

FOUNDER OF WALDENSES WAS NOT PETER WALDO

Clifton A. Emahiser's Teaching Ministries
1012 N. Vine Street, Fostoria, Ohio 44830
Phone (419)435-2836, Fax (419)435-7571
E-mail caemahiser@sbcglobal.net

Please Feel Free To Copy, But Not To Edit

That the Waldenses sect of Christians were derived and formed into a religious group by Peter Waldo is probably among one of the biggest lies ever told. It is absolutely not true. Their very name screams "it's a lie". My purpose here is to clear up this odious lie that many people pass along as being the truth. I know you have been told this lie, but the Waldenses existed hundreds of years before Waldo ever came on the scene. As we shall see, Waldo was only a late comer in the game.

The Waldenses date back to the Roman emperors' persecutions of the early Christians and it is a well known fact that they started to meet in the catacombs. They also fled to the mountains of northern Italy for safety. The filthy lie that the romish 'church' promotes is that the Waldenses were a sect organized by Peter Waldo.

The following is what I have written in a recent brochure entitled *Daniel Prophesied The Catholic Church*: "Many who didn't die in the Roman persecutions from Nero unto Diocletian, fled to the mountains of northern Italy and were called the Vaudois (people of the valleys). They were originally called 'Vallenses', but with the *W* added to the alphabet in Medieval times representing *vv* or *uu* and one of the *l*'s changed into a *d*, the name became 'Waldenses' and still meant 'people of the valleys', and never at any time did the name have anything to do with Peter Waldo." The word "Vallenses" is a Latin word for "people of the valleys" and "Vaudois" is the corresponding word in French. Don't let anyone ever tell you the lie that Peter Waldo was the founder of the Waldenses! [Check the book *Truth Triumphant* by B.G. Wilkinson pp. 217 & 226, hereinafter *TT*.]

Wilkinson says on p. 217: "These Christians of the Alps and Pyrenees have been called Waldenses from the Italian word for 'valleys,' and where they spread over into France, they have been called Vaudois, a French word meaning 'inhabitants of the valleys' in a certain province. Many writers constantly call them Vaudois. The enemies of this branch of the Church in the Wilderness have endeavored to confuse their history by tracing to a wrong source the origin of the name, Waldenses. They seek to connect its beginnings with Peter Waldo, an opulent merchant of Lyons, France, who came into notice about 1175. The story of this remarkable man commands a worthy niche in the temple of events. However, there is nothing in the original or the earliest documents of the Waldenses – their histories, poems, and confessions of faith – which can be traced to him or which make any mention of him."

TT, p. 226: “ Cardinal Peter Damian, one of the able builders of the papal edifice, in his campaign (A.D. 1059) against these primitive Christians in northern Italy, called them Subalpini. The word in common parlance to designate these borderers of the Alps was ‘ Vallenses,’ from which in time the V was changed into W; one of the I’s into d, and they have since the twelfth century generally been called Waldenses.”

To verify that all of this is correct, I would like to refer to the *Junior Classic Latin Dictionary*, Latin-English and English-Latin, by Antonio J. Provost, head of the Modern Language department, University of Notre Dame. Note: the abbreviations used from this source are: *f.* = feminine gender; *s.* = substantive; *fig.* = figuratively; *poet.* = poetically.

In the English-Latin section, p. 203 it says, “ valley, *s.* vallis, convallis, is *f.*” Then in the Latin-English section it says on p. 154, “ vallis, is *f.* valley, vale, *fig.* (poet.) hallow.” In this same section, p. 27, under “ convallis ” it says: “ convallis is, *f.* deep valley.” From these definitions in Latin, it is clear that the term “ Waldenses ” (“ Vallenses ”) meaning “ people of the valley ” has absolutely nothing to do with the historical character by the name of Peter Waldo. It’s a Roman Catholic lie.

To demonstrate that the *Junior Classic Latin Dictionary* is correct, we will now go to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* under “ valley ” which has the usual English definition. This dictionary goes beyond others as it has an appendix of Indo-European Roots. Before we go to the appendix, let’s read the origin of the word at the end of the definition: “ [Middle English, valley from Norman French, from Vulgar Latin *vallāta* (unattested), from Latin *vallis*, *vallēs*. See *wel*-³ in Appendix] ”, and we will drop in at #10: “ Perhaps variant *wal*- in Latin *vallēs*, *vallis*, valley (‘ that which is surrounded by hills ’): *VAIL*¹, *VALE*¹, *VALLEY*.” You will notice the “ variant *wal*- in Latin ” suggests a “ w ” sound in place of the “ v ” sound, and may be the reason why “ Vallenses ” had evolved into “ Waldenses ”.

Again we will go to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* for a history of the letter “ W ” in our alphabet: “ The letter W is a descendant of the letter V. Around 1000 B.C. the Phoenicians and other Semites of Syria and Palestine began to use a graphic sign in the forms [not able to show here] . They gave it the name *wāw* and used it for a semiconsonant *w*, as in English know, knows. After 900 B.C., when the Greeks borrowed the alphabet from the Phoenicians, they developed two signs from *wāw*. The first sign, which they called *upsilon*, ‘ bare u,’ they used for the vowel *u*. The Greek form without the tail passed via Etruscan to the Roman alphabet, in which it was used for two sounds, semiconsonantal *w* and vocalic *u*, as in the writing of VENIO and IVLIVS. In later Roman times the sound *w* became *v*. Before the Norman Conquest of England the Anglo-Saxons used the Latin letter V, as in the Uncial form, for the sounds *u*, *v*, and *w*. Later the habit developed to use V for *u* and *v*, but to write V doubly for the sound *w*. Gradually the two separate letters were linked to form a new character, as in the Cursive form. Our modern printed letters, capital and lower-case, are formally constructed by analogy with the printed V, while the written forms revert to the Cursive.”

With this comprehensive explanation, one can now see why the term “ Vallenses ” developed into “ Waldenses ” especially during the Middle Ages around 400 to 1200 A.D. For evidence concerning the Waldenses, I will again turn to *TT*, p. 216:

“Waldenses Date Back to the Apostles

“The connection between the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and other believers in the New Testament and the primitive Christians of Western Europe is explained by Voltaire thus:

“Auricular confession was not received as late as the eighth and ninth centuries in the countries beyond the Loire, in Languedoc and the Alps – Alcuin complains of this in his letters. The inhabitants of those countries appear to have always had an inclination to abide by the customs of the primitive church, and to reject the tenets and customs which the church in its more flourishing state judged convenient to adopt.

“Those who were called Manichaeans, and those who were afterward named Albigenses, Vaudois, Lollards, and who appeared so often under different names, were remnants of the first Gaulish Christians, who were attached to several ancient customs, which the Church of Rome thought proper to alter afterward.” (Voltaire, *Additions to Ancient and Modern History*, vol. 29, pp. 227, 242.)

“For nearly two hundred years following the death of the apostles, the process of separation went on between these two classes of church members until the open rupture came. In the year 325 the first world council of the church was held at Nicaea, and at that time Sylvester was given great recognition as bishop of Rome. It is from the time of this Roman bishop that the Waldenses date their exclusion of the papal party from their communion. As the church historian Neander says:

“But it was not without some foundation of truth that the Waldenses of this period asserted the high antiquity of their sect, and maintained that from the time of the secularization of the church – that is, as they believed, from the time of Constantine’s gift to the Roman bishop Silvester [A.D. 314-336] – such an opposition as finally broke forth in them, had been existing all along’.” (Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion*, 5th Period, sec. 4, p.605.) [*Evidently, Neander (1789-1850) jew church historian was not aware the “Donation of Constantine” was a romish forgery.*]

On the second quotation above by B.G. Wilkinson of Voltaire, we might add: Voltaire was one of France’s best known writers who flourished 1694-1778. He was a man of high caliber who’s testimony should be taken seriously, even though he was trained at a Jesuit school. Voltaire must have done something right, as upon his death, the Roman Catholic church, because of much of his criticism of that institution, refused to allow him to be buried in church ground. If this commentary on the Waldenses by Voltaire was in his 29th volume on ancient and modern history, surely he must have been quite familiar with his subject, and well qualified to make the observation that the romish church had “altered” the ancient Gaulish Christian customs! No doubt, Voltaire was denied a place of burial because of his positive remarks in favor of the Waldenses. The Waldenses, along with the British Celtic Church represented Yahweh’s assembly in the wilderness that would be persecuted for 1260 years as prophesied by Daniel at 7:25.

It should be made very clear here that Peter Waldo joined the Waldenses rather than the Waldenses joining Peter Waldo. Once one understands that the romish church had to destroy the Waldenses in order to continue claiming they were the original church, then one can realize why there was such terrible persecution of Yahweh’s

people, for truly the Waldenses were The Israel Of The Alps. Peter Waldo, though, was a good man in his own right. For this we will return to *TT* p. 245:

“ Peter Waldo

“ Mention is now made of that famous individual, Peter Waldo. Some authorities claim that the name Waldo was derived from the Waldenses because of his prominent work among them. Whether this is true or not, we do know that from his time on the name Waldenses was more generally used to indicate those large reforming bodies which had previously been called ‘men of the valleys,’ or Vallenses, Albigenes, Insabbatati, Berengarians, Subalpini, Patarines, Petrobrusians, Henricians, Arnoldists, and other names.

“ Peter Waldo of Lyons, France, began his work somewhere between 1160 and 1170. He was a wealthy merchant who gave away all his goods and began to preach the genuine doctrines of the New Testament. He claimed the papacy to be the ‘man of sin,’ and the beast of the Apocalypse. He devoted much time to translating and distributing the Bible.”

From this we see that not only was Peter Waldo a good man, but he understood Bible prophecy better than most people today. But on the other hand, if we erroneously give Waldo the credit for founding the Waldenses sect, we destroy the identity of true Israel during the critical Middle Ages, and that is not to say the Waldenses were all of Israel at that time. Once we understand who true Israel is, how fantastic it is to claim the present-day “Jews” are Israel. We simply cannot continue to give credence, without opposition, to the lie that Peter Waldo founded the Waldenses! Some people in Israel Identity today will put emphasis on being a member of a local church as if somehow that was a prerequisite for being a Christian. The term “church” in Greek (#1577) is *ekklesia* and means “a calling out” or “called out ones”, and the only people who are “called out” are true Israelites. Whenever one notices a White Israelite walking down the sidewalk one is observing “a called out one” or a member of Yahweh’s assembly. Had some of these people today who put their emphasis on a so-called “local church” lived back in the time of the Waldenses, they would have asked, “Are you a member of a local romish church?”; how absurd! That single White Israelite seen walking down the sidewalk is a “called out one” whether he is alone or in a building with 10,000 other Israelites. In the Waldenses, we have an example of the true *ekklesia* of Yahweh and nobody cares to mention them, or reflect on the persecution they endured. And that persecution was executed by the hand of the “man of sin”, or the office of the pope of the romish catholic church, and that title doesn’t deserve to be written in capital letters! The next time anyone asks you if you are a member of a local church, let them know real quickly that you are “a called out one” whether alone or with 10,000 in a sizable edifice. [Note Acts 8:3; 9:31; 1 Cor. 14:23]. The truth is, when you are alone in the privacy of your own immediate family, you constitute, if racially pure, a Holy *ekklesia*! A multiracial group **never** establishes an *ekklesia*, whether among one’s own immediate racially-mixed family or in a large building with diverse races represented!

HOW WIDESPREAD WERE THE WALDENSES?

For this we will return to *TT*, p. 252, where B.G. Wilkinson quotes a writer by the name of Edgar, in his *The Variations of Popery*, pages 51, 52: “The Waldenses, as

they were ancient, were also numerous. Vignier, from other historians, gives a high idea of their populousness. The Waldenses, says this author, multiplied wonderfully in France, as well as in other countries of Christendom. They had many patrons in Germany, France, Italy, and especially in Lombardy, notwithstanding the papal exertions for their extirpation.

“This sect, says Nangis, were infinite in number; appeared, says Rainerus, in nearly every country; multiplied, says Sanderus, through all lands; infected, says Caesarius, a thousand cities; and spread their contagion, says Ciaconius, through almost the whole Latin world. Scarcely any region, says Gretzer, remained free and untainted from this pestilence. The Waldensians, says Popliner, spread, not only through France, but also through nearly all the European coasts, and appear in Gaul, Spain, England, Scotland, Italy, Germany, Bohemia, Saxony, Poland, and Lithuania. Matthew Paris represents this people as spread through Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, Spain, and Germany. Their number, according to Benedict, was prodigious in France, England, Piedmont, Sicily, Calabria, Poland, Bohemia, Saxony, Pomerania, Germany, Livonia, Sarmatia, Constantinople, Philadelphia, and Bulgaria.”

THE EVANGELIZING OF THE WALDENSES

For this we will return to *TT*, p. 249, where B.G. Wilkinson quotes a writer by the name of McCabe, *Cross and Crown*, p. 32:

“Seemingly they took no share in the great struggle which was going on around them in all parts of Europe, but in reality they were exercising a powerful influence upon the world. Their missionaries were everywhere, proclaiming the simple truths of Christianity, and stirring the hearts of men to their very depths. In Hungary, in Bohemia, in France, in England, in Scotland, as well as in Italy, they were working with tremendous, though silent power. Lollard, who paved the way for Wycliffe in England, was a missionary from these Valleys ... In Germany and Bohemia the Vaudois teachings heralded, if they did not hasten, the Reformation, and Huss and Jerome, Luther and Calvin did little more than carry on the work begun by the Vaudois missionaries.”

Yet, today, both Protestant and Catholic alike sneer at the very mention of the Waldenses. The Waldenses, along with the British Celtic church, were the primary evangelists to take the Gospel to the lost tribes of the children of Israel in Europe. They did their job well; were continually persecuted and slain by the romish church; and were given no credit for their labor and suffering even to this day.