

QUEEN OMEGA

By Ikael Tafari

I speak of the things which I have made touching the King... You are more handsome than the children of men. Grace is poured into your lips, therefore God has blessed you forever... Your throne, O JAH, is for ever and ever. The sceptre of your kingdom is a right sceptre. You love righteousness and hate wickedness, therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above other kings... King's daughters were among your honourable women. Upon your right hand did stand the Queen in gold of Ophir... Hearken, O daughter... forget your own people and your father's house. So shall the king greatly desire your beauty, for he is your Lord... Instead of your father shall be your children, whom you may make princes and princesses in all the earth...
(From Psalm 45. A Song of Loves)

Virtually unnoticed in Christian circles, Psalm 45 offers a crucial revelation concerning the second advent of the Christ – in his kingly character. Unlike the case of the first advent – fulfilled by Yeshua (Jesus), the messianic prophet, some 2000 years before – the psalmist tells us the messianic king will be crowned with the queen at his right hand. Now, for those steeped in the asceticism of the patriarchal Roman Christian tradition, it is hard to accept the notion of the Christ-King desiring the beauty of the Queen, much less having children – princes and princesses – with her! I can almost hear the refrain – “Not my Jesus!”

But, when Emperor Haile Selassie I was crowned on the Solomonic throne in St. George's Cathedral, Addis Ababa on November 2, 1930, as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, seated beside him was his beautiful black queen, Empress Menen, along with the young princes Asfa Wossen and Makonnen.

What manner of woman was the Empress Menen, of whom the psalmist declared prophetically: “The King's daughter is all glorious within. Her clothing is fashioned from gold” (v. 13). Of course, clothing here symbolizes character – and gold refers to the Queen's inviolate purity, passing through the fire of tribulation and emerging without blemish. From all accounts, it is an apt description of Empress Menen.

Descended from the Prophet Mohammed as well as from the Davidic line, Menen was the great granddaughter of Emperor Menelik II, the strong, reforming monarch who ruled Ethiopia into the second decade of the 20th century. Ever regal in her bearing, the abiding centre of her large family, she was a deeply religious Galla who believed devoutly in the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church – a faith she did not

abandon even in times of great hardship such as the years of exile in Britain (1936–41)..

We get an insight into the nature of her 51-year marriage with the Emperor almost from the beginning. At his coronation, Haile Selassie made one of his many crucial breaks with age-old tradition. It had never been permitted for the Empress to be crowned on the same day as the Emperor. But, determined to create a basis of equality for their union, the Emperor insisted the Empress be crowned jointly with him.

Documentation on her life is unfortunately scant – most texts on Haile Selassie dwell on political realities, references to his family life are rare. But it is recorded that she gave herself selflessly to the education of her people. Her works of charity were legendary in Ethiopia, particularly in connection with the Empress Menen Hospital which was named after her in tribute to the tireless service she devoted to the elderly, the poor, and the infirm.

Haile Selassie's testimony is instructive: "Her character is such that, apart from goodness, there is no evil or malice in her...During the memorable days of our companionship we never had differences that needed the intervention of others".

Long live King Alpha and Queen Omega.