

## A Royal Wedding You Have to See!

Psalm 45

Studies in the Psalms #46

**S**o I guess there was this thing called “the royal wedding” recently? I didn’t watch but everyone was chatting about it online. All weddings are beautiful whether with a few family and friends or in a large cathedral for the world to see. With the royal wedding as backdrop we pick up where we left off last June with Psalm 45: A ROYAL WEDDING YOU HAVE TO SEE!

The titles of the Psalms are notoriously difficult to interpret, but this part is clear: **a love song**. *Shir yedidot* is actually **a loves song** using the plural **loves** for intensity.<sup>1</sup> In the introductory verse 1 the writer says he speaks this **love song** from his heart: **my heart overflows**—how can it not when thinking about love—**with a pleasing<sup>2</sup> theme**. What’s in his **heart overflows** into words upon a scroll: **I address my verses to the king**. He does so with a **tongue...like the pen of a ready scribe**.<sup>3</sup> His praise is not with the pen but with the tongue.

LOOK AT THE KING (vv. 2–9)

*Look at his physical beauty* (v. 2): **You are the most handsome** or “doubly more beautiful,” using an unusual verb form to express his exceptional beauty.<sup>4</sup> He’s **the most handsome of the sons of men**, or of *‘adam*.

*Look at his divine blessing* (v. 2): **grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever.** He looks the part while God set him apart.

*Look at his divine might* (vv. 3–4): **Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty!** (v. 3) That’s what you’d want in a king in the ancient near east. **In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!** (v. 4) As a godly king he’s not defined as a colonizer or conqueror, but as a defender of truth<sup>5</sup> by being meek or humble and righteous.

*Look at his victory* (v. 5): **Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies; the peoples fall under you.** This is a difficult verse to translate. One Old Testament scholar translates it as it stands in the Hebrew text like this: “Your arrows—what sharpened ones!—(peoples are falling beneath you!)—right into the heart of the king’s enemies!”<sup>6</sup>

*Look at his god-likeness* (v. 6): **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever** (v. 6). In the ancient world kings were seen as gods. But how can the Psalmist say this since Israel confesses only one God? The answer is that the king is God-like. Like the Lord said of Moses, “You are like God to Pharaoh” (Ex. 4:16). An eternal throne alludes to 2 Samuel 7:14 and the Davidic covenant. Both these show us that David and his throne are types of the Messiah. But how can

a man make himself to be equal with God? Remember that was the question of the Judean leaders to Jesus? Our Psalm waits further that we have access to.

*Look at his righteous rule (vv. 6–7): **The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness, you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness*** (v. 6), unlike David, who was a man of blood. **Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions** (v. 7).

How does God have a God? This is cited in Hebrews 1 to show the Son of the Father is greater than the angels who gave the law at Sinai.

*Look at his clothing (v. 8): **your robes are all fragrant with the most expensive perfumes<sup>7</sup> myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad.*** He dwells in glory. One of my former professors said, “the sensual is not denied but celebrated in its proper place in life.”<sup>8</sup>

*Look at his entourage (v. 9): **daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor***—that’s how honored he is. **At your right hand** [the place of honor] **stands the queen in gold of Ophir.** If you’re an Israelite, this is the ideal king.

LOOK AT THE QUEEN (vv. 10–15)

He leads to her at the end of verse 9 and writer saying *LOOK AT THE QUEEN* in verses 10–15. One thing that’s interesting is that contrary to our culture there’s way less said about her than the king. We have bridal magazine, stores,

and huge expos at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. All we men have is the Men's Warehouse. But at least "you're gonna like the way you look. I guarantee it!"

*Look at her leaving and cleaving* a la Genesis 2 with four verbs in verses 10–11: **Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear: forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty.**

*Look at her devotion* in verse 11: **Since he is your lord, bow to him.**

*Look at her newfound preeminence* in verse 12: **The people of Tyre, a key ancient port city, will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people.**

*Look at her clothing* in verses 13–14: **All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold (v. 13). In many-colored robes she is led to the king with her virgin companions following behind her (v. 14).**

*Look at her entrance into her new home:* **With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king (v. 15).**

The end of verse 15 leads us back to the king; the Psalm concludes in verses 16–17 saying: **In place of your fathers shall be your sons.** Not mere children, but sons as God promised David in 2 Samuel 7. **You will make them princes in all the earth (v. 16),** as God promised Abram in Genesis 15. **I**

**will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever** (v. 17). What a celebration of royal marriage!

#### OUR MARRIAGE

What does a Psalm like this say to us, thousands of years removed, without royalty to celebrate, who may never get married, or who have suffered the tragedy of a broken marriage? That royal wedding pointed forward to something greater: OUR MARRIAGE as the bride to Jesus. Did you know God loves weddings? Of course ours can be filled with difficulties even tragedies, but human history began with a wedding before sin in Genesis 2 and human history ends apart from sin with another wedding in Revelation 21. God loves weddings because they picture the “profound mystery of our covenant relationship with Jesus (Eph. 5:32).

This is our **love song** (title) in which we praise our eternal king going out **from the ivory palaces** (v. 8) of the Father’s love (John 1:18) and glory (John 17:5), taking upon himself our humanity (John 1:14) so that he could find us, his bride, marry us, and take us back to **enter the eternal and glorious palace of the king** (v. 15). “Christ loved the church” in eternity “and gave himself up for her” in his life and death “that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word” (this is what he’s already done),

“so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish” (this is what he will do). (Eph. 5:25–27). One writer said the consummation of this wedding is “the definitive aim of our destiny.”<sup>9</sup>

This is our **love song** (title) for Jesus, **the most handsome of the sons of Adam**. We don’t love him for his physical **handsomeness** for “he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him” (Isa. 53:2). We love him for his **handsomeness** of having **grace...poured upon his lips** in his teachings (v. 2). We love him for **gird[ing] his sword on [his] thigh** yet being conquered for us in his first coming (v. 3). We love him because **in...majesty** he will **ride out victoriously for the cause of truth** in his second coming (v. 4). We love him for shooting his **arrows...in the heart of his enemies** in preserving us from the world, the flesh, and the devil (v. 5). We love him for being **God** and having a **throne...forever and ever** as the eternal Son of God. We love him for his **kingdom** being one **of uprightness** (v. 6) as he leads by example **lov[ing] righteousness and hat[ing] wickedness** (v. 7). We love him for being **anointed...with the oil of gladness** of the Holy Spirit **beyond his companions** (v. 7) so that he can pour the Spirit out on us.

This is our **love song** (title) for him whose love for us is stronger than death! (Song of Songs 8:6) Now he calls you and me in love to leave our sins and idolatries behind: **Hear...consider...incline...forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty** (v. 10). Now he calls you and me in love to cleave to him: **since he is your lord, bow to him** (v. 11). Jesus once gave a parable of his kingdom being like a wedding. We, like the bride, are to hear and heed his command: "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him" (Matt. 25:6).

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Motyer, 117.

<sup>2</sup> “Good;” *tov*.

<sup>3</sup> *Soper* is a professional scribe, but it’s used here as a figure of speech for his being a poet. Futato, 165.

<sup>4</sup> Motyer, 118 n32.

<sup>5</sup> Longman III, 202.

<sup>6</sup> Motyer, 118.

<sup>7</sup> Longman III, 202.

<sup>8</sup> Futato, 165.

<sup>9</sup> Reardon, 87.