

## **The Vision of King Zechariah**

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

How interesting it is to know that in the old city of On, the home of Joseph's wife, there is a school where young people are taught "this gospel of the kingdom" and are being trained to become missionaries! This city is now called Materieh. Materieh is not only the place where Joseph got his wife, but it is supposed to be the place where Moses went to school. It is in that part of Egypt now called Abyssinia, but in the Bible it is called Ethiopia.

Near our training school in this place is a tree called "The Tree of Mary." This is a very, very old sycamore tree where Joseph and Mary are supposed to have rested when they fled from Herod with Jesus. To this tree Moslem mothers have tied bits of cloth. These pieces of cloth are to them a prayer asking some favor for their children, or they may even be a prayer for forgiveness of sins.

A number of years ago, there lived in Abyssinia a Moslem king, called Zechariah. He hated the very name of Christ. One day, King Zechariah had a vision. He saw a man standing by him, whom he at once knew to be Christ. Such love and tenderness and compassion he had never before seen on any face. Speechless he stood and looked at the vision.

"Zechariah, I love you," Jesus said at last.

Zechariah only gazed in wonder.

"Zechariah, I love you," Jesus repeated. "I gave My life for you."

"Are you Christ?" the king asked timidly.

"Yes," He answered.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Get My Book, and read it."

The king bought a New Testament. For ten years, he studied this Book. Then the vision appeared to him again. The divine look in Jesus' face was even more loving than before.

"Zechariah," He said, "for ten years, you have read My Book. You know I am your Saviour. Will you come to Me?"

"My Lord, I will come," he answered almost before he knew what he was saying.

After that, the king started to preach all through Abyssinia. He preached for seventeen long years, and thousands were won to Christ. Just before his death, he wrote a statement which he left with his people. This is what he wrote

"I am like the moon. But the full sun is coming. I am like John the Baptist; but after me is coming a people who have the full light of the gospel. When they come, accept their message."

Two or three years after his death, a few of his followers started in search of those who the king had said had the full light of the gospel. They came to a Christian mission. They were taken into a church to worship. Here they saw images.

"These folks are heathen," they said. "Look at all the idols they have in their church."

Then they found another Christian mission. It was Sunday.

"You are here on the Lord's day," the minister said.

"How is that? Maybe we have lost a day traveling about. What day was the day before yesterday?" they asked.

"Friday," the minister replied.

"If that was Friday, yesterday was the Lord's day, for the Sabbath comes next after Friday," they said.

The minister invited them to dinner where meat was served.

"What kind of meat is that?" they asked.

"It is pork."

"Oh no, we don't belong here," they said.

"I'll tell you where you belong," said the minister. And he sent them to the Adventist mission.

The next Sabbath morning, when the little bell rang for Sabbath school, they came in. They attended Sabbath school and heard the sermon in their own language.

"We are very hungry, they said to the missionary's wife. "We would like to eat at your table."

She invited them to go home with her, and soon they sat down to dinner.

"Haven't you any pork?" they asked.

"No, we don't eat pork."

"Do you pay tithe?"

"Yes, we follow all the Bible."

To-day, the private secretary and the most trusted friend of King Zechariah are our missionaries. The only grandson of this king is a student in our school in that old city of On. From all over that part of Abyssinia the people ask us to come and teach them the truth. Many are being baptized, and they are good Christians.

These people have been severely tried and have suffered persecution as true children of God. Some time ago, the heathen and Moslems put an old friend of the king into prison for two months. They flogged him and starved him till he was nearly dead.

They offered him his choice of giving up the Seventh-day Adventist religion or of being shot on the spot.

"I am ready to die," the man said, "but never to deny my Saviour."

God honored this man's loyalty, and saved him from death.

Review and Herald (adapted).