

1545 AD – MASACRE OF WALDENSISANS AT MERINDOL

“But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 9 v 24)

HISTORY

In **1545** in the environs of Merindol in the south of France hundreds of Waldensians were slaughtered by armed soldiers. Survivors were sent to forced labor on slave galleys.

During the period known as the Wars of Religion from **1562** to **1598** between 2,000,000 and 4,000,000 people died in religious violence. French nobility took sides. There were riots and mob violence in the cities. There were pitched battles of armed troops. Huguenots received support from monarchs of Protestant lands and so the conflict persisted for decades.

In **1598** the Edict of Nantes granted Huguenots the right to practice their religion without persecution by the State. This was revoked in the Edict of Fontainebleau in **1685** and hundreds of thousands of Huguenots emigrated. In **1787** the Edict of Tolerance brought full civil rights and legal recognition to Huguenots, Calvinists, and Jews. In **1789** full religious freedom was granted in the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

THE WALDENSISANS

The movement appeared in the **1170**'s in Lyon, France. Peter Waldo gave away his property and preached apostolic poverty. He drew some followers who called themselves the 'Poor Men of Lyon'. In **1215** the Roman Church declared them heretical and they were persecuted.

In **1211** more than 80 Waldensians were burned as heretics. Persecution lasted centuries.

The Waldensians held to doctrines contrary to teachings of the Roman Church: freedom of conscience, justification based on the death of Christ, the sinfulness of man, the incarnation of the Son, the priesthood of all believers, congregational involvement in church affairs, and a 'low' view of the merits of the sacraments. They denied purgatory as an invention. They considered the Church of Rome to be 'antichrist'.

Between **1175** and **1185** Peter Waldo commissioned the translation of the Bible into the local language. In the **1180**'s the Waldensians were forced to leave Lyon. They met in secret. They would confess sins and hold a service. Preachers were itinerant and safeguarded in homes.

During the sixteenth century leaders of the Waldensians embraced the Reformed movement and joined local Protestant organizations. It was at this time when they departed from their historic very private observances of faith and joined organized public churches that the persecution and massacre at Merindol occurred in **1545**.

The Waldensians came under the influence of Lutheran Protestants who had a more militant mindset to establishing the faith. Certain towns were fortified. Contentions and conflicts with local Catholics became more strained and public. Local administrators requested the assistance of soldiers. They massacred Waldensians and devastated their villages. The King of France and the Pope approved of these actions and granted the soldiers honors.

PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH 9 V 24

“But let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 9 v 24)

Up until the Protestant Reformation, the Waldensians were a peaceful movement who did not challenge the authority of governments. They had found a way to function under oppression.

The LORD would have been pleased if the Waldensians had been satisfied to keep their private faith and not become involved politically in the struggle for domination of one religion (Protestantism) over another religion (Catholicism) in the political realm.

Before these events, the Waldensians possessed a precious thing: they knew who Jesus was. To their everlasting credit they correctly honored Jesus and his death as the way of salvation: **‘let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me: that I am the LORD’.**

At some point the leaders of the Waldensians deemed that knowing Jesus was not enough. They wanted something in addition to that – freedom to worship publically in buildings. But by pressing their agenda into the political realm they transgressed. As appalling as the massacres were, the Waldensians were at fault in becoming aligned in a political battle.

SPIRITUAL NUMBER ANALYSIS

For a mind that has wisdom please read on. See truth from another perspective.

PART ONE

Chapter **9** of Jeremiah is the **78th** chapter of The Prophets.

The spiritual number **78** means 'Miraculous Signs'.

The spiritual number **9** means 'Judgment'

The survival of the Waldensians over centuries of oppression was a 'Miraculous Sign' the LORD was with them. The genocide of the Waldensians was a 'Judgment' of God. The Waldensians had left their first love. They exchanged the Lord's protection for fortifications and man's strength to fight man. It was a horrible mistake in judgment.

PART TWO

Jeremiah **9 v 24** is the **19,200th** verse in the whole Bible starting at Gen **1 v 1**.

The number **19,200 = 50 x 384**

The spiritual meaning of **50** is 'Fire' or 'Persecution'

The spiritual meaning of **384** is 'Honor the Law of God'.

Why did the Waldensians want to meet in church buildings? They were knowledgeable in the Scriptures. They knew the human body of a believer is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. They had been blessed by the LORD in their private meetings in homes for centuries. What did they have to gain from having a church building? Did they want to parade their righteousness before men? Did they want to gain larger numbers of followers by having a recognized meeting place in the community? Or were they simply tired of suffering for Christ and they wanted to be socially accepted?

No matter what the reason – there is no justification for believers in Christ to build temples or churches on earth. First, we have a temple – our bodies. Second – we have homes to meet in. Third – we are called to give our possessions to the poor; buying and maintaining church property voids this command. Fourth – meeting in a church building is a first step to

organized religion: setting meeting days, organizing services for larger numbers, and normalizing conventions of faith and practice forcing individuals to sin against their conscience to keep attendance. The full proof of man's religion was facing them in the very organized reformed religious movement called Lutheranism which relied on paid ministers and church buildings. Why would the Waldensians desire that?

They chose Man's Religion with a church building. They got the 'Fire' of 'Persecution' full force because they did not 'Honor the Law of God'. The lesson ought to be clear to understand: God is not impressed with Man's Religion. God prefers us to walk as Jesus did.

PART THREE

Jeremiah **9 v 24** is the **1,545th** verse of The Prophets starting at Isaiah **1 v 1**.

The number **1,545 = 15 x 103**

The spiritual meaning of **15** is 'Covenant'

The spiritual meaning of **103** is 'Image of God'.

The Waldensians had a precious thing: they knew Jesus. And another precious thing: they were living the life of Jesus: 'Image of God'. Jesus was never popular. Jesus was forced to stay on the move and at times hide from religious authorities trying to kill him. Jesus had no building to call home. Jesus slept under the trees. Jesus accepted hospitality from strangers.

We can say, like few movements that have ever appeared in all history, the Waldensians were keeping 'Covenant' with the LORD by living as Jesus did. Even though the world did not see them because their faith was private the LORD knew and treasured them.