

The Glorious Revolution

From the 'Heritage' Series

The reign of James II of England was short. It began in February 1685 and ended in December 1688 with his forced "abdication" in what we know as the Glorious Revolution. On his accession, James promised to "preserve this Government both in Church and State as it is now by law established." But he was a zealous Roman Catholic who wished to re-establish Roman Catholicism in England and throughout his reign he made every possible effort to further the Roman cause.

James was the first openly Roman Catholic king since the time of Philip and Mary nearly a century and a half before (Charles II had been a Roman Catholic but had hidden the fact until he was dying.) His reign was marked by a series of events which prepared the way for the Glorious Revolution in 1688.

Within a few months of his accession there were two rebellions, both revolts were defeated and both leaders executed. Bitter resentment grew against the king as a result. In October 1685 in France, King Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes and thereby Protestantism became an illegal religion. During the next few years, half a million Huguenot-Israelites left France, the greater number making their way, as though by instinct, to their kinsmen in Britain, Holland, North America, Northern Ireland and South Africa.

James set up a Roman Catholic chapel at his court. There the Roman Mass was celebrated and James was attended by a Jesuit



priest. These actions aroused much opposition; among the opponents was Lord Halifax, a member of the Privy Council. In November 1685 Parliament was prorogued and never met again during James' reign.

In 1686 James began to misuse his royal rights, especially two rights known as the 'Dispensing Power' and the 'Suspending Power'. This aroused more opposition as men could see that he was abusing these rights in order to advance

Roman Catholics into positions of power. Throughout 1687 James intensified his Roman Catholic policy and a Papal Nuncio was officially accredited to St. James'. The abuse of royal rights led eventually in 1688 to a direct confrontation with seven bishops of the Church of England. They were charged and committed to the Tower, but were acquitted on 30th June, 1688, the same day that a letter signed by seven prominent Englishmen was taken to the Hague by Admiral Herbert.

This letter invited William, Prince of Orange, a nephew of James II, to come to England with an army to restore national liberty and protect the Protestant religion. On 10th October, 1688, William issued a declaration in which he enumerated James' illegal acts.

William landed at Torbay on Monday, 5th November, 1688. He brought with him an English flag, emblazoned with his arms, surrounded with the legend "For the Protestant religion and our love to mankind, your liberties, and proper-

ties." Moving towards London, William gathered support all the way and finally on 23rd December, James fled to France without any attempt to fight.

The revolution was one of the most important events in British history for it secured the Protestant throne (of the Lord) and constitution. Tyranny was removed, but monarchy was retained. On 13th February, 1689, William and Mary (James' eldest daughter) accepted the Crown and the Declaration of Rights, the constitutional mon-

archy. On 11th April, 1689, William and Mary were crowned as joint sovereigns and took their place on the Throne of David, a throne that must be in existence when Christ Returns.

The Scriptural promise is that that Throne will stand for ever:

"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."
2.SAM 7:16

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CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES INTERNATIONAL, P.O. BOX 888, COFFS HARBOUR N.S.W. 2450, AUSTRALIA