

The Matchless King & His Beautiful Bride

Hope in the Beautiful Majesty of God

Psalm 45

Pastor Jason Van Bommel

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song.

- ¹ My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.*
- ² You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever.*
- ³ Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!*
- ⁴ In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!*
- ⁵ Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.*
- ⁶ Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;*
- ⁷ you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;*
- ⁸ your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;*
- ⁹ daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.*
- ¹⁰ Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:
forget your people and your father's house,*
- ¹¹ and the king will desire your beauty.
Since he is your lord, bow to him.*
- ¹² The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,
the richest of the people.*
- ¹³ All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.*
- ¹⁴ In many-colored robes she is led to the king,*

- with her virgin companions following behind her.*
- 15 With joy and gladness they are led along
as they enter the palace of the king.*
- 16 In place of your fathers shall be your sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.*
- 17 I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.*

On Royal Weddings . . .

One of my early childhood memories is of the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana in 1981. I was seven years old, and we were living in California. I have better memories of Prince Andrew and Princess Sarah Ferguson's 1986 wedding, as I was twelve by that time. Those of you familiar with the more recent royal weddings of William and Kate in 2011 or Harry and Meghan in 2018 have no idea what global phenomena the royal weddings of the 1980s were. Charles and Diana's wedding was watched by over 750 million people worldwide, and some estimates are as high as a billion viewers. The total population of the world at the time was only 4.5 billion, so somewhere between 20 and 25% of the entire world population watched Prince Charles, the Crown Prince of the British Empire, wed Lady Diana Spenser. William and Kate's wedding, by comparison, had about 100 million viewers total. Actually, accurate viewership numbers for the royal weddings are hard to find, but they have obviously been incredibly popular events. An estimated crowd of a million people lined the streets of London for William and Kate's wedding.

Why do royal wedding fascinate people so much? Both of the spectacular royal weddings of the 1980's created unhappy marriages that ended in divorce after much infidelity by both partners. But at the time of the wedding, it all seems like a fantasy fairy tale come true, doesn't it, complete with ornate horse-drawn carriages and stunning long wedding gown trains? They're earthly depictions of an ideal that we almost never see achieved in this world.

Psalm 45 depicts a royal wedding – or, perhaps we should say, it depicts THE Royal Wedding, between the divine King who is matchless in every measure of excellence and His stunningly beautiful bride. While Psalm 45 may have been written for the occasion of the wedding of a king in Jerusalem, perhaps for King Solomon's wedding to the daughter of Pharaoh, the language used by the psalmist far exceeds what could be rightly applied to any earthly king.

Psalm 45 divides nicely into two main parts, the description of the Matchless King who is God in verses 1-9, followed by the description of His beautiful bride in verses 10-15. These

two main parts are followed by a closing section declaring the eternal praise of the matchless king and the great blessings bestowed on His sons.

I. **The Matchless Majestic King, vv. 1-9**

We begin with verses 1-9, the portrait of the matchless king:

- 1 My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.*
- 2 You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever.*
- 3 Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!*
- 4 In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!*
- 5 Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.*
- 6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;*
- 7 you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;*
- 8 your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;*
- 9 daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.*

In verse 1, the psalmist expresses his excitement to write celebrating this matchless king:

*My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.*

The psalmist tells us that he is addressing the king himself, and again, this may have originally been written for a grand royal wedding in Jerusalem, and some earthly king of Israel or Judah may have been the initial subject in the psalmist's mind. But the psalmist is

writing under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is working through the psalmist's overflowing heart and ready tongue to bring a beautiful portrait of King Jesus to His church.

We know definitively that Psalm 45 speaks of Jesus the Son of God because verse 6 addresses the king as "O God," a title would never rightly and fully fit a mere human being. Also, Hebrews 1:8-9 quotes verses 6-7 –

But of the Son he says,

*"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."*

- Heb. 1:8-9, ESV

So, it's always safe to follow the lead of the New Testament in how it interprets the Old Testament for us.

The first thing the psalmist says about the Matchless and Majestic Son of God is that He is "the most handsome of the sons of men." Now, the psalmist is not talking about the physical appearance of Jesus during His earthly incarnation, for Isaiah 53 tells us of His physical appearance: "he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him." But, as this is a love song celebrating the royal wedding, I believe it is focused on the glorified Jesus, who shines with the radiance of the Son. When He returns and every eye sees Him, every knee will bow in worship before Him. When John saw a vision of Jesus on the Island of Patmos in Revelation 1, he fell at His feet like a dead man, for he was so overwhelmed by the majestic glory of the exalted Son of God.

The next thing the psalmist praises is the graciousness of the lips of the King: "grace is poured upon your lips; therefore, God has blessed you forever." Jesus spoke with gracious authority during the days of His earthly ministry, and His teaching was so gracious and wonderful that He could hold large crowds spellbound for hours. The crowds would walk away from His teaching astounded, saying, "No one ever taught like this man, for He teaches with authority and not as the scribes." Even the soldiers who were sent to arrest Jesus came back to the Sanhedrin and reported, "No one ever spoke like this man."

Now that Jesus is enthroned on high at the right hand of the Father, His words are even more powerfully gracious. John 1:16 says, "For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

Verses 3-5 pivot from the opening description of the beauty and graciousness of the King to speak of His power and judgment, especially against His enemies:

*Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!*

*In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!*

*Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.*

— Psalm 45:2-5, ESV

These verses have a double meaning in describing the Son of God. Now, in the age of grace under the Gospel, the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God penetrates the hearts of people to bring them to conviction of their sin and to bring them to faith in Jesus. So, King Jesus today is subduing His enemies through sword and arrow by the preaching of the Gospel and the conversion of His enemies into His subjects and His children.

But Psalm 45 is focused on the wedding day of the glorious King, and on that day, the Lord Jesus will ride out in power and glory to judge and rule the nations. There's a strong connection between Psalm 45 and Revelation 19, where we read about the coming of the king to His wedding supper. The marriage supper of the lamb is the revelation of the Majestic Son of God as King of kings and Lord of lords. Here's Revelation 19:6-16:

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

*“Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.*

*⁷ Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;*

*⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure”—*

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

⁹ And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” ¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow

servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (ESV)

The sword which Psalm 45 tells the Bridegroom-King to strap on His thigh is coming from His mouth in Revelation 19, as He descends from heaven on a white war horse to judge and make war.

Psalm 45 calls the King to “*ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness.*” Revelation 19:11 tells us that “*The one sitting on [the white horse] is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.*” In fact, Psalm 45:6 goes on to proclaim to the royal bridegroom:

*Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;
you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.*

Jesus rules His kingdom with absolute truth and righteousness, for He is the Truth and He is the Righteous One. That He is the truth speaks to the reality that everything He thinks and says is true; there is no deceit found in Him. That the scepter of His kingdom is a scepter of uprightness tells us that everything Jesus does is done with perfect integrity and blameless righteousness.

The anointing of the oil of gladness speaks of the Holy Spirit. So, verse 7, which says, “*Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions*” speaks to the truth that God the Father rewarded Jesus for His sinless obedience and perfect righteousness by exalting Jesus to His right hand and giving Him the gift of the Holy Spirit, which He then poured out in His church in gracious abundance. Jesus Himself, of course, was anointed with the Holy Spirit without measure at His baptism, where He was anointed as the Messiah, the Anointed One. But it was at His exaltation to the Father’s right hand that He received the gift of the Holy Spirit to pour out on His people.

Also, when Jesus returns for His royal wedding day, He will perfect and glorify His people, so that we will all be powerfully anointed and freed from sin and filled with perfect gladness forever and ever!

The multi-sensory description of the wonderful King continues in verses 8-9:

*your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;
daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.*

Notice how the psalmist has described every possible aspect of the king's person and character as wonderful. His appearance, His speech, His character, His power, His authority, His anointing, and even His aroma and the music that accompanies Him and makes Him glad. Everything about this matchless king, inside and out, and everything surrounding Him and His royal wedding processional is just wonderful – beautiful, powerful, fragrant, and splendid. We can't know exactly who the ladies of honor are meant to represent, but we know that when Jesus comes for His bride, He will be accompanied by all the host of heaven and all the splendors of eternity.

This is also a call for us now to praise our glorious King with beautiful music and with prayers that Scripture says rise before the Lord like incense. As overwhelmingly beautiful and powerful as our worship will be on that great and coming day, we should strive to make our Lord's Day morning worship beautiful and pleasing to our King, too, as a foretaste of the glory to come!

II. His Beautiful Bride, vv. 10-15

In verse 10, our attention is turned from the matchless King to His beautiful bride. This is a description of the church, the beloved bride of the Lord. Now I know many of us men have a hard time picturing ourselves as part of a beautiful bride, but we need to be secure enough in our masculinity to accept this metaphor and embrace the love of Christ for us as His own treasured and beloved ones. And, to balance it out, we get the masculine metaphor of the sons of the king being made princes in verse 16, and that language applies to the ladies as much as to the men among us. So, men, we are called to be part of the beautiful bride of Christ, and ladies, you are called to be part of the sons of the King who will be princes in the earth. So, we all just need to get over ourselves and accept the wonderful things being said about us here.

*¹⁰ Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:
forget your people and your father's house,
¹¹ and the king will desire your beauty.*

Since he is your lord, bow to him.

*¹² The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,
the richest of the people.*

¹³ All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.

*¹⁴ In many-colored robes she is led to the king,
with her virgin companions following behind her.*

*¹⁵ With joy and gladness they are led along
as they enter the palace of the king.*

The first thing said about the beautiful bride of the King is actually a calling. Just as the King Himself was called to ride forth in majesty and rule (“In majesty ride out victoriously”), so now the bride is called to come forth. Only she is called to come forth and listen to the voice of her Lord, the King, her Husband, to leave behind her father’s house and her people and to bow to the Lord in honor and worship.

Much like the king being called “O God” in verse 6 and being told that His throne is forever and ever, these lines are only fully fitting when applied to Jesus and His bride, the church. Jesus makes the call of discipleship very clear in the Gospels. We are called to follow Him, to deny ourselves, to turn our backs on our earthly priorities and attachments and agendas and surrender ourselves to Him and Him alone:

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?” – Luke 9:23-25, ESV

The wedding dress of the beautiful bride is described as many-colored robes interwoven with gold. As colored dyes were very expensive in the ancient world, this is an extravagantly costly wedding gown. Apparently, Kate Middleton’s wedding gown cost almost \$400,000, and Meghan Markle’s was over \$250,000. But their gowns were not as beautiful or even as costly as what is described here, especially when we understand the fulfillment of this picture in the bride of Christ, the church.

Revelation 19:7-8 describes the wedding gown of the bride of the Lamb:

*⁷ Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;
⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure”—*

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

The wedding gown of the bride of the Lamb is granted to her by the grace of God and it is woven of the perfect, matchless righteousness of Christ but also of the righteous deeds of the saints, including the willing martyrdom of many thousands of the saints of God. Obviously, the only covering which is perfect and can clothe us before God is the perfect righteousness of Jesus, but the description of many colors and a robe interwoven with gold, together with the picture in Revelation 19, tells us that God grants suffering to His faithful saints, so that we might follow in the footsteps of the Lamb of God, our Lord, and that the suffering of the saints as well as the perfect righteousness of Jesus clothe the church of Christ in splendor on her wedding day. No amount of money on earth could ever begin to purchase anything so infinitely valuable and pricelessly precious.

And what a stunning thought verse 15 conveys: *“With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.”* That’s your future, believer!

If you’re here and you’re not a believer, the great and glorious wedding day, which will bring such tremendous joy and gladness to the those of us who have been longing for His appearing, will be the Day of Judgment and wrath for you. The Bridegroom will come to both judge the nations with perfect justice and to take His bride to Himself. Where will you be on that day?

III. The Enduring Praise of the King & His Sons, v. 16-17

Then, Psalm 45 ends with a wonderful promise of the eternal praise of the King and the glory and honor given His Sons:

*16 In place of your fathers shall be your sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.
17 I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.*

So, here, the metaphor shifts, and we need to follow that shift, as often happens in the Psalms. We the church of Jesus Christ, those who belong to Him by grace alone through faith alone, are now pictured as His Sons, made princes in all the earth. Jesus said that the meek shall inherit the earth, and He promised His disciples that they would sit on thrones with Him and judge the nations.

Paul reminded the church in Corinth of this privileged future when he chastised them for taking one another to court. He said, *“do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels?”* (1 Cor 6:2-3, ESV) The fallen angels, the demons who have harassed

the people of God for centuries, will, in the end, be judged by the people of God, as we sit enthroned as princes, the Sons of God, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, as Romans 8 says.

But the final lines of Psalm 45 are not about the sons of the king and their reign as princes but about the King Himself and His eternal praise:

*I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.*

Here we sit 3,000 years after the writing of Psalm 45, on the other side of the world from where Jesus lived 2,000 years ago, and we remember His name and we praise His name. He is praised in more nations and in more languages and by more people today than at any other time in human history. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ continues to advance, and more and more nations are coming to know Him all the time. Even in all eternity, Jesus will be praised as the worthy Lamb as those around His throne will say forever:

*“Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.” – Revelation 5:9-10, ESV*

And we have the distinct honor and privilege of worshiping Him now, as those who will be His bride and His princes forever!