



As an Ulsterman I have always been fascinated by the “Story of Ulster’s Red Hand” The truth has thrilled me since I first heard it. The fact that its origin can be traced back to the very first book of our Bible, the book of Genesis, has been a source of great encouragement to me for many years now.

The sad thing is that because of the apathy in this age that we are now in, so few people in Ulster today are aware of their glorious history that is intrinsically tied up in the pages of Holy Scripture and therefore lost to them are these Precious Truths that characterize the Ulster Man.

It is a great privilege for me to set out a brief outline of these remarkable events that led to the making of the As re *Ulster People*.

Genesis chapter 38 verses 27 – 30

And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez {Pharez: that is A breach} And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah.

As we reflect upon this passage from Genesis chapter 38, I want you to join me as we tread the Olde Paths and discover the history of the indigenious *Ulster People*. As we explore this great story, it is my earnest prayer that as we unearth these wonderful truths we will bring understanding to His people and glory to His Name; also that He would inspire us to pass the Truth on to our children.

The story begins with the ignoble union of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar; from it came twin boys and as the Scripture tells us, the midwife prepared a **scarlet thread** to mark the true first born and rightful heir.

In verse 28 we learn that she put the scarlet thread around the hand of Zarah whose name indicates a pioneering person saying “*This came out first*”.



Now that is vital. As we progress in our study we will see that this is what characterizes the Ulster-Scot That declaration all those years ago by the midwife is the history of the Ulster-Scot in a nut shell.

No matter where in the world they appeared, they went with courage, they went with adventure and they went I believe, with the Spirit of God upon them. Everywhere they went, they were accompanied with their Bible and when they reached their destination they planted their Bible Faith as the very basis of who they were. And as we read the pages of history, we realize that their Bible Faith has spawned many great nations.

America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and even South Africa: when these great nations were being pioneered, the Ulster man was never very far away.

Due to the complications surrounding the birth of Zarah, he lost his birthright to his twin brother Pharez. The descendants of Zarah felt they had been cheated out of their inheritance, so they left the main body of Israel. The historian Josephus states that this migration started after the death of Moses and he goes on to explain how and where they went. "They migrated along the Mediterranean Sea, through the Pillars of Hercules (which we know today to be the Strait of Gibraltar). They first landed in Spain, from where they pushed northwest through Europe".

We know that this process took many years and that these people (our forefathers) established settlements that became bridgeheads for further expansion. Some of these settlements still today bear the name of Zarah and in fact there are traces of the descendants of Zarah in place names right throughout Europe. One such settlement is in the south of Spain where a town there still bears their name; it is called Zaragoza which means "where Zarah is". Another blatantly obvious place name that we find is in Denmark called Jutland which means "home of Judah".

Through this we can see a picture building up layer by layer of an adventurous, pioneering people that are so characteristic of the Ulster Scots. These descendants of Zarah made their way through Europe and as they did they carried their ensign with them. That ensign is a very precious one, it was the Bloody Red Hand, encircled with the Scarlet Thread which pointed to their origin.

This very ensign was the one that the Ulster People had up until partition in 1921. Then the Scarlet Thread was replaced with the Star of David, keeping our identity as Israelites. It was also



topped by the Queen's crown, illustrating our allegiance to the British Throne (which is the Royal Throne of David) and to the British Parliament.

Up until then it was the same as our forefathers in Zarah-Judah; the Red Hand and Scarlet Thread. A great reference book on this tremendous subject is "Symbols of our Celto-Saxon Heritage" by W. H. Bennett and is an absolute must read for serious students.

As our ancestors pushed through Europe planting settlements and building bridgeheads, they were growing in numbers and confidence and then one day they landed here in these Britannic Isles. When they arrived here, they settled and the ensign that they had carried throughout their travels in Europe, they planted when they got to Ireland, right here in Ulster.

One of the many things that are remarkable about these adventurous pioneers is the skills that they displayed and this skill based work ethic has characterized the workforce of the Ulster People for generations. These Israelites were renowned for their metal work, pottery and their skills with fine cloth. When you think of Ulster, think of the shipbuilding and engineering works along with the Ulster Linen industry. (For a Scriptural account of the skills of Zarah-Judah, read 11 Chronicles chapter 2 verse 1). All these God given skills have been passed down from generation to generation in Ulster. The skills that were first found in our forefathers Zarah-Judah are resident in the Ulster people of today. In fact, Ulster is famous throughout the world for its shipbuilding and fine linen.

While the focus of our brief study has been on Zarah-Judah, this story would not be complete without mentioning that they were joined by remnants of their kinsfolk from other Israelite Tribes. The Tribe of Dan was very strongly represented in the pioneering party that made their way to Ireland.

A former Prime Minister Mr. William Gladstone in his book 'The History of the World' stated, "The earliest form of life in Ireland were Hebrews and one of the earliest names of these Israelites was 'Dani', relating to the Tribe of Dan". It is also clear that while pioneers settled throughout Ireland, they mainly congregated in the northern Province of Ulster where they raised their ensign and called the land 'home'. Some propagate the notion that the Red Hand came from the O'Neill Clan. They did indeed embrace it, however the Red Hand far pre-dates their use of it as the Red Hand traces its roots right back to the Bible.



We are also even more fascinated when we consider what the word Zarah means in Hebrew.

1. It means Sunrise or Scarlet.
2. It also means Sprout or Seed.

Taking the latter meaning first, what do you do to a seed to make it sprout? The answer is of course that you plant it. I do not believe that it is a coincidence that for generations Ulster has been known throughout the Western world as the Plantation. In fact for as long as anyone can recall, Ulster has been known as the Plantation - the place where seed is planted.

The other rendering of the word Zarah, which would be the main meaning of the name is Sunrise or Scarlet and we know from our King James Version that there are some wonderful promises made by our Lord that show us this meaning in a very clear light. Isaiah chapter 59 verse 19 tells us *“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun.”* We know that Isaiah here is speaking to Israel in the Isles. We also know that the only Isles that these could possibly be are these British Isles in which we live. So we learn that when the prophet says *“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west”* of these Isles, he has to be referring to Ulster and part of Scotland. It is in these parts of the Isles that this promise is for. The promise was this *“so shall they fear the name of the LORD”* and when they did this the glory of the Lord would be upon them (Zarah).

Paul says in 11 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 17 *“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord”*. It is very important therefore that when we think of the wonderful story of the Red Hand of Ulster that we understand that it is His story of Him keeping His promises to His people Israel and for that, all the glory must go to Him.

It would be true to say that Ulster is the only country in history to have been formed because of their Protestant Faith. While there are, thank God, many Protestant countries, the only one that was formed because of its Protestantism was Ulster.

I would like you for a moment to think of the Ulster man. We have our problems and we have our own shortcomings and indeed plenty of them. We have our faults and failures. Despite this, the Lord has in His infinite mercy watched over the Ulster Israel people from the beginning and has blessed them with His Light. He has also made us His light-bearers throughout the world for generations.



In my humble opinion the two main light-bearers to the heathen gentile world today is the Banner of Truth Trust in Edinburgh and Every Home Crusade here in Ulster. Both of these are situated right here in the very home of the descendants of Zarah-Judah.

Isaiah tells us in chapter 60 verse 1 that Zarah will shine as he bears the Light to a world who, without Christ, are in darkness.

The confirmation marks of a people who have been “set apart” by God to be His witnesses and to bring glory to His Name are no other people than the people known as the Ulster-Scots.

Clear evidence of this can be found in both the Scottish and Ulster Covenants of 1638 and 1912 when each set of these people promised that they would put God and His Word before everything else. This was never done before on this scale in history; yet by God’s grace and guidance, it was done by our forefathers who were as we are, the descendants of Zarah-Judah.

May God bless Ulster and His people.

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“The Story of Ulster’s Red Hand”**