



Why did people go to war in 1642?

Case study 1: 1637-39 – Source 7

Report to Archbishop Laud from informers, 31 May 1639

(Catalogue ref: SP 16/422/113)

What is this source?

This is a report to William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, from some of his informers.

Laud had a network across the country that sent him regular reports about what people were saying.

What's the background to this source?

Throughout the 1630s Charles I and William Laud tried to bring changes to the organisation of the church and to the way people worshipped in church. As a result, Laud made many enemies.

Laud punished some of his critics harshly. For example, in 1637 William Prynne, Henry Burton and John Bastwick printed pamphlets attacking Laud. All three men were Puritans. They believed that Laud's changes were making the Protestant Church of England too much like the Catholic Church of Rome. Laud had their ears cut off and their faces branded with a hot iron.

It's worth knowing that ...

Laud and Charles tried to increase the power of the church in England and Scotland. They also wanted everyone to worship in the same way. Both of these things alarmed many Protestants, particularly the hard-line Protestants known as Puritans. On the other hand, many approved of Laud's policies. They just disliked the way he clamped down on free speech and treated his critics badly.

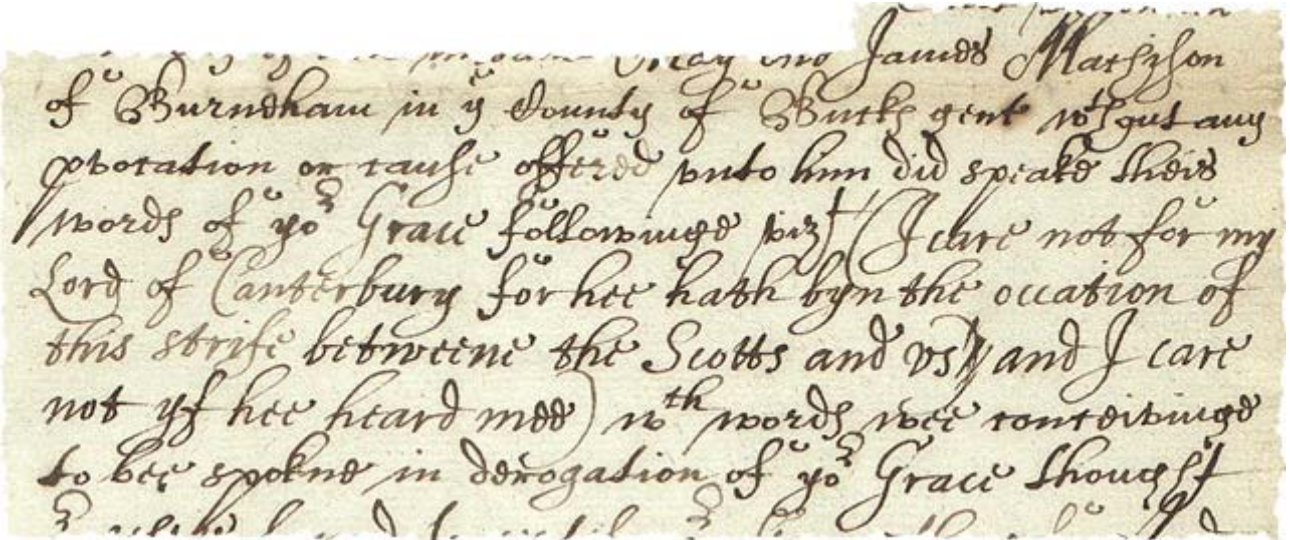
Both England and Scotland split from the Roman Catholic Church in the 1500s and became Protestant. In the 1600s the Protestants were still very suspicious of any changes to their church in case the Protestant Church became too much like the Catholic Church.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

1. What did James Machison think of Archbishop Laud?
2. Is it possible to say whether many people felt the same way?
3. How do you think Machison would have felt if he had seen this report?
4. What does this source tell us about the attitude of the government towards the people at the time?
5. Does this source give us any clues about why the kingdom went to war in 1642?



Source 7



of Burndham in y County of Suffe gent w^{ch} g^o any
cooperation or cause offered unto him did speake th^o words
of yo^r Grace followinge vizt (I care not for my
Lord of Canterbury for hee hath byn the occasion of
this strife betwene the Scotts and vs) and I care
not yf hee heard more wth words w^{ch} contayned
to be spoken in derogation of yo^r Grace though
I w^{ch} had beene till I had