

Dr. Kevin E. Frederick, Waldensians, Session 12, Henri Arnaud, The Glorious Return (1685-1690) Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Frederick, Waldensians, Session 12, Henri Arnaud, The Glorious Return, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Kevin Frederick explores the **"Glorious Return" of the Waldensians** between 1685 and 1690, focusing on the leadership of **Henri Arnold**, a minister who also served as a military commander. The text details the **persecution and exile of the Waldensians** by French forces under Louis XIV, followed by their determined attempt to **reclaim their homeland**. It highlights their **military struggles, reliance on faith (particularly Psalm 68), and eventual unexpected survival** against overwhelming odds, which Arnold attributed to divine intervention. The lecture concludes by emphasizing the **remarkable nature of their perseverance and the perceived divine favor** shown to the Waldensians.

2. 15 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Frederick, Waldensians, Session 12 – 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).



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ans_Session12.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Frederick, Waldensians, Session 12, Henri Arnaud, The Glorious Return

Briefing Document: The Glorious Return of the Waldensians (1689-1690)

Overview:

This document provides a briefing on the "Glorious Return" (1689-1690) of the Waldensians to their homeland in the Cottian Alps, as detailed in Dr. Kevin E. Frederick's Lecture 12. This pivotal event, led by the pastor and military commander Henri Arnold (or Arnault), saw a small band of Waldensian exiles defy overwhelming odds to reclaim their valleys after being forcibly expelled and suffering immense losses due to religious persecution by Louis XIV of France and the Duke of Savoy. The lecture emphasizes the strong spiritual leadership of Arnault, the remarkable resilience of the Waldensians, and the narrative of divine providence that underpinned their struggle and ultimate success.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Context of Persecution and Expulsion:

- In 1685, Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, leading to the persecution of Huguenot Protestants in France.
- In 1686, this persecution extended to the Waldensians in the Cottian Alps through an alliance between Louis XIV and the Duke of Savoy.
- Under Commander Nicholas Catinat, French troops forcibly removed approximately 8,500 Waldensians, imprisoning them. Around 1,600 were killed in combat, and over 60% of those imprisoned died from harsh conditions.
- Survivors were eventually exiled to Switzerland, with only 3,381 of the original 14,000 Waldensians alive as exiles in Geneva within a year.

1. Henri Arnault: Spiritual and Military Leader:

- Henri Arnault, a former soldier in the service of William of Orange who later became a pastor, emerged as the key leader of the Glorious Return.
- His leadership was characterized by a strong spiritual focus, integrating prayer, scripture (particularly Psalm 68), and daily sermons for his fighting men. Frederick notes, "Every day of the glorious return, starting in August of 1689 and concluding in May of 1690, Arnold would lead the fighters with a sense of spiritual focus. He would lead them in prayer and the scriptures, preaching to them once a day..."

1. **The Audacious Return Against Overwhelming Odds:**

- In August 1689, Arnault, commissioned as a colonel by William of Orange, led approximately 900 Waldensian and Huguenot men from Lake Geneva on a 130-mile trek over the Alps to reclaim their homeland.
- The journey was fraught with challenges, including capture of initial leaders, ambushes, and a significant confrontation at the bridge of Salbertron against 2,500 French troops.
- Despite losses, their speed and determination allowed them to return to their valleys within 11 days. Frederick states, "The speed of Arnault's army was one of their strongest tactics, which assured their successful return to their homeland."

1. **The Defense of Basilia and the Siege:**

- Facing a much larger French force (eventually reaching 10,000 under General Catinat), the Waldensians, numbering around 400, established a defensive stronghold at Basilia in the Germanosca Valley, based on the strategic advice of John Avel.
- They endured repeated assaults throughout the fall of 1689, utilizing guerrilla tactics and the natural terrain to their advantage.

1. **Providential Survival and Miraculous Provisions:**

- The lecture highlights several instances where the Waldensians' survival is attributed to divine providence.
- The discovery of a buried millstone allowed them to grind grain for food.
- Remarkably, unharvested fields of grain were revealed by a thaw in mid-February 1690, providing sustenance during their siege. Arnault later reflected, "Can anyone, he asked, refuse to recognize the hand of Providence in this extraordinary circumstance that the Vadois were permitted to make their harvest not in the midst of summer but in the midst of winter?"

1. **The Final Stand at Pan di Zucara and the Escape:**

- By May 14, 1690, the remaining 347 Waldensian fighters were besieged at their final defensive position, Pan di Zucara, by a combined French and Savoyard force of 22,000 troops.

- Facing imminent defeat and with gallows prepared for their execution, escape seemed impossible.
- However, under the cover of a thick fog and guided by Captain Philippe Tran Poulat, the Waldensians executed a daring escape through the least expected and most difficult terrain, evading the surrounding enemy forces. Frederick recounts, "Meanwhile, Poulat led the band of men hand to shoulder through the dense fog, often resorting to crawl on hands and knees over the precipice through the well-defended French lines."

1. **The Shift in Alliances and Ultimate Return:**

- A crucial turning point occurred when the Duke of Savoy, after secret negotiations with Protestant nations, switched his allegiance from France and joined forces against Louis XIV.
- The Duke offered the Waldensians their freedom in exchange for their support against the French.
- The Waldensians readily allied with the Duke and played a significant role in expelling the French from his kingdom.

1. **A Testament to Faith and Divine Intervention:**

- The Glorious Return is presented as a remarkable story of faith, resilience, and divine intervention.
- Arnault himself questioned how their survival and successes could be explained without the hand of God: "Arnault asked of his readers in his own handwriting in the glorious return, he says: how else but by the hand of God can this be explained?"
- The consistently high casualty rates inflicted on the French forces compared to the Waldensians are highlighted as further evidence of this. Frederick notes, "The casualty list of the French army was often in excess of 100 to 1 throughout the military campaign..."

1. **Legacy and Commemoration:**

- The Glorious Return is celebrated annually in Waldensian communities around the world in August.

- The event is seen as a testament to their enduring faith and God's protection. Arnault's memoirs emphasize the belief that God sanctioned their religion through these miraculous events.

Key Quotes:

- "Every year in August. It was led by a man named Henri Arnold or Henry Arnold. Henri Arnold was a minister, so his leadership oftentimes included very strong spiritual leadership as well as military leadership."
- "Let God rise up. Let his enemies be scattered." (Psalm 68, recited and sung by the Waldensians)
- "From a human point of view, all hope seemed lost. They turned to their leader, Henri Arnault, and to God on that fateful morning, singing Psalm 68... and hoping against hope and insurmountable odds that they would survive this siege."
- "The speed of Arnault's army was one of their strongest tactics, which assured their successful return to their homeland."
- "Can anyone, he asked, refuse to recognize the hand of Providence in this extraordinary circumstance that the Vadois were permitted to make their harvest not in the midst of summer but in the midst of winter?" (Henri Arnault reflecting on the unharvested grain)
- "Arnault asked of his readers in his own handwriting in the glorious return, he says: how else but by the hand of God can this be explained?"
- "Surely it must be granted that in all their troubles and dangers the omnipotent delivered them, gave them victory in all their battles, supported them when they were faint hearted, supplied them with necessaries when it appeared they must be destitute, and finally inspired their prince, the Duke, with the will to reinstate them in their heritage and suffer them to restore true devotion to their churches." (Henri Arnault's concluding thoughts)

Conclusion:

The Glorious Return stands as a remarkable chapter in Waldensian history, characterized by immense hardship, unwavering faith, and seemingly miraculous events. Under the leadership of Henri Arnault, a small group of exiled and decimated people defied the might of the French and Savoyard armies to reclaim their homeland. The narrative, as presented by Dr. Frederick, strongly emphasizes the role of divine providence in their survival and ultimate success, solidifying the Glorious Return as a central event in Waldensian identity and a testament to their enduring religious convictions.

4. Study Guide: Frederick, Waldensians, Session 12, Henri Arnaud, The Glorious Return

The Glorious Return: A Study Guide

Quiz:

1. Who was Henri Arnault, and what roles did he play in the Waldensian return?
2. What significant historical event preceded the Waldensians' exile in 1686, and how did it impact both Huguenots and Waldensians?
3. Describe the conditions faced by the Waldensians during their imprisonment and the subsequent journey over the Alps to Geneva.
4. What was the strategic importance of Basilia in the Germanosca Valley for the Waldensian fighters?
5. Explain the significance of Psalm 68 in the context of the Waldensians' experience, particularly during the siege of Pan de Zucara.
6. What were some of the key challenges and military tactics employed by the Waldensians during their eight-month siege?
7. Describe the seemingly miraculous events that provided sustenance for the Waldensians during the harsh winter siege.
8. How did the fog on the night of May 14th, 1690, contribute to the survival of the remaining Waldensian fighters?
9. What pivotal political shift occurred that ultimately secured the freedom and return of the Waldensians to their valleys?
10. According to Henri Arnault, what was the primary explanation for the Waldensians' survival and ultimate success in their return?

Answer Key:

1. Henri Arnault was a Waldensian minister and a former captain in William of Orange's army. He served as both the spiritual and military leader of the Waldensians during their "Glorious Return," leading them in prayer, scripture, and military strategy.
2. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685, which eliminated the right for Huguenot Protestants in France to worship as they chose, preceded the

Waldensians' exile. This act of religious intolerance by the French king led to the persecution and expulsion of both Huguenots and, subsequently, the Waldensians in alliance with the Duke of Savoy.

3. During their imprisonment, over 60% of the 8,500 imprisoned Waldensians died from hunger, thirst, and disease within eight months. The surviving prisoners, over 3,000, were then released to make a perilous winter journey over the Alps to Geneva, during which nearly a third more perished due to the harsh conditions.
4. Basilia in the Germanosca Valley was considered by the Waldensian military tactician John Avel to be the most defensible natural stronghold within their homelands. Its mountainous terrain provided a strategic advantage for the smaller Waldensian force against the much larger French army.
5. Psalm 68, a psalm of thanksgiving and deliverance, was sung by the Waldensians on several critical occasions, including the morning of their final stand at Pan de Zucara. It served as a source of spiritual strength, reminding them of God's power to rescue and deliver them even in seemingly hopeless situations.
6. The Waldensians faced severe shortages of provisions and ammunition, as well as repeated assaults from a vastly superior French and Savoyard army. They employed tactics such as speed, guerrilla warfare, utilizing natural defenses like boulders, and relying on their intimate knowledge of the mountainous terrain.
7. Miraculously, unharvested fields of grain were revealed by a warm wind melting the snow in the Alpine valleys during mid-February, just when the Waldensians' food supplies were nearly exhausted. Additionally, they rediscovered a buried millstone that allowed them to grind the gathered grain into flour.
8. On the evening before the anticipated final assault at Pan de Zucara, a thick fog rolled in across the mountains. This provided cover for the Waldensians to execute a daring escape down a treacherous and less-patrolled route, allowing the majority of them to evade the surrounding enemy forces.
9. After months of negotiation, the Duke of Savoy unexpectedly switched his allegiance from France to the Protestant nations of England, the Netherlands, and Austria. He offered the Waldensians their freedom if they would join his efforts to expel the French, a shift that ultimately secured their return.
10. Henri Arnault attributed the Waldensians' survival and success overwhelmingly to the intervention and providence of God. He pointed to events like the

unharvested grain, the unexpected fog, and their repeated victories against overwhelming odds as evidence of divine favor and protection.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the leadership of Henri Arnault during the "Glorious Return." In what ways did his dual role as a minister and military commander contribute to the Waldensians' resilience and ultimate success?
2. Discuss the significance of religious persecution as a driving force in the history of the Waldensians, focusing specifically on the events leading up to and during the "Glorious Return."
3. Evaluate the strategic and tactical decisions made by the Waldensians during their eight-month siege in the Basilia Valley and their escape from Pan de Zucara. What factors contributed to their ability to withstand a much larger and better-equipped enemy force?
4. Explore the role of seemingly providential or miraculous events in the narrative of the "Glorious Return." How did these events shape the Waldensians' understanding of their experience and their faith?
5. Compare and contrast the motivations and objectives of the key players involved in the "Glorious Return," including Henri Arnault, Louis XIV, the Duke of Savoy, and the Waldensian people. How did their individual goals and actions influence the course of events?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Waldensians:** A Christian religious movement originating in the 12th century in the Alps, characterized by their emphasis on biblical preaching and simple living, often facing persecution for their beliefs.
- **Henri (Henry) Arnault:** A Waldensian minister and former military captain who led the "Glorious Return" of the Waldensians to their homeland from exile.
- **The Glorious Return (1689-1690):** The arduous journey and military campaign by which a group of Waldensian exiles, led by Henri Arnault, returned to their valleys in the Cottian Alps after being expelled.

- **Edict of Nantes (1598):** A decree by French King Henry IV granting substantial rights to Calvinist Protestants (Huguenots) in a largely Catholic nation; its revocation in 1685 led to renewed persecution.
- **Louis XIV:** The King of France who revoked the Edict of Nantes and, in alliance with the Duke of Savoy, ordered the expulsion of the Waldensians from their valleys.
- **Duke of Savoy:** The ruler of the Savoyard territories in the Alps who initially allied with Louis XIV to expel the Waldensians but later switched allegiance to the Protestant nations.
- **Nicholas Catinat:** A French military commander who led the initial purge of the Waldensian valleys in 1686 and later commanded the French forces against the returning Waldensians.
- **The Invincibles:** The small band of less than 1,000 Waldensian fighting men who resisted the initial French purge and negotiated their exile in exchange for the release of prisoners.
- **Basilia (Germanosca Valley):** A naturally defensible stronghold in the Waldensian valleys where Arnault and his followers established their primary defense during the winter of 1689-1690.
- **Pan de Zucara (Sugar Loaf):** A prominent rock outcrop on a ridge that served as the final line of defense for the remaining Waldensians during the siege in May 1690.
- **Psalms 68:** A psalm of thanksgiving and deliverance from the Hebrew Bible that held significant importance for the Waldensians, particularly during times of hardship and conflict.
- **Huguenots:** French Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries who followed the Reformed tradition of John Calvin, facing persecution in Catholic France.
- **Providence:** The protective care of God or of nature as a spiritual power. Henri Arnault frequently interpreted the Waldensians' survival as a result of God's providential intervention.

5. FAQs on Frederick, Waldensians, Session 12, Henri Arnaud, The Glorious Return, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The Waldensian Glorious Return (1689-1690)

1. What was the "Glorious Return" in the context of Waldensian history, and when did it primarily take place? The "Glorious Return" refers to the remarkable and arduous journey of approximately 900 Waldensian and Huguenot exiles who returned to their homelands in the Cottian Alps in August 1689, after being forcibly expelled in 1686 due to religious persecution by the French King Louis XIV and the Duke of Savoy. The return culminated in a prolonged siege and eventual escape in May 1690, followed by the Duke of Savoy switching alliances and reinstating the Waldensians.

2. Who was Henri Arnaud, and what role did he play in the Glorious Return? Henri Arnaud was a Waldensian pastor and former soldier who became the key leader of the Glorious Return. Commissioned as a colonel by William of Orange, he organized and led the exiles on their 130-mile trek across the Alps. Arnaud provided both spiritual and military leadership, conducting daily prayers and sermons while strategically guiding the fighters through numerous battles and the prolonged siege of Basilia. His leadership was crucial in maintaining the morale and focus of the Waldensians against overwhelming odds.

3. What were the main reasons behind the Waldensian expulsion in 1686? The expulsion of the Waldensians in 1686 was primarily due to the religious policies of Louis XIV of France, who, after revoking the Edict of Nantes in 1685, aimed to unify France under Catholicism. In alliance with the Duke of Savoy, Louis extended his religious purge to the Waldensians in the Cottian Alps, viewing religious diversity within his sphere of influence as a sign of weakness. This resulted in the forced removal, imprisonment, and death of thousands of Waldensians.

4. Describe the journey of the Waldensian exiles back to their homeland in 1689. What challenges did they face? The journey began on the shores of Lake Geneva with approximately 900 men. They faced numerous challenges, including the capture and killing of some leaders and men before they even began their trek, arduous travel over multiple snow-covered mountain ranges, ambushes and resistance from local Catholic authorities and French troops (notably at the bridge of Salbertron), and the loss of men due to the relentless pace of the march. By the time they reached their valleys, their numbers had dwindled to around 600.

5. What was the significance of the siege at Basilia (Pan di Zucara) during the Glorious Return? After returning to their valleys, the Waldensians, led by Arnault and following the tactical advice of John Avel, established a defensive stronghold at Basilia in the Germanosca Valley. For eight months, the remaining fighters, numbering around 400 and later just 347, endured repeated assaults from a much larger French and Savoyard force (at one point numbering 22,000). Despite being heavily outnumbered and facing dwindling supplies, they successfully defended their position through a combination of fighting, guerrilla tactics, and what they perceived as divine providence. The final stand at Pan di Zucara, under intense bombardment, seemed to mark their imminent defeat.

6. How did the Waldensians manage to escape the siege at Pan di Zucara when facing overwhelming odds? On the night before the anticipated final assault, a thick fog rolled in, providing cover for the Waldensians. Following a plan suggested by Captain Philippe Tran Poulat, who knew the terrain well, the remaining 347 men stealthily escaped over a treacherous and less-guarded route down the mountainside, leaving their campfires burning to deceive the enemy. By morning, they were spotted a significant distance away, having successfully evaded the surrounding armies.

7. What role did external political factors play in the ultimate survival and return of the Waldensians to their valleys? A crucial turning point occurred when the Duke of Savoy, after months of secret negotiations with Protestant nations like England, the Netherlands, and Austria, switched his allegiance from France and joined the Protestant alliance against Louis XIV. The Duke offered the Waldensians their freedom and requested their support in fighting the French. The Waldensians readily agreed and played a significant role in driving the French out of the Duke's kingdom, ultimately leading to their reinstatement in their homeland.

8. According to the sources, how did Henri Arnault and the Waldensians interpret their survival and successes during the Glorious Return? Henri Arnault and the Waldensians largely attributed their survival and repeated successes against a far superior enemy to the providential hand of God. They saw divine intervention in events such as the unharvested grains that sustained them through the winter siege, the unexpected snowstorm that repulsed a major assault, and the fog that facilitated their miraculous escape. Arnault himself repeatedly emphasized that only God's power and blessing could explain their endurance, their victories against overwhelming odds, and the Duke of Savoy's eventual decision to reinstate them. They viewed their survival as a testament to God's favor upon their faith.