

Chapter One

The Generations Before the Crossing

A¹s it is written in the Book of Matthew, the generations were reckoned in three companies: from Abraham unto David, from David unto the exile, and from the exile unto the Christ.

²So let the generations of this land be reckoned also in three companies — the Dynasties of the Nile, the Kingdom of the Negus, and the Empires of Gold — for this people did not begin in bondage. They began upon thrones.

THE DYNASTIES OF THE NILE

³In the thirty-first century before the Common Era, Narmer united the Two Lands of Egypt upon the Nile, and was crowned the first Pharaoh.

⁴And the throne passed through four and twenty dynasties of the Nile Valley of Africa, until the seven hundred and forty-seventh year before the Common Era.

⁵Then Kashta, king of Kush in Nubia, came up against Egypt; and his son Piye conquered the Two Lands and was crowned Pharaoh in his place.

⁶After Piye reigned Shabaka, who restored the ancient writings of the priests.

⁷After Shabaka reigned Shebitku; and after Shebitku reigned Taharqa, the greatest of these kings, who built at Karnak and at Nuri, and whose armies marched as far as Jerusalem.

⁸After Taharqa reigned Tantamani, the last king of the five-and-twentieth dynasty, called by the nations the Black Pharaohs, who ruled Egypt and Nubia as one throne for ninety-one years, until the armies of Assyria drove them out.

⁹And being driven from Egypt, they did not perish, but returned to Napata, and after to Meroë, and reigned in their own land a thousand years more.

THE KINGDOM OF THE NEGUS

¹⁰In the first century of the Common Era, beyond the Red Sea in the highlands, there arose the Kingdom of Aksum; and her kings were called Negus, which is King, and Negusa Nagast, which is King of Kings.

¹¹In the fourth century, Ezana the Negus took up the cross of the Nazarene, and his kingdom became the first of Sub-Saharan Africa to do so; and in his reign the thousand-year throne of Kush came to its end.

¹²And in that same generation in which Sumayyah was slain at Mecca and Bilal was bound in chains upon the burning sand, certain companions of the Prophet fled the persecution of the Quraysh and crossed the sea unto Aksum.

¹³And the Negus who reigned there received them, and would not give them up to their enemies; and this is remembered as the First Hijra.

¹⁴So the throne of the Negus sheltered the Ummah before the Ummah had a city of its own.

THE EMPIRES OF GOLD

¹⁵After the kingdoms of the Nile and the kingdoms of the highlands, there arose in the west, upon the rivers Senegal and Niger, the empire the Soninke called Wagadou, and the Arabs called Ghana; and it endured from the fourth century until the twelfth.

¹⁶In its last great age reigned Tunka Manin, whom al-Bakri the traveler beheld and described as a king of two hundred thousand warriors and great justice.

¹⁷But in the year 1076, the Almoravids came up against the capital at Kumbi Saleh; and within two generations, Ghana was no more.

¹⁸And after Ghana, the Mandinka people raised up Mali; and the greatest king of Mali was Mansa Musa, who in the year 1324 went up to Mecca with so much gold that the markets of Cairo did not recover their value for years after; and in his reign Timbuktu became a city of scholars and of books.

¹⁹And after Mali came Songhai, the greatest of the three; and Songhai was ruled by Sunni Ali, and after him by Askia Muhammad, who made of Gao and Timbuktu a seat of learning unmatched in all of West Africa.

²⁰But in the year 1591, the armies of Morocco, bearing muskets the empires of gold had never known, broke Songhai upon the field of Tondibi; and the age of empire on this scale did not rise again in that land before the ships came.

²¹These, then, are the generations before the Crossing: four thousand seven hundred years of African throne, from Narmer to Askia, ending only a few and twenty years before Anthony (Adam) and Isabella (Eve) were taken up out of Ndongo and brought to Point Comfort.

²²They were not born to bondage. Bondage was done to them.

3100 BCE — 1619 CE

FIRST DYNASTY OF EGYPT TO THE CROSSING AT POINT COMFORT