

Psalm 45

Introduction – Why does God want us to sing about a wedding we know so little about, a ceremony between an unnamed King and a foreign woman? Commentators suggest this describes the wedding of Solomon to the daughter of Pharaoh, but we don't know for sure. But what if... - what if God actually had a plan and a purpose for His people to sing this psalm for decades and centuries, growing in anticipation of something far greater, fulfilling something far deeper than simply remembering an old wedding ceremony. And what if, after it was fulfilled, He desired for us to rejoice in singing about a ceremony that we discovered we were participating in? What if we found out that this was our King anointed with the oil of gladness, and that we found our hearts driven to sing with great joy that we were the princes in all the earth praising the name of this King to all people forever and ever? And what if singing this song spread the net of His reign over all the world? Would you want to sing this song then? Maybe then you would sound like the poet in verse 1 – *"My heart is overflowing with a good theme..."*

Overview – We invest in professional photographers to memorialize our weddings. This one is worthy of the Spirit-inspired pen of a poet (v1). First is a eulogy of the groom, a king (v1). Grace-words come from his lips, he is fairer than all, and God has blessed him forever (v2). His wedding garments include his sword with glory and majesty (v3), and he rides with righteous majesty (v4), a victorious warrior who has seen his enemies fall (v5). This king is addressed as God and His throne is forever, righteousness reigns, and His God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness (vv6-7). His garments are spiced with precious ointments, his daughters are with him and at his right hand stands the queen he is about to take, dressed in gold (vv8-9).

This queen is now addressed by the poet. She is urged to forget her people and her father's house (v10). The king desires her and as her Lord, she should worship him (v11). She is honored and wooed with promises of devotion, guests with rich gifts, and representatives of sovereigns paying homage (v12). She is glorious within and adorned such outwardly, her bridesmaids following her as a beautiful train, with gladness and rejoicing (vv14-15). It is promised that her children will be princes and she will be praised forevermore (vv16-17). The quintessential princess story. And so much more.

Let's Cut to the Chase – Israel understood this to be a Messianic text, and the New Testament leaves no room for doubt. This is a song about Jesus. Psalm 45:6-7 is quoted in Hebrews 1:8-9. In that book, the author is trying to dissuade the Jewish Christians from the temptation to return to Jerusalem, the temple-worship and animal sacrifices. He argues that Christ is greater than all of that, but begins by noting that Christ is greater than the angels and Moses, to whom the Jews held great respect. He is better than the angels (Heb 1:4) having sat down at the right hand of God and obtaining a more excellent name than they. The angels are ministers of God (Heb 1:7), but to the Son, God speaks to Him, saying, *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever..."* (Heb 1:8-9). Jesus Christ is called God by God and is anointed more than the angels surrounding that throne. Psalm 45 is already teaching us the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity as well as the deity of Christ.

Christ, the Warrior-Groom – The death of Christ was not His defeat nor His escape into a spiritual kingdom. It was His victory, declared in His resurrection, over sin and death and over the principalities and powers of this world (Col 2:15, Rom 1:4, 1 Cor 15:20-21). Grace is on His lips and a sword on His thigh in His wedding procession. Jesus has words of life (John 6:63). He is the Word made flesh, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). That Word is a sword (Rev 1:16) and He rides with a bow conquering (v5, Rev 6:2). The Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword (Heb 4:12). This is the beautiful picture of your defeat, the death of the old man, if you are in Christ Jesus (Gal 2:20). This is also a picture of a King who has seen an extensive victory, *"Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under You"* (v5). This is a celebration because with the death in Christ comes also the victory-resurrection in Christ, and this is immense in number (Rev 7:9-12). His victory, it turns out, is not only our defeat – it is our victory. He did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17).

The Bride – She is His possession, His body, the church, just as Revelation portrays (Rev 21:1-2, 9-10). Paul makes this explicit as well in his admonitions to wives and husbands (Eph 5:32). Human marriages are real covenantal unions and yet they are but shadows to the true marriage between Christ and the church. God became a man so that He could take a human bride. He came to conquer and to take a bride – to kill the dragon and get the girl. He conquered by dying, but it was through that action that He put down the enemies of God and purchased the bride. The Bible begins and ends with a wedding for it is all about God preparing a bride for His Son (Paul picks up this imagery in 2 Cor 11:2).

The image is glorious. She has left her former life and come into His. She has been made glorious *by* the Groom and *for* the Groom (Eph 5:25-27). A husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church will find his wife more and more beautiful, noble, and glorious. This bride is His saved possession, and she turns to Him with great honor (v11), and together, their offspring rule the nations as princes (and John would address the churches speaking of Jesus Who *"has made us kings and priests to His God and Father"* – Rev 1:6). A new Adam and a new Eve now take dominion over the earth.

The image is glorious, but we do have to be careful. The church as a corporate entity is referred to as the bride, but we are not individually brides of Christ. Jesus is not our boyfriend, which is weird even for women but truly awkward for the men. But corporately we do have a feminine response in our relationship to Christ our Head. Understanding this rightly (which the church has failed to do in our day) allows for and directs us to still have masculine and feminine piety with their distinctions. Individually, men are to imitate the masculine characteristics of the warrior-groom and women are to imitate the feminine characteristics of the queen.

A Wedding Banquet and the Oil of Gladness – What is your picture of the perfect wedding celebration? Think of how you join in on the ceremony, the procession, the witnesses, the glory of it all and in doing so honor them all the more. What is your hope for the bride and groom on that day for that day and their future? The true wedding feast of Christ and His bride surpasses every imagination. This is a picture of the wedding of the Lamb, of the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven in perfection, of the salvation of the world and the healing of the nations. We are singing of this great victory, but the world says "no." But the Warrior has a sword upon His thigh, a sword coming out of His mouth, and arrows that pierce the heart. What does His Word do? What has it done to you? Why would it not do the same to this world around us. *"And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely"* (Rev 22:17). *"Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever"* (Psalm 45:17).

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