

PSALM 45: THE ROYAL WEDDING -- YOU'RE INVITED!

It's always nice to be invited to a wedding, and that's what's happening to you today. I'd like to extend a special invitation to each of you and talk a bit about this wedding you are invited to.

Today I'd like to focus on Psalm 45, a magnificent Psalm.

The superscription says this is "A Love Song" (many versions) or "A Wedding Song." (NIV) It is a song about a bride and groom, and their love for one another.

Some scholars say it was written for Solomon at his wedding, but the poem quickly rises above that and clearly can be talking of no one other than Jesus Christ, and His Bride is no one other than the Church of God, you and me.

So this is a song that is very relevant to each of us, and it is remarkably encouraging and prophetic.

Verse 1 "My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skilful writer."

The first words show the eagerness of David to write this song. The KJV says "My heart is inditing a good matter," which some of you classical music lovers will know that Handel turned into a magnificent anthem.

But it's hard to understand that older form of English now, so we'll use the NIV. "My heart is stirred by a noble theme". The word "stirred" can also be translated "overwhelmed," or more literally, "my heart boils over, or seethes." His heart is bursting. His tongue is like the pen of a ready writer. He can't wait to pour out these words describing the Groom at the wedding.

Hopefully this is the way we still feel about our calling, and about Jesus Christ our King – bursting to praise Him and get to know Him better – so much that we can hardly contain ourselves!

Verse 2 "You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever."

David's son Absalom was such a golden-tongued orator that he quickly won sizeable support for a rebellion against David. Solomon too was of course famous for wise verdicts and proverbs.

But this refers most to Jesus, who indeed is the most excellent of men. We sing the hymn "How Excellent is Thy Name." The Hebrew word is doubled, "Beautiful, beautiful art thou."

The song, "Jesus, what a beautiful name" sounds a bit syrupy, but in fact the wording of this verse is very similar. (Song of Solomon 5:16 says "he is altogether lovely.")

Verse 2b “your lips have been anointed with grace” – Grace is a word which sums up Jesus – He is always gracious, gives us unmerited pardon, died for us, is full of grace.

Luke 4:22 “All spoke well of Him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from His lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.”

(Verse 2c “since God has blessed you forever.”—applies to Jesus.)

Verse 3 “Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one; clothe yourself with splendour and majesty.”

David wishes the next King success in his military pursuits. This shows the warrior side of Jesus. He is a man with the softness of velvet and the strength of steel. He knows how to wield a sword.

Verse 4 “In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility and justice; let your right hand achieve awesome deeds.”

That’s the way a human King should act, but they don’t. However, there is one who will! This reminds us of Christ’s return to Earth riding a white horse as a Conquering King bringing truth and justice to the world at last.

Verse 5 “Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king’s enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet.”

Describing the return of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6 “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom.”

The throne of David had been promised forever in a divine covenant:

2 Samuel 7:16 “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

But the words “O God” prove who it is that this Psalm is ultimately talking about! This King is “O God”!

Isaiah 9:7 “Of the greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”

Verse 7 “You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

Who is this talking about? We don’t have to wonder, because verses 6 and 7 are quoted in Hebrews 1:8-9: “But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom.”

Jesus has been exalted by the Father to rule over the Kingdom.

Now we turn our attention to the preparations for the wedding ceremony.

Verse 8 “All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad.”

Because of His righteousness, grace and truth, Jesus’ garments are described as being beautifully scented.

Notice 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 “¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ’s triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of Him everywhere. ¹⁵ For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?”

We need to bring the perfume of Jesus Christ to the world. Are we equal to such a task? To show the very perfume of Jesus Christ to the world? We can’t do it of ourselves, but only through our relationship with Him – that He is in us. If He is in us, His perfume will come out of us.

Verse 9 “Daughters of kings are among your honoured women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.” (a proverbially fine gold).

Now the writer switches to talk about the bride. It is clear the groom is Jesus Christ, but who is the bride?

Ephesians 5:25-27 ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”

He presents her beautifully, or as Psalm 45:9 puts it “in gold of Ophir.”

Ephesians 5:32 “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

Paul also referred to this in 2 Corinthians 11:2-3 “² I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him. ³ But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

So we need to forsake the things of the world, the physical distractions that drag us down, and remain pure in our devotion to Jesus Christ, just as a wife or husband remains faithful to their spouse. That’s what we also see in the next verse of Psalm 45.

Verse 10 “Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention: Forget your people and your father’s house.”

The Queen was of foreign descent and was to leave her people as Ruth did, and pledge allegiance to God’s covenant people. So we need to forsake our old ways, leave our old style of life and continue to draw closer to Jesus.

How do we do that? If a husband and wife want to draw closer, the best way is to spend more time together. So the key to drawing closer to Jesus is spending time in prayer, study of His word, and meditation: that is the way to spend time with the Lord.

Similarly, to draw closer to one another in the Church, the key is to spend more time together.

Verse 11 “Let the king be enthralled by your beauty; honour him, for he is your lord.”

The first part of this verse is one of the most astonishing statements in the Bible!

“Honour him, for he is your lord.”—we realise that and have heard about it many times. But look again at the first 8 words of this verse!

“Let the king be enthralled by your beauty”. Could Jesus possibly be enthralled by our beauty? This says that He is!!

The spiritual character we show is beautiful and appealing to Him. He wants us and loves us dearly – that’s why He made us and called us – He wants to be with us forever! He delights in us, as a husband delights in His bride on His wedding day!

Prov 15:8 says “the prayer of the upright is his delight.” He delights in His people, and we honour Him because He is our Lord.

Verse 12 “The city of Tyre will come with a gift, people of wealth will seek your favour.”

Tyre is mentioned as the last word in wealth. It was an exceedingly wealthy and prosperous city at that time.

In Solomon’s time precious gifts were brought to Jerusalem because of his international reputation (e.g. the Queen of Sheba). This will happen in the Kingdom of God:

Rev 21:24-26 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.

Verse 13-14 ¹³“All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold. ¹⁴ In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her— those brought to be with her.”

This is describing us! This is the way Jesus sees us, with His spiritual eyes, when we are clad in the white garments of sincerity and truth. Jesus loves to see His people living His way of life, showing His attitudes of kindness, humility and love.

Notice the description of the church in Isaiah 61:10 “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of His righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”

Verse 15 “Led in with joy and gladness, they enter the palace of the king.”

Wow - what a wonderful time that is pointing to – our actual wedding to Jesus Christ, our entrance into His Kingdom, into His palace, the mansions set aside for us. This will happen at our resurrection of course, but it happens to some limited extent now! We have been raised right into the heavenlies.

Ephesians 2:6 “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus”. We are already seated with our King. But we are promised and invited to a magnificent wedding in the future.

Whenever we pray, we are entering the palace, the very throne room of God!

Hebrews 4:16 “Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” “Enter the palace of the King”.

This reminds me of Esther approaching King Xerxes.

Esther 5:1-2 “¹On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king’s hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. ²When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the sceptre.”

Similarly, God is pleased when we enter His presence! He is always happy to see us. The gold sceptre is always held out to us.

When you know the story, you realise Esther had to be very bold and courageous to come to this point. But she was the Queen, and the King loved her. We can sometimes think “Why would God want to hear from and help little old me?” But we are the Bride of Jesus Christ, and He loves us and really wants to hear from us.

The time this Psalm is talking about is described in Rev 19:6-9:

Revelation 19:6-9 “⁶Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. ⁷Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.) ⁹Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

Wow! What a magnificent event that will be! But the Psalm hasn’t ended yet. There are two more verses.

Psalm 45:16 “Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land.”

The Queen marries into the royal line, a family blessed by God’s promise of continuity of leadership. Her sons become princes, like William and Harry.

Hebrews 2:10 “In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what He suffered.”

Verse 17 “I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you forever and ever.”

This sometimes happens to mortals like King Solomon (their names go down into history and are remembered for generations afterwards), but it especially applies in the Kingdom of God. Somehow it looks from Ps 45:17 like the Bride will be special forever.

Daniel 7:18: But the holy people of the Most High will receive the **kingdom** and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.’

Revelation 21:24 “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it.”

Talks about the nations at that time. The Lamb will be there, and His Bride, and also the Nations. The Nations will praise the Lamb and His Bride forever. I’m not sure exactly what that means, but I’m going to be there to find out!

So today we’ve had a brief look through Psalm 45. What a wonderfully encouraging Psalm it is! You are invited to a wedding. And not just any old wedding, but the most glorious and spectacular wedding ever, by far!

Let’s conclude on a couple of verses in Isaiah that sum up the Royal Wedding to which we are all invited.

Isaiah 54:5 “For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is His name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth.”

Isaiah 62:2, 5 “²The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. ⁵As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.”

What a fantastic honour it is to be the bride of Jesus! Let’s continue to draw closer to Him and to one another as His people, and we have just so much to look forward to!