



Pastor's Update September 1, 2024

By Rev. Francis Williams

"A Wedding Song for the King and his Bride"

Psalm 45: For the Leader on Shoshanim (lilies?) of the sons of Korah.
A Song of Love.

Psalm 45 is a Royal Psalm. The following are also Royal Psalms: 2, 18, 20, 21, 72, 101, 110, 132, 144:1-11). A Royal Psalm is a prayer that was offered up for the king or in his name.

"Psalm 45 is a spirited and very ancient song sung to glorify the wedding of the sovereign" (Herman Gunkel). "This was a psalm for a royal wedding. It was sung by the court minstrel to celebrate the happy event that was about to take place" (J. H. Tullock).

Outline

I. The Introduction (45:1)

- A. The singer's heart has been stirred up to sing a "good word" (or gracious words).
- B. He is writing not with a pen (written) but with his tongue (oral).
- C. His tongue is like a "skillful scribe" (see Ezra 7:6; Prov. 22:29)
- D. He addresses the king.

II. The Psalmist addresses the king as groom (45:2-9)

- A. The king's elevated character is based on God's blessing (45:2).

He is the most excellent of men. Exceptional beauty was a royal attribute of Saul (see 1 Sam. 9:2) and of David (1 Sam. 16:12); Egyptian Kings are also described as very handsome. However, the psalmist must have known that true beauty is not external but internal (see Prov. 31:30).

- B. The king is blessed with strength (45:3-5)

Israel's kings led their nation in battle and were expected to be warriors.

Here the king is depicted as an ideal, successful warrior.

"Splendor" and "Majesty" are divine attributes (e.g. Psalm 104:1).

The power and majesty of the kings of Israel must be yoked with the cause of God (truth, humility and righteousness; see especially 1 Kings 3:4-14). See the description of the ideal future king in Israel (Isa. 11:3-5)

Thus the king will defeat his enemies.

Psalm 45 Cont'd

C. The king is blessed with an eternal throne (45:6-8)

The writer to the Hebrews relates this passage to Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:8-9).

“Anointing” is the central ritual of kingship (See 1 Sam. 10:1). “Oil of gladness” is the joy that accompanies the coronation of the king.

D. The psalmist describes the pomp and ceremony of the wedding (45:8-9)

1. The Psalmist addresses the royal bride (45:10-12a)

In the Ancient Near East wives were subservient to their husbands, and abandoned the practices of their birth family for those of their husbands’ (Deut. 21:13; Ruth 1:16-17); even queens must do so. She has to forget the people and submit to the king as her lord.

2. The Psalmist describes the queen’s bridal attire as she was led by her escort to the wedding chamber (45:12b-15).

Question: Is this a political arrangement rather than a marriage of equals or even a love match?

3. The Psalmist forecasts the king’s future (45:16-17)

Verse 17 is a remarkable conclusion, where the king is praised in language typically reserved for God.

Conclusion: Who is the (ultimate) King in Psalm 45?

Who is the (ultimate) Royal Bride in Psalm 45?

By God’s Grace and for His glory,

Pr. Francis