

1 **Hoffman and Münster**2 **Melchior Hoffman**

- Melchior Hoffman was born in southern Germany about 1495.
- He traveled throughout Northern Europe as a Lutheran preacher.

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- Hoffman's teachings soon led to a break with Lutheranism.
 - Much of Hoffman's preaching centered on simple repentance and salvation through Christ.
 - He was influenced by Karlstadt, and stressed the importance of holiness.
 - He interpreted much of the Bible figuratively.
 - He was also deeply interested in biblical prophecy and continuing revelations from God.

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- Hoffman developed a strange doctrine of Christ's humanity.
 - He said that Christ did not receive His humanity from Mary, but had a "heavenly flesh" that came purely from God.
 - Hoffman and his followers were accused of Docetism, and this view remained problematic for many decades.

5 **In 1529 Hoffman visited Strasbourg, and he became an Anabaptist there.**

- He continued traveling and preaching, and many people became enthusiastic followers of Hoffman's brand of Anabaptism.
- His interpretation of biblical prophecies and the visions of some of his followers convinced Hoffman that Christ's return was very near, Strasbourg was to be the new Jerusalem, and he himself was the prophet Elijah, sent to proclaim God's message in the last days.

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- He returned to Strasbourg in 1533 and allowed himself to be imprisoned, which he thought was part of the prophecy.
- Hoffman died in prison about ten years later.

7

Müntzer = crazy revolutionary

Münster = city full of crazy revolutionaries

8 **Münster**

- Hoffman's followers spread Hoffmanite Anabaptism throughout Northern Germany and the Netherlands.
- Natural disasters, plagues, and political oppression made the people of this region

receptive to the message of Christ's imminent return and the judgment of the ungodly.

9

- Some of the more radical Hoffmanites took control of the German city of Münster, which a new prophecy revealed to be the actual site of the new Jerusalem.
- While Hoffman preached against violence, saying that God would destroy the wicked in His own way, the Münsterites believed that they were called to prepare for the reign of Christ by destroying the ungodly themselves.
- The residents of Münster were given the choice of being baptized or forced to leave.
- The local rulers were alarmed by these developments and besieged Münster.

10 **Extremism in Münster only increased.**

- The leader, Jan van Leiden, claimed that he was the new King David.
- Polygamy began to be practiced.
- On June 24, 1535, Münster fell to the besieging army, and most of the men of the city were killed.
- The events in Münster gave all Anabaptists an undeserved bad reputation that took centuries to fade away.