

STUDY PACK 32

ENGLAND

“Late in the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe pointed out that if kings were chosen by God and ruled with divine rights, then God must assist and approve the sins of tyrants – ‘a blasphemous conclusion!’ Hence it was not a sin to depose tyrants.” ~ Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason*, p. 82 ~

I. EARLY ENGLAND

The earliest complete records of the British Isles came from around 55 B.C. This was when Julius Caesar and his Roman legions invaded Britain. He found the islands inhabited by the Celtic tribes – tribes closely related to the German tribes he had just defeated in Gaul. One of their religious sects, the Druids, was representative of paganism generally. The Druids practiced _____, _____, _____, and _____.

The existence of Britain had been known by the Greeks for at least 500 years. Tin was plentiful there and the name Britain comes from that observation. However, there is only very limited record of trading expeditions to “the land of tin.” Caesar’s first attempt to invade Britain was a failure but his troops were impressed by the fertile farmland. The next year they came back with 800 ships full of soldiers and supplies. The Celtic defenders of the island soon became famous for their bravery and their ferocity in battle. Finally a treaty was reached between Caesar and the Celtic tribes. The Celts in theory acknowledged Roman authority but the Roman army left Britain. For over 100 years, Roman trading expeditions came and went at will but the Roman armies stayed away. Trade with the rest of Europe also increased.

In 43 A.D., a Roman army of 20,000 men invaded Britain. This army was also commanded by a future Roman emperor Vespasian. This army included soldiers from the fierce Germanic tribes who used the same battle methods as the Celts. It also included elephants from North Africa, trained for warfare. The Romans were successful in conquering a large area. The Romans destroyed the sacred graves of the Druids. The British people revolted. London, which remained loyal to Rome, was slaughtered – every man, woman, and child. New Roman legions arrived and expanded Roman control.

The Romans built a _____. They minted coins. They erected a 73-mile wall to serve as a barrier against the still independent Celtic tribes. In 208 A.D., the Roman emperor Severus came in person to Britain and concentrated on expanding Roman rule.

Christianity was brought to Britain by Roman soldiers and traders. Christianity spread widely _____ were started throughout Britain. During the second and third century, Britain experienced a peace enforced by the Roman Empire and a cultural transformation as Christianity replaced paganism as the most important religion. This is called _____. When the Roman emperors persecuted Christianity, the persecution usually did not extend as far away as Britain. The Christian churches developed in relative peace.

As the Roman Empire broke up in civil wars and tried to withstand invasions, more and more legions were pulled from Britain. By 410 A.D., Roman control had ended.

II. THE INVASION OF THE ANGLES AND SAXONS

Around 441 or 442 A.D., two Germanic tribes, the Angles and the Saxons, began to invade Britain. At first, they were defeated as a legendary cavalry leader named Arthur united the Celtic tribes and drove them off. Little is known for sure about Arthur though hundreds of legends have been told about his exploits. Arthur used _____ against the Saxon invaders who used _____.

The Saxons kept coming and in time they conquered much of the center of Britain, pushing the Celts into the modern regions of Wales and Scotland. The _____ - England. The Saxons brought _____ with them. Christian churches continued but they were no longer the dominant force in society. The education, culture, and relative peace that had been Christian England now crumbled. Respect for law and order and private property was replaced by the violent culture of the pagan Saxon.

Roman Catholicism was imposed upon the Germanic tribes on the European mainland by King Charlemagne and others. The Roman Catholic Church began to send missionaries to bring England under Catholicism. The church threatened to send armies to force England into Catholicism. Most of the Saxons agreed and continued to practice their paganism using Roman Catholic terms. The independent Christian churches resisted and a long, bloody, civil war was fought. Eventually, most of the independent Christian churches were destroyed and Roman Catholicism became _____.

III. THE VIKINGS

The Vikings began to routinely raid the British Isles. These Nordic pirates repeatedly and cruelly ransacked villages all over the British Isles. All the Viking raiders were volunteers and each could take away all the booty he could carry. They practiced polygamy and routinely carried away women captives who struck their fancy. Winston Churchill called them the most audacious and treacherous type of pirate and shark that had ever yet appeared.

The Saxons rarely were successful in defeating the Viking raiders. When Viking King Ragnar was captured by the Saxons, he was thrown into a pit of poisonous snakes. His son hunted down the Saxon king and literally cut his heart and lungs out. This same son, King Ivar, eventually led a group of Danish Vikings to settle permanently in England. He established a major kingdom and converted to Christianity. They began a period of rule that was referred to as the “_____”.

IV. KING ALFRED THE GREAT

Alfred, brother of a Saxon king, led a Saxon army in a rousing defeat of the Vikings. This shook the confidence of the Viking people. Alfred became king at age 24 (upon the death of his brother). He set about uniting all the Saxons under one government. He convinced them that they could defeat the Vikings only if they were united. He called for a union against the “Great Heathen Army.”

Many of the Danish colonies swore allegiance to Alfred and were incorporated into his kingdom. Most eventually converted to Roman Catholicism.

The Danes, who had not united with Alfred, were reinforced by a Viking army from Denmark. A tremendous storm sank over 120 Viking boats, weakening the Viking forces. The Danes sought a peace treaty and Alfred granted it. The Vikings honored it for five months until they received

more reinforcements. The Saxons suffered a terrible defeat and Alfred and a few followers had to hide in the marshes and forests. He began a guerilla warfare against the Danes.

Finally the Saxons regrouped and administered a terrible defeat to the Danes. Alfred restored a united government to England. _____. He is usually thought of as the _____. Historians have awarded him the title of “Great” because of his influence on the history of England. Under Alfred’s rule, Christianity was firmly established as the national religion of England.

One final Viking invasion threatened Alfred. In 885 A.D., forty thousand Vikings invaded England. Alfred gathered troops from all over England and defeated the Vikings. He was succeeded by his son Edward who also defeated a Danish invasion.

V. FURTHER STRUGGLES

In the north of England, the Celts and the Danes united against the Saxons. They were reinforced by a Viking army from Norway. Alfred’s grandson, Athelstan, united the Saxons against this northern conspiracy. He won a great victory which helped to establish the kingdom. The next two kings also had to withstand Viking invasions. For 85 years, England experienced peace. Then the Viking invasions began again.

A young Danish king, Canute, took control of part of England and proclaimed himself _____. Soon, Saxon and Celtic leaders were pledging loyalty to Canute. Canute eventually ruled over Denmark, Norway, England, and Scotland. Canute _____. He built churches and supported monasteries.

During this time, the Vikings conquered the region of France called _____. There they settled and intermarried with the French people. William of Normandy claimed the right to the throne of England. In 1066 A.D., England was ruled by Harold, the grandson of Canute. William was a mighty warrior and invaded England. At the battle of Hastings, he defeated Harold and seized control of England.

VI. NORMAN ENGLAND

William established the Normans as the ruling class of England. He ruthlessly executed anyone who opposed him. For 20 years, various Saxon groups opposed him but they were all defeated. The Normans worked to impose the _____.

William returned to Normandy, leaving his family in charge. His son Robert rebelled against him. William returned to war against his son. They actually fought in hand-to-hand combat. After many years, they were reconciled.

Eventually the Normans began to adjust to England and moderated some of their ways. But the tension between Saxon and Norman was to last for a long time. The Robin Hood legends relate to this conflict. Supposedly, Robin of Locksley was a Saxon noble deposed by the Normans. He led a band of outlaws in Sherwood Forest who stole from the Norman conquerors and gave to the abused Saxons.

As the Normans intermarried with the English, the English were now a combination of _____, _____, _____ and _____. Their language and culture reflected all of this heritage.

The English were very involved in supporting the Crusades. Many English knights went with Crusader armies to the Holy Land.

Arguments over who held the legitimate right to the throne brought England into a civil war. The accession of Henry II made the Plantagenet family the ruling family of France. _____
_____ Under Henry, the legal code of England became the _____ rather than the Roman civil law. Henry II resisted the growing claims of the Roman Catholic Church to control civil government. This led him to controversy with his former friend, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Eventually, some of his knights killed Becket to please the king. Henry led England to new strength.

One thing kept England from becoming the most powerful European nation. Henry faced no fewer than four rebellions led by one of his sons. These civil wars held back a growing kingdom.

As Henry promoted the concept of the Christian common law, the _____
_____. The ideas of _____, _____,
and _____ became part of the English culture.

The most famous of the Plantagenets was Richard the Lionhearted. Richard was a dedicated warrior who operated out of Normandy. He spent little time in England and he devoted most of his time as king to fighting in the crusades. Richard fought Saladin the Moslem leader in classic military confrontations. Finally, a truce was reached leaving the Holy Land in Moslem control but Christian pilgrims were allowed to come to the Holy Land.

Richard was captured and imprisoned by the Emperor of Germany, a supposed ally. His brother, Prince John, declared that he had died in the Crusades (he knew where he really was) and claimed the throne. Many people in England, both Saxon and Norman, refused to accept John's rule. Both John and King Philip of France offered the Emperor money to keep Richard imprisoned. He refused, ransoming him instead to his English supporters. When Philip found out Richard was free, he sent John this message "_____."

Richard defeated the rebellious John but pardoned him. He then returned to Normandy to war with King Philip. Richard spent the next five years at war with France. As he was dying from a French archer's wound, he declared his brother John his successor.

Many in England opposed the treacherous John, _____
_____. His cousin Arthur led a rebellion against him. John finally vanquished his cousin, who mysteriously disappeared.

John's next great battle was with Pope Innocent III. Innocent threatened John with interdict and a chastened John had to sign over all the royal lands in England to the church.

Next the English nobles rebelled against John. They forced him to sign the _____. The Magna Carta recognized that the _____. Later popes denounced the charter but it was to stand as the first _____.

Under the Plantagenets, the concept of the English parliament developed. Though the powers of the parliament were only vaguely defined, it was clear that it provided a check and balance to the king's authority.

The Celtic people of Scotland constantly rebelled against the English throne. They wanted to be a separate nation and they felt that the principles of the common law were not being applied to them. _____, despite the poverty of Scotland, forged a citizen's army. They became famous because of their bravery and their victories over the English. They won victory after victory until the superior numbers of the English armies finally wore them down and overwhelmed them. In 1305, Wallace was betrayed, captured, tried, hanged, drawn and quartered.

The new champion of Scotland became _____. His army of 10,000 inflicted over 30,000 casualties on the British in one battle. Eventually the British had to reach an agreement with the Scots. The Stuart family became the royal family of Scotland.

Independent preachers like John Wycliffe and Walter Lollard called the English common people to the gospel. Independent churches and preachers flourished in England. This helped to encourage the English heritage of freedom.

The English continued to fight civil wars over who had the right to the throne. They continued to fight wars in France and to turn back French invasions.

VII. THE WAR OF THE ROSES

Two families, themselves inter-related, began to battle for the English throne. The Lancaster family had as its symbol, the Red Rose. The York family was symbolized by the White Rose. Their various schemes and programs finally broke out into a civil war, called The War of the Roses. The _____ finally secured control of England.

Finally, the throne in England was secured in the Tudor family. Henry Tudor was descended from one of the royal families of the Celtic tribes. Through marriage alliances, his family became part of both the York and Lancaster families. He became King Henry VII uniting the various factions in England under one family.

Isaiah 44:9: They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.

Acts 2:5: And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.