

Dr. Kevin E. Frederick, Waldensians, Session 10, The Centrality of Trouble – Joshua Janavel (1655-1660) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Frederick, Waldensians, Session 10, The Centrality of Trouble – Joshua Janavel, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Kevin Frederick explores the intense hardships faced by the Waldensians in the 17th century, particularly focusing on the figure of Joshua Janavel. It details the devastating impact of famine and plague, followed by targeted persecution and violence orchestrated by the Duke of Savoy and the French king. Despite facing overwhelming odds and brutal massacres, the Waldensians, exemplified by Janavel's resolute faith and resistance, defended their communities. The lecture highlights their enduring determination rooted in their religious convictions, which even inspired support from Protestant Europe and informed later military tactics.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Frederick, Waldensians, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History → Waldensians).



**Frederick_Waldensi
ans_Session10.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Frederick, Waldensians, Session 10, The Centrality of Trouble – Joshua Janavel

Briefing Document: The Centrality of Trouble - Joshua Janavel and 17th Century Waldensian Persecution

Overview: This lecture by Dr. Kevin Frederick focuses on the intense hardships faced by the Waldensians in the 17th century, particularly highlighting the pivotal role of Joshua Janavel in their resistance against the Duke of Savoy's persecutions. The lecture uses Hebrews 11:32-12:2 as a foundational scripture to frame the Waldensian experience as a continuation of the enduring faith demonstrated by biblical figures in the face of immense suffering. The 17th century is presented as a uniquely devastating period for the Waldensians, marked by famine, plague, economic hardship, and ultimately, a brutal campaign of annihilation. Joshua Janavel emerges as a key figure who embodies unwavering faith and courageous resistance against overwhelming odds.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

- **The Enduring Nature of Waldensian Faith in the Face of Trouble:** The lecture emphasizes that the Waldensians, like the figures mentioned in Hebrews 11, demonstrated extraordinary faith and resilience through centuries of persecution. Dr. Frederick states, "But they could have easily been written about the Waldensians, not only in regards to the kinds of persecution and tortures they faced as a people, but in the very nature of their response of faith, which endured century after century of persecution by the Roman Catholic Church, and by numerous other hardships as well." This sets the stage for understanding the 17th century as a critical test of this enduring faith.
- **The Uniquely Devastating 17th Century:** The lecture argues that the 17th century was the most destructive period for the Waldensians. Multiple crises converged, including:
 - **Famine (1629):** A severe drought led to widespread famine and death.
 - **The Black Plague:** Following the famine, the plague decimated the population, killing nearly 50% of the Waldensians and an alarming majority of their pastors.
 - **Economic Hardship:** The Duke of Savoy imposed excessive financial burdens on the already weakened community.

- **Systematic Persecution and Annihilation Efforts:** Driven by religious intolerance, particularly the influence of the Duke's mother, Catherine Marie, and the Bishop of Turin, Louis XIV of France and Charles Emmanuel, the Duke of Savoy, sought the "total annihilation" of the Waldensians.
- **The Edict of Expulsion (1655):** This edict forced Waldensians who refused to convert to Catholicism from their homes in the middle of winter. "On January 25th that year, in the middle of a particularly brutal winter, those Waldensians who would not renounce their faith and convert to Catholicism were forcefully evicted from their secure valleys and relocated into more accessible and less defensible valleys." This resulted in significant loss of life due to exposure and illness.
- **The Massacre of Easter (April 1655):** Following the expulsion, Savoyard troops, under the command of the Marquis de Pianesa, launched a brutal attack on the Waldensians. "What followed that Easter morning was a particularly brutal assault involving many forms of torture upon men and women and even Waldensian children." The cruelty was so extreme that some French officers resigned in protest.
- **Joshua Janavel: The Lion of the Valleys:** Janavel is presented as a pivotal figure who recognized the impending danger and organized resistance. Initially dismissed by some, he formed a small group of volunteers to defend their homes. His leadership and unwavering faith were crucial in the defense of Rora.
- **The Defense of Rora:** Despite being heavily outnumbered, Janavel and his small band of defenders successfully repelled multiple attacks by the Duke's forces. Dr. Frederick highlights Janavel's faith during these battles: "Before and after each attack was repulsed, he would gather his men and pray. After the attacks, he would recite the 11th Psalm, thanking God for the protection given them."
- **Janavel's Stand in the Face of Family Tragedy:** After Rora was eventually overrun and his family taken prisoner, the Marquis de Pianesa offered Janavel his family's release and personal gain in exchange for renouncing his faith. Janavel's powerful refusal demonstrates his absolute commitment: "My Lord Marquis, there is no torment so great or death so cruel, but what I would prefer the abjuration of my religion, so that promises lose their effects, and menaces only strengthen me in my faith." His wife and daughters were subsequently executed.
- **Continued Resistance and Divine Protection:** Despite the devastating loss, Janavel continued to lead the resistance, and his forces achieved surprising

victories against larger Catholic armies. The lecture emphasizes the Waldensians' belief in God's protection: "It was clear to Janavel and the Waldensians that God was protecting them in their attempts to defend their valley homes."

- **International Awareness and Support:** News of the Waldensian massacre spread across Protestant Europe, leading to sympathy and support, notably from Oliver Cromwell in England, who encouraged fundraising efforts.
- **The Significance of Faith as Action:** For Janavel and the Waldensians, faith was not passive belief but an active force in the face of existential threats. "For Joshua Janavel and the defenders of the Waldensian people, faith was not simply a belief in God. Faith was a matter of life and death."
- **Lessons for Today:** Dr. Frederick poses the question of how the modern church and individual lives would be transformed by embodying the same level of conviction and faith as the Waldensian forebearers.
- **Janavel's Legacy:** Even in later life, after being banished by his own people for being "too provocative," Janavel's military strategies were influential, even being studied by military institutions.
- **The Hymn "More Than Conquerors":** The inclusion and analysis of this hymn highlights the Waldensian understanding of their suffering and ultimate victory through faith in Christ. "More than conquerors, such is our emblem. More than conquerors, even if persecuted, for the victory of our faith was acquired through the Savior who redeemed us."

Key Quotes:

- "We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, and the words of the writer of the Letter of Hebrews were written about an early Christian community... But they could have easily been written about the Waldensians..."
- "...it is quite clear that there is no century more devastating to the Waldensian people and their existence than the 17th century."
- "Hatred of the Waldensians had hardened so much since the Reformation a century earlier that during the 1650s, Louis XIV, King of France, and Charles Emmanuel, the Duke of Savoy... began to seek their total annihilation."
- "On Easter Sunday, before the sun rose, the Duke's troops carried out a well-organized attack in every home where the Savoyard troops were garrisoned."

What followed that Easter morning was a particularly brutal assault involving many forms of torture upon men and women and even Waldensian children."

- "My Lord Marquis, there is no torment so great or death so cruel, but what I would prefer the abjuration of my religion..." - Joshua Janavel's response to the offer.
- "For Joshua Janavel and the defenders of the Waldensian people, faith was not simply a belief in God. Faith was a matter of life and death."
- "More than conquerors, such is our emblem. More than conquerors, even if persecuted, for the victory of our faith was acquired through the Savior who redeemed us."

Conclusion:

Dr. Frederick's lecture paints a vivid picture of the extreme trials faced by the Waldensians in the 17th century. The figure of Joshua Janavel stands out as an exemplar of unwavering faith, courageous leadership, and profound sacrifice in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. The lecture emphasizes the "centrality of trouble" in the Waldensian experience and invites reflection on the nature and power of faith in the lives of believers today. The historical account serves as a testament to the enduring strength of religious conviction in the face of brutal persecution.

4. Study Guide: Frederick, Waldensians, Session 10, The Centrality of Trouble – Joshua Janavel

Study Guide: The Centrality of Trouble and Joshua Janavel

Key Themes:

- The history and enduring faith of the Waldensian people.
- The intense persecution faced by the Waldensians, particularly in the 17th century.
- The pivotal role of Joshua Janavel as a leader of Waldensian resistance.
- The concept of faith as demonstrated through perseverance, resistance, and unwavering commitment in the face of extreme adversity.
- The broader historical context of religious conflict in Europe and the specific animosity towards the Waldensians.
- The impact of key events like the drought, the plague, and the edict of expulsion on the Waldensian community.
- The significance of individual acts of courage and faith in the face of overwhelming odds.
- The lasting legacy of figures like Janavel and their influence on subsequent Waldensian history and even military strategy.

Quiz:

1. According to the lecture, what made the 17th century particularly devastating for the Waldensians?
2. Describe the events of the edict of expulsion in January 1655 and its immediate impact on the Waldensian population.
3. Who was Joshua Janavel, and what initial action did he take in response to the arrival of Savoyard troops?
4. Explain why some Waldensians were initially critical of Janavel's preparations for defense.
5. Recount the events of Easter Sunday when the Savoyard troops attacked the Waldensian valleys.

6. What was the outcome of the Marquis de Pianesa's repeated attacks on the hamlet of Rora and the role of "John of El"?
7. Summarize the offer made by the Marquis de Pianesa to Joshua Janavel and Janavel's response.
8. What was the impact of the news of the Waldensian massacre on Protestant Europe, and who was a notable figure who responded?
9. Describe some of the remarkable events and outcomes of the battles led by Joshua Janavel against the Catholic forces.
10. What eventually happened to Joshua Janavel, and what is mentioned about his lasting impact?

Answer Key:

1. The 17th century was exceptionally devastating for the Waldensians due to a confluence of disasters: a severe drought and famine in 1629, followed by the Black Plague which decimated nearly 50% of their population and killed most of their pastors. Later in the century, they faced intensified persecution and planned annihilation.
2. In January 1655, King Louis XIV and the Duke of Savoy issued an edict of expulsion for Waldensians who would not convert to Catholicism. In the midst of winter, they were forcibly removed from their homes and relocated to less defensible valleys, resulting in death from exposure and illness, as well as looting by neighbors.
3. Joshua Janavel was a Waldensian farmer who recognized the arrival of Savoyard troops as the beginning of intense persecution. In response, he gathered eleven volunteers in February 1655 to defend their homes in the community of Rora.
4. Some Waldensians viewed Janavel's preparations as rash, overly provocative, and likely to incite violence. As a result, they did not make broader preparations for a general defense of the valleys.
5. On Easter Sunday, before dawn, the Duke's 15,000 troops launched a coordinated attack on every Waldensian home where they were garrisoned. This assault was characterized by brutal torture inflicted upon men, women, and children, including being bound and rolled over cliffs.

6. Despite repeated attacks by the Marquis de Pianesa's troops, the small hamlet of Rora, defended by "John of El" and eleven volunteers, initially repelled the larger forces, inflicting heavy casualties. Eventually, Rora was overrun, resulting in deaths and prisoners, including John of El's family.
7. The Marquis de Pianesa offered Joshua Janavel indemnity for his losses, the immediate release of his wife and children, and a commission in the Duke's army if he renounced his faith and converted to Catholicism. Janavel refused, stating that no torment or death was worse than denying his religion and entrusting his family's souls to God's care.
8. News of the torturous massacre of the Waldensians spread across Protestant Europe, reaching as far as England. Oliver Cromwell, England's Lord Protector, encouraged English parishes to raise money to support the Waldensian exiles.
9. Despite being consistently outnumbered, Janavel and his troops repeatedly outfoxed and defeated the Catholic forces. Notably, at the attack of San Zacondo, they overran a heavily fortified position by using wooden planks for protection, inflicting significant casualties while sustaining relatively fewer. Janavel himself survived two severe wounds.
10. In the 1660s, Janavel, accompanied by his son, retired to Geneva, banished by his own people who considered him too provocative. He lived for several more years, becoming a source of information, and developed military guidelines that are reportedly still studied today.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the factors that contributed to the intense persecution faced by the Waldensians in the 17th century, drawing specific examples from the lecture.
2. Evaluate the role of faith as a motivating and sustaining force for the Waldensians, particularly as exemplified by Joshua Janavel's actions and responses.
3. Discuss the significance of the Easter Sunday massacre of 1655 as a turning point in the history of the Waldensians and its impact on Protestant Europe.
4. Compare and contrast the responses of the wider Waldensian community and Joshua Janavel to the threats posed by the Duke of Savoy and the Catholic Church.
5. To what extent did the "centrality of trouble" define the Waldensian experience in the 17th century, and how did they respond to this ongoing adversity?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Waldensians:** A Christian religious movement originating in the 12th century, characterized by beliefs and practices that often conflicted with the Roman Catholic Church, leading to centuries of persecution.
- **Duke of Savoy:** The ruler of the Duchy of Savoy, a historical state in northwestern Italy and southeastern France, who played a significant role in the persecution of the Waldensians in the 17th century.
- **Catherine Marie:** The mother of the Duke of Savoy in the 17th century, a granddaughter of the Medici family and daughter of the French king, known for her strong animosity towards the Waldensians.
- **Edict of Expulsion (1655):** An order issued by the Duke of Savoy and King Louis XIV of France demanding that Waldensians who refused to convert to Catholicism be forcibly evicted from their valleys.
- **Marquis de Pianesa:** The commander of the Savoyard troops responsible for carrying out the edict of expulsion and subsequent brutal attacks on the Waldensians.
- **Rora:** A small Waldensian hamlet that mounted a significant initial resistance against the Savoyard troops under the leadership of "John of El."
- **Oliver Cromwell:** The Lord Protector of England during the Interregnum period, a Protestant leader who responded to the news of the Waldensian massacre by encouraging financial support for the exiles.
- **Syndic of Lucerne:** A Catholic bishop in the region who, upon witnessing the defeat of Catholic forces by the Waldensians, ironically commented on the heretics "eating the wolves."
- **Geneva:** A Swiss city that served as a refuge for Protestants, including Joshua Janavel in his later years after being banished by some of his own people.
- **Henry Arnall:** A later Waldensian leader who utilized Joshua Janavel's military tactics during the Waldensian exodus to Switzerland and their subsequent return.

5. FAQs on Frederick, Waldensians, Session 10, The Centrality of Trouble – Joshua Janavel, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about the Waldensian Experience and Joshua Janavel

1. Who were the Waldensians and what was the central challenge they faced, as highlighted in this lecture? The Waldensians were a Christian community with a history spanning over 800 years, known for their enduring faith in the face of relentless persecution, primarily from the Roman Catholic Church. The central challenge, particularly emphasized in the 17th century, was the constant threat to their very existence through violence, economic hardship, disease (like the Black Plague), and systematic attempts at annihilation due to their religious beliefs.

2. What made the 17th century a particularly devastating period for the Waldensians? The 17th century witnessed a confluence of catastrophic events for the Waldensians. They suffered a severe drought and famine in 1629, followed by the devastating Black Plague which wiped out nearly 50% of their population and the vast majority of their pastors. Adding to this were excessive economic burdens imposed by the Duke of Savoy. This culminated in the 1650s with a hardened hatred fueled by figures like the Duke's mother and the Bishop of Turin, leading to an edict of expulsion and brutal military actions aimed at their complete annihilation.

3. Who was Joshua Janavel and what role did he play in the Waldensian struggle? Joshua Janavel was a Waldensian farmer who recognized the impending danger of the Savoyard troop deployments in 1655. He was a key figure in organizing resistance against the Duke of Savoy's forces. Leading a small band of volunteers, he bravely defended their homes in Rora against overwhelming odds, demonstrating remarkable faith and military acumen. His defiance in the face of the execution of his family and his continued leadership made him a symbol of Waldensian resistance.

4. Can you describe the events of the Easter Massacre of 1655 and its significance? On Easter morning in 1655, the Duke of Savoy's troops, numbering 15,000, launched a brutal and well-organized attack on Waldensian homes where they were garrisoned. This event, known as the Easter Massacre, involved horrific acts of torture against men, women, and children. The brutality was so extreme that some French officers resigned in protest. This massacre galvanized Waldensian resistance and horrified Protestant Europe, leading to international support for their cause.

5. What was the significance of Joshua Janavel's response to the Marquis de Pianesa's offer? The Marquis de Pianesa offered Joshua Janavel his life, the release of his captured wife and children, and a commission in the Duke's army in exchange for renouncing his Waldensian faith. Janavel's defiant refusal, stating that no torment or death was worse than abjuring his religion and entrusting his family's immortal souls to God, is a powerful testament to his unwavering faith. His response solidified his image as a hero of the Waldensian cause.

6. Despite being outnumbered, how were the Waldensian defenders under Janavel often successful in their resistance? Despite facing vastly superior numbers, the Waldensian defenders under Janavel were often successful due to a combination of factors. Their deep faith provided them with courage and resolve. Janavel himself demonstrated tactical thinking, such as the use of wooden planks for cover. Additionally, the lecture suggests a belief in divine protection, highlighting instances where the Waldensians inflicted surprisingly heavy losses on the Catholic forces.

7. What was the broader European reaction to the persecution of the Waldensians, particularly the Easter Massacre? News of the brutal persecution of the Waldensians, especially the Easter Massacre, spread across Protestant Europe, eliciting widespread outrage and sympathy. Figures like Oliver Cromwell in England actively encouraged financial support for Waldensian exiles. This persecution also motivated some Protestant mercenaries to join the Waldensian cause, forming a larger, albeit still outnumbered, fighting force.

8. What legacy did Joshua Janavel leave behind, even after being banished by his own people? Despite being later banished to Geneva by some Waldensians who considered him too provocative, Joshua Janavel left a significant and lasting legacy. He remained a source of information and developed military guidelines that were studied even by military institutions like West Point. His leadership and unwavering faith during a critical period of intense persecution made him an enduring symbol of Waldensian resilience and a testament to the power of faith in the face of overwhelming adversity. His military tactics also proved valuable later in the Waldensian Exodus and Glorious Return.