

KING JAMES I

b. June 19, 1566

d. March 27, 1625

SCOTTISH & ENGLISH MONARCH

*“You may be sure that I love the
Earl of Buckingham more than anyone else ...
Christ had his John, and I have my George.”*

**He commissioned
the King James
Version of the Bible,
used by Protestant
denominations
worldwide.**

King James ruled Scotland as James VI (1567-1625) and England and Ireland as James I (1603-1625). Styling himself as the “King of Great Britain,” he is perhaps best known for his unprecedented union of the Scottish and English crowns and the publication of the King James Bible. Based on his well-documented, intensely romantic relationships with men, many historians believe James to have been bisexual or gay.

The only son of Mary, Queen of Scots, James was born in Edinburgh Castle in 1566. After his mother was deposed and imprisoned in 1567, he ascended the Scottish throne as King James VI at the age of 1. Unable to rule as a child, he assumed a

more active role as monarch in his teens. Recognizing the possibility of succeeding the childless Queen Elizabeth I of England, James brokered an alliance between Scotland and England in 1586. Firmly committed to the partnership, he took no action when Elizabeth had his mother executed in 1587.

In 1589, James married Anne, the daughter of Frederick II of Denmark. They had eight children together. Three survived infancy. Despite his wife and family, rumors about James’s sexuality abounded. He surrounded himself with noblemen, many of whom were his exceptionally close companions. Their public displays of affection and the influence these friends exerted over his policies fueled speculation by contemporaries and, later, historians that the relationships with his favorites were sexual.

Upon the death of the unmarried, heirless Queen Elizabeth I, James VI of Scotland ascended the English throne in 1603 as James I. The two countries uniting under a single sovereign laid the groundwork for the Anglo-Scottish union of 1707.

During his reign, King James encouraged and actively presided over brutal witch trials. He ended England’s war with Spain in 1604 and survived a failed assassination attempt by Catholic revolutionaries in 1605, known as the Gunpowder Plot. He oversaw the establishment of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607 — the first permanent English colony in North America — and in 1611, commissioned a revised translation of the Bible known as the King James Version, which is still used today by Protestant denominations worldwide. Believing that the monarch’s power was absolute and ordained by God, James frequently clashed with the English Parliament. He dissolved the body in 1611 and then again in 1621.

James faced mounting criticism toward the end of his 58 years of rule over Scotland and 22 years over England and Ireland. His son, Charles, succeeded him.

© WIKIPEDIA



lgbt[™]
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright © 2026 — A Project of Equality Forum