



September 28th

Memory Verse

The gospel of Christ
is the power of God

unto salvation

to everyone that believeth. Romans 1:16

Something to read from History¹

On 28th September 1066 William the Conqueror landed in England to begin his conquest of the country. Things in England would never be the same again. England's King Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) had not been an ideal man for the throne. He was devoted to the Church of Rome and its



¹ Adapted from *The Story of God's Dealings with our Nation* Volume 1 which is available here:

<https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=The%20Story%20of%20Gods%20Dealings%20with%20our%20Nation> story on until the Norman Conquest.



teachings. He had been brought up in Normandy² and had spent most of his life in monasteries. At this time there was a difference between the church life on the continent and that in England. For instance, the clergy³ were often married men in England unlike those on the continent who were forbidden to marry. The Norman dukes gave much money to the church and Normandy was full of very beautiful churches and cathedrals. In return the dukes had the power to appoint bishops and abbots. This meant that the church leaders were like servants of the dukes and helped them carry out their policies. Edward was a weak person, afraid of offending his Anglo-Saxon nobles so he did not force on them a thorough change of the church to bring it into line with the Roman ideas he had enjoyed in Normandy.

The most powerful noble in the land was the Saxon Earl Godwin. He was so powerful that Edward put Normans rather than Englishmen into high places both in church and state to lessen the Earl's power. The English disliked the Normans and when Edward had Earl Godwin and his son thrown out of the country, the people rose up to fight for him and his son Harold. Edward was forced to allow them to return. Although he was married to Earl Godwin's daughter, Edward left no children when he died. The nearest heir was Edgar the Atheling, who was only a boy. Edward, when dying, named Harold, Earl Godwin's son king and this was confirmed by the Witan.⁴ Unfortunately for Harold, there were two other people who thought they had a better right to the throne than he did, Harald Hardrada king of Norway and William Duke of Normandy.

William Duke of Normandy was the cousin of Edward the Confessor. Edward had promised the throne to William when he quarrelled with the Godwins. In offering the throne to both William and then Harold, Edward created a dangerous situation. William had once taken Harold prisoner when he was ship wrecked on the Norman coast. He had released him only on condition that he promised to support William in his claim to the throne of



² Normandy is part of France. The Dukes of Normandy owed allegiance to the kings of France but in practice they were so strong that they were virtually independent rulers.

³ Clergy means ministers and officials of the church.

⁴ The king's council, a forerunner of our modern parliament.



England. Harold did not keep his promise. Perhaps he thought that, since he had been forced to make the promise and had not made it freely, he need not keep it. The pope supported William. He wished to impose his authority on England and make it conform with the Roman church in such matters as clerical celibacy.⁵ William for his part was very happy to have the pope's blessing. It made his invasion of England look more respectable.

Harald Hardrada's claim to the English throne was based on his relationship to an earlier King of England, Canute. Harold could probably have beaten either Harald Hardrada or William of Normandy but he could not defeat both.

Harald Hardrada attacked first, invading Yorkshire and Harold defeated him at the battle of **Stamford Bridge, Yorkshire**. Then he and his men had to march south to face William at **Pevensey**. William's men were trained soldiers who fought on horse back. Harold's army consisted mainly of peasants who were not well armed. His housecarls⁶ had not learned to fight on horseback as the Normans had done. Instead they used horses to get from place to place but got off their horses to fight. Even so, the English did well against the invaders who were only able to get close to them by pretending to run away in order to trick the English into running after them. Eventually Harold was killed by an arrow in the eye and the Norman horsemen broke through the defences. William had won.

After this defeat the hearts of the English seemed to fail them. The northern and midland nobles were waiting in London. When William arrived there



⁵ Celibacy means not being married. The Roman church did not allow its priests to marry.

⁶ Bodyguard.



they submitted to him. He was crowned in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day.

William punished rebellion against his rule with great harshness and cruelty. In the north of England he burned crops and villages and killed the inhabitants when they rebelled against him. The old Saxon barons were removed and Norman lords put in their place.

William was not timid about imposing Roman ideas on the church in England as Edward had been. Celibacy was forced on the English church and Roman ideas were firmly established. In the state Norman lords replaced Saxon barons and in the church the native English Bishops and Abbots were replaced with foreigners. The new rulers of the English church emphasised two false teachings which are characteristic of the Roman church, the worship of the virgin Mary and the doctrine of transubstantiation.⁷ Spiritual darkness began to close in on England.

Although the pope had given William his blessing in his conquest of England, once he was in possession of the throne, William wished to control the church in England himself, rather than accepting the pope's authority. Accordingly he required that all priests should make an oath of loyalty to him. He forbade the church to excommunicate⁸ any of his officers without his consent and declared that any decision reached by the synod had to be agreed by himself. The clergy were not allowed to recognise a new pope or publish a papal bull⁹ unless they first had William's permission.



7 This is the teaching that the bread and wine actually change into the body and blood of Christ. Christ is held to be sacrificed again every time the mass is celebrated. Only the priest is considered to have the power to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.

8 To excommunicate is to throw out of the church. People believed that the church authorities, headed by the pope, had this power because they acted on behalf of Christ himself. They believed they could not get to heaven without the church. This gave the pope and the church authorities great power since people were terrified of being excommunicated.

9 A papal bull is an official letter from the pope giving his decision or instructions. "Bulla" is the Latin word for the lead seal which was fixed to the document. The pope expected his bulls to be obeyed without question.



On the continent a system of government had grown up called feudalism. This meant that land was not *owned* but *held* from someone else in return for certain services. The lords held their land from the king in return for fighting for him when called upon. The knights held their lands from the lord in return for fighting for the lord. The peasants held their land from the knight in return for working on his land and fighting for him when called upon. The system was not established in England until the reign of Edward the Confessor. With William it was ruthlessly pursued. William granted land (which had belonged to the Saxon nobles) to his Norman barons in return for their services. They bound the people under them as villeins. Villeins were little better than slaves. The Saxon peasants found their new Norman masters much harder than their old Saxon lords. The Normans did not distinguish between freemen and serfs¹⁰ as the Saxons had done, lumping them all together as villeins. The Normans did not even speak the language of their new villeins. For many years to come there were two languages spoken in England as the ruling classes¹¹ now spoke Norman French.



The king claimed all the forests of England as his own, punishing any one who killed the deer or wild boar. Poor people had been used to adding to their diet with animals which they killed in the forests so this was a very harsh rule.

William built stone castles all over the country to keep the people in check. The most famous of these castles is the Tower of London, which was built of great shaped blocks of the famous hard white stone of Normandy. William had these brought over the sea specially and the



10 A serf was virtually a slave of the lord bound to serve him and unable to leave his service.

11 Ruling classes - the people with power and authority over others.



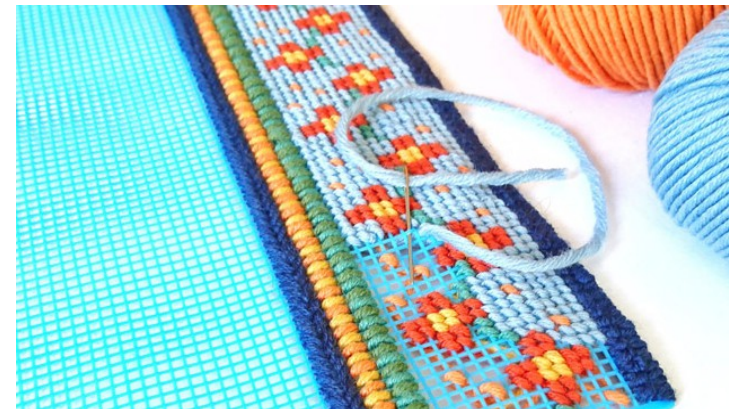
tower became known as the White Tower. In order that he might be sure that he was getting every last penny of the taxes due to him, William sent round officials to every manor in the country to question the inhabitants and value everything. The record of this inquiry is known as the Domesday Book.

Map work

Look up Stamford Bridge, Yorkshire and Pevensey in an atlas. How far did Harold and his men have to march between the two battles?

Something to make

To celebrate William's victory, the Norman ladies made an *enormous* piece of embroidery known as the Bayeux Tapestry. There are some parts of it at the top and bottom of these lesson pages. Half a metre high and a huge 70 metres long, the tapestry was embroidered with scenes from the conquest so that it formed a kind of pageant telling the story of the event in pictures rather like a modern graphic novel. The Norman ladies were embroidery experts but there is no reason why you should not have a go at some embroidery even if you are not (yet) an expert. The easiest kind of embroidery to start with, in my opinion, is inexpensive plastic canvas, sometimes sold under the trade name *Plasticanvas*. This is very easy to use as you do not need an embroidery hoop and no special threads are needed – left over knitting wools will do and you can often find these in charity shops. You can use graph paper to design your embroidery yourself. All sorts of pretty effects can be made easily as you can see on the right. Very small pieces of plastic canvas can be cut for making gifts such as book marks and the canvas can even be joined to form boxes and other solid shapes.¹²



Very young children might enjoy a kind of “embroidery” made using simple pictures such as those found on birthday cards. An older child can prepare a picture for a small child using a hole punch or even a knitting needle (used with great care and adult help) to make holes all round the outline of the main object in the picture. Then thread a large blunt plastic needle with a thick piece of wool (in a bright colour if possible) the end of which can be

¹² Image by kind permission of Ponyneedles Europe.

fastened to the back of the picture card with sellotape. Now a little one can “sew” in and out of the holes to embellish the picture. A set of these cards provides plenty of fun and helps little ones learn to control their fingers.

Map Work and Diary Entries¹³

In late September 1538, the people living in the region of Pozzuoli, a few miles to the west of Naples in Italy, were disturbed by a succession of earthquakes. On September 28th a volcano was born in the Campi Flegrei or Philegraen fields and was called Monte Nuovo (New mountain). The event is important in the study of Volcanos or *volcanology* because it was the first eruption in modern times that was witnessed and well described by a number of different witnesses. On 19th May we looked at Volcanoes and there are instructions on that date for making your own volcano (!) in that day's lesson.

Here are extracts from two letters written at the time of the *Monte Nuovo* eruption describing the event.

The earth opened near the lake and revealed a horrid mouth, from which was vomited, furiously, smoke, fire, stones and mud composed of ashes; making at the time of its opening a noise like loud thunder. The fire that issued from the mouth went towards the walls of the unfortunate city [Pozzuoli]; the smoke was partly black, and partly white, the stones that followed were by the devouring flames converted to pumice, the size of which (of some I say) were much larger than an ox.

The stones went about as high as a cross bow can carry, and then fell down, sometimes on the edge, sometimes in the mouth itself... the mud was of the colour of ashes, and at the first very liquid, then by degrees less so; and in such quantity that in less than twelve hours, with the help of the above mentioned stones, a mountain was raised of 1,000 paces in height.

Next morning, the poor inhabitants of Pozzuoli, struck with so horrible a sight, quitted their habitations... some with children in their arms, some with sacks full of goods;... others carrying quantities of birds that had fallen dead at the times the eruption began, others with fish that they had found, and were to meet with in plenty upon the shore, the sea having been at that time considerably dried up... Turning towards the place of the eruption, you saw mountains of smoke, part of which was very black and part very white, at times deep coloured flames burst forth with huge stones and ashes, and you heard a noise like the discharge of a number of artillery.

Information of this sort has to be carefully interpreted. Look at the eye witness accounts of the *Monte Nuovo* eruption again. How high would 1000 paces be? *Monte Nuovo* is actually 132m or 433ft high. Can you calculate whether the eye witness meant 1000 paces vertically or did he mean it would take 1000 paces to walk up the slope to the top? What can you tell about the diet of the people of the area from these accounts? What might the eye witness be describing when he says “the sea having been at that time considerably dried up”?

Eye witness evidence of all sorts of events, natural or historical is very important to historians and scientists. Even records of local weather conditions or people's reactions to political events both local, national and international can be important to historians trying to build up a picture of a given society or scientists trying to track the vagaries of climate. Everyone can participate in this by keeping a journal or diary. You can record everything in your journal from what the weather is like to your own feelings about what you read or hear about current events. You can even illustrate it with drawings or photos. You do not need to write an entry everyday – although you can if you wish, of course. A weekly entry or even a monthly summary would still be a good project to undertake. If you already keep a diary, try looking round for new types of things to include. Ask people what they think about things that are happening in society. Do different people have different thoughts about the same things? These might all be good material for a diary entry, although not so spectacular as a volcano!

Something to sing

In 1745 on **September 28th** the National Anthem had its first performance. If you learned the words in the lesson for 21st April today would be a good day to sing the anthem again, remembering that it is a prayer for our King, based on words from the Bible (1Samuel 10:24) which were first used of Saul, king of Israel. It should be our prayer that God will truly save our King and lead him into his truth. Words and Music are in the Optional Resources files for today so even if you have not sung it before you can try it today – but you will have to change the word “Queen” to “King” when you sing it as we have a king now!