

Proclamation of King James II and VII, September 28, 1688

All through the summer of 1688 there had been rumours that the Prince of Orange was preparing an invasion of England, but it was not until September 23 that James II received information that the Prince of Orange had actually announced his intentions to the States General of the Netherlands. Several days later James issued the following proclamation which was to be read throughout the country and was published in the London Gazette.

James R.¹

We have received undoubted advice that a great and sudden invasion from Holland, with an armed force of foreigners and strangers, will speedily be made in a hostile manner upon this our kingdom; and although some false pretences relating to liberty, property, and religion, contrived or worded with art and subtlety may be given
5 out (as shall be thought useful upon such an attempt) it is manifest however (considering the great preparations that are making) that no less matter by this invasion is proposed and purposed than an absolute conquest of our kingdoms and the utter subduing and subjecting us and our people to a foreign power, which is promoted (as we understand, although it may seem almost incredible) by some of our subjects, being persons of wicked and restless spirits, implacable malice, and desperate designs, who having no sense of former intestine distractions,
10 the memory and misery whereof should endear and put a value upon that peace and happiness which hath long been enjoyed; nor being moved by our reiterated acts of grace and mercy, wherein we have studied and delighted to abound towards our subjects, and even towards those who were once our avowed and open enemies, do again endeavour to embroil this kingdom in blood and ruin, to gratify their own ambition and malice, proposing to themselves a prey and booty in such a public confusion.

We cannot omit to make it known that although we had notice some time since that a foreign force was preparing against us, yet we have always declined any foreign succours, but rather have chosen (next after God) to rely upon the true and ancient courage, faith, and allegiance of our own people, with whom we have often ventured our life for the honour of this nation and in whose defence against our enemies we are firmly resolved to live and die. And therefore we solemnly conjure our subjects to lay aside all manner of animosities, jealousies
20 and prejudices, and heartily and cheerfully to unite together in the defence of us and their native country, which they alone will (under God) defeat and frustrate the principal hope and design of our enemies, who expect to find a people divided, and by publishing perhaps some plausible reasons for their coming hither, as the specious, though false, pretences of maintaining the Protestant religion, or asserting the liberties and properties of our people, do hope thereby to conquer the great and renowned kingdom. But albeit the design hath been carried on
25 with all imaginable secrecy and endeavours to surprise and deceive us, we have not been wanting on our part to make such provision as did become us and by God's blessing we make no doubt of being found in so good a posture that our enemies may have cause to repent such their rash and unjust attempt.

We did intend (as we lately declared) to have our parliament in November next and the writs are issued forth accordingly, proposing to ourselves, amongst other things, that we might be able to quiet the minds of all our
30 people in matters of religion, pursuant to our several declarations we have published to that effect, but in regard of this strange and unreasonable attempt from our neighbouring country (without any manner of provocation) designed to divert our said gracious purposes, we find it necessary to recall our said writs. ... And forasmuch as the approaching danger now is at hand we call on all our subjects (whose ready concurrence, valour, and courage as true Englishmen we no way doubt in so just a cause) to be prepared to defend their country; and we do hereby
35 command and require all Lords Lieutenants and Deputy Lieutenants to use their best and utmost endeavours to resist, repel, and suppress our enemies who come with such confidence and quiet preparations to invade and conquer these our kingdoms. And lastly we do most expressly and strictly enjoin and prohibit all and every of our subjects of what degree and condition soever from giving any manner of aid, assistance, countenances or succour, or from having or holding any correspondence with these our enemies or any of their accomplices upon
40 pain of high treason, and being prosecuted against with the utmost severity.

Given at our Court at Whitehall the 28th day of September, 1688, in the fourth year of our reign.

¹ James R. = James Rex. Rex is the latin word for King. This is the way in which Kings of England sign documents.

READ THE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

- 1) What did James hope to effect with this proclamation? After briefly situating the document in its context (no more than one or two sentences), formulate as precisely as possible the goals he had in writing the document. (Your answer should be one or two paragraphs long)**
- 2) Analyse the various ideas and arguments put forward by James and show how they all contribute to making his proclamation as effective as possible. In the course of your analysis, you should explain the allusions James makes to recent and not so recent events. (Your answer should be at least two pages long)**