What kind of king was Charles I?

Case study 1: Monarchs before Charles I – Source 3

Part of a speech by James I to Parliament in 1609 (Catalogue ref: SP 14/53/31)

What is this source?

This is an extract from a major speech which James I made to the Parliament of England.

Parliament was made up of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The Lords were the great nobles, landowners and powerful men of the realm. The Commons were smaller landowners, plus wealthy merchants and traders.

What's the background to this source?

In this speech, James set out his views on how he would run the country.

James became king in 1603. He wanted the Lords and Members of Parliament to know what he expected of them and what they could expect from him.

It's worth knowing that...

James had a poor reputation as a monarch in some ways because his court was rather disorganised and he often drank too much. However, historians now point out that James was good at reaching compromises with his opponents on difficult issues.

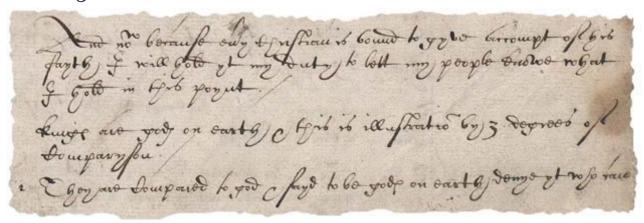
One reason for this is that his court was not too stuffy or formal. MPs and nobles found it easy to approach James and tell him about their concerns.

Your turn: What can we learn from this source?

What was James trying to say? Try to identify parts of the speech showing that:

- 1. James believed in the Divine Right of kings that kings were appointed by God.
- 2. James would not accept anyone challenging his authority.
- 3. James accepted that he had a responsibility to look after his people.
- 4. James would respect the laws of the land.

Source 3a



Source 3b

