different meanings depending on the requirements and goals of a given message.

In Hus's heavily clerical and male-dominated context, the opposite sex provided an especially difficult challenge in the pulpit. Women certainly attended his preaching, but his portrayal of them as good and evil suggests that he may have been ill at ease with laywomen in general. One of Hus's most famous written tracts from exile is that of *Dčerka*, in which he wrote to a community of religious women to serve as a spiritual guide.³⁸ Also, three of Hus's 101 surviving letters explicitly addressed a woman or groups of women (including Queen Sofia, who famously, if not necessarily factually, regularly attended his preaching), and 23 others were addressed to broad audiences that may have included women.³⁹ Hus certainly did not exist in a male-only world, but

³⁷ David Mengel's "From Venice to Jerusalem and Beyond" is the quintessential work on the institution of prostitution in Prague. Mengel's work includes a careful study of terminology related to prostitution just prior to Hus's entry into Prague. The detailed terminology is essentially absent from Hus's sermons. Mengel, "From Venice to Jerusalem and Beyond," 421-22.

³⁸ Jan Hus, "Dčerka," In *Iohannis Hus Opera Omnia: drobné spisy české*, vol. 4, (Prague: Acad. Scientiarum Bohemoslovenicae, 1985): 163-186.

³⁹ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 58. Spinka, *The Letters of John Hus*, 8, 20, 116.

his perception of women in his preaching is difficult to ascertain between his frequent use of tropes concerning female sinfulness and his repeated praise of the women of Scripture. Hus showed a complex and often contradictory approach to women in a similar way to that of Bernardino of Siena, whom historians have described as being at times both respectful and misogynistic. Both of these men preached within a medieval religious context that struggled to reconcile the “the fallen temptress Eve and the pure co-Redemptrix Virgin Mary.”⁴⁰

Hus’s career falls at the beginning of what František Graus described as a “shift among so-called intellectuals” that saw a dramatic increase in theological misogyny. Graus suggested that clerical misogyny was closely linked to the growing prominence of female spiritual leaders that coincided with the growth of the Beguines, various powerful abbesses, and the rising influence of female mystics, such as Catherine of Siena.⁴¹ It is unclear to what degree this growing female presence affected Hus, as few contemporary female spiritual leaders gained significant notoriety in Bohemia.⁴² Perhaps more significant than threats to male authority is the clerical view of women as temptation. Clerical guidebooks, advisory sermons, and letters throughout Europe

⁴⁰ Marmando, *The Preacher’s Demons*, 33. Thomas M. Izbicki also writes with considerable detail on the use of women in preaching in fifteenth-century Italy in terms of sinful vanity when compared to the ideal female examples of scripture. Thomas M. Izbicki, “Pyres of Vanities: Mendicant Preaching on the Vanity of Women and its Lay Audience.” In *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, Thomas L. Amos, Eugene Green, Beverly Mayne Kienzle eds. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989).

⁴¹ František Graus, “The Church and its Critics in a Time of Crisis,” 77.

⁴² John Klassen discusses women acting as dissidents in his work on women in Hussite Bohemia, but there are no examples of female spiritual leadership that might challenge Hus’s position or typical roles for women. John Klassen, *Warring Maidens, Captive Wives, and Hussite Queens: Women and Men at War and at Peace in Fifteenth-Century Bohemia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

warned priests of the inherent dangers of seeing to the spiritual needs of women.⁴³ In the Bohemian context, Czech historian Jana Nechutová has labeled several precursors to Hus, such as Milíč, Conrad Waldhauser, and Matěj Janov, as generally seeing women as substantial threats to spirituality. Nechutová describes the existence of a common misogynist satire emanating from Bohemian preachers beginning towards the second half of the fourteenth century. Unfortunately, this discovery may simply be a consequence of the exponential increase in homiletic sources originating from the preaching reforms of Charles IV.⁴⁴ Hus's sermons, at a foundational level, seem to have shared many of the same stereotypes, contradictions, and misogyny of his contemporaries.⁴⁵

Holy women, of course, received an entirely different treatment than women in mortal sin. Similar to many other medieval priests, Hus readily praised and idealized women from scripture. He referenced falsely accused Susanna as she “signifies adulterous women who finally return to innocence.”⁴⁶ He, like his contemporaries, frequently praised Mary Magdalene and her perfect repentance.⁴⁷ He preached on how

⁴³ Bethlehem Allison Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2008), 20. Hus himself in a sermon warned young priests of the possibility of temptation through impure thoughts with women in confession.

⁴⁴ Jana Nechutová, “Frauen um Hus. Zu den Frauenfeindlichen Satire der Hussitenzeit,” In *Jan Hus: Zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Konfessionen*, Ferdinand Seibt, ed. (Munich: Oldenburg, 1997), 73-79. Nechutová remains the only specific work linking Hus to questions of gender to date. Unfortunately, the word *um* in her title means she does not actually examine Hus's treatment of women, just major trends before and after Hus's life.

⁴⁵ See in particular Ruth Mazo Karras's considerable analysis on issues sex, gender, and sexuality in Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁴⁶ Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 131.

⁴⁷ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 365; Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 3, 26, 37. For detailed explanation on the use of Mary Magdalene see: Jansen, *The Making of Magdalene: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*, 2000.

women first reached Christ's tomb and how after the crucifixion, Jesus appeared first to women who "illuminate the mind" so that the "holy mind might learn from the holy women."⁴⁸ Naturally, Hus also frequently addressed the Virgin Mary both "allegorically, as Mary signifies the Church who is virgin and spouse," but he was also capable of preaching with surprising tenderness. His Christmas Eve sermon from 1410 focused on Mary and Joseph's relationship and their mistrust of each other before Jesus's birth. Hus described their fears and highlighted their need to repent of their sinful uncertainty.⁴⁹ Historians have noted Hus's frequent preaching on Mary, to the point of describing him as a devotee.⁵⁰ Yet, all of these praiseworthy women represent tropes common to medieval preachers. Preachers frequently used the example of female saints to illustrate doctrine and clerical attributes, rather than any specific feminine identity.⁵¹ Hus's use of Mary Magdalene and Susanna differs little from the meta-theme of saints as examples of the repentant sinner becoming holy.⁵² Although he offered positive female spiritual role models, he added little to established utilitarian preaching on the women of scripture.⁵³

On the other side of the spectrum is Hus's use of women as a threat to salvation. Along with the frequent employment of examples illustrating feminine holiness, Hus also

⁴⁸ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 174.

⁴⁹ Hus's explanation of Mary as allegory is in the Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 64. Hus's considerable sermon on the bitterness and repentance of Mary is in Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 126-27. This sermon is particularly interesting because it implies that Mary sinned in fearing Joseph's reaction to her pregnancy and in not completely trusting God.

⁵⁰ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 60; Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 47.

⁵¹ Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 102, 120; Jansen, *The Making of Magdalene*, 8, 86, 106.

⁵² Jansen, *The Making of Magdalene*, 231.

⁵³ Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 85.

described women in menacing and dangerous terms. Rarely did Hus generalize directly concerning women, but one of his most common themes is spiritual damage brought on by sexual immorality. In particular, fornication and adultery are frequent topics. Even marital sex seemed problematic in light of his promotion of celibacy. For example, in his sermon on the Feast of the Holy Innocents in 1410, he stated:

But this epistle is read now on the [feast of the] Innocents, because it reminds us of the holy martyrs, who finally will sing a song with God, for they were not polluted by women. And when they are so great, those Holy Innocent Martyrs, that on their day this epistle is read. Today, therefore, we are mindful of the feast of the Innocents, because their virginity is mentioned, because they were virgins, and they were without pollution...⁵⁴

This passage states that the women themselves are not necessarily the problem; rather their association with intercourse made them a pollutant. Hus essentially implied that avoiding sex with women was the Innocents' most holy attribute and their most notable accomplishment after martyrdom. For Hus, and perhaps all priests with vows of celibacy after the twelfth-century, women represented a dangerous temptation.⁵⁵ Fornication stands out repeatedly in Hus's sermons as the sin of greatest concern, and a sin for which the local clergy was regularly chided. It appears dozens of times in the *Collecta* and the *Sermones*. Since he was also quite specific in his discussions on homosexuality, his explication on fornication should be understood explicitly to mean the temptation emanating from women and the act of fornication. That temptation appears in many ways, including Hus's explanation during the autumn of 1405:

⁵⁴Sed legitur iam hec epistola de Innocentibus, quia in ea mencia fit de sanctis martiribus, qui finaliter cum Deo canticum cantabunt, qui eciam cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati. Et cum tales fuerunt sancti martires Innocentes, ideo in die ipsorum hec epistola legitur. Hodie igitur memoramur festum Innocencium quia tangitur de virginibus; quia virgines erant et sine macula errant, igitur legitur de eis. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 168-9.

⁵⁵ Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 44; Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women*, 19-20.

Human temptation is to think evil and to have temptation continuously in the heart. True diabolical temptation is temptation being overcome by action and to bring about evil. To desire a woman is human temptation, diabolic adultery is to truly complete fornication' thus Remigius. But this distinction is not seen to suffice. To lust for forbidden women, following Matthew's testimony of truth, is diabolical. For it is less dangerous to view a woman with near lust than in fact to lust for her. View a woman first as my beloved, and then lust follows. Therefore, it is possible to be said of human temptation, that when man is tempted by sin he shows stimulation in the temptation. But even if he does not consent, the temptation is still truly diabolical. At the time [of temptation] many immediately consent to the influence of temptation.⁵⁶

The concept of sexual sins can be traced throughout the corpus of Hus's preaching, and at times he went into great detail on the various forms that such sins take. Explicit mentions of women were relatively rare in connection with fornication, yet the topic of fornication still implies their presence and the danger they pose to spiritual purity. Female lustfulness is a common trope in medieval literature, but Hus did not mention lust as a uniquely female attribute, but often discussed it in gender neutral terms.⁵⁷ Hus does not precisely blame women for the sin of fornication, as his focus often seems to highlight male culpability. A woman's acquiescence to the act of fornication seems to be simply taken for granted. Perhaps Hus's silence on female guilt in fornication suggests a belief that a woman's lust was so obvious that it did not need

⁵⁶ "Temptatio humana est mala cogitare et in corde temptaciones multas perpeti. Dyabolica vero temptatio est certamine temptacionis in opere superari et malum perficere. Concupiscere mulierem humana temptatio est; adulterium vero sive fornicacionem perficere dyabolicum est." Hec Remigius. Sed non videtur ista distincio sufficere. Concupiscere enim mulierem illicite secundum veritatis testimonium Matth. 5 dyabolicum est. Minus enim est videre mulierem ad concupiscendum quam de facto concupiscere, et cum primum sit mechari, ideo et secundum. Potest ergo dici humana temptatio, quando homo temptatus peccato patitur titillacionem in temtacioine, sed non consentit, dyabolica vero, quando statim consentit ad tactum temptacionis. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 401-402.

⁵⁷ Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 87.

mentioning. The exception in this case are those specific female saints that overcame their sinful nature.⁵⁸

Hus's sermons against carnal acts also include the occasional mention of sodomy. His mention of sodomites often appear in lists of sins and, when linked to the city of Sodom, as dramatic examples of God's wrath. Within the *Sermones*, Hus has a single full sermon dedicated to warning against the sin of sodomy. His sermon for December 6, 1410, transitioned from a protheme containing the story of Saint Nicholas to sins of luxury, and finally focused on the sin he labeled the "worst, most indecent, and contrary to nature."⁵⁹ Throughout the sermon, Hus provided numerous proof texts from the Old Testament, 1 Corinthians, and the church fathers, followed by a thorough synopsis of the Gibeah incident from Judges 19-20, where people of the city of Gibeah, wanting to abuse a male stranger, instead rape and abuse his concubine to death. The result of their action was war between the tribes of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin. Hus used this example to show how the sin of sodomy and the presence of sodomites can lead to the wrath of God and the destruction of whole cities. He stated:

Because he overthrows all enemies and consumes all cities with fire, slaughtering more than seventy thousand men on account of that worst and most wicked sin, therefore all the faithful of Christ are to beware. God has hatred for no other sin like that of sodomy, if only because it annuls and destroys nature at the root.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ In Hus's sermons rape tends to be something inflicted on mankind by the Devil, rather than something done by men to women, for example Hus's sermon for Sunday during Epiphany describes the rape of the soul. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 79. Generally the idea of sex in the Middle Ages was not seen as a shared act, and therefore the man is primarily responsible for the act alone, although certainly not the guilt of the sin. Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 9, 87, 112.

⁵⁹ The sermon described seven families of sins of "luxuria." Perhaps, in this case, luxury should be considered as hedonism, as they are nearly all sexual in nature. These seven do not correlate with the better known seven deadly sins. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 21.

⁶⁰ ...quod omnes inimicos prostraverunt et combusserunt civitatem occiderunt plus quam septuaginta milia virorum propter illud peccatum pessimum et sceleratissimum, quod ab omnibus Christi

Between the cities of Gibeah and Sodom, he had plenty of examples to warn the people of Prague that the presence of sodomy among them could bring about not the Devil's victory, but punishment from God. Unlike the Devil and the Antichrist, however, Hus is describing God's warfare, and not the people of Prague's responsibility to fight. They are warned of the danger of sodomites, but Hus makes no apparent call for even spiritual action to remove the threat. Sodomites simply existed, and although Hus condemned them, he offered only God's punishment. This lack of a call for action represents a significantly different approach than the persecutions of homosexuals from the thirteenth century which frequently called for burnings. Hus only points to divine punishment rather than secular punishment.⁶¹

Just as Hus simultaneously praised and vilified women, he also portrayed non-Christians as both future brothers waiting to be shown the truth and as poisonous influences who serve Satan in persecuting Christ's Church. He could, at times, sound quite magnanimous in his preaching, calling for restraint and love for unbelievers to bring them into the flock. He stated in late October 1405:

He is a pagan today. Do you know whether he may be a future Christian? He is an unfaithful Jew today, what if after today he believes in Christ? He is a heretic today, what if tomorrow he follows catholic truth? He is a schismatic today, what if tomorrow he is surrounded in catholic peace? Anyone you refer to, in whatever sort of notable error, if you condemn the most desperate, before they end their life, may they not repent and come to true life in the future? So then, brothers, for this I remind you, that the Apostle said, 'wish not to judge anyone before the right time.'⁶²

fidelibus est cavendum. Non alia ergo de causa Deus exosa havet peccata illa sodomitica, nisi quia sunt nature annullancia et destructive in radice. Ibid., 24.

⁶¹ Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 94.

⁶² Paganus est hodie. Unde scis utrum sit futurus cristianus? Iudeus infidelis est hodie, quid, si cras credat in Cristo? Hereticus est hodie, quid, si cras sequitur catholicam veritatem? Scismaticus est hodie, quid si cras amplectitur catholicam pacem? Quid si isti, quos in quocunque genere erroris notas et

Although certainly not arguing for total acceptance, in this early sermon, he seems to be calling for peaceful coexistence. This sermon is one of only a handful in which Hus preached in a calming manner. His list of those who should not be too quickly condemned reflects the diversity of Prague and the complex state of the church. It also makes no reference to the supernatural Devil or Antichrist. Hus echoed this statement during Lent in 1411, "I encourage you to patiently desire [repentance] with regard to all the faithful, infidel, gentiles, and Jews on account of God. Whoever among you inflicts violence, then you descend into sin with [the sinful ones]... This [violence] is the law of the pagans, heathens and tax collectors."⁶³ During a period of intense polemic, he continued to call for patience and to condemn violence. This call for civic peace places the audience's focus on the spiritual battle at hand. Hus kept the audience focused on foes that could be conquered from within the soul and called for patience with those without.

Similar to his cautious acceptance of women and intolerance of sodomites, Hus could preach harshly against the Jews and heretics one day and describe them as future brothers on the next. Hus's preaching on the Jews serves as a revealing case study of how he preached on those he understood to be outside the flock. The history of Jews in Prague, like the history of Jews in many cities, consisted of times of plenty and prosperity, along with tumultuous times of violence and persecution. Charles IV readily welcomed Jews to his expanding capital and even attempted to maintain the population

tamquam desperatissimos dampnas, antequam istam vitam finiant, agunt penitenciam et inveniunt veram vitam in future? Proinde, fratres, eciam ad hoc vos admoneo, quod ait Apostolus: 'Nolite ante tempus quenquam iudicare.'" Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 545

⁶³ Hortamur vos, fratres, patientes esuri ad fideles, infidels, gentiles, Iudeos propter eum, si quam violenciam inferrantur vobis, dum non solum in peccatum non deducant...Et hec est regula paganorum et ethnicorum et publicanorum. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 54-55.

of the Old Town Jewish Quarter while encouraging Jewish settlers to fill space in his growing addition of New Town. Although hardly without incident, when compared to many other European major cities, the Jews of the mid-fourteenth century encountered far less violence and persecution.⁶⁴ In 1389, however, a minor street scuffle led to charges of host desecration and a major outbreak of violence against the Jewish community. The pogrom stemmed from broad discontent with King Wenceslas, whom detractors referred to as “Jew lover” because he frequently protected the Jewish population and used the services of money lenders.⁶⁵ With Wenceslas away from the city, the Jews became targets and scapegoats for growing dissatisfaction. The violence against the Jews ignited due to an apparent incident in the Jewish Quarter. The Christian chronicles of the incident accuse the Jews of hurling insults and rocks at a passing priest carrying the communion host to a shut-in living just inside the Jewish quarter. Apparently, this act resulted in a brawl between some unnamed Jews and the Christian procession. In response, Christians entered the Jewish quarter and proceeded to massacre the population.⁶⁶ Exact numbers of people killed in the attack are unclear. Most records vastly exaggerate deaths as high as 3,000, although probably only 750 Jews actually lived in the quarter. Perhaps the most accurate estimates place the dead at three to four hundred.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ David C. Mengel, “Emperor Charles IV, Jews, and Urban Space,” in David C. Mengel and Lisa Wolverton ed. *Christianity and Culture in the Middle Ages: Essays to Honor John van Engen’s Thirty-Five Years of Teaching* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, forthcoming 2014).

⁶⁵ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 37.

⁶⁶ Barbara Newman has recently published an excellent analysis of the chronicles describing the 1389 pogrom and the mocking Christian “passion” texts which glorify the incident. Barbara Newman, “The Passion of the Jews in Prague: The Pogrom of 1389 and the Lessons of a Medieval Parody,” *Church History* 81 (2012): 1-86, 2-6.

⁶⁷ Newman, “The Passion of the Jews in Prague,” 7.

Unfortunately, little evidence exists concerning the Jewish population during the time Hus preached in Prague. The violence against the community occurred roughly a decade before Hus arrived in Prague. The Jewish population did not cease to exist, although it was probably severely diminished. Records attest to at least one Jewish individual who was charged with blasphemy in 1399, suggesting that Jews were either still in residence in Prague or had returned a decade after the massacre.⁶⁸ However, little evidence exists concerning their numbers or status prior to 1419 and the outbreak of the Hussite Wars. Hussite texts mentioned cooperation between the Jews of Prague and Hussites in defiance of the crusaders, both in the construction of fortifications and in financing the Hussite war effort. Violence that occurred in 1421 under the leadership of the preacher and brief despot of Prague, Jan Želivský, attests to a Jewish community remaining in the city. Unfortunately, almost no details of the event remain.⁶⁹ A considerable and frustrating thirty-year gap is evident in the historiography of Jewish life in Prague that aligns with the life and career of Jan Hus.

Due to their frequent mention in the Bible and position as outsiders in Bohemian society, the Jews were a recurring topic in Bohemian preaching. Many of Hus's predecessors and contemporaries preached sermons concerning the Jews. Matěj Janov labeled the Jews as Antichrist, and Jakoubek and Tomaš of Štítný also preached and wrote texts demonizing the Jews for usury and other issues.⁷⁰ Nothing, however, highlights these homiletic references to Jews as anything other than the employment of common tropes.

⁶⁸ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 42.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

Hus, likewise, frequently referenced the Jews in his sermons. If descriptions of Pharisees are separated from Jews, and the Pharisees are acknowledged as predominately an allegory for corrupt Christian priests, then the amount of homiletic material on Jews decreases dramatically. Hus, however, still had many of the expected condemnations of the New Testament Jews scattered through his sermons. His sermon for Passion Sunday, 1405 contained the typical denigration of the Jews as found in the sermons of other preachers. Hus stated in the sermon that, “therefore the holiness of life and the truth of doctrine are made to be, on account of those of the Jews that murdered Christ the Lord.”⁷¹ Hus described Jews as perverse and odious, but he makes no explicit connection between the Jews of the New Testament and the Jews of Prague.⁷² Hus discussed Prague’s Jewish population with more than a passing reference only a few times, and the common trope of Jews as the “killers of Christ” in 1405 appears to have been dictated by the calendar-based liturgical readings. When discussing Jews outside the scriptural context, he occasionally built upon stereotypes and negative tropes, but also preached an Augustinian style of *tolerentia*.⁷³ Of note is that Hus’s sermons lack any mention of some of the most notorious descriptions

⁷¹ *Sanctitas ergo vite et veritas doctrine cause fuerunt, propter quas Iudei Christum Dominum occiderunt.* Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 164.

⁷² It is also interesting that Hus seemed to have not preached on Good Friday in both 1405 and 1411, common days to find anti-Jewish rhetoric.

⁷³ Hus’s concept of *tolerentia* appears to echo Augustine’s. The term’s meaning is significantly different than the modern concept of tolerance, which implies acceptance. Hus was not preaching that Prague’s Jewish population should be ignored, rather that they should be viewed as possible converts to Christianity and saved from their ignorance. For a detailed article on this topic see: Donald Burt, “Friendly Persuasion: Augustine on Religious Toleration,” *American Catholic Philosophy Quarterly* 74 (2000): 63-76.

attributed by preachers to medieval Jews, such as the blood libel, ritual child murder, unmitigated carnality, or the accusation of host desecration.⁷⁴

As with many medieval Christians, however, Hus personally may have known little about his actual Jewish neighbors and he rarely offered any information that distinguished the Jews of Prague from the Jews of the New Testament.⁷⁵ His sermons provide no distinct information about Prague's Jewry or any interaction between Christians and Jews; mention of Jews is mostly limited to common tropes of the Jews as either "icons of disbelief" or "testifiers at the second coming."⁷⁶ He likely built his concepts concerning the Jews almost completely from Scripture, patristic writings, and model sermons. Hus possibly could have encountered Prague's Jews, for the distance between Bethlehem Chapel and Prague's oldest Synagogue is barely one kilometer; but Hus's sermons give no indication that he interacted with any Jews on a regular basis. Despite his detachment from the reality of fifteenth-century Judaism, he preached on the Jews to his audiences and used Jews as a physically visible spiritual opponent whose proximity to the Bethlehem Chapel would have made them quite useful for his audience as examples of ungodliness.

Many of Hus's references to the Jews fall in line with the perceived Jewish failure to accept the Christian faith. For example, in March 1411, he commented that "therefore the Gospel at hand tests the limits of faith, which neither the Jews nor the pagans are able to accept. Jews are not able to take hold of the idea that an un-violated virgin might

⁷⁴ Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 188; Newman, "The Passion of the Jews in Prague," 2.

⁷⁵ Steven Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 167, 170.

⁷⁶ These are two stereotypes offered by Gregg that fit the common paradigm employed by Hus. Gregg, *Devils Women and Jews*, 180.

conceive and might give birth to a son while remaining virgin.”⁷⁷ Similarly, Hus preached earlier on December 19, 1410:

On the other hand, you might say that Christ is the stone. Matthew 21 points that Christ is himself the stone. For he says, “The stone which the builders rejected, this is in fact the cornerstone.” For Christ preaches the truth and the Jews reject it to their damnation, having excommunicated and abandoned Christ to death. Thus Christ is in fact the cornerstone because the walls of Gentiles and Jews combine in one faith and Christian religion, just as the corner stone combines two walls. Christ is the stone which should join together all, but he is rejected, despite being the cornerstone of the walls, i.e. Jews and Gentiles.⁷⁸

Both of these examples utilize the Jews not as a threat but as a group who fail to recognize Christian truths and as a moral comparison for Hus’s audience. In other words, he seems to be simply telling his audience not to be like the Jews, yet within his sermons, the Jews can appear far more sinister.

Some of Hus’s sermons describe the Jews as inspired by and working with the Devil. The moral comparison becomes more ominous in sermons where Hus explicitly linked Jewish resistance or failure to accept Christian doctrine to diabolical influence.

For example, on June 7, 1411, Hus stated:

All men are disciples of Christ or disciples of the Devil and just as Christ gives his doctrines to the young learners (*abecdearii*) the Devil also teaches his. Principally, therefore, the doctrine of the Christian faithful is faith and through faith the letters are learned, and these proceed from the heart, so from the heart the Trinity creates blessing. But likewise the Devil

⁷⁷ Quia igitur evangelium presens est quasi littus fidei, ad quod Judei neque pagani fidem applicare possunt, quia Judei non possunt hoc capere, quomodo virgo inviolate conciperet et pareret filium manens virgo. Nam si hoc possint concipere tunc quasi omens alios articulos fidei facilliter acceptarent. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 148.

⁷⁸ Si autem tu diceres, “utrum Christus est lapis?” Ita Matth 21 dicitur, quod ipse est lapis. Nam dicit, “Lapidem, quem reprobi” verunt edificantes, hic factus est in caput anguli.” Nam Christus predicantem veritatem, Judei reprobaverunt zavrhy su, ipsum excommunicantes et morti exponens. Hic Christus factus est in caput anguli quia muros gentilium et Judeorum in unam fidem et religionem Christa nam, tamquam lapis angulus combinavit. Christus est lapis, qui conpaginari debent Omnia, sed reprobatus est; ipse autem est lapis angularis parietum, i.e. Judee et gentilitas. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 88.

teaches letters first to his disciples, meaning the Jews, heretics, and pagans, and the alphabet is unfaithfulness, that is in the hearts of Jews and pagans, who do not believe in the blessed Trinity.⁷⁹

Hus linked the Devil and the inability of the Jews to accept Christian doctrine, but he also made the Jews legitimately threatening to his audience. Although probably a political action, one of Wenceslas's treasurers, Sigmund Huler was denounced, excommunicated, and executed by the King in the summer of 1405 for on various charges including stating that Judaism was superior to Christianity. This event, occurring early in Hus's career, may have influenced his warnings that Jews were drawing Christians away from the faith.⁸⁰ At times, Hus certainly alluded to Jewish influence on Christians. For example, he makes vague allusions to the danger of the Old Testament and the Jewish prophets: "For through synecdoche that scripture is understood, just as Remigius says. On the other hand the Jews infest us through their scripture," and he continued by describing some dangers of following Old Testament Jewish law, rather than Christ's new covenant.⁸¹ He used considerably harsher anti-Jewish polemic in March, 1411:

Christ Jesus 'had two sons,' one who was innocent and the other a mortal sinner. Allegorically these are the Jews and gentiles. First, the innocent son represents the people of salvation, those who at the end stay for

⁷⁹ Ewanglium presens legitur in die s. Trinitatis ideo, quia in eo est mencio de s. Trinitate. In ewangelio igitur docet Christus Nycodemum principium salvacionis nostre, sc. fidem congoscere, sine qua impossiblile ut salvari hominem. Et quia omnis homo vel est discipulus Christi vel dyaboli et sicut Christus dedit suis doctrinam abecedarii, sic et dyabolus suis. Principium ergo doctrine christianorum fidelium est fides, que per litteram designator, que a corde procedit, ut ex corde Trinitatem creant benedictam. Sed eciam dyabolus docet literam primam suos discipulus, sc. Judeorum paganorumque, qui non credunt benedictam Trinitatis...Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 177.

⁸⁰ Petr Čornej over looks the pro-Jewish charges, and states that Huler was executed for counterfeit, embezzlement, and taking part in a conspiracy which led to the murder of a mistress of Wenceslas IV at Karlstein Castle in 1397. Čornej, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české* vol. 5, 78. Newman, "The Passion of the Jews in Prague," 7.

⁸¹ Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 42.

eternity in the home of their father. The second son represents a pile of sinners; although he is the son of his creation, nevertheless he will not stay eternally in the house of his father for eternity, and according to this the son is named in many ways. First, he is the congregation of the wicked, second, he is the city of Babylon, and third, he is the synagogue of Satan and other adoptions of the wicked.⁸²

Hus linked Jews to the service of Satan, and he described them as “doers of evil” and a clear threat to the followers of Christ. Hus’s descriptions of corrupting Jews were the most common use of contemporary Jews within his preaching. This example is seen again in April, 1411, as Hus included the Jews as threats to the church:

The holy Church of Christ never experiences peace in this world, because he says to him in Matthew 10, ‘I come not to send peace but the sword.’ Therefore Holy Mother Church does not have peace from the persecution of heretics, from the persecution of Jews, nor does it have peace from hypocrites simulating holiness. Whence Bernard says, ‘Once it was foretold, now comes the time of fulfillment. Behold my bitterness in peace most vile. First, the bitter murder of the martyr, I am more bitter in the conflict of heretics, now in most bitter in the customs of the domestic, so called, Christians posing themselves as false sons and rectors of the Church militant. He is able to neither rout nor flee from them. Therefore they are so strengthened and so multiplied to be above us, they are an internal and incurable plague of the Church, and it will be cured with difficulty-and for that reason his bitterness it is most vile in peace.’⁸³

Hus, borrowing heavily from Matthew and Bernard of Clairvaux, presented a bleak image of the contemporary church. The Jews in conjunction with heretics and

⁸² Christus Jesus “habuit duos filios” innocentem et peccatorem mortaliter; et allegorice: populum Judaicum et gentilem. Primus ergo filius innocens est populus salvandorum, finaliter, qui manebit in domo patris sui in eternum. Secundus autem filius, peccatorum cumulus, quamvis sit filius eius creacione, tamen non manebit in domo patris sui in eternum- et secundum hoc diversimode nominatur talis filius. Primo ecclesia malignancium, 2 civitas Babilon, 3 synagoga Sathane et sic de aliis appropriacionibus malorum. Ibid., 90.

⁸³ Primam pace mundi nunquam habet sancta Christi ecclesia, quia dixit ei Matth. X, “Non veni mittere pace, sed gladium. Non habuit ergo s. mater ecclesia pace ab hereticorum persecucione, a Judeorum perecucione, iam habet pacem ab yporitarum sanctitate simulata. Unde dicit Benhardus, “Olym predictum est nunc tempus implecionis advenit. Et in pace amaritudo mea amarissima. Amara prius nece martire amarior post in conflictu hereticorum, amarissima nun in moribus a domesticorum, sed fictorum, christianorum et false se filios rectores ecclesia fingencium militantis. Non fugare, non fogere eos potest, ita invaluablent ita multiplicati sunt super nos intesntina et insanabilis plaga ecclesie, et difficiliter curator- et ideo in pace amaritudo eius amarissima...” Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 4, 52.

false Christians, however clearly differ from the Devil or Antichrist. Hus does not call for their destruction. Here, along with other earthly destroyers of the Holy Mother Church, they are explained in terms of a regrettable peace. The war is to be fought in the hearts and souls of the audience, and the “plague of the Church” is simply too difficult to conquer. According to Hus, the Jews persecute the Church of Christ, but Hus, by avoiding a call for action, absolved the audience of their part in the struggle against earthly foes. Their battle of the spirit was against the powers of Satan. Women, Jews, heretics, and sodomites were evidence of battles already lost.

In conclusion, Hus presented his audience evil after evil in a dramatic litany of spiritual corruption. The charge of “pulpit terrorism” could absolutely apply to Hus. Even with a considerable number of sermons that appear reasonable and tolerant to a modern perspective, Hus commonly bombarded his listeners with images of terrifying foes with the potential to destroy. The Devil prowled like a lion, the Antichrist corrupted the church from within, and sinners who failed their spiritual tests looked for ways to drag the faithful with them to hell. Why should historians investigate this rhetoric of terror? Few preachers did not have this reputation following the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which sanctioned the persecution of Jews, heretics, and lepers as threats to the faithful.⁸⁴ Hus repeatedly expounded on the threats to the faithful, and despite the fact that in many ways he exemplified the medieval stereotype, his own version of “pulpit terrorism” should not be ignored. Warnings and threatening imagery appear so frequently, they must be considered part of the audience experience at Bethlehem Chapel. It would be foolish to marginalize Hus’s fearful rhetoric because he employed

⁸⁴ Moore, *Persecuting Society*, 88.

common tropes. These tropes had considerable value in understanding the function of Hus's sermons. Hus had three key purposes for his broad use of spiritual threats that he proclaimed to his audience: the threats solidified core values, they further solidified his position as leader, and finally they gave purpose and agency to his audience.

First, the use of terrifying imagery helped reinforce core values at a time when Prague seemed in decline. The Devil, the Antichrist, and the hosts of sinful mortals that aligned against the people of the Bethlehem Chapel represented not just the spiritual destroyers of souls, but also a reason for the social, political, and economic destabilization of late medieval Prague. The glory of the Emperor had come and gone; popes had increased in number, splitting the family of Christ; plagues struck repeatedly; and the winters grew colder and longer. From his pulpit, Jan Hus told the people about Christ's love for the righteous and the woe being brought down on sinners. Throughout Christendom, the forces of evil were "a dark reflection of unresolved doubt and anxiety."⁸⁵ Hus, although rarely drawing the link explicitly, gave the people of his audience scapegoats for blame, while he simultaneously buttressed their position as well as his own as the righteous and loved of God.⁸⁶

Second, through his preaching of spiritual vigilance, Hus clearly positions himself as the charismatic leader of his flock. Sociologist Philip Smith argues that one cannot have a charismatic leader without the presence of evil. Essentially, for a salvation narrative to exist and for Hus's words to truly resonate with his audience, the people must recognize their need to be saved.⁸⁷ Hus's frequent threatening reminders fulfilled

⁸⁵ Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews*, 20.

⁸⁶ Izbicki, "Pyres of Vanities," 223.

⁸⁷ Smith, "Culture and Charisma," 103.

this purpose. He filled his sermons with the Devil, demons, the Antichrist, corrupt priests, and any number of forces ready to deny his listeners salvation. Beyond simply belonging to or leading the community, Hus used martial imagery and symbols of evil in an attempt to motivate his followers. Within the early sermons, much of his emphasis was on the threats of the Devil and sin, with a growing emphasis on clerical reform. In the two years leading up to the indulgence riots of 1412, Hus spoke in terms of spiritual conflict as he encouraged his listeners to fight for their souls against the forces of evil with ever-harsher statements.⁸⁸ Smith suggests that “love of the Charismatic leader often seems to be predicated on hatred of the evil against which they fight, and indeed will be magnified as this perceived evil intensifies and is incarnated in a specific ‘folk devil.’”⁸⁹ For much of his career, Hus was not combatting a “folk devil,” but in his and his audiences’ minds they struggled against the actual Devil. Hus’s sermons created a terrifying, ever-present, and corrupting Devil against whom one could hope for victory *only* with obedience to Christian teaching, as preached by Hus. He presented supernatural and earthly foes to his audience as proof of the Devil’s existence with the clear message that if they followed Christ and their priest in combating these foes, they would strengthen their faith and achieve salvation.

Hus’s leadership leads, therefore, to the fulfillment of the third benefit of “pulpit-terrorism,” which is that he provided his audience with purpose. The sermons in their recorded form do not reveal Hus as a great story-teller and certainly not as a consoler. Instead, his preaching gave his audience the purpose of combating the forces that

⁸⁸ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 81.

⁸⁹ Smith, “Culture and Charisma,” 103

seemed to be tearing apart their world and their faith. His emotional appeals attempted to bring his audience to spiritual action to defeat supernatural foes.⁹⁰ His sermons served to harness popular anxiety, not just towards terrifying spiritual foes but also away from violence and activities detrimental to the peace of Prague, the church, and their souls. These extreme threats were also easily recognized and understood by his audience as they built off of tropes and imagery that would have been quite familiar to his listeners. By examining Hus's employment of supernatural threats along with the outsiders of the church, it becomes clear that he was primarily interested in internal spiritual conflict, as Jews, sodomites, heretics, and corrupt women all appeared as those who have failed in their struggle against the Devil. These groups were still threats and fundamentally important as witnesses to surrounding spiritual battle, but Hus made no call for their destruction. The battle that his listeners needed to fight was for their own souls.

⁹⁰ Gavin I. Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 266.

CHAPTER 6 SIN AND REPENTANCE

Corrupt clerics, political scandals, simony, indulgences, forces of evil, and doers of good; these are only a handful among dozens of topics addressed in Jan Hus's surviving sermons. Yet when one pushes the cacophonous political, cultural, and theological context of early fifteenth-century Prague into the background and focuses on Hus's preaching, the central theme that emerges is one of repentance.

Historians have noted this, yet many only briefly mention Hus's calls for repentance and his concern for the salvation of souls, preferring instead to examine more controversial topics. No one has examined Hus's treatment of repentance in the context of his preaching. Matthew Spinka stated that Hus's sermons reflect "wholesale preaching bent on the reforming of souls," but he offered no substantial discussion on Hus's approach to this goal.¹ Roughly four decades after Spinka identified the "cure of souls" as Hus's principal purpose in ministry, Thomas Fudge, in his biography of Hus, cited Spinka's observation in passing, but then he quickly moved to Hus's trial.² Jiří Kejř, in an article examining ideas on repentance and confession in the context of the Bohemian Reform, illustrated how Hus's ideas concerning repentance and confession reflect typical medieval beliefs, but his evidence is almost exclusively from Hus's academic tracts, with only limited use of Hus's sermons.³ Kejř cited Vlastimil Kybal's work, *M. Jan Hus: života a učeni*, as including a detailed study of Hus's views on confession, but Kybal's work was significantly preoccupied with Hus's rejection of

¹ Spinka, *John Hus: Concept of the Church*, 60.

² Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 40.

³ Kejř, "Teaching on Repentance," 90, 93. He uses a sermon from January 1411 to show Hus viewed the priest's role in confession as indispensable but needing to be in-line with God's will.

indulgences, and his discussion only addressed Hus's opinion that confession and repentance were preferable to the purchase of indulgences.⁴ Historians have clearly been aware of Hus's call for repentance, but none has seen fit to examine it as a central theme in Hus's preaching.

To discern how Hus chose to preach on the topic of sin and repentance his academic tracts can help to illustrate how he altered doctrine and theology for the pulpit. His academic writing, theological writing, and public preaching certainly supported and influenced each other, but a considerable difference existed in audience and context between the pulpit of Bethlehem Chapel and the masters of the University of Prague. Therefore, analyses of Hus and repentance that focus on only one or the other of these two formats are fundamentally incomplete. A comparison on the other hand reveals conscious decisions Hus made depending on the audience and the immediate context.

Studies have shown that preachers often interacted with a "web of meaning" that meant full disclosure was unnecessary because the audience knew quite well what was meant and intended. I would argue, however, the "web of meaning" in this instance revolved around pastoral and practical issues critical to the spiritual life of his audience. Perhaps the most unavoidable issue before the faithful at Bethlehem was the rarely mentioned issue of two and, in 1410, three popes. Combined with the frequently noted hypocrisy of a severely discredited clergy, Hus frequently found himself addressing disruptions in the church's prescription for salvation. This concern should not be artificially combined with a broad call for reform in the church; rather Hus treated this matter in a way that would have allayed some of his listeners's concerns. Hus never

⁴ Kejř, "Teaching on Repentance," 89. Kybal, *Žvota a učeni*, vol. 3, 268-73.

explicitly addressed the multitude of popes and their relation to repentance, other than to point out their relative powerlessness in the process. After introducing the context for Hus's preaching on sin and repentance we will examine the four central concepts in his understanding of repentance, as they developed in two different genres: theological writings and sermons.

This context of apostolic confusion is was a particular problematic thread for many of Hus's contemporaries. To effectively preach his message of repentance to a broad audience, Hus had to have a keen awareness of his context. Two clear factors, among many less notable issues, influenced Hus's preaching of repentance: the papal schism and his developing ideas concerning the elect. He preached during a time when the apostolic succession to the papacy was in doubt. Consequently, the validity of priestly absolution was in question.⁵ Hus had the choice either to preach around this delicate subject or to address it directly. His contemporaries also grappled with how to handle the state of the church. Such a widespread struggle resulted in a variety of different strategies for explaining how the schism affected the spiritual lives of the laity. The Florentine preacher Giovanni Dominici (d.1419), for example, assumed the responsibility to act as a substitute for the position of the pope, attempting to guide his Florentine listeners in the absence of a clear papal authority.⁶ Jean Gerson, on the other hand, appealed to divine law and conciliar theology to anchor the continued authority of the clergy among the laity.⁷ In his sermon *Quomodo Stabit Regnum*, Gerson

⁵ Flanagan, "Extra Ecclesia Salus non est – Sed Quae Ecclesia? Ecclesiology and Authority in the Later Middle Ages," 337; Graus, "The Crisis of the Middle Ages and the Hussites," 88.

⁶ Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*, 218.

⁷ Francis Oakley, "Gerson as Conciliarist," in *Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 193-194.

comforted the laity trapped between multiple popes, telling them they would not be held responsible for supporting a false pope when papal validity was unclear.⁸ Hus also had to preach to the complexity of the papal schism, and this context is reflected in his call for repentance.

A second major influence on Hus's preaching on repentance was his own developing perspective concerning the definition and authority of the church. Undoubtedly influenced by the thoughts of Wyclif, Hus produced his most famous work, *De Ecclesia*, while in exile from Prague in 1413. Within this text, Hus rejected the idea of a hierarchical church based on apostolic authority and redefined the Church as the chosen elect. One of the more controversial arguments in *De Ecclesia* is Hus's denial of the priest's role in the penitential cycle. Hus clearly alluded to the duty of the church in the 1411 sermons, but at that time, he may already have been convinced the priest was unnecessary. Possibly, Hus had already altered the meaning of "the Church" to reflect the definition proposed by Wyclif and later explored by Hus in *De Ecclesia* which defines the Church as the "predestinate."⁹ This definition of the Church essentially insinuates that the clergy may not even be members of the Church if not of the elect. If not part of the elect, how could a priest have the authority to hear confession or grant absolution? In the text of *De Ecclesia*, Hus argued concerning priests:

Hence it is to be noted, that guilt enters in the soul of him who sins mortally and grace is corrupted or ceases to be, for which reason he who sins mortally is under the debt of eternal damnation, provided he does not do penance, and, if he persists in this guilt, he is separated from the companionship of pilgrims in grace. But in penance there is a remedy, by which guilt is deleted, grace conferred, the chain of damnation broken,

⁸ Referenced in McLoughlin, "Gerson as a Preacher in the Conflict Between Mendicants and Secular Priests," 251.

⁹ Jan Hus, *De Ecclesia*, trans. by David Schaff, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1915), 11.

and a man reunited with the church. This penance is performed by contrition, confession, and satisfaction...Such contrition is enough for salvation.¹⁰

Hus cited Ambrose on the authority of the priest: "He alone forgives sin who alone died for us. The Word of God forgives sins. The priest is the judge. The priest performs his function and does not exercise the way of any power." Hus continued to argue that Christ forgives those who repent in their hearts, while the priest forgives those who repent with their mouths; only repentance in the heart is required.¹¹ Clearly, Hus arrived at a point where he completely denied the necessity of the priest, and while preaching on repentance just two years prior to writing those statements, he may have already been in the process of arriving at that conclusion.

Before Hus's exile, his preaching provides little explicit evidence that he may have been considering an open denial of the priesthood in the penitential process. His preaching on the topic of sin and repentance, however, shows that Hus effectively remained ambiguous as to the necessity of confession. Of interest is that sin and repentance is a topic in Hus's sermons that remained relatively constant in the wake of tensions with the bishop and Hus's detractors. Consistency is evident in Hus's discussions on the topic; no dramatic differences exist between those in 1404 and those in 1411. Although Hus's rhetoric becomes more radical and eschatological in the latter group of sermons, it does not noticeably alter the tone of his concern for educating listeners about sin and their opportunity for repentance. Hus's focus on repentance

¹⁰ Ibid., 98-99.

¹¹ Ibid., 101.

remains, despite the changes in his personal circumstances and the addition of his polemical responses to challengers.

Sin

Although the central theme in Hus's preaching was the call to repentance, in the context of Hus's sermons, repentance is inextricably linked to the obverse theme of sin. Obviously, without sin no one would need repentance; these two concepts are counterparts and are clearly co-dependent within Hus's sermons. In fact, medieval theologians such as Thomas Aquinas and Peter Lombard considered a "perfect sorrow" necessary before forgiveness was even possible.¹² Therefore, the sinner had to recognize his sins and realize their gravity. Hus's preaching on sin generally falls into four broad categories: types of sin, consent to sin, descent into sin, and consequences of that sin. Rarely are these categories mutually exclusive, and Hus never addressed them as a steady progression. Yet when we synthesize Hus's sermons focused on sin, these categories account for the majority of the key elements. Hus's primary purpose was to bring his flock to repentance, but before that could occur, he felt he must make his audience aware of their sinful state.

Sin has been an ever-present concern in the history of the Christian Church. Having been preceded by fourteen centuries of Christian thought on the subject, Hus had innumerable sources to draw from; yet he cited no single influence with such frequency as the works of Augustine of Hippo.¹³ Augustine taught that the world was a battleground ruled by the Devil, one where Christians must strive to overcome the evil of

¹² Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 24.

¹³ No comprehensive study of the influence of Augustine on Hus as yet exists. Vilem Herold has conducted a cursory examination of some of Hus's most famous works in: Vilem Herold, "Master Jan Hus and Augustine," *BRRP* 7, (2007) pp. 744-53.

this world to achieve the crown of victory in the next.¹⁴ Augustine's vision of the corrupt and sinful "world of flesh" influenced countless theologians in the middle ages, including Jan Hus, who often employed the phrase. When Hus preached on sin, he frequently supported his warnings with proofs from Augustine. He cited a variety of other sources as well, but Augustine's influence was easily the strongest.¹⁵ Hus stated his view of the world, with proofs from Augustine, on the second Sunday after the feast of the Trinity in 1405:

John corroborates the first [group] saying 'Do not be surprised, if the world hates you.' He speaks about the lovers of the world [in] the world, because the whole world was placed in wickedness, that is, in the Devil, since the evil fire was set because of hatred and lust. Therefore, you who are not placed in that fire, do not be surprised, if the world hates you. Hear, for this reason the Lord says in John 15 'If you had been from the world, the world, because it was its own, would love you; because you truly are not from this world, but I chose you from the world, on account of this the world hates you.' And again, 'If the world hates you, know that [it is] because it first held me in hatred.' Wherein Augustine [says] 'Great consolation [comes] to the members from the head. Whereby the head is held in hatred, the members are consoled, thence, dearest ones, do not be surprised if the world hates you, you truly are not from the world. And your head was first held in hatred so that the head would fortify the members. Therefore, do not be surprised, if the world hates you. If, therefore, the world hates itself, for according to Augustine it loves itself falsely and hates truly, because it hates nature and loves vice, through which nature is spoiled and pruned by the eternal fire, then do not be surprised because the world hates you, because the world is the heir of the kingdom of Babylon, [but] you [are heirs] of the heavenly father.'¹⁶

¹⁴ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 244.

¹⁵ In the 90 sermons of the *Collecta* alone Hus cited Augustine roughly 150 times.

¹⁶ Et talis invidia est peccatum secundum mortale: primum superbia, secundum invidia. Mortale dicitur, quia mortificat animam a gracia Dei qua prius erat gracia Dei vivificans, quia si inpenitens decederet, eternaliter dampnaretur. Secundum est mortale peccatum, quia nascitur ex superbia et est filia primogenita superbie apostotantis angeli, sequentis vestigia illius. Nam Lucifer videns se pulcrum in Trinitate sancta, quasi in speculo, habuit conplacenciam in se et sic superbiam, quia sibi ipsi placuit. Et sic invidebat Deo, quod esset pulcrior eo et super esset. Igitur Ecclesiastici dicitur, quod "iniciium peccati est superbia." Unde Sapientie 2, "Invidia dyaboli intravit mors in orbem terrarum." Et imitantur eum, qui sunt ex parte eius. Mors enim sic intravit in orbem. Nam si Adam non peccasset et Eva, dyaboli invidia

Hus emphasized that greed for the vices of the world had lured mankind into the depths of sin. Hus also saw the world as a perfectly evil place and sin as the outcome of focusing on the “world of flesh” rather than on the soul. Four weeks later, Hus encouraged his listeners to renounce the world and all luxuries that lead to sin and damnation.¹⁷ Two weeks after that sermon, he urged listeners to deny the desires of the flesh and focus instead on the desires of the Spirit. Hus stated, “For to live carnally is to practice carnal works evilly, such as to commit adultery, to steal, to kill unjustly, to desire and solicit (*ambire*).”¹⁸ Hus believed these sins were the result of living in and of the flesh and were rooted in love of the world.¹⁹

To illustrate how man’s love of the world leads to sin, Hus frequently devoted large parts of sermons to analyzing ways that sin was manifest. Hus insisted on identifying and labeling sins for his listeners, so that this might change their lives and find redemption. Hus, of course, did not grant all sins the same level of severity, a typical medieval position, as historians have repeatedly pointed out.²⁰ Hus and the

decepti, non fuissent mortui. Et igitur invidet homini, qui potuit mori et potuit non mori: potuit mori, quia potuit peccare. Igitur dyabolus videns, quod debent extolli powzyeny byti in beatitudine super eum, quam ipse amisit, et illam beatitudinem habere, quam ipse debuit habere-et sic invidebat ipsis et ideo ad transgressionem precepti dominici seduxit eos in peccatum et in mortem primam parentum. Igitur peccatum invidia est peccatum dyaboli et qui sunt invidi, sequaces sunt dyaboli et filii iniquitatis dicuntur. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 55-56.

¹⁷ Renuncciaſti dyabolo et operibus eius, mundo et luxurie eius, ac voluptatibus tenetur vox tua, non in tumulto mortuorum, ſed libro vivencium. Ibid., 345.

¹⁸ Carnaliter enim vivere eſt carnis opera ſiniſtree exercere, ut adulterari, furari, iniuſte occidere, vauptari et ambire. Ibid., 376-77.

¹⁹ Interestingly, Hus does not use any references to the ſinful world during the ſeaſon of Lent in 1405. Although the ſermons are laden with references to ſin and repentance, he abandons referencing the world in favor of more direct references to the Devil.

²⁰ Gerson published the treatiſe *De Differentia* on the difference between venial and mortal. Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 146. Huſ’s definition of ſin is a common point of emphasis for hiſtorians examining Huſ’s poſition concerning ſin and authority. Because of this, hiſtorians often emphasize hiſ orthodox poſition, eſpecially as it was a point of contention at Conſtance. Fudge, *Jan Huſ*, 115; Spinka, *Huſ’s Concept of the Church*, 78, 156, 230.

majority of Christian theologians believed that certain sins were more easily forgiven than others. He deemed venial sins, such as sleeping too much or simply feeling annoyed, almost completely involuntary and unlikely to result in damnation.²¹ Other sins, however, were severe enough to be labeled mortal and drove a wedge between perpetrators and their Savior. The most frequently cited source for Hus's theological views on mortal and venial sins is the *Super IV Sententiarum*; but as previously mentioned, Hus never cited the work directly in his preaching.²² Historians have rarely referenced Hus's preaching on sin, likely because his word on the matter often seems incomplete when compared with his academic writings. This focus on his academic tracts has led to oversimplified, general statements concerning his thoughts on sin – generalizations that ignore how Hus's sermons illustrated what Hus felt was critical to understand and what information Hus most valued.²³ A key example from his sermons is that Hus almost never addressed venial sin, choosing instead to preach almost exclusively on what he perceived the far more pressing matter of mortal sin.

To educate his audience about mortal sin, Hus used a typical and relatively simple, straightforward approach. He often compiled a numbered list of types of sins and would then proceed to expound upon each sin, one at a time.²⁴ This style of numerical organization most often consisted of short lists in his popular preaching and

²¹ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 40. Fudge provides no footnote as to where he found these examples.

²² Both Fudge and Spinka rely on *Super IV Sententiarum* to address Hus's specific belief on sin, while generally neglecting the sermons on this subject. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 40, Spinka, *Concept of the Church*, 76-8; Kybal, *Života a učeni*, vol. 3, 97-106.

²³ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 40

²⁴ D'Avray has shown that this was a frequent practice of homiletic preaching intended for the laity. D'Avray, *Preaching of the Friars*, 251-255. Pavel Soukup has also pointed out that this was common practice among other reforming preachers surrounding Hus in Bohemia such as Peter Chelčický and Jakoubek of Stříbro. Soukup, "Metaphors of the Spiritual Struggle," 96-97.

extended more complex organization in more formal sermons on important feast days or in his addresses to the Bohemian Synod.²⁵ One such occasion was the third Sunday in Advent, 1404. Hus assembled this lengthy and commonly cited sermon using the analogy of sins as chains dragging an individual to hell.²⁶ Hus explained that a state of repentance could lighten the burden of those metaphorical chains and that the grace of Jesus Christ could remove them completely.²⁷ Hus, in his typical manner, cast his aspersions on the sinful world by directing his audience to control their physical bodies, stating, “Therefore the state of being repentant is to imprison the body, because in a state of innocence the body is of glory; after sin seizes it, it is jailed in misery.” Hus then described the seven punishments of hunger, thirst, cold, fever, toil, sorrow, and death that the corrupted body suffers as punishment for its sin. Hus described these bodily sensations as chains placed on humans as the penalty for corruption.²⁸ Hus began this sermon with the symptoms of being imprisoned in the chains of sin. Later in the sermon, he described the proverbial material of the individual chain links, or specific sins. Hus addressed the links of sin in a way that was vague enough to be applicable to nearly any sin. Hus stated that “the chains of sinners are sins of which the first is lust –James 1, ‘Each one is tested from evil desire, having been dragged away and enticed.’ Second is delight in the sin, third is consent to the sin, fourth is the deed, fifth to endure in the deed, sixth to harden (*induracio*). But be free from the seventh, which is to be

²⁵ Soukup, “Hus as Preacher,” 5-6.

²⁶ Both Spinka and Fudge cite this sermon in their works to help summarize Hus’s preaching on sin and salvation. Spinka, *Concept of the Church*, 58; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 41

²⁷ These concepts are found at the beginning and end of the sermon. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 39, 45.

²⁸ Status ergo penitentis est in carcere corporis, quod in statu innocencie erat corpus glory, post peccatum cepit esse carcer miserie. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 39.

obstinate.”²⁹ Hus used it in this sermon as part of a wider discussion on all mortal sin. Hus never addressed the sin of fornication directly in this sermon, though he did in numerous other sermons; therefore, sexual impurity was probably meant to stand as only one of many possible interpretations for that particular scriptural reference. This specific sermon also reminds sinners that Scripture gives examples of how to overcome their chains; but more important is the fact that Christ sent his apostles to forgive the sins of those who repented. Although this is a likely allusion to absolution through confession, Hus mentioned neither priests nor the sacrament of confession; instead, he kept Christ as the actor throughout the sermon, reinforcing the idea that all mercy and forgiveness is through Christ.³⁰

Hus used a similar list-style format in his sermon for December 13, 1410, when he argued that pride and envy should be considered mortal sins. Hus listed both pride and envy before explaining why these two sins lead to damnation. Included in this sermon is an explanation of mortal sin for his audience:

And such envy is also a mortal sin: first [comes] pride, then envy. It is called mortal because it removes the soul from the grace of God, [the soul] which was first made alive by the grace of God, because if it would die impenitent, then it would be eternally damned. Second, it is a mortal sin, because it is born out of pride and is the first-born daughter of pride of the apostate angel, following in his footsteps. For Lucifer, seeing himself [to be] beautiful in the holy Trinity, as if in a mirror, held delight, and thus pride, in himself, because it itself was pleasing him. And thus he was jealous of God, since [God] was more beautiful than him and was above [him]. Therefore, it is said in Ecclesiasticus 10:15, that ‘the beginning of sin is pride.’ [And] from Wisdom 2: ‘Death entered the world through [by means of] the envy of the devil.’ And they who are part of him imitate him. Death, indeed, thus entered into the world. For if Adam and Eve had not

²⁹ Vincula peccatoris sunt peccata, quorum a concupiscencia sua abstractus et illectus.” Secundum est delectatio, tertium consensus, quartum opus, quantum consuetudo in opera, sextum induratio. Sed absit septimum, quod est obstinatio. Ibid., 44.

³⁰ Ibid., 45

sinned, deceived by the envy of the Devil, they would not be dead. And therefore he envies man, who was able to die and [who] was able not to die: he could die, because he was able to sin. Therefore the Devil, seeing that because they ought to be extolled *powyzeny byti* in blessedness above him, which he himself lost, and they [ought] to have that blessedness, which he himself ought to have – and thus was envying them and for that reason, he seduced them into sin to a transgression of the Lord’s commandment and into the first death of the parents. Therefore, the sin of envy is the sin of the devil and those who are envious, are the followers of the Devil and are called the sons of iniquity.³¹

When mental concepts as common as pride and envy are labeled as mortal sin, it reveals just how insignificant venial sins were in Hus’s preaching. Hus considered many near involuntary acts as mortal sin, leaving only what seem like trivial character flaws as venial. Hus addressed many of humanities most noticeable failings as mortal sins, which were far more significant to address than the serious but simultaneously uncontrollable problems connected with sinful human nature.³²

A week earlier, on December 7, 1410, Hus also addressed mortal sin of a sexual nature, but he used the labeling and numbering of these sins to transition to another major component of his preaching on sin and repentance: the question of consent.

Consent also appeared in the example of the seven links in Hus’s sermon from the third

³¹ Et talis invidia est peccatum secundum mortale: primum superbia, secundum invidia. Mortale dicitur, quia mortificat animam a gracia Dei qua prius erat gracia Dei vivificans, quia si inpenitens decederet, eternaliter dampnaretur. Secundum est mortale peccatum, quia nascitur ex superbia et est filia primogenital supervie apostotantis angeli, sequentis vestigial illius. Nam Lucipe videns se pulcrum in Trinitate sancta, quasi in speculo, habuit conplacenciam in se et sic superbiam, quia sibi ipsi placuit. Et sic invidebat Deo, quod esset pulcrior eo et super esset. Igitur Ecclesiastici dicitur, quod “iniciium peccati est superbia.” Unde Sapiencie 2, “Invidia dyaboli intravit mors in orbem terrarium.” Et imitantur eum, qui sunt ex parte eius. Mors enim sic intravit in orbem. Nam si Adam non peccasset Eva, dyaboli invidia decepti, non fuissent mortui. Et igitur invidet homini, qui potuit mori et potuit non mori: potuit mori, quia potuit peccare. Igitur dyabolus videns, quod debent extolli *powyzeny byti* in beatitudine super eum, quam ipse amisit, et illam beatitudinem habere, quam ipse debuit habere-et sic invidebat ipsis et ideo ad transgressionem precept dominic seduxit eos in peccatum et in mortem primam parentum. Igiture peccatum invidia est peccatum dyaboli et qui sunt invidi, sequaces sunt dyaboli et filii iniquitatis dicuntur. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 55-56. The Czech phrase *powyzeny byti* is simply used in apposition.

³² Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 40.

Sunday of Advent, 1404. The nature of consenting to sin appeared quite commonly throughout Hus's sermons, and understandably this would have been a practical issue on which his audience needed frequent clarification. Much as he did in forming his opinions of the sinful nature of the world, Hus drew many of his ideas about consent from Augustine. Hus cited a sermon of Augustine: "For all men, who persecute others in body, first themselves are found to sustain persecution in heart and in spirit. And therefore greater are the punishments of the soul than of the body, because the spirit first consents to sin and then the body."³³ By bringing attention to the detrimental effect of consent to sin, Hus reassures his audience that those in mortal sin, including but not limited to clerics wallowing in luxury, suffer spiritually and separate themselves from God. As Hus's career progressed, consent retained its importance in his preaching on sin, although some historians argue that his focus became dominated by a corrupt priesthood.³⁴

In the sermons of 1410-1411, Hus's circumstances had changed when pressured through excommunication to give up the pulpit. Through the progression of Hus's career, sin continued as a frequent and powerful topic. Hus's preaching on sin did not necessarily change in respect to his urgency and need for identification, but rather he began to focus more openly on the faults of his critics, especially priests and bishops he perceived to be living in mortal sin. As Hus became more polemical, he spent more time defining sin and detailing the finer points he deemed necessary for the correction of his

³³ In inferno enim maius supplicium sustinebunt in anima mali, quam in corpore, quia anima prius consensit ad peccatum, quam corpus; plus peccaverunt in anima, quam corporis, ideo plus punietur etc. Nam primum consentit peccato et post facit opera. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2 169.

³⁴ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 63-64. Kybal, *života a učení*, 50-51.

audience but his sermons also clearly targeted his opponents. In particular, Hus often cited clerics as greedy and false prophets.³⁵

Hus did not always maintain a predominantly critical tone, and many of his sermons maintained a definitive focus on his pastoral duties. His sermon for December 7, 1410, is an excellent example of how Hus was mindful of explaining right and wrong to his listeners, while trying to explain the subtler gray areas in his theology for the lay audience. This gray area especially existed around the question of consent. A fall from a state of righteousness into a state of mortal sin required consent, for if one did not consciously choose to give in to temptation, then one did not sin.³⁶ The finer details of the concept, however, remained unclear when applied to sinful thoughts and uncontrollable functions of the body. This sermon began with a typical numbering of sexual sins, including bestiality, homosexuality, and the bringing forth of a man's seed dishonestly, which according to Hus, results from "a women being on top and a man placed under, for even this is most torpid sin."³⁷

Hus continued in the sermon, however, by explaining that not all sexual impulses are necessarily similar. In a remarkable sermon from early 1411, Hus humanized the priestly office and offers one of the most sympathetic examples in his sermons. He explained the temptation of sin with an example from the confessional.

Sometimes it happens at the urging of the devil, because he disquiets nature at night or even in the daytime one suffers the flowing of nature; and for the one to whom this happens it is not a sin, provided that it is not [done with] his consent; and the outpouring of seed is produced from co-

³⁵ See Chapters 2 and 4 for a full illustration of Hus criticism of his opponents.

³⁶ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 40; Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 150-151.

³⁷ Similiter quando mulier superponitur et vir supponitur, eciam est turpissimum peccatum. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 30.

habitable, vicious conversation, even if it happens to the priests in confession, just as when young women come to confession bearing different sins of luxury, the man is aroused by passion and if he does not consent, he conquers; however, if he consents, he sins—and thus priests should be careful in confessions;...many times the young priest, hearing confession [and] delicate women relating their deformities, may then suffer the attack of the flesh against his will; if he does not stand fixed in reason and somehow consents to the former movement of the flesh, from that sin then and now he sinned; if he does not truly consent to the motions of the flesh, he has not sinned, but conquering, he is rewarded.³⁸

Hus might have chosen any number of scenarios to illustrate his point that sin is located in the act of consenting. Nevertheless, he gives an example of a young priest and a choice between sin and salvation, even in the midst of the sacrament of penance. Although this is a departure from Hus's typical examples that were commonly scriptural or patristic, his willingness to describe a priest's temptation is consistent with his tendency to minimize the sacramental act of confession. This sermon is one of few in Hus's preaching that explicitly mentions the act of confession to a priest, and in this description the priest, rather than the penitent, is caught up in the spiritual turmoil of having to deny the urges of the flesh.³⁹

The passage and sermon clearly illustrated how an individual may either consent to sin or resist in matters as basic as bodily functions. Even though the image of a

³⁸ Aliquando fit dyaboli instigacione, quod naturam conturbat in nocte vel in die unus nature fluxum patitur; et hoc non est peccatum, dum non est consensus illius, cui accidit; vel contingit ex conversacione viciosa cohabitabili effusio seminis, ut in confessione sacerdotibus accidit, sicut cum veniunt iuvenes mulieres ad confessionem, referentes diversa peccata luxurie, homo accenditur ardore et si non consentit, vincit; si autem consentit, peccat- et sic presbiteri debent esse cauti in confessionibus; puta quod multociens sacerdos iuvenis audiens confessionem, mulieres delicatas suas deformitates referentes, quod tunc contra suam voluntatem patitur impetum carnis; qui si non stat ratione fixus et quomodocunque consentit illi motui carnis, extunc iam peccato illo peccavit; si vero carnis motibus non assentit, non peccavit, sed vincens premiatur. Ibid., 31

³⁹ Claire M. Waters points out that the use of women as tempters in medieval preaching is not uncommon. Within Hus's and other sermon collections, women are often portrayed as a common root of temptation while men struggle with their inherent weaknesses. This particular case is interesting, however, since the female is doing exactly as she is supposed to do by confessing her sins and seeking forgiveness, and still is the source of temptation for the priest. Waters, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*, 38.

compromised priest is an atypical example for Hus, it is still an indication that Hus strove to place the clergy and laity on nearly equal footing. This is significant when analyzing Hus's celebrity, as such egalitarian imagery may have assisted in endearing him to his audience. By using an example of a cleric to illustrate how sin only occurs with consent, Hus removed some of his own "clerical loftiness."⁴⁰ The use of clerical examples was certainly common in the Middle Ages, as indicated in well-known examples from medieval literature such as Chaucer or Dante. This is not an example of a broad critique, but rather Hus, the ordained priest, chose an example that illustrated the possible trials he himself might endure. This may also reveal information about Hus's audience, because the use of a clerical example may correspond with the presence of young clerics and students from the university in the audience; perhaps the example was given as a warning to them in particular. Hus may have chosen this example so he could reach both the clerics and the laity in his audience, which was his primary goal.

Hus again addressed the topic of consent in his sermon of December 28, 1410.

Hus significantly borrowed from Augustine, stating:

Augustine [said] in a sermon...'For every man who attacks another is himself first known to sustain persecution in his heart and in his spirit. And when the punishment of the soul is greater than that of the body, then those punishing and holding punishment in the heart suffer more than the suffering. In hell, they will sustain greater punishment in a spirit of evil than in the body....because the spirit consented to sin before the body....For he first consents to sin and then does it in an act. Whence Isaiah [says] in the last [chapter]: 'Their worm does not die' which gnaws away the spirit, because it was ever denied eternal joy, 'and their fire is not extinguished' burning away the soul; 'behold the penalty of the spirit,' Augustine supplied...Joy also is by far greater than in the body. And he supplied 'No

⁴⁰ Ibid., 63.

one holds unjust profit without just loss, 'for when you gain anything by unjust means, then you are fined justly in [your] conscience.'⁴¹

Just as in the previous example, Hus showed that consent is the first step on a path to damnation. Here he borrowed Augustinian imagery of injustice, depicting the way earthly sin corrodes and leads to the destruction of the soul.

Although consent is a critical component for the commission of individual sins, Hus focused on bringing more significant change to his listeners. He desired to convert his audience to lead a life pleasing to God and meriting salvation; therefore, Hus gave significant attention to the larger context of his audience and necessary generalities. Consent was a sinner's first step in allowing the sinful world to overtake his soul, but many subsequent steps were possible. Even as one may attain a life pleasing to God, one could also follow a path in the opposite direction. Hus used another numbered list to denounce influences that could impede people on their journey to heavenly rewards. In a sermon in 1405, Hus focused on and provided scriptural references identifying three major factors that the Devil could use to draw people away from a righteous life: pleasure, lust, and curiosity. Hus stated, "Thus the devil first covets the curious soul through coming near, steals through suggestion and consensus, and rapes through carrying out works."⁴² In the sermon, Hus described the process of an individual's decline into sin as one in which a rather mundane human emotion, such as curiosity,

⁴¹Augustinus in sermone...'Omnis enim homo, qui alium in corpore persequitur, prius ipse persecucionem in corde, i. in anima, sustinere cognoscitur. Et cum maior sit pena anime, quam corporis...quia anima prius consensit ad peccatum, quam corpus...Nam primum consentit peccato et post facit opere. Unde Ysaie [pen]ultimo: 'Vermis eorum non morietur' qui animam corrodet, quam umquam gaudiis eternis est privatus "et ignis eorum non extingwetur" animam conburens; "ecce pena anime" subdit Augustinus. Vermis swyedomye twklywost welyka. Gaudium eciam multo maius est, quam in corpore. Et obdiit: 'Nemo habet iniustum lucrum sine iusto dampno; nam quando quid lucraris iniuste, iam iuste dampnificaris' in consciencia. Flajšhans, M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem, vol. 2,169.

⁴² Sic dyabolus animam curiosam primo adamat per aproximacionem, rapit per suggestionem et consensum e tdormit per operis exsecucionem. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 80

can lead to such violence as being “raped” by sin itself. The imagery of a journey fraught with obstacles continued through Hus’s preaching. For example, Hus used the term “impede” again on February 11, 1411, when he stated, “And these four purposes (to convert to the Lord, to value the Lord, to fear the Lord, to praise the Lord), should turn us to God himself, anything placed opposed to the four impedes us.”⁴³

At the end of a lifetime of sin, of course, comes the inevitable judgment. In his preaching, Hus frequently used the second coming of Christ as a frame of reference or a deadline. This was the deadline all faithful Christians in Hus’s time focused on, but perhaps more important in Hus’s sermons, he emphasized this as the last chance for sinners to change their lives.

Because, from the beginning of the world, this divided generation of evil and good always hastens, and will hasten up to the day of judgment, where first they will be separated; the sheep should be placed on the right in eternal joy and the foul-smelling goats on the left....And pertaining to these things [*rales*] if they will continue impenitent, they will be eternally damned.⁴⁴

Hus always gave his audience another chance for conversion and repentance, but he never let them forget that God’s mercy had an established time frame and that leading an unrepentant life had dire consequences.

Hus frequently referenced this conclusion with words that invoked images of an afterlife of fear and pain for those who spurned the opportunities granted to them in life. Any number of examples and quotations are available from Hus’s sermons that described judgment. Yet, he used many of those threatening images in proximity to the

⁴³ Et has quatuor affectione ut ad ipsum Deum convertamus, quibus opponuntur quatuor impedimenta. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 8.

⁴⁴ Quia a mundi principio semper currit duplex generacio, malorum sc. et bonorum, et curret usque ad diem iudicii, ubi primo seperabuntur oves a dextris in eterna leticia et edi a sinistris fetidi collocandi...Et rales si sic continuaverint inpenitentes eternaliter dampnabuntur. *Ibid.*, 40.

call for repentance and conversion. For example, Hus stated on the first Sunday of Advent 1406, “For you warn that not all are changed from sin to grace and thus not all changed from misery to glory, none in the inferno are redeemed and therefore the wicked do not rise at judgment neither do sinners rise at the council of the just.”⁴⁵

References to the inferno and to fire in general permeated Hus’s preaching. Fire was the repeated threat that the audience had to consider if refusing to repent. In effect, fire became a motivating tool within Hus’s sermons, and he hardly dwelled on other torments of hell. Fire was typically an adequate persuasion for his audiences. Despite the pervasiveness of references to the inferno, Hus generally discussed such references in close relation to the themes of repentance and justice.

Hus typically presented judgment as something for sinners to avoid, much like the fires of Hell. In fact, Hus used the threat of judgment much like the inferno. Justice as a threat, especially in an eschatological sense, is most obvious in Hus’s advent preaching. On the Second Sunday of Advent in 1406, for example, Hus devoted a sermon to the end times as described in Luke 21. After discussing the various signs, such as eclipses, pressure, and wars, Hus turned his focus to the impending judgment. Hus concluded by quoting Gregory the Great: “Therefore that day, most caring brothers, think with all purpose, correct life, change behavior, conquer temptation by resisting, or you will be punished and weep forever. Advent is always of eternal judgment.”⁴⁶ The

⁴⁵ A sompno mortis corporalis resurgunt omnes; a sompno mortis spiritualis resurgunt quidam; a sompno mortis eternalis resurgunt nulli. 1 Cor. 15: ‘Omnes quidem resurgemus,’ ‘quantum ad primum, sed non omnes imutabimur,’ quantum ad duos postremos, nam non omnes inmutabuntur de peccato in gratiam et sic nec omnes de miseria in gloriam, qua in inferno nulla est redemptio et ideo ‘non resurgunt impii in iudicio neque peccatores in consilio iustorum.’ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 29

⁴⁶ Illum ergo diem, fratres karissimi, tota intencione cogitate, vitam corrigite, mores mutate, mala temptancia resistendo vincite, perpetrare autem fletibus punite. Adventum namque eterni iudicis tanto

theme of judgment continued the following week as Hus focused on the chains of sin and the penalties that come with judgment compared with earthly punishment. Hus, referring to John, stated that “The truly penitent one humbly endures these chains so that, expecting to be freed by the Lord, he might be saved....However, the sinner makes haste to release himself, unwilling to endure justly the chains and willing to be freed unjustly from the chains.”⁴⁷ Hus then discussed man’s desire to flee from the Lord rather than face damnation. He implored his audience to run to the Lord in repentance, rather than flee, because flight from God leads to eternal death and more chains.⁴⁸

Hus proclaimed to his audience the way to avoid a regrettable last judgment. Hus attempted to convince them that if they persisted in sin and the ways of the world, they would be damned to eternal fire. Yet, to bring about conversion, Hus always reminded sinners of the way out, as he stated on the third Sunday after the Trinity:

Oh sinner, humble thyself because the hand of God has power to exalt,... return to the obedience of the creator. Because you having been deformed through sin but are reformed through grace, be humble and return praise to God. Because you are richly endowed, be thankful; be humble to the glory of God. Because you will be punished for sin, be humble; go repent, so that you may not hear the judgment and sentence of damnation.⁴⁹

securiores quandoque videbitis, quanto nunc districtionem illius timendo preventitis. Hec Gregorius. Ibid., 38.

⁴⁷ Hec vincula verus penitens humiliter patitur, ut salvetur expectans a Domino liberari...peccator autem se ipsum festinat solvere, nolens iuste pati vincula et volens iniuste a vinculis liberari. Ibid., 40.

⁴⁸ Nec mors finem, quia morte perpetua morientur. O libera, Domine de morte eternal et sic a vinculis hic iam dictis. Ibid., 41.

⁴⁹ O peccator, quia es potenter creates ex nichilo, humilare, redde obsequium Creatori. Quia deformatus perccatum reformatus es per gratiam, humiliare et redde laudem Deo. Quia es multis dotatus, gratus esto, humiliare da golriam Deo. Quia puniendus es pro peccato, humiliare, age penitenciam, ne sentenciam dampnabilem audias iudicantis. Ibid., 309-310.

In summary, Hus's preaching served as a medium to warn his audience of the threat of sin and to make them aware of their vulnerability. These key components naturally emphasized those dangers that primarily concerned him. His concerns about the identification of sin, consent to sin, and potential punishment for sin permeated his sermons. Hus's warnings served as a significant prelude to his greatest concern: the salvation of his audience through true repentance. In order to reach true repentance, first one must feel true sorrow for their sins.

Contrition versus Confession

One cannot blame historians for avoiding the use of sermons for defining Hus in broad terms, as Hus seems to have confused his contemporary critics concerning his thoughts on repentance as well. Štěpán Pálež, a friend-turned-opponent, accused Hus of denying the role of the priest in the penitential cycle. Specifically, Pálež accused Hus of suggesting that only contrition was necessary for forgiveness, an idea which undermined the commonly held process of contrition, confession, and satisfaction. The implication of this was to degrade the necessity of the priest, who was relegated to announcing absolution while God, in fact, granted it.⁵⁰ If Hus truly believed that all the priest did was announce God's forgiveness, than Pálež could argue that Hus was denying the penitential cycle altogether. Whether Pálež's accusation was correct or not depends entirely on the source material examined. Compared to his best known academic writings before 1412, Hus dramatically minimized the role of the priest in his preaching, while still consistently maintaining accepted doctrines of the church; yet, he also unquestionably pushed the limits of acceptable orthodoxy within his sermons. The

⁵⁰ Keř, "Teaching on Repentance,"92; Sedlak, *Miscellanea Husitica*, 160.

reality of the situation is that Páleč was both right and wrong in his categorization of Hus's preaching on repentance as heretical. Certain sermons emphasized contrition in a way that, depending on the context, certainly sounded subversive, yet Hus often allowed enough ambiguity to keep clear of outright heresy. An examination of Hus's preaching suggests that Páleč's confusion may have been genuine. Yet, for those in the audience of Bethlehem Chapel who did not have the ability or privilege to examine Hus's writings, the message must have seemed quite clear.

To examine how Hus preached on the topic of contrition and confession, one must scrutinize not only the ideas that dominated Hus's sermons, but also those items that Hus minimized or even ignored. Part of historians' hesitation to analyze Hus's message of repentance may stem from the daunting number of sermons relating to the subject of sin and his variety of approaches to the topic. One may try to describe Hus's message of repentance in general terms, but to synthesize every sermon into a composite summary of Hus's beliefs is a daunting, if not impossible, task.⁵¹ His sermons usually appear incomplete, as Hus simplified his message with only certain aspects of repentance. This simplification often took the form of purposeful omission, meaning Hus's sermons often ignore significant theological detail.⁵² Hus's preaching on the concepts of sin and repentance illustrates this point, where he routinely minimizes, or even omits, the role of priests in the sacrament of confession.

⁵¹ A clear example of this is the various "roots" or starting points for sin. Hus spoke at times definitively of "love of the world" as the clear root of sin, only to later state that sin begins with lust; this will be further illustrated in this chapter.

⁵² Peter Francis Howard referred to differences between academic theology and popular preaching by explaining that preaching is explicitly intended for "the cure of souls." Howard, *Beyond the Written Word*, 3.

Hus's academic writings, on the other hand, are far easier to summarize, as they are thorough and formulaic applications of reason illustrating dense, comprehensive answers to his chosen questions. Despite their density, Hus's tracts commonly allow for easy generalities, especially on those topics where only one or two documents exist discussing his position. The advantage for historians working with these documents is that Hus was exhaustive in his approach, and one need not draw from multiple sources. Therefore, in academic tracts, theological omissions are few, and alternative approaches to ideas are rare. Hus made every effort to ensure that no idea was inadequately dealt with from a scholarly perspective, thus allowing for easy summarizing of his arguments.

Hus's thoughts on repentance also permeate his preaching corpus, as exemplified in the sermons of the *Collecta* (1404-1405) and *Sermones in Bethlehem Capella* (1410-1411). Hus shaped his message to reach his audience, and these sermons and homilies reveal the myriad ways Hus conveyed the message of repentance at the Bethlehem Chapel. Presenting an analysis of how Hus preached on the topics of sin and repentance, reveals that Hus emphasized a view of repentance that was simplified and non-sacramental in order to encourage personal moral reform in a distinctly different way than he explained in his most well-known academic tract the *Super IV Sententiarum* (1407). Hus assembled this considerable work after his series of lectures on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard from 1404-1406. Hus's exposition on Lombard serves as his primary academic and theological contribution prior to *De Ecclesia* in 1412.⁵³ By directly, but not necessarily uniformly, addressing matters of sin,

⁵³ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 12-13; Spinka, *John Hus: Concept of the Church*, 74-77.

repentance, and satisfaction, Hus called his listeners to true conversion and repentance by pointing directly to God. This almost certainly conscious decision discretely minimized the relevance of his fellow priests' services.

In contrast to both Dominici and Gerson, Hus tended to promote the direct authority of God. In this time of confusion, Hus effectively preached around priestly authority by promoting an almost perfect morality that, if one takes Hus's preaching to its successful conclusion, could render confession obsolete. In effect, his message is for the sinner to stop sinning altogether, which would leave an individual with no need of sacramental confession or the assistance of the priest. Hus, unfortunately, never stated this idealistic solution plainly, and whether he actually believed this to be possible is questionable. Yet the clear message of his preaching was to convert his audience to life without sin, a message all the more poignant while the authority of the priesthood and the effectiveness of confession was in question.

Although Hus almost certainly believed in the validity of the sacrament of confession and the priest's duty as facilitator, his sermons de-emphasized the clerical role. Through Hus's sermons, the people of Prague encountered his ideas; and therefore, his sermons serve as a critical link between Hus and the population. Certainly both his academic writings and his sermons had a large and overlapping audience, yet one can safely suggest that Hus's sermons probably had a greater impact upon the population of Prague during his lifetime, while his written tracts were of greater significance for his trial and legacy.⁵⁴ Therefore, Hus's preaching of repentance allows

⁵⁴ Šmahel, "Literacy and Heresy in Hussite Bohemia," 248; Spinka points out that many of the forty-five articles were actually from the writings of Wyclif, not Hus. Upon Jean Gerson's arrival at Constance, he presented an additional twenty articles which he claimed were taken from *De Ecclesia*. Spinka suggests that Gerson never actually saw a complete copy of *De Ecclesia*, but actually had

historians an opportunity to examine how Hus presented his primary message to his flock. One of the most noteworthy points of departure between Hus's preaching and academic writing is the seldom-mentioned priestly confession. Hus thoroughly discussed the sacramental act of confession in his academic work *Super IV Sententiarum*, but the necessity of the sacrament rarely appeared in Hus's sermons.

When Hus did reference confession, it was not to call the sinner to confession with a priest, but rather to confess to God. The noteworthy absence of a direct mention of the priest is apparent in a number of examples. In one instance on March 2, 1406, Hus mentioned confession in a sermon on keeping oneself sanctified. He stated:

What, moreover, may be the will of God, the Apostle illustrates this, saying: This is, moreover, God's will, your sanctification, according to Exodus 19: "Go and sanctify the people today and tomorrow, and wash their clothes and let them be prepared on the third day," that is towards the state of glory, for on the first day, that is state of penitence, a man is cleansed from vices, on the second day, that is the state of justice, for he is decorated with good works and on the third day, certainly he is in the state of glory, crowned with a stole of the spirit and body. This is illustrated in 1st Maccabees 4, where it is read, how Judas and his brothers first cleansed the temple, which was polluted by foreigners, second they made new vessels, third they dedicated the temple and decorated it with golden crowns. Judas is interpreted as confessing. Look confession, brothers of confession, contrition and satisfaction. These ought to protect the temple of the heart from luxury as the Apostle says...⁵⁵

examined statements sent to him that reportedly came from *De Ecclesia*. Either way, little consideration seems to have been given to Hus's actual preaching except by Paleč. Spinka, *John Hus' Concept of the Church*, 351. Thomas Fudge provides the most recent synopsis of Paleč's arguments in Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 134-35.

⁵⁵ Que autem sit voluntas Dei, manifestat Apostolus ita dicens: Hec est autem voluntas Dei, sanctificatio vestra, de qua Exo. 19: "Vade et sanctifica populum hodie et cras, laventque vestimenta sua et sint parati in diem tertium," id est ad statum glorie, nam primo die, id est in statu iusticie, decoratur operibus bonis et in tercio die, scilicet statu glorie, coronatur stola anime et corporis. Hoc figuratum est 1 Mach. 4, ubi legitur, quod Iudas et fratres eius primo mundaverunt templum, quod era tab alienigenis polutum, secundo fecerunt vasa nova, tercio dedicaverunt ilud et ornaverunt choronis aureis. Iudas interpretatur confitens. Ecce confession, fratres confessionis contricio et satisfaccio. Hii debent mundare templum cordis a luxuria dicente Apostolo: Abstineatis vos a fornicacione, ut sciat unusquisque vas suum possidere in sanctificatione et honore, non in passion desiderii sicut gentes, que ignorant Deum. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 132

Hus focused the rest of the sermon on the way sin, fornication in particular, sullies the temple of the heart. The sermon, however, also provided a warning against those outside oneself who might attempt to pollute one's heart; along with mercenaries, artisans, liars, and *rustici* is the threat of false priests who "offer a blessing to the people, that is actually a curse."⁵⁶ In this sermon, Hus did not mention any priests in a positive way and directly concluded, "If broken, he will save, the actual redeeming one, because Jesus is the Savior."⁵⁷ Hus clearly inferred that Christ saves and redeems, without the help of a priest. A later example of Hus mentioning confession is from February 26, 1411, when Hus told his listeners:

Yesterday, the holy prophet Joel exhorted us in the person of Christ, that we might turn toward the Lord, because [we may esteem] God himself better above all things, that we may finally fear, that we may rejoice in the spirit, because we will gain the greatest good of the kingdom of heaven, so that we suffer greatly because we disturb our Lord. And these four emotions, so that we may turn toward God himself, are opposed by four hindrances, 1 delight of sin is opposed by the delight of the divine, 2 shame of sin is opposed by fear, because fearing to lie in the presence of God, to whom chiefly sin has been confessed, they choose to recite their sins. 3 hope of pardon and the hope of future confession are opposed by turning toward God, because first they wish to confess, when called by punishment, 4 desperate for the remission of sins.⁵⁸

Just as he did in the previously mentioned sermon, Hus clearly indicated here that the one confessing is speaking to God. That lying to God is what one should fear. Once

⁵⁶ Presbiteri eciam dicunt populum beatum, cum sit maledictus. Ibid., 135-36.

⁵⁷ Si perditus, ipse redimens salvabit, quia Iesus Salvator. Ibid., 137.

⁵⁸ Heri sanctus Johel propheta in persona Christi nos, ad Dominum ut convertamur, hortabatur, quia ut ipsum Deum melius super Omnia diligamus 2 ut finaliter timeamus, 3 ut in anima gaudeamus, quia maximum bonum regni celorum adipiscemur, 4 ut summe doleamus, quia comovimus Dominum nostrum. Et has quatuor affectiones, ut ad ipsum Deum convertamur, quibus opponuntur quatuor impedimenta: 1 delactatio peccati opponitur dilectioni divine; 2 pudor peccati opponitur, quia verentes peccata sua recitare bolunt mentiri coram Deo, cui inprimis est confessus timori oppnitur; 3 opponitur conversioni ad Deum spes venie et spes future confessionis, quia primo volunt confiteri, cum pulsacione vocantur; desperacio remissionis peccatorum. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 8.

again, the role of the priest is neither explained nor mentioned to the audience; mention of a priestly intercessor is noticeably absent.

In the texts of the *Collecta* and the *Sermones in Bethlehem*, I have found only one instance of Hus actually telling his flock to tell their sins to a priest, On Quadragesima 1405, Hus told his audience:

The one who set this forth, who wrote this and who writes it in the heart of the sinner, is the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that [the sinner] may enumerate, weigh out, and separate his sin. [The sinner] will enumerate them before the priest, how many he committed and how often, so that he considers carefully how grave they are and under what circumstances they were committed. He may distinguish the time in which he lied in sin and served the Devil⁵⁹

This single explicit mention of the priest's confessional role among dozens of sermons on repentance illustrates Hus's indifference towards sacramental confession. Even in this context though Hus still presents the priest in more of an advisory role and says nothing of absolution.

While minimizing the priest's role in forgiveness may not strike many modern Christians as particularly out-of-place, this concept was fairly radical at the time. Rather than admitting fault and then focusing on lifestyle changes, the most common way for sinners to find forgiveness in the Middle Ages was through the practice of the penitential process. At its simplest level, it consisted of three steps: contrition, confession, and satisfaction, as Hus expressed in the sermons of March 6, 1406 and January 3, 1411.⁶⁰ First, through contrition, sinners acknowledged and recognized their sinful state and

⁵⁹ Articulus, qui hoc scribebat, est Spiritus sancti gracia, que in corde peccatoris scribit, ut numeret, appendat et dividat peccata sua; numeret coram sacerdote, quot et quociens comisit, appenat ponderans, quam gravia sunt et quibus circumstanciis aggravavit, dividat tempus, quo in peccato iacuit et dyabolo servivit. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 156.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 132 and Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 23.

their need for forgiveness. Second, sinners confessed their sins at least once a year to their local priest to receive absolution. The final step was for sinners to provide satisfaction, or the complete atonement for those sins, through penance prescribed by the priest. This usually took the form of penitential acts, such as prayers or pilgrimages.⁶¹ Medieval theologians saw the role of the cleric as absolutely essential to two of the three steps in the process, and to remove the priest as the facilitator was clearly a dangerous suggestion.⁶²

Despite the existence of a simple three-part system of repentance, nearly every aspect of this process was subject to varying interpretations over a multiplicity of details. Questions abounded concerning repentance. Was contrition or attrition necessary?⁶³ Which confessors had jurisdiction? What constituted adequate contrition? Could one confessor hear all sins? Should some sins be confessed directly to God? What penance was necessary for suitable satisfaction? Scholars and theologians throughout Christendom frequently debated these and other questions.⁶⁴ Milíč of Kroměříž, for example, used sin as an overarching theme for the majority of his preaching, emphasizing the importance of striving to live a moral life in a world of evil and the

⁶¹ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation*, 4. Jansen, *The Making of Magdalene*, 203. Kejř, "Teaching on Repentance and Confession," 89.

⁶² Jiři Kejř, "Teaching on Repentance," 92-95.

⁶³ In the medieval context contrition is defined as an "inward sorrow." The principal advocate of the superiority of contrition in the penitential process was Abelard (Attrition, on the other hand, is an "imperfect sorrow that must exclude all intention of sinning but can legitimately begin in fear of punishment." The sinner is attrite as opposed to contrite. Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 18, 26.

⁶⁴ See: Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 57-130; Jane Dempsey Douglass, *Justification in Late Medieval Preaching: A Study of John Geiler of Keisersberg*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought vol 1. ed. Heiko A. Oberman, (Leiden: Brill, 1966); Rosalind Hill, "Public Penance: Some Problems of a Thirteenth Century Bishop" *History* 36 (1951): 213-226; Paul F. Palmer, ed. *Sacraments and Forgiveness. History and Doctrinal Development of Penance, Extreme Unction and Indulgences*, Sources of Christian Theology, vol. 2 (London: Newman Press, 1959).

necessity of Christ's help to succeed.⁶⁵ Important contemporary figures, such as Jean Gerson, one of Hus's judges at Constance, attempted to simplify and instruct the clergy on the proper application of confession through academic treatises.⁶⁶ The works of the scholastic theologians and their plethora of answers to the aforementioned questions reached the laity through preachers such as Jan Hus.

In his own academic writings, Hus addressed a number of questions concerning sin and repentance. Hus, borrowing heavily from Peter Lombard, went into great detail concerning justification, salvation, and the need for repentance in *Super IV Sententiarum*.⁶⁷ Within *Super IV Sententiarum*, he systematically engaged in a drawn-out discussion of the interconnectedness between the Grace and authority of God and its correlation to the sacramental authority of the Apostles and the successive Apostolic Church.⁶⁸ Hus wrote specifically concerning the priest:

[Point] Four: that it is necessary first to God and then to the priest to offer confession for in no other way is the entry of paradise able to be reached, if the faculty is present –Five: that having sinned first with God, if then the priest is deficient he is joined with God despite having been separated. Not from necessity, but so that they are of harmony. Six: that although in contrition sin is deleted, nothing little is necessary to confess, because only some sins are punished, just as with works of satisfaction because by means of one's priest one knows the crime and the sin, and through them the sinner is more humble and more cautious.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Moreé, *Preaching in Fourteenth Century Bohemia*, 146, 150.

⁶⁶ Gerson addresses confession in his works *Opus Tripartitum* and *De Differentia* as addressed in Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 137, 146.

⁶⁷ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 12-13; Spinka, *John Hus: Concept of the Church*, 74-77.

⁶⁸ Flajšhans, *M.J. Hus Super IV Sententiarum* (Prague: Nákladem Jaroslav Bursíka, 1904), 588-614. Discussed in Jiří Kejř, "Teaching on Repentance and Confession," 92.

⁶⁹ 4. Quod oportet premium Deo deinde sacerdote offerre confessionem nec aliter posse pervenire ad ingressum paradisi, si adsit facultas-5. quod peccata primo Deo, deinde sacerdoti, qui si defuerit socio pandenda sunt, sed non de necessitate, sed de congruitate est.-6. quod licet in contricione peccatum sit deletum, nichilominus est necessaria confessio quia est quedam punicio peccati sicut

Although differences exist between Hus's academic work and his preaching concerning the role of the church, Hus was careful to avoid straying too far from the common belief of how sins are remitted. In *Super IV Sententiarum*, Hus thoroughly analyzed the priestly authority for forgiving sins. In *distinccio* 18, Hus stated:

Therefore, you should believe universally because whoever was duly ordained a priest has sufficient power of conferring whatever sacrament, through following true contrition in that time and place of absolving you according to the use of his authority from whatever sin; neither can the pope absolve in any other way, for all priests are equal by the power of the order according to blessed Jerome, although the power of the inferior priest may have been bound in accordance with reason.⁷⁰

Kejř pointed out that although Hus agreed entirely with the conventional view about penance, he was criticized at his trial for suggesting contrition alone was necessary for salvation. In works such as *De Ecclesia* and *Dčerka*, Hus asserted that only God's approval of repentance could render the repentance valid. Thus, while priests were instruments of God, they were certainly not the source of absolution.⁷¹ This stance is consistent with Hus's preaching on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, as well.⁷² Worth restating, however, is that Hus never completely denied the necessity of the priest; he simply minimized the cleric's role.⁷³ Even after Hus's

satisfaccio operis et quia per eam sacerdos scit iudicare de crimine et peccator per eam fit humior et caucior. Flajřhans, *M. J. Hus Super IV Sententiarum*, 601.

⁷⁰ Ergo catholice credi debe, quod quilibet sacerdos rite ordinatus havet potestatem sufficientem quelibet sacramenta conferendi, et per consequens vere contritum loco et tempore pro usu auctoritatis a peccato quolibet absolvendi, nec aliter papa potest absolvere, nam quantum ad potestatem ordinis secundum b. Jeronimum omnes sacerdotes sunt pares, licet potestas sacerdotis inferioris racionabiliter sit ligata. Flajřhans, *M.J. Hus Super IV Sententiarum*, 607.

⁷¹ Kejř, "Teaching on Repentance," 92-93.

⁷² Works specifically addressing Hus's consideration of the sacraments see: Krmíčková, "K pamenům Husovy kvestie de sanguine Christi sub specie vini" (1999); Marin, "Les Usage de la Liturgie dans la Prédication de Jean Hus," 54.

⁷³ Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 344-45.

excommunication, his written works on the topic of sin and salvation continued to conform to conventional medieval understanding, while simultaneously pushing the limits of the orthodox status quo. The differences between the academic tracts and sermons simply point to Hus's consideration of audience. His emphasis changed, depending on whether he addressed his fellow theologians or the diverse audience of Bethlehem Chapel prior to 1412.

Hus did not approach his sermons in the same way he approached his scholastic writings. Perhaps the simplest point of contrast is the length. His sermons display an element of brevity that his academic writings lack. Although Hus's sermons can seem long-winded at times, historians have noted their average length is minimal when compared to *Super IV Sententiarum*.⁷⁴ They also differ in respect to the thoroughness and complexity of thought required in scholastic analysis, as opposed to popular preaching. The Czech scholar Ján Liguš also noticed the considerable difference between Hus's writing and preaching in regard to style, language use, and content. He attributed the difference to the intended purpose of the two media. He suggested that Hus's writings were intended to focus on the Law of God, while his preaching emphasized the Word of God, or the role of the church and personal belief.⁷⁵ Liguš in particular was interested in connecting Hus to the Protestant view concerning works and faith in his preaching, while suggesting that his written tracts typically aligned to a

⁷⁴ Spinka described the *Sentences* as "complete and systematic exposition" while citing de Vooght's opinion that they could be best described as "banal." Spinka, *John Hus: Concept of the Church*, 64.

⁷⁵ Ján Liguš, "Hussens Schriftbegriff in Seinem Predigten," in *Jan Hus: Zwischen Zeiten, Völkern, Kofessionen*, ed. Ferdinand Seibt (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), 128-130.

medieval doctrine of justification by works.⁷⁶ This argument creates an unnatural and unfortunate dichotomy, as Hus certainly preached on the Law of God; this subject was a common theme. The same can be said about his discussion of the role of the church in his writings.

Hus's sermons and writings addressed different themes, as dictated by the context and audience of each medium. This required some variation between the academic tracts and preaching, in order to maximize efficacy. At the pulpit, Hus did not have time to systematically lay out his conclusions, at least not to the extent expected in academic writing. This was perhaps most obvious when he preached on sin and repentance. In general, priests concerned with saving the souls of their audience often ignored theological schools of thought and obtuse formulas for identifying the severity of specific sins. They did this to effectively pass along basic, understandable information that they deemed necessary for the audience to escape damnation. In simplistic terms, a preacher had to tell the sinner what he must "say, do, think, and feel if he is to rid himself of guilt."⁷⁷ Hus chose a simple, engaging approach to calling sinners to repent, an approach he undoubtedly felt could effectively explain his point. As Thomas Tentler points out in his study of confession, a preacher "would choose what was helpful and avoid the rest."⁷⁸ Anne T. Thayer came to a similar conclusion concerning the general preaching of penitence which is also apparent in Hus's preaching. She argues that preachers were concerned more with "motivating their listeners to engage in the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 134.

⁷⁷ Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 235.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 234.

penitential process than in promoting a particular school of thought.”⁷⁹ Because of the practical purpose of his sermons, Hus, like his contemporaries throughout Christendom, emphasized what the audience needed to hear. His approach bore his own design, while remaining anchored in the proof texts of the past.⁸⁰

Repentance

Hus’s academic tracts and sermons taught that Christ’s purpose on Earth and the purpose of Christ’s Church was to bring sinners to repentance and forgiveness for their sins. In *Super IV Sententiarum*, Hus devoted ten *distinctio* to theology concerning how man should seek forgiveness through the penitential process.⁸¹ Hus carefully analyzed repentance, drawing heavily from Peter Lombard, the Church fathers, and Scripture. As previously mentioned, his conclusions are explicitly orthodox. Hus summarized the topic: “Because that is true repentance, and it abolishes sin... it corrects wickedness, because it truly corrects the wickedness and odious crimes that have been committed and those that will be committed, along with the desire to produce satisfaction.”⁸² Repentance, therefore, is the point of change in the individual within the context of the penitential process - the point from which one endeavors to atone for past wickedness and to sin no more.

⁷⁹ Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation*, 9.

⁸⁰ Hus frequently cited the words of Augustine, Bede, and Thomas Aquinas among others and although his words were often rooted in centuries of tradition, the theology itself was in a constant state of debate among the medieval clergy.

⁸¹ Flajšhans and Komínková, *Mag. Joannis Hus Super IV. Sententiarum*, 588-633.

⁸² Quod illa est vera penitencia, que peccatum abolet, quod solum illa facit, que scelus corrigit, illa vero scelus corrigit, que odium commissi criminis et committendi cum desiderio satisfaciendi affert. *Ibid.*, 593.

Hus exhorted his audience to repent by frequently explaining motivations for repentance in a myriad of ways that differed from the ones he mentioned in his writing. Although he did write on the topic, Hus preached on repentance far more than he wrote on it. Though the subject is present in *Super IV Sententiarum*, it appears on only a handful of pages. One might even suggest that Hus hid it. The subtopic of the origin of repentance, for example, is only mentioned in a mere two paragraphs at the end of a broader section. Hus described the origin of repentance:

Who brings about repentance and for what reason? It is said that as long as we accept that repentance is a sacrament, then God is the cause and he is the principal agent. The priest is the instrumental cause, just as in other sacraments, and being sorry is the subjective cause. The remission of sins and the achievement of glory is the final cause. But in repentance, like virtue, God is the cause, because through him virtue is poured. God himself alone is effectively the direct cause, but he causes his power to be shared. For repentance is as if man reverses from sin, from the devil, and from the world and comes to God. Therefore, first it is necessary for man to consider his sin and from what he must flee. Second, he must consider the Devil whose power from which he is to flee. Third, he must consider the punishment that he wishes to evade. And finally consider God whom he should approach. To these thoughts, however, man is only set through the light of faith...⁸³

Hus, although pointing to God as the clear origin of repentance, also emphasized that many different stimuli can prompt repentance. In his academic work, Hus offered little other commentary on what sparks repentance in the human soul; yet, at the pulpit he described a plethora of ways that such a spark might be transmitted to his listeners.

⁸³ Dubitatur: quis est effectus penitencie et que causa? Dicitur quoad secundum, quod accipiendo penitenciam u test sacramentum, tunc Deus est causa eius principalis efficiens, sacerdos est causa instrumentalis, sicut in aliis sacramentis, et penitens est causa subiectiva, et remissio peccatorum et adeptio glorie est causa finalis; sed penitencie, u test virtus, Deus est causa effective, quia cum, ut sic sit virtus infusa, ipsam solum Deus principaliter effective causat, sed causa eius dispositive potest esse multiplex. Nam quia penitencia est quasi reversion hominis a peccato, a dyabolo et a mundo ad Deum, ideo necesse est hominem cogitare peccatum, a quo debet recedere, dyabolum, cuius potestatem effugere, penam, quam vult evitare, et Deum, ad quem debet accedere. Ad hoc autem homo disponitur pre lumen fidei... Ibid., 592.

The need to instill repentance in his audience dominated Hus's preaching, yet it did not merit a broad examination in the *Super IV Sententiarum*. This clearly illustrates the critical difference in the audience and the purpose of the two media. Hus wanted his sermons to bring about the repentance of his audience; therefore, he explicitly made it the focus of his preaching. It was not, however, central to his writing, which suggests the topic was either troubling or, by contrast, irrelevant to the university audience.

Historians have often described Hus's audience at the Bethlehem Chapel as one favorable to more radical, reforming, and even revolutionary ideas.⁸⁴ They may have been the ideal audience for Hus to expand on his ideas of repentance, perhaps even using them to gauge reactions to ideas before placing them in published texts. If Hus's preaching on repentance is taken at face value, it creates an image of a complex range of influences on sinners' lives. For example, Hus discussed what he believed to be the instigators of the "tears of penitence" on the third Sunday of Advent, 1404. In a typical enumerating style, Hus described seven reasons why one should repent: first, because of offending the creator; second, because of the confusion of angels; third, because of the mockery of demons; fourth, because of the spirit of prostitution and the demon of adultery; fifth, because of the worthlessness of sin; sixth, because of the loss of all that is good; and seventh, because of evil aggression.⁸⁵ To support this list, he inserted proof texts that he drew primarily from Scripture. The remainder of the sermon focused

⁸⁴ Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 58-59.

⁸⁵ Leprosi mundantur, qua debes per lacrimas a lebra spirituali menundari in figura Naaman, de quo 4 Reg. 5. Septem enim sunt cause, quare debet homo penitens lacrimari: 1 propter Creatoris offensionem, 2 propter angelorum confusionem, quia "angeli pacis amare flebunt"-Ysa 33, 3 propter demonum irrationem-Tren. 1 "Viderunt eam hostes eius et deriserunt sabata eius," 4 propter anime prostitutionem demonis adulterio, 5 propter peccati vilitatem-Ier 2, "Quam vilis facta es," scilicet nisi ex vilitate peccati, 6 propter omnium bonorum amissionem-Tren. 1 "Dedit me Dominus in manum," id est potestatem dyaboli, "de qua non potero surgere," 7 propter omnium malorum aggressionem. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 43.

on scriptural references that provided examples of Christ redeeming sinners. As is often the case in Hus's early sermons, this sermon contained little of his distinct analysis outside of the list. Hus rarely touched again on many of these issues within the context of stimuli for repentance.

In a second sermon from the fourth week of Lent 1405, Hus approached the topic from a slightly different perspective, extrapolating on three "requirements" for repenting.⁸⁶ Hus, paraphrasing from Ephesians 4, stated that repentance requires a pure mind; adherence to the unity of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one father of all; and finally satiety because God removes the desires of those who follow him.⁸⁷ Again, Hus goes into great detail with numerous proof texts to develop these points in the larger context of the sermon, but these requirements do not appear in 1405 or 1410 to 1411.

In 1411, Hus preached another sermon providing stimuli for repentance, with imagery rooted in Exodus:

Grief bears down on you on account of sins. Micah lastly [said]: 'Your sins are thrown into the depths of the sea'—and are submerged in the harshness of the heart. In that sea the Egyptians are submerged, i.e. the demons, as is well known in Exodus 14, where the people of the Lord were standing in the sea on dry feet and the people of Pharaoh were submerged in the sea, just as by doing penance you will ford across the sea of penitence, because your contrition will lead you without nuisance and the devil will be submerged. However, penitence brings forth Christ in the mind of men. Whence Matt. 12: 'He who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven, this one is my mother' etc. (do not understand this

⁸⁶ The context in this sermon is somewhat unclear. It may be explicitly referring to the actual giving of satisfaction or doing penance

⁸⁷ Secundo in penitente requiritur unitas, qui dicitur: Est puer unus, per quam unitatem debet quilibet proximo adherere, de qua unitate et Pater omnium, "unus fides, unum baptisma. Unus Deus et Pater Omnium," unus Dominus, cui subiecti, una fides, qua coniuncti, unum baptisma, quo mundati, unus Deus, per quem create, unus Pater omnium, per quem in gracia spiritualiter generate... Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 154-155.

carnally, but spiritually!) Therefore, if you grieve concerning your sins and wish not to sin, then you have born Christ in your heart.⁸⁸

Rather than generating a list, within this sermon Hus focused on a single, all-encompassing emotion that might also lead to repentance. Hus offered no single motivation for repentance, other than God; yet, as Scripture provides numerous examples of external forces driving man to return to God, so too does Hus give numerous different examples to motivate his audience. Therefore, rather than analyzing Hus's preaching on repentance on the seven instigators, the three requirements, or the pervasiveness of grief, a broader view of his preaching on repentance suggests that two categories effectively contain the majority of Hus's ideas: the call and the choice.

Although Hus frequently returned in his preaching to the topics of the spirit of prostitution and the demon of adultery, they were not central in his call to repentance. Rather, when Hus described the "change of the will" and repentance to his audience, his key themes tended to fall into two major groups. First, he commonly called his audience to repent to the Lord, a call for all time that God himself continued and Hus repeated. Second, Hus often described repentance in terms of personal choice and presented his listeners with the choice to repent. Much like his generalized thoughts on sin, Hus never actually addressed repentance explicitly within these two straightforward categories. Nevertheless, they incorporate much of his message to his audience to repent. The key goal of Hus's sermons was to bring about conversion and repentance

⁸⁸ Dolor urget te pro peccatis. Michee ultimo: "Proicientur in profundum maris peccata vestra"—et submerguntur in amaritudine cordis. In illo mari submerguntur Egipcii i. e. demones, ut patet Exodi 14, ubi populus Domini stabat in mari sicco pede et populus Pharaonis submersus est in mari, sc. eciam penitente transvadato in mari penitencie, quia contricio tua deducet te sine documento et dyabolus submergetur. Gignit autem penitencia Christum in mente hominum. Unde Matth. 12: "Qui facit voluntatem Patris mei qui in celis est, hic mater est mea" etc. (non carnaliter, sed spiritualiter intellige!) Si igitur doles de peccatis et non vis peccare, Christum genuisti in corde. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 2, 126.

of those in his audience, and his emphasis was on his audience's duty to both hear the call and act upon it.

As with every topic of his, Hus's call for repentance began with the words of Christ in the Gospel. During the week of the third Sunday after the feast of the Trinity, Hus preached a significant part of his sermon on the Good Shepherd in Luke 15. He expounded on the words attributed to Christ:

Ponder, therefore, oh sinner, especially because the Good Shepherd searches for his sheep...he searches sweating with blood, crying tears, he searches in the place of dread on the Mount of Olives. He searches in this world of vast solitude. He found him in the desert, that is hell, where the wolf had thrown him [the sheep], but he was not able otherwise to rescue the found [sheep] except as a shepherd.⁸⁹

In the actions of Christ, Hus rooted the call for repentance, and he utilized examples from Scripture that described Christ's example. Likewise, on February 26, 1411, Hus used the common word "*convertimini*:"

'Convert!' says the Lord, who is able to punish and knows everything...who also is able to save or condemn in a moment. 'Convert' to me, away from sin, from the devil, and from the world, I who am your safety, liberator, and the one who rewards [premiator]. And this is the first of all our good actions. For just as a man is unable to sin unless he is turned away from his God, so he is unable to repent worthily unless he is converted to the Lord God.⁹⁰

Hus paid particular attention to the authority of the one calling sinners to repent. He frequently cited from Scripture and the Church fathers. He scattered references in

⁸⁹ Pensa ergo, o peccator, qualiter ovem bonus pastor quesivit, ubi quesivit et ubi invenit. Quesivit sudans sanguine, plorans lacrimis, quesivit in loco horroris monte Oliveti, in loco vaste solitudinis huius seculi. Invenit in deserto, id est in inferno, ubi lupus eam deiecerat, sed inventam aliter erripere non poterat nisi ut pastor. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 317.

⁹⁰ "Convertimini!" ...dicit Dominus, qui potest punire et omnia scit, que agimus, qui etiam in momento salvare vel dampnare potest. "Convertimini" a peccato, a dyabolo et a mundo ad me, qui sum securitas, liberator et premiator. Et hoc est principium accionum nostrarum bonarum omnium. Nam sicut homo non potest peccare, nisi a Deo suo avertatur, sic nec digne penitere potest, nisi convertatur ad Dominum Deum. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 4.

his sermons to John the Baptist, to the Apostle Paul, and most importantly to Christ, calling for humanity to repent.⁹¹ Hus portrayed this call as one intended for the church militant and as instructions for proselytizing. For example, on March 13, 1411 he said, “thus the church encourages three things in the Gospel, first repentance, so that anyone might stab the conscience for the purpose of atoning, second to intimate love of divine piety, third to the fear of divine justice, so that we may know, how just he is in himself, so much is he merciful and for the sake of the converted.”⁹² The next day, March 14, Hus reemphasized the purpose of the church, stating, “This Gospel is read this day, because the intention of Holy Mother Church is always to lure others from sin to God and to repentance.”⁹³ He preached that the church must both repent and lead others to repentance. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, Hus was critical in his preaching about those whom he viewed as failing in their duty to preach.⁹⁴

Hus frequently served as his own example of calling to repentance. The surviving sermon texts record him in the first person plural as he speaks broadly to his audience, which is not unusual.⁹⁵ For example, on the first Sunday after the Feast of the Epiphany, Hus stated, “But we brothers have a home in repentance, in weeping and mourning, because our weeping is converted to praise in Jesus Christ our Savior in worldly

⁹¹ See chapter two on scriptural examples of the mandate to preach.

⁹² Sic ergo ad tria in evangelio hortatur ecclesia: 1 ad penitentiam, ut quilibet fodiat conscienciam, ipsam expiando, 2 ad pietatis intimam dileccionem divine, 3 ad divine iusticie timorem, ut sciamus, quod in se quantum est iustus, tantum misericors-et e converso. Ibid., 87.

⁹³ Evangelium istud hodie legitur, quia intencio s. matris ecclesie est semper alios a peccatis allicere ad Deum et ad penitentiam... Ibid., 89.

⁹⁴ See Chapter three.

⁹⁵ Fudge argues that Hus’s self-inclusion reflects that Hus did not have a self-righteous attitude. I suggest in chapters two and three on the other hand that Hus was conscious of his appearance and used this as a necessary rhetorical strategy to connect with his audience. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 64.

blessings of the world.”⁹⁶ More often in the sermons, however, Hus explicitly called for repentance by using proof texts filled with the imperative mood which emphasized his direct call to his audience.

Once the audience heard the call to repent, Hus sought to persuade his audience to answer the call. Hus’s preaching contained significant elements of action and purpose that demanded audience participation. These shared calls may have both nurtured a sense of community and agency in the congregation, as well as further established Hus as the authoritative role model for his listeners. An important part in this is the formation of choices that allow individuals to be a part of the collective audience, not just listeners, but part of the community. The call for his listeners to actively choose to repent was a central aspect of his message to Bethlehem.

What is clear is that he calls on his audience to convert and, in particular, to choose repentance over a sinful life. Part of this choice was practical in scope. Hus may have often spoken in rather mystical terms on topics such as temptation and sin, but when addressing his audience he often gave his audience clear instructions for working to make their lives pleasing to Christ. An example of this is from a homily concerning Psalm 24, presented on the First Sunday of advent in 1404. After the invocation Hus continued to teach his audience and to call attention to key components of the psalm. He stated:

Observe the three things, first who he lifts up, that is the repentant man, second what raises, that is the soul, third to whom it raises, that is to the Lord, and the fourth on account of what, lest he be ashamed or confused. And fifth he begs, so that because of this pursuing, the Lord may

⁹⁶ Sed nos, fratres, habitemus in domo penitencie, in fletu et planctu, quia fletus noster in gaudium convertetur prestante Iesu Christo Salvatore nostro in seculorum secula benedicto. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 83

demonstrate the ways of his commands, and he teaches them the paths, of his councils. Observe the first one, that there are three things necessary for the repentant one wishing to lift their spirit to the Lord, certainly removing iniquity, humiliation of the heart and the faithful moderation of the mouth. He orders the first action externally, the second action internally, the third action of course is to moderate actions of the mouth.⁹⁷

His advice to repent on the exterior is rather straightforward and gave the audience a practical benchmark towards setting themselves right with God. Essentially, Hus was telling his audience to correct what they could control on the exterior by following the Lord's commandments, and the heart and soul would follow. This real and concrete step could have united them in action and empowered them with the opportunity to take direct control over their salvation. In a similar fashion, Hus offered them the choice to repent. On the sixth Sunday after the feast of the Trinity, Hus called for his audience to "renounce the devil and his works, the world and its luxury, and your voice is held with delight. Not in the tomb of death, but in the book of life."⁹⁸ Again, Hus gave his audience the opportunity to take the first steps towards salvation. The choice to repent, however, was simply a starting point on a longer journey, one not entirely within the control of the repentant sinner.

Although repentance was the key point of Hus's message, he described it as a foundation, not as the ultimate goal. He expounded upon the journey that starts at repentance in the afternoon of Quadragesima, 1405. Hus preached this for the

⁹⁷ Nota tria: primo quis levat, quia penitens, secundo quid levat quia animam, tercio ad quem levat, quia ad Dominum, et quarto propter quid, quia ut non erubescat et confundatur. Et quinto petit, ut ad hoc consequendum Dominus demonstret sibi vias suas, scilicet mandatorum suorum, et doceat eum semitas suas, scilicet suorum consiliorum. Quantum ad primum, nota, quod tria sunt neccessaria penitenti volenti levare animam suam ad Dominum, scilicet iniquitatis remocio, cordis humiliacio et devota oris moderacio. Primum actum exteriorem ordinat, secundum actum interiorem, tercium vero actum medium, scilicet oris. Ibid., 21.

⁹⁸ Renuncciasti dyabolo et operibus eibus, mundo et luxurie eius, ac voluptatibus tenetur vox tua, non in tumulo mortuorum, sed in libro vivencium. Ibid., 345.

repentance of female sinners and described the path to heaven that one trapped in a sinful lifestyle could follow.

First, therefore, if the sinner herself changes by the spirit through repentance to true conversion, as she may give herself to her God and God will also give himself to her. The change proceeds however by the spirit of the sinner from guilt into grace, from grace into great justice, from justice into perseverance and from perseverance it is changed into glory. For this fortunate change will be of the most high.⁹⁹

Although repentance could be the start of a journey towards salvation, it could also serve as yet another gateway into damnation. Hus showed considerable concern that those who heard his message of repentance did not turn from sin. Hus warned often of false repentance as a possible pathway leading from a failed repentance. Several warnings concerning false repentance appear in Hus's sermons during Lent 1411. For example, Hus preached, "Behold now is the acceptable time for repenting, now in the law of Christ, at this time we should repent fruitfully, otherwise if someone neglects to repent at this time, they will be cast into the inferno for unfruitful repentance. However, who is truly and perfectly and fruitfully repentant, they are called to remain."¹⁰⁰

Within the context of false repentance, once again Hus briefly brings up confession. In a sermon for March 3, 1411, Hus focused his attention on the severity and origin of mortal sin. In a paragraph discussing what Hus called the "impious way," he also referred to the possibility of forgiveness. Hus stated:

⁹⁹ Primo ergo mutet se peccatrix anima per penitentiam in conversionem vera, ut det se et sua Deo et Deus dabit ei se et sua. Procedat autem mutatio peccatricis anime a culpa in gratiam, a gratia in maiorem iusticiam, a iusticia in perseveranciam et a perseverancia mutabitur in gloriam. Hec enim erit mutatio dextre excelsi. Ibid., 139.

¹⁰⁰ Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile sc. penetendi, nunc in lege Christi, ubi penitere debemus fructifere, alioquin si quis hic penitere neglexerint, inferno penitentiam agent infrucuesam. Quid autem sit vera ac perfecta et fructuosa penitencia, dictum est mane. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 27.

Certainly, they live the way of luxury, avarice, pride and behave as such in regards to others. Those who persist in this sin up to death pass through the wide way into the fire. Therefore, if a man wishes to achieve mercy it is necessary that he desire to extract all his sin from the roots. For if one confesses while intending to relapse, even if confessing to the pope and even with all bulls imposed above him, his sin is not remitted without proposing firmly not to sin. But others say that it is better not to confess than to confess with the intention to relapse. I say that it is not better, because neither of those is good. For if it is better, than it is good to confess when proposing to relapse, which nevertheless is false, for such sin is not remitted.¹⁰¹

Obviously, once again Hus is warning his audience about the danger of false repentance, but with an added example of papal and priestly impotence in confession. By this period of 1411, as mentioned previously, Hus argued with ecclesiastical authorities concerning indulgences, and his critique coincided with his advice to his audience. He pointed out, naturally, that if the one confessing intends to relapse, that is not the fault of the priest. Yet, part of the reason the fault is not of the priest is that neither the priest nor pope is responsible to forgive the truly repentant; this is reserved for God alone. Therefore, even when absolving the priests of any responsibility for unrepentant confessions, Hus still points out their limitations.

The following day, Hus again addressed false repentance in his sermon; however, he was far more implicit about his criticism of the clergy and their hypocrisy concerning repentance. He stated early in the sermon:

Others are hardened toward conversion, while still others fall into sin with diminishing virtue, for at the end they repent falsely. First, those who are

¹⁰¹ Certe hic viam habent in luxuria, avaricia, superbia et sic de aliis, qua perseverantes usque ad mortem ibunt per latam viam ad infernum. Et ergo oportet, quod homo, si vult misericordiam assequi, quod de radice voluntatis Omnia peccata eiciat. Nam si confitens havet intencionem recidivandi, confiteatur eciam pape et omnes bulle inponantur super eum, non remittentur ei peccata sua, nisi proposuerit firmiter non peccare. Sed dicet aliquis 'uturum ergo melius esset non confiteri, quam cum intencione recidvandi confiteri'. Dico, quod non est melius, quia neutrum illorum est bonum. Nam si esset melius, tunc bonum esset confiteri cum proposito recidivandi, quod tamen est falsum, cum tali non remittentur peccata. Ibid., 36.

curious say to the Lord, 'Master, we wish to see a sign from you.' And those are such that do not wish to convert if not convinced through a sign. That corrupt and adulterous generation call to Christ, who think like many today that now ask for a visible sign in the sacrament of body and blood of Christ... Those who have hardened their hearts are unable to be converted through miracles nor through words of divine wisdom, nor through the out pouring of the blood of Christ. Those who fall after beginning good works often desert penitence and fall into sin. And if they become such as this they may continue impenitent and be eternally damned.¹⁰²

Hus continued the theme of "generation" through to the end of the sermon, where he explicitly linked it to his contemporary clergy. Hus stated in his conclusion that, "Now this generation of scribes and Pharisees compares to homes having been purged because they are completely superficial, inside they are full of evil. And each of these mortal sinners is demonic."¹⁰³ As in the case of consent, Hus focused on a clerical example. By chastising priests for false repentance, he established a model of failure and hypocrisy among the clergy that was perhaps easily recognizable for the audience. This chosen example may have also degraded "clerical loftiness," although by this period in 1411, many of Hus's sermons tore at the reputation of immoral priests.

Satisfaction

Once the sinner had repented and confessed to either God or to a priest, the final step was to provide satisfaction to atone for sins. Hus provided a formal explanation in *Super IV Sententiarum* and explained that satisfaction is worthless unless done with the

¹⁰² Alii sunt duri ad convertendum, alii recidivantes in peccata finaliter in virtutibus non permanentes, quamvis aliquando fictè penituerunt. Primi, qui sunt curiosi, dixerunt: "Magister, volumus a te videre signum." Et tales sunt, qui nolunt converti, nisi per signa. Quos generacionem pravam et adulteram appellat Christus, qui nunc simi es habent multos, qui querunt signa visibilia in sacramento corporis et sangwinis Christi... Alii duri, qui nec per miracula nec per berba divine sapiencie, nec per effusionem sangwinis Christi convertuntur. Alii recidivantes, qui incipientes bene operari deserunt peritenciam et reddeunt in peccata. Et tales si sic continuaverint inpenitentes eternaliter dampnabuntur. Flajšhans, *M. Hus Sermones in Bethlehem*, vol. 3, 40.

¹⁰³ Hic iam generacionem scribarum et pahriseorum comparat domui purgate quoad superficiem extrinsecam, que purgata est, et intus pleni sunt malicia. Et sic quilibet mortalis peccator est domoniacus. Ibid., 42.

grace of God, because mankind is not able to atone for mortal sin.¹⁰⁴ Hus also discussed in detail ways to achieve satisfaction, ways to atone for venial sins, and ways that satisfaction creates a link between man and God's mercy.¹⁰⁵ Although at times discussed in detail, satisfaction is not a dominant subject within Hus's sermon texts when compared with the subjects of sin and repentance. Neither does it play more than a nominal role in *De Ecclesia*; as Hus stated, since God only requires perfect contrition for forgiveness, satisfaction is unnecessary although possible.¹⁰⁶ Hus did, however, address satisfaction a number of times, either briefly in the context of the penitential process or as a link to larger issues. His preaching on satisfaction became another topic where he either discussed the process while ignoring the role of the priest, or he used the step of satisfaction as a way to critique clerical sin. When compared to the frequency of Hus's preaching on sin and repentance, he hardly treats satisfaction in equal terms.

Hus twice raised the questions concerning satisfaction and explicitly linked them to the role of the priest as early as 1405. On the Sunday after the feast of the Epiphany, he examined the apostolic role in assigning penance:

The Apostle beseeches in the manner of a prudent physician, urging the sick to receive an austere cure. He prays but does not command, for he knows that the free spirit wishes to be the principal doctor [and will resist force]. One hopes that austerity quickly corrects the charming tongue having erred. Prov. 15: 'The soothing tongue is a tree of life.' From Gregory: 'more towards correcting he urges benevolence rather than severity, and encouragement rather than domination, and love rather than power, nor from this must correction be forsaken, because through correction the stern mind frequently is made soft, but through benevolence

¹⁰⁴ Flajšhans and Komínková, *Mag. Joannis Hus Super IV. Sententiarum*, 594.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 447.

¹⁰⁶ Hus, *De Ecclesia*, 97.

it is made hard.’ Moreover the apostle beseeches through mercy and not through power or justice. It is said, on account of this: First [that he is] of God. Second, he may reveal that particular kindness, so that they might be wakened to the hope of pardon, because of how the Apostle from blasphemy has snatched away mercy among [those] that you set up in apostolic dignity. Then through that mercy be rescued from blasphemy. Whence in 1 Tim 1: ‘Even though before I was a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, but I have followed the mercy of God.’ Third, he says these things to strongly awaken them to good. For nothing admonishes the sinner so powerfully to good works than their consideration of the mercy of their God. And from this admiring the mercy of God the Psalmist said: ‘What is returned to the lord, and what does he return to me?’ However, the consideration of divine power and judgment brings one back from evil, on account of what the Psalmist says: ‘If you will not convert, he may brandish his sword,’ that is he positions his words. That is held in Matt. 25: ‘Thus evil burns in eternity.’¹⁰⁷

Although Hus did not mention satisfaction by name, he used the example of Paul to advise priests of how they should prescribe penance and treat sinners. Hus explicitly mentions priests twice in the sermon, once by referring to the priests of the sacrificial altar of the Old Testament and then by splicing lines from Leviticus 6 to make them relevant to his audience, stating that “there should always burn a fire at my altar;” it is the love in the heart, “which the priest will nourish.”¹⁰⁸ Hus addressed the role of the priest in this text, but once again, his emphasis could be questioned. By explaining how

¹⁰⁷ Apostolus more prudentis medici, suadentis austera recipere remedia egroto, obsecrat, non imperat, sciens, quod in voluntate libera spiritualis consistit principaliter medicina. Unde cicius sepe errantem blanda lingua corrigit quam austere. Prov. 15, “Lingua placabilis lignum vite.” Unde Gregorius, “Plus erga corrigendos agit benivolencia quam severitas, plus hortacio quam dominacio plus karitas quam potestas, nec tamen ex hoc debet dimitti correccio quia dura mens per correccionem sepe mollis efficitur, que per benivolenciam induratur.” Quare autem Apostolus obsecrat per misericordiam et non per potenciam vel iusticiam, dicitur, quod propter hoc: ut primo Dei, secundo propriam mansuetudinem ostendat, secundo ut eos ad spem venie ex consideratione misericordie Dei comoveat, per quam misericordiam a blasphemia erreptus est in dignitate apostolica constitutus. Unde dicit 1 Tim, 1, “Qui prius blasphemus fui et persecutor et contumeliosus, sed misericordiam Dei consecutus sum.” Tercio ut eos ad bonum forcus accendat. Nichil enim peccatorem monet ad bene operandum forcus quam consideracio misericordie Dei sui. Et hinc admirando de misericordia Dei psalmista dicit, “Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus, que retribuit michi?” Consideracio autem divine potencie et iusticie retrahunt a malo, propter quod dicit psalmista, “Nisi conversi fueritis, gladium suum vibravit,” id est verbum suum disposuit. Puta illud Matth 25, “Ite malediciti in ignem eternum.” Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 77-78.

¹⁰⁸ “Lev. 6, “Ignis in altari meo semper ardebit,” id est karitas in corde, “quem nutrit sacerdos,” *Ibid.*, 78.

priests should approach the assignment of penance, Hus was teaching students in the audience how to prescribe penance as well as highlighting the possible failures and self-interest of their contemporaries.

This link between satisfaction and Hus's concerns with the church appeared again in 1405, with Advent approaching on the twenty-third Sunday after the feast of the Trinity. Hus preached an expansive sermon on repentance and the failure of the pope and the clergy to grasp the concept of true repentance in particular. Early in the sermon, Hus referenced the cross carried by individuals: "For Christ does not impose an equal cross for all separately, but a pleasant and light yoke, which is not like being under the cross of Christ, but unique for one's strength for journeying, but whoever has taken their [cross] imitates Christ the Lord."¹⁰⁹ This reference does not begin to reflect ideas of repentance until he links it to the arrogance of and dissatisfaction with sinful church leadership. He stated sarcastically, "Behold, how the pope lucidly declares his holiness, narrating his own strength of holy virtue, not for the purpose of praising himself, but for the usefulness of those around him and so they do not sin individually."¹¹⁰ Hus then linked the pope and the church to repentance:

It shows from this, since he disagrees with the statute of the Apostle and it follows closely to being proud, glorious, luxurious, or greedy. Therefore, our clerics, these criminals of the purse, work to separate us from our

¹⁰⁹ Non enim Christus equalem crucem per omnia singulis inposuit, sed iugum suave et onus leve, sub quo viantes iuxta vires proprias non crucem Christi, sed quilibet propriam accipiens Christum Dominum imitatur. Ibid., 586.

¹¹⁰ Ecce, quam lucide declarant iste sanctus papa, quod viri sancti virtutes narrantes proprias non ad laudem sui, sed ad utilitatem proximi ac propriam non peccant. Ibid., 589.

glory, are damned in the end, and we with them if not cleansed by true repentance.¹¹¹

The link between satisfaction and the clergy is rather tenuous. Yet, noteworthy is Hus's discussion of the light and easy burden imposed by Christ, compared to the vanity and greed of the priesthood. Hus, a well-known critic of simony throughout his career, described to his audience the sin of those who would unjustly assign penance. He began his sermon with statements describing the light burden that Christ himself assigns. This link, though not explicit, supports an understanding of how and why Hus minimized the priests in repentance when taken in the larger context of his sermons. Not just the act of forgiveness, but the advice and guidance in satisfaction was suspect with a corrupted priesthood.

In conclusion, historians should not overlook or ignore Hus's broad message of repentance to his audience. The topic of repentance dominates Hus's sermons to such a substantial degree that it merges with Hus's concern with the schism, clerical abuse, and his defense against criticism. Hus's desire to bring his audience to salvation formed the central theme of his preaching. He constructed his preaching on repentance around the central phases of sin, contrition, repentance, and satisfaction. These, in turn, highlight three particular distinct aspects of Hus's preaching on the topic. First, some contradictions exist between Hus's academic writings, in particular the *Super IV Sententiarum* and his recorded sermons. Specifically, Hus both upholds and undermines the role of the priest in sacramental confession. This contradiction is hardly absolute and only becomes apparent on examination of sermons individually to realize

¹¹¹ Ex quo patet, quod repugnant apostolorum statui et eorum sequacium esse superbos, gloriosos, luxuriosos, vel avaros. Ergo ve nobis clericis, qui sumus his criminibus infiscati nam Gloria nostra in confusion finis vero dampnacio, si non per veram penitentiam fuerimus expurgati. Ibid., 590.

how rarely Hus mentions priestly action in the context of finding forgiveness for sins. Second, Hus shaped his message to simplify the penitential process for the proper context. He was selective of which sins he warned his audience, for example his focus on mortal sins or his willingness to illustrate the challenges of sin even among the clergy. For Hus, identifying sins that threatened the flock was of utmost importance to bring them to repentance. Finally, Hus provided an alternative route for forgiveness to his audience that eased concerns regarding the legitimacy of their parish priests. By preaching Christ-centered repentance as opposed to the confessional, Hus moved towards the fringe of orthodoxy but was careful not to venture too far.

The most revealing issue is Hus's perspective on the clerical role in the penitential process. The evidence clearly shows that Hus maintained, or at least paid lip service to, the penitential process in his preaching at Bethlehem Chapel. Yet, the confusion of Páleč is quite justified. If one looks at the complete corpus of Hus's literature, there is enough evidence to illustrate his orthodoxy. Yet if one divides that corpus by respective genre, one sees Hus, in response to pastoral concerns, pushed the boundaries of orthodoxy. Without a clear apostolic succession, Hus carefully suggested that his parishioners look beyond the priest for forgiveness.

The analysis of these sermons indicates that Hus made conscious, rational, and long term decisions as he correlated and assembled them. Historians have never had any reason to doubt his abilities and competence within the preaching field. Therefore, if the sermons created only a narrow or partial image of such an important and permeating topic as the penitential process, the logical conclusion is that Hus intended his audience to receive that image specifically. One might still suggest that any

reference to penance may have assumed the role of the priest as confessor; and therefore its absence is inconsequential. Yet Hus's discussions on repentance are so prevalent in the preaching, and his decisions so carefully calculated to push the boundaries of orthodoxy but remain free from heresy, that they should be considered more carefully in any further works on Hus's preaching.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

These problems have been bedeviled by the prejudices of modern scholars, not to mention those of both Hus's friends and enemies in his own day. It would take a whole book to straighten things out to the point, as yet unreached by modern scholarship, where the true figure of the historical Hus would begin to emerge.¹

Can historians find the "true figure" of Hus amidst the historiographical battlefield that remains of his legacy? Since Kaminsky's publication of *A History of the Hussite Revolution* in 1967, five full biographies and dozens of journal articles, edited volumes, and thematic monographs have attempted to make definitive statements on the meaning and significance of Jan Hus's life.² Despite ever increasing nuance, they have continued to muddy the already brackish waters of Hus's identity. Their evidence and arguments for certain interpretations of Hus are often compelling, and yet he remains a figure that stubbornly resists generalities. Scholars have typically admitted as much, but then frequently reduce Hus's place in history into narrow definitions as a reformer, revolutionary, or proto-nationalist. Historians have made vague references to his orthodoxy or medieval identity and then focused on the narrative they desired to promote.

Perhaps the ideal approach to understanding Hus is not to argue a generalized character, but to acknowledge and utilize the fact that he existed within multiple frameworks during his abbreviated life. My goal with this dissertation is not to define or describe the "historical Hus" but to isolate and understand one of his singular roles. Hus

¹ Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, 36.

² The four most recent biographies of Hus are: Krzenck, *Johannes Hus Theologe, Kirchenreformer, Märtyrer*, 2011; Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 2009; Hilsch, *Johannes Hus. Prediger Gottes und Ketzer*, 1999; Amedeo Molnár, *Jan Hus. Testimone Della Verità*, (Torino: Claudiana, 1973).

was a student, professor, administrator, victim, priest, preacher, and of course, a martyr. An examination of Hus in all of these roles would be of enormous value, but his significance to European history started at the pulpit. Arguably Hus's most influential living role was that of a preacher, but he was not just any preacher in Prague's overcrowded religious scene. Hus was a prominent local celebrity in his lifetime, and his sermons, perhaps more than any other source, attest to how that recognition and fame developed in the context of Prague from 1402 to 1412.

Historians have long recognized the wealth of material within the surviving sermons, but too often their use has been limited to carefully selected lines and paragraphs that illustrate a particular point of view. On the other hand, to engage with the entire homiletic corpus alone is a daunting challenge that not all historians are able to tackle. Scholars have commonly relied on Hus's last recorded sermons of the *Sermones* (1410-1411) and the Czech *Postil* (1412) as they are easily his most polemical and most closely linked to his death. They also represent the most theologically mature Hus, and essentially provide, along with his tracts written in exile, his final positions on many of the prominent issues of the era. Yet these sermons in isolation only support an incomplete picture of Hus, and even that picture can be influenced when viewed in the light of martyrdom. The value of Hus's sermons, as a unique illustration of medieval preaching, are simply ignored as the narrative of Hus's martyrdom takes precedence.

Historians's limited use of the sermons may also reflect the liturgical and formulaic nature of many of the sermons. Hus's postils and collections include the majority of feast days, and although he often built elaborate sermons from the liturgical

calendar, they generally provide little controversial content. Commonly the start of all complete liturgical sermon collections begins with the season of Advent.³ The *Collecta* begins with six Advent sermons and a sermon for Christmas Eve, while the *Sermones* contains thirty-four sermons from November 30, the first Sunday of Advent, and Hus's second sermon on Christmas day. Although careful study of Hus's Christmas themes can certainly be rewarding, in the context of the larger body of sermons they tend to be on themes one would expect to hear at Christmas: Christ's humility, Mary's faith, and reasons for joy among faithful Christians. These themes have been present in Christmas sermons since the preaching of Augustine, and Hus attempted little original material for the holidays.⁴ For a historian trying to develop Hus's radical profile, the formulaic nature of Hus's Christmas sermons provide little in terms of controversy. Christmas is not the only example of the often mundane nature of sermon collections, but it is the most obvious. Hus's exegesis, when examined in isolation without the context of other sermons, often appears ordinary and orthodox far more often than it appears charismatic and exceptional.

Of course, more problematic than the sermons's occasionally formulaic nature is that Hus's public performance is impossible to recreate. Historians can only guess at his vocal qualities, intonation, gestures, improvisation, and most significantly his exact words. His sermons are either *postils* such as the *Collecta* (1404-1405) or *reportationes* such as the *Sermones in Bethlehem* (1410-1411). Neither of these genres is an exact

³ The *Sermones* actually begin on the Feast of All Souls and fifteen sermons given before the first Sunday in Advent.

⁴ Although no focused studies on Christmas sermons exist for the Late Middle Ages, one can see many of the same themes reflected in the Christmas sermons of Saint Augustine. Augustine and Thomas Comerford Lawler, *Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany* (Westminster, Md: Newman Press, 1952).

copy of the sermon on the day it was preached. It is rare that sermon notes survive in any circumstance. A famous exception are the notes of the fiery Bohemian preacher Jan Želivský (d.1422), that include explosive and angry marginal comments in the hand of the author that provide a significantly closer understanding of what the preacher may have improvised.⁵ Bernardino of Siena, on the other hand, traveled with an entourage of scribes who attempted to faithfully record every utterance from the friar's mouth, including replies to hecklers, attempts to quiet people talking in the rear of his audience, and even hesitant stuttering such as, "oh, oh, oh, wait, uh, wait a minute."⁶ Scholars of Hus have no such luxury.

With enigmatic sermons, historians might attempt to create an accurate context by using reports and discussions that describe the act of preaching. For Giovanni Dominici, letters survive that describe him with a "voice that rang out like a trumpet call." Dominici had a considerable trail of admirers who praised his preaching.⁷ Famous Renaissance preachers, especially those who went through the process of canonization have significant documentation describing their activities with varying degrees of reliability. Frustratingly, only a single description of Hus preaching exists from before his martyrdom and it comes from Hus's great nemesis Michael de Causis in 1412. De Causis described a full chapel of over three thousand listeners and goes into great depth detailing heresies with which Hus allegedly deceived his audience. The description from one of Hus's most notorious opponents should be treated with

⁵ The Želivský manuscript survives at the Czech National Library. MS IV.F.23; Národní knihovna České republiky; Prague.

⁶ Marmando, *The Preacher's Demons*, 16, 45; Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of two Popular Preachers*, 42-43.

⁷ Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of two Popular Preachers*, 198.

skepticism.⁸ De Causis's account is frequently cited, but historians rarely treat his testimony with the necessary caution that they should. Even de Causis's claim of a full chapel is problematic since the author's purpose was to make Hus appear as a threat to authorities and to the peace.⁹ Hus provided in his *Postil* a single description of one event at Bethlehem that briefly describes "Germans" attacking Bethlehem Chapel while he was preaching. The attack was turned away by his audience without loss of life, which, on the other hand, supports the presence of significant numbers in the building.¹⁰ With such a limited number of explicit descriptions, scholars remain ignorant of every sermon's performance.

With these inherent pitfalls in the sources it is not surprising that historians have consistently retreated from a comprehensive analysis of this material. With the exception of Vlastimil Kybal's reform-driven sermon analysis, no historians have attempted to comprehensively understand the content of Hus's sermons as a whole. Jan Sedlak dismissed Hus's sermons as, "mere moralistic expositions...toward the clergy. Hus assumes a reform stance from the beginning."¹¹ Mathew Spinka on the other hand ignored the majority of the sermons in order "to analyze them principally from the point of view of Hus's concern for church reform and his concept of the Church."¹² Thomas Fudge gives Hus's sermons more attention than most, but even he

⁸ Palacký, *Documenta*, 169-70.

⁹ Thomas Fudge cites de Causis's testimony of three thousand by vaguely attributing it to "contemporary sources" and avoiding the problematic nature of the testimony. Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 58-9.

¹⁰ Translation of the sermon appears in Spinka, *John Hus at the Council of Constance*, 244-45.

¹¹ Jan Sedlak, *Studie a texty k životopisu Husovu II* (Olomouc: Nákladem Matice Cyrilmetodějské, 1915), 397.

¹² Spinka, *John Hus's Concept of the Church*, 45.

stumbles into the same dangerous generalities. He states in his biography of Hus, “the polemical notions of Hus shouting heresies from the pulpit of Bethlehem Chapel are clearly unwarranted,” and yet states that Hus “can be considered a reformer and a heretic” and follows that thread consistently through his text.¹³ Fudge devotes significant space to Hus’s chiding of corrupt clerics, but again he offers little explicit analysis of how the other themes Hus addressed in the pulpit. Despite an acknowledgment of a more complex preaching agenda, Fudge reiterates the common Reformation narrative of Hus the anticlerical radical. The alternative approach, of which I believe I have only begun to scratch the surface with this dissertation, is to truly set the sermons in their context by limiting their chronological scope.

Hus’s surviving sermons have considerably more value than merely providing quotations that situate Hus in a reform or national narrative. Scholars of late medieval Italian preaching in particular have shown the remarkable relationship between preaching and its urban context. Prague in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, although unique in many respects, shared a variety of traits with Florence and Paris, most significantly a dynamic academic and clerical population well integrated in the urban framework.¹⁴ Hus’s sermons demonstrated a similar social and cultural empathy to that of the more frequently studied Italian preachers.¹⁵ Yet, Hus’s great advantage as a source is the sheer number of sermons delivered from a single location.

¹³ Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 60, 4.

¹⁴ Howard, *Beyond the Written Word*, 2. For an examination of mendicant preaching in Florence see Daniel R. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: The Social World of Franciscan and Dominican Spirituality* (London: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), 176-77; Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*, 60-63.

¹⁵ Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*, 92-102.

His sermons illustrate how a preacher approaches his audience over an extended period of time. Therefore, as I have argued in this dissertation, if one looks at those sermons for content and ignores Hus's dramatic death, one discovers not just Hus's perspective on wider church reform, but also the cares and concerns of the audience.

Rather than only providing vague statements concerning Hus's pastoral concern, the sermons provide the record for the preacher's social, spiritual, and personal concerns and how he expressed those concerns to his flock. It also demonstrates the interplay of original expression and the reliance on tropes present in many sermon collections throughout the Middle Ages. As previously illustrated, the existence of sermons from a relatively peaceful time in 1404 through the growing pressures of the Wyclifite controversies demonstrates some of the ways he negotiated his pastoral duties in the dynamic context of Prague. Hus adapted his message of repentance to circumvent the issues of questionable clerical authority by focusing on God's agency rather than that of the priest. He employed the rhetoric of spiritual warfare in motivating his audience to fight against the forces of damnation. Yet in the long shadow of the 1389 violence against the Jews, Hus avoided topics of earthly violence. He focused his audience's fear and anger elsewhere when concerned with sinners in the city walls. He tapped into old and widespread currents of frustration with contemporary clerics when preaching on the Pharisees to make the text relevant to his audience. Finally, Hus recognized his tenuous position due to his place at a university controlled pulpit, separated from the protection of an established parish or religious order and later under the swirling accusations of heresy. To address these insecurities, Hus presented himself to his flock in the role of ideal preacher, good shepherd, and at the darkest

moments, Christ on his way to crucifixion. The development of these themes and their evolution only becomes apparent when examining the greater corpus as a whole.

Alongside Hus's distinctive approach to his audience, this dissertation explored significant themes that characterize his career and provide an additional explanation for his popularity. These themes function together as a corpus and fit the theoretical framework of charisma. Hus's establishment of authority, descriptions of evil threats to the flock, and his emphasis on repentance as a means of salvation all closely fit Max Weber's observations concerning charisma. Charismatic theory might allow for a better explanation of Hus's popularity, and historians have begun to apply it to various preachers in hopes of gaining insight into the phenomena of charismatic preaching.¹⁶

The observations of German sociologist Max Weber are foundational here. Weber defined charisma as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, super human, or at least specifically exceptional qualities."¹⁷ Weber stated unequivocally that it is the followers' devotion that generates that charismatic persona in

¹⁶ Previously cited in this dissertation is the edited volume of Katherine L. Jansen and Miri Rubin ed., *Charisma and Religious Authority*, 2011 and D'Avray, *Medieval Religious Rationalities*, 2010. Also of interest is an article by Ayelet Even-Ezra, "The Conceptualization of Charisma in the Early Thirteenth Century," *Viator* vol. 44, 1 (2013). Weberian Charismatic Theory has been applied to Hus previously. Pavlína Rýchterová, "Jan Hus: Der Führer, Märtyr und Prophet: Das Charisma im Prozeß der Kommunikation," In *Das Charisma: Funktionen und Symbolische Repräsentationen* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008). Pavlína Rýchterová constructed her chapter almost entirely from Peter of Mladoňovic's *Relatio* which serves as the primary account of Hus's trial and martyrdom. This text, created shortly after Hus's death, details the trial at Constance and provides a moving and inspiring tale of Hus's triumphant march to the stake. Mladoňovic provided his audience with all necessary proof of Hus's charisma, as Rýchterová rightly points out that "Hus was altogether, in the Weberian sense, interpreted as a charismatic leader." Yet, the text really illustrates the relationship between Mladoňovic and his audience more that it links Hus and his disciples. Yes, Mladoňovic and Hus clearly had a close relationship as evidenced by Hus's own letters, but historians should still treat the *Relatio* with caution. It seems foolish to make statements on Hus's charismatic persona only from the context of his death, and yet the majority of evidence from his disciples originated during and after Constance.

¹⁷ Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 329; Einstadt, *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building*, xviii.

conjunction with intense communally shared feelings such as enthusiasm, despair, or hope.¹⁸ Naturally, however, Weber refined that simple explanation and constructed an ever more complex framework to investigate the causes, conduct, and consequences of the charismatic individual. Unfortunately, Weber's charismatic theory, as scholars understand it, evolved from multiple tangents in ambitious and comprehensive works that indirectly add to the theory, leaving others later to compile Weber's scattered thoughts on the topic.¹⁹ Weber's thoughts on charisma are, therefore, generally in relation to broad sociological questions such as economy, religion, and authority rather than for the sake of charisma itself. Historians and sociologists have tended to highlight several fundamental topics, notably the relationships between charisma, authority, and religion.²⁰ It is Weber's scrutiny of the origin and sustainability of charismatic authority in the context of religion that is most relevant to Hus's sermons.

Sociologist Philip Smith has elaborated on a particularly useful aspect of Weber's charismatic theory. In his article "Culture and Charisma: Outline of a Theory," Smith argues a model he describes as "cultural charisma."²¹ Weber was vaguely aware of the cultural links that connected the charismatic leader to his audience, and historians of homiletics have pointed out the failure of certain preachers attempting to engage

¹⁸ Weber, *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, 354.

¹⁹ Smith, "Culture and Charisma." 109-110.

²⁰ The most useful compilation of Weber's thoughts on charisma is located in S. N. Eisenstadt, *Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). A broader discussion of Weber's ideas on charisma can also be examined in the three volume *Max Weber, Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Clause Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968).

²¹ Philip Smith, "Cultural Charisma: Outline of a Theory," *Acta Sociologica* vol. 43, No. 2 (2000): 101-111.

audiences without understanding the vernacular and the local culture.²² Smith claims that Weber and his disciples miss “culture as an ‘independent level of analysis and as a crucial factor in construction of charismatic authority.’”²³ In other words, Weber never gave the cultural link between a charismatic and his followers any real significance. Yet, it is through cultural familiarity that the charismatic is able to know what proof his followers require and how to gain the trust of his audience by means of what the sociologist Edward A. Tiryakian called “collective effervescence.”²⁴ This concept of “effervescence” derives from the work of Émile Durkheim who described a speaker’s ability to “enter into communion with the crowd” and how the preacher’s comfort in that environment could lead to success with the audience.²⁵ Hus’s sermons, at times match that example, and although he became increasingly isolated, during his time in Prague he was able to relate culturally to his audience precisely because he was an insider and “in communion” with the university and community. His use of images, symbols, and rhetoric that his listeners understood established the “effervescent” bond between preacher and audience.

Despite the insightfulness of Weber’s theory concerning religious leaders and charisma, Smith laments the absence of a “widely acknowledged general theory

²² Eisenstadt summarizes Weber by noting “the self-transformative power of Charismatic symbols and activities and of their power to transform the societies in which they are embedded” and yet continues his focus on what symbols the followers attach to the charismatic rather than the charismatic utilizing symbols to connect with the audience. Eisenstadt, *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building*, xlv. See chapter 2 for discussion of the cultural awareness required for successful preaching.

²³ Smith, “Culture and Charisma”, 101

²⁴ Edward A. Tiryakian, “Collective Effervescence, Social Change, and Charisma: Durkheim, Weber, and 1989,” *International Sociology* vol. 10 (Sept. 1995): 269-280, 270.

²⁵ Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press 1965), 241.

concerning culture and charisma.”²⁶ Smith notes that Weber devoted most of his energy to explaining how charisma transforms institutions and then disperses through routinization, rather than how the “phenomenon” of charisma formed and functioned. Weber suggested the existence of a “defining strand” that connects charismatic leaders to their followers. Smith suggests, in addition, that that strand may well be found in the “institutions, symbols, and geographic locations” that the charismatic leader and disciples share.²⁷ He argues for a revised cultural model:

In restoring the individual leader to definitional centrality, Weber’s original focus on interpersonal and group relationships is reaffirmed. In arguing that charisma is linked to the quest for salvation and issues of purity, sacrality, profanity, and pollution, the nascent cultural dimensions of Weber’s original argument are maintained and given content. By specifying the presence of codes and narratives with formal and internally consistent systems of signification, the model endows the cultural system with relative autonomy from the social and psychological systems. Finally, while arguing for the importance of the individual as leader, the model also maintains strongly cultural and therefore, collectivist rather than psychological and individualist, understanding of charisma’s social origin.²⁸

Hus’s preaching clearly concerned salvation and the pollution of society by sin, and one not need look too deeply into the texts to find the “codes and narratives” significant to early fifteenth-century Prague. He wove them throughout his sermons. Perhaps most significant is that Smith’s model functions without the need to understand the psychology of individual members of the audience. How Hus’s sermons affected an individual is impossible to say, and yet the social implications of his preaching are fairly evident in the chain of dramatic and bloody events that began with his death.

²⁶ Smith, “Culture and Charisma,” 103.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 109-110; 103.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

If one applies Smith's model to late medieval charismatic preaching, we find that Hus fits his parameters closely. If we accept that sermons are formed in dialogue between the preacher and audience, we see that Hus's charismatic presence was rooted in his status as the spokesperson of a collective whole. Smith's interpretation removes the awkward concept of the "duty of the audience to recognize charisma" and replaces it with a "cultural process resulting from symbolic structures," or in other words, culturally relevant rhetoric.²⁹ One may argue, therefore, that Hus was expressing the opinions and concerns of his audience, and that they listened as their collective concerns were vocalized in an open forum. It is essentially irrelevant to question who had the greater impact on the preaching environment, the audience or the preacher, but it should be understood as both individual and listeners influencing each other. Especially with the case of Hus, the themes and cultural context with which he was engaging reflect the establishment of reform preaching in Prague by Charles IV and even harken back to the reforms of Pope Gregory the Great (d.604).³⁰ Neither Hus nor his audience began the discussion that formed their charismatic relationship; rather Hus was on stage, or more appropriately, in the pulpit, when events in Prague reached their pivotal climax and the message was able to have its greatest effect.

Something about Hus's preaching struck a chord with his audience. Undoubtedly, the recurring themes he developed in the pulpit contributed to his emerging reputation as a charismatic preacher. Hus's rhetorical skills were utilized to motivate his audience into action under his leadership. Weber pointed out that "rhetoric has the same meaning

²⁹ Smith, "Culture and Charisma," 103.

³⁰ Soukup, "Die Predigt als Mittel Religiöser Erneuerung Böhmen um 1400," 246-254; D'Avray, *Preaching of the Friars*, 17.

as...street parades and festivals: to imbue the masses with the notion of the party's power and confidence in victory and above all to convince them of the leader's charismatic qualification."³¹ Hus's rhetoric, as already described in chapter two, established the preacher as the ideal righteous leader for the community of the Bethlehem Chapel. In chapter four and five we saw how Hus employed the language of spiritual warfare, exhorting his followers to victory as a great captain. In addition, Hus employed a number of other recognizable rhetorical approaches in motivating his audience, including application of emotion and reason.³²

Along with establishing his authority and leadership, Hus provided his audience with a diabolical foe to fight. Smith argues that that one cannot have a charismatic leader without the presence of evil as well. For a salvation narrative to exist, a people must need saving.³³ Hus frequently reminded his listeners of the threats awaiting them outside the doors of the Bethlehem Chapel, as Hus filled his sermons with the Devil, demons, the Antichrist, corrupt priests and any number of forces ready to deny his listeners salvation. Beyond simply belonging to or leading the community, it is with his threatening imagery and symbols of evil that Hus attempted to motivate his followers. Smith suggests, "Love of the Charismatic leader often seems to be predicated on hatred of the evil against which they fight, and indeed will be magnified as this perceived evil intensifies and is incarnated in a specific 'folk devil.'"³⁴ Hus for much of his career was

³¹ Weber quoted in R. Bell, "Charisma and Illegitimate Authority," in *Charisma, History, and Social Structure*, R. Glassman and R. Swatos ed. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 55-70, 64. Cited in Smith, "Culture and Charisma", 103.

³² D'Avray, *Medieval Rationalities*, 97; Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 4, 327.

³³ Smith, "Culture and Charisma," 103.

³⁴ Smith, "Culture and Charisma," 103.

not combating a “folk devil,” but in his and his audience’s minds they struggled against the actual Devil, who was corrupting the broken world around them. Through his sermons Hus created a terrifying and ever-present Devil that could only be defeated with obedience to Christian teaching, as interpreted and proclaimed by Hus. By 1410, Hus and his enemies’ rhetoric had “intensified” to the point that he was equating those who challenged his authority to preach with the powers of hell. By the time of Hus’s excommunication, his enemies had taken the place of the Devil and were the enemy against which Hus’s followers mobilized.

The final aspect of an analysis of Hus through charismatic theory is the critical salvation narrative promoted by the charismatic individual. Weber defined salvation as “the distinctive gift of active ethical behavior performed in the awareness that god directs this behavior, i.e., that the actor is an instrument of god.”³⁵ Hus’s salvation narrative was essentially that of Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and Christendom as a whole, but its place as the central point of Christianity does not mean it should be disregarded as formulaic. Far too often, Hus’s role has been generalized as promoting a pseudo-revolutionary message that encouraged social and political change.³⁶ Yet, his critique of luxury and sinful authorities simply reflected Hus’s desire to bring his listeners to reject that which was ungodly. Hus preached salvation from sin, the establishment of a righteous New Jerusalem on Earth, and of course life eternal. Hope was a common

³⁵ Weber, “Different Roads to Salvation,” 278

³⁶ The portrayal of Hus as a rebel and instrument of social change has continued for a considerable time and been heavily present in German and Marxist historiography. Most recently Thomas Fudge takes this position in Fudge, *Jan Hus*, 2011. Also of note for this perspective is Peter Hilsch, *Johannes Hus: Prediger Gottes und Ketzer*; Richard Friedenthal, *Ketzer und Rebell: Jan Hus und das Jahrhundert der Revolutionskriege* (Munich: R. Piper-Verlag, 1972); Charles H. George, ed. *Revolution: European Radicals from Hus to Lenin* (Glenview, ILL.: Scott, Foresman & CO., 1971); Melchior Vischer, *Jan Hus. Aufruhr wider Papst und Reich* (Frankfurt am Main: Societäts-Verlag, 1955).

message, and Hus offered his audience comfort stating, “If man diligently and carefully follows the words of our savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, how greatly those words can exalt the spirit with joy, because sinners are able to have hope for justice, grace, and the security of life eternal.”³⁷ Hus called for repentance from the threat of sin and the Devil and offered the reward of paradise to those who changed their lives. Hus offered a path of salvation and in the troubled context of early fifteenth-century Prague, the success of preachers such as Jan Hus and others suggests that that message of salvation mattered to the laity.³⁸

There is little doubt that Hus was a popular preacher, and although it is impossible to know how successful he was at turning hearts to God, the sure volume of enduring evidence suggests he must have connected with his audience culturally, spiritually, or intellectually. Preachers who developed sermons in an urban environment had little alternative if they hoped to be successful but to address local concerns and had to bring theological concepts to the level of his audience.³⁹ Therefore, it is possible to suggest aspects of his preaching that met the expectations of both his clerical and lay audience. In turn, focusing on Hus’s pastoral message converts the sermons into a useful tool for understanding the social and religious concerns of the audience.

First, Hus followed in the footsteps of several noteworthy preachers who gained widespread recognition in Prague. The emphasis on effective preaching, started by

³⁷ Hec verba Salvatoris nostri et Domini nostri Iesu Christi homines si diligenter perpenderent, quantis animi gaudiis exultarent, cum peccatores possunt spem habere de gracia et iusti securitatem de vita eterna. Schmidtová, *Collecta*, 225

³⁸ Unfortunately, there is little explicit evidence of lay reaction outside the same indicators that mark Hus’s popularity. Therefore it seems if Hus repeatedly addressed the topic it must have resonated in some way with his audience.

³⁹ Howard, *Beyond the Written Word*, 13, 144.

Charles IV, laid the ground-work an individual such as Hus. For roughly half a century, Prague had seen exceptional preachers pass through its chapels, monasteries, and squares. Hus's sermons, with some exceptions, were a continuation of a tradition that included Waldhauser, Milíč, and Janov. Hus preached in Latin and the vernacular as his predecessors and has been frequently described as a continuation if not a fulfillment of that legacy.⁴⁰ The context, of course, was significantly different as most of Hus's famous predecessors preached while Prague was ascending in power and stature under the long reign of Charles IV. Those predecessors also preached under a unified line of apostolic succession situated in Avignon, and although the exile of the papacy from Rome was quite problematic to those who witnessed it, the stress it placed on the church paled in comparison to the schism. It seems logical that Hus's sermons represented continuation in the ears of his listeners. Hus was also well aware of his place in the line, as he commented in a letter to his ally Ondřej v Brod, that:

On account of this, of those who preached contrary to the clerics, only I, as I see it, have been excommunicated. For instance, those from ancient times, Milíč, Conrad, Szenka, and many others all preached against the clerics. Still only I have been subject to this sentence of excommunication.⁴¹

Hus took on the mantle of religious reform that was characteristic of his predecessors, and themes such as immorality, eschatology, and repentance would have been readily recognizable to his listeners.

Second, Hus's critique of clerical sin reflects long held frustrations with clerical wealth. Marxist historians have viewed his preaching on this theme as reflective of the

⁴⁰ Fudge, *Magnificent Ride*, 58-64.

⁴¹ Latin and German text provided in Soukup, "Die Predigt als Mittel Religiöser Erneuerung," 242.

steady undermining of social order, an order that was buttressed by the wealthy church.⁴² Yet, Hus's early preaching was far more concerned with his listeners's salvation in general, and he targeted his attacks against luxury not only at clerical excess but also the wealth of a capital city. Prague was certainly not as prosperous as during the reign of Charles IV, and there was a significant divide between rich and poor in the city. Hus sermons called for the rejection of excess, among the laity and clergy. A call that undoubtedly played a role in the social violence of the subsequent Hussite wars as a call for shared wealth and voluntary lay and clerical poverty were a common trait of the Hussite movement's more radical wings. In particular, adherents of the famous Taborite movement experimented in what Šmahel calls the "Gospel ideal of 'just Feudalism'" which redistributed all goods according to need through the community and order.⁴³

Third, much of Hus's challenge to the hierarchy of the church derives from the shameful example of the papal schism. His sermons that touch on the schism express his audience's concerns for the role of the church in their salvation. Debate continues on just how large an impact the schism had on the laity of Europe. However, Hus's frequent sermons discussing clerical issues and his careful critique and circumvention of priestly authority, suggests that the concern must have been present among his audience.⁴⁴ Hus's sermons addressed, sometimes directly and other times obliquely, the uncertainty his audience had for the validity of the Sacraments.

⁴² Macek, *The Hussite Movement in Bohemia*, 20-21.

⁴³ Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce* vol. 2, 114.

⁴⁴ Although the schism is an important point for scholars discussing the Bohemian Reformation, few studies have actually questioned its relationship to the laity, but it was a frequent topic among the Prague literati. See Chapter 5 for a more complete examination.

Hus closely fits the mold of those reform preachers who came before and, he also met the expectations required of him as a representative of Prague University appointed to the Bethlehem Chapel. His sermons are demonstrations of his erudition as they are firmly anchored in an impressive array of quotations. Hus, in loose mimicry of scholastic models, attached link after link to the golden chain of citation. His authority and knowledge were on display in nearly every sermon and his audience would have been left with no doubt concerning his mastery of theology and scripture. His sermons also made clear his purpose to feed them the bread of the word as expected in the “house of bread.”⁴⁵ Hus not only met these expectations but reinforced them by shaping the expectations of the audience.

In conclusion, the content of Hus’s sermons once again shows his priorities in addressing his audience. Considering him as a priest concerned for his flock need not totally replace the images of Hus as the fiery reformer. Instead, analyzing the sermons as a corpus makes Hus all the more significant to his era and understanding the daily message of all preachers.

⁴⁵ Šmahel, *Husitská revoluce* vol. 2, 211.

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