

PSALMS

Chapter 45

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. ²You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever. ³Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty! ⁴In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let your right hand teach you awesome deeds! ⁵Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you. ⁶Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; ⁷you 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.¹⁰Hear, 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. ¹²The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people. ¹³All 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. ¹⁵With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king. ¹⁶In place of your fathers shall be your sons; you will make them princes in all the earth. ¹⁷I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

Ps 45† A song in praise of the king on his wedding day. He undoubtedly belonged to David's dynasty, and the song was probably used at more than one royal wedding. Since the bride is a foreign princess (see vv. 10, 12), the wedding reflects the king's standing as a figure of international significance. Accordingly he is addressed as one whose reign is to be characterized by victories over the nations (vv. 3–5; cf. Ps 2; 110). As a royal son of David, he is a type (foreshadowing) of Christ, and his queen (vv. 9–15) is a type of the church, the bride of Christ (cf. Eph 5:25–27). After the exile this psalm could apply only to the Messiah, the promised Son of David who would sit on David's throne (for the application of vv. 6–7 to Christ see Heb 1:8–9). The superscription implies that it was composed and sung by a member of the Levitical temple choir, a fact not surprising in view of the close link between the temple (housing the earthly throne room of Israel's heavenly King) and the Davidic dynasty (the Lord's appointed regents over his people, described throughout the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles). As a word from one of the temple personnel, the song was no doubt received as a word from the temple—and from the One who sat enthroned there. In its structure, the song is framed by vv. 1, 17 while vv. 2, 16 constitute a secondary frame within them—all addressed to the king. The body of the song falls into two parts: (1) words addressed to the king (vv. 3–9) and (2) words addressed to the royal bride (vv. 10–15). These in turn each contain two parts, reflecting a similar pattern: (1) (a) exhortations to the king (vv. 3–5), (b) the glory of the king (vv. 6–9); (2) (a) exhortations to the bride (vv. 10–11), (b) the glory of the bride (vv. 12–15). (CSB)

Royal psalm celebrating the marriage of the ideal king to his bride. Shows the close connection between the song of the temple, where God dwelled, and the royal court, where His king sat enthroned. It enlarges the scope of the messianic prophecy recorded in Ps 2 (cf 2:1–11; 2Sm 7). The prayer addressed to God (vv 3, 6), as well as this king (vv 1, 7), depicts the “anointed” in a

way that would have exceeded any Davidic king. Whoever the king of the original setting is, he foreshadows that future One “greater than Solomon” (Mt 12:42). Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself up for, and is intimately united to, His Bride, the Church (cf Eph 5:25–27). Luth: “[This] is a prophecy of the Gospel and the kingdom of Christ, adorned with magnificent, splendid, and powerful words. For it portrays Christ as a king—with all kingly splendor, . . . having likewise a fine castle, a grand host of ladies-in-waiting, a beautiful queen and children forever. This is all nothing else than a spiritual picture of the Gospel of Christ, His Spirit, grace, church, and eternal life, of war against sin, death, law, devil, flesh, world, and all evil” (*PILM*, p 62). *according to Lilies*. Probably a name for a specific melody (cf the likewise Christological Ps 69). *Sons of Korah*. See Ps 42 intro. *a love song*. Luth: “wedding lyric” (AE 12:200). Actually plural, “a song of loves,” that refers to bridal virgins or maidens, including the bride herself, or possibly a reference to accompaniment for the female vocal range, namely, the soprano key. The psalm likely contains features of the wedding ceremony. (TLSB)

Format: V 1, announcement; vv 2–3, address to king; vv 4–5, appeal for action; vv 6–9, the king’s splendor; vv 10–12, address to bride; vv 13–15, the bride’s splendor; vv 16–17, the couple’s future. (TLSB)

Psalm 45 is an answer to the plea of Psalm 44 because it pictures the Messianic King who brings victory to his people. (PBC)

45:1 See v. 17, where the speaker pledges (perhaps by means of this song) to perpetuate the king’s memory throughout the generations and awaken the praise of the nations. (CSB)

In this opening verse the poet declares the greatness of his theme. He is not writing about an ordinary king or composing a wedding march for a royal wedding of Israel. By inspiration he is writing for Christ, the Messianic King, and for his wedding to his bride the church. (PBC)

a pleasing theme – Lit, “a good word.” Ambr: “He is the Word given forth from the heart of the Father, because He came forth from the Father” (*NPNF* 2 10:279). (TLSB)

king – No specific ruler of the Davidic house is named, but each Davidic king foreshadows the great King, the coming Messiah. (TLSB)

ready scribe. His expert “tongue” faithfully speaks the “verses” of this psalm as one inspired to write and speak from the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

45:2 *most handsome of the sons of men* – One who excels in manly traits and beauty, as a king should (see 1Sa 9:2; 16:18)—but he is so beyond ordinary men as to be almost Godlike. (CSB)

This verse was the inspiration for the familiar hymn “Beautiful Savior.” Jesus’ beauty was not a physical attractiveness, but his pure, sinless character and the beautiful words of truth, grace, and forgiveness which he spoke. (PBC)

grace...upon your lips – See Pr 22:11; Ecc 10:12; cf. Isa 50:4; Lk 4:22; see also v. 16, where it is suggested that such a king will be perpetuated in his sons. (CSB)

This king is a man, but more than an ordinary man by the “grace” that pours out in His speech. (TLSB)

45:3–5 Go forth with your sword victoriously in the service of all that is right, and clothe yourself thereby with glory—make your reign adorn you more truly than the wedding garb with which you are now arrayed (v. 8). (CSB)

45:3 *Gird Your sword on Your thigh* – Like a true king, He is a warrior ready to battle for His people. (TLSB)

O mighty one – Hbr *gibbor*, divine name, messianic title (cf Is 9:6; Lk 1:49). (TLSB)

splendor and majesty – Like that of his heavenly Overlord. (CSB)

The fact that the qualities with which he is endowed are to be used in strenuous combat and are not for personal embellishment and gratification only is evident in the summons that follows. (Leupold)

45:4 *majesty ride* – Although Christ once came to Jerusalem in lowliness, riding on a donkey, he will return in majesty to subdue all the enemies of his kingdom. On Judgment Day every knee will bow to Him. Satan and all his followers will be confined to hell. The King’s people will then live in eternal peace and security because of His rule. (PBC)

His victorious course is described as He now rides forth for the battle for which He is in a singular sense destined. He is not the agent of bloody, cruel conquest, but He does battle in the interest of “truth, meekness, righteousness.” (Leupold)

The King has put on His armor and begins the combat. He receives the best wishes for success and victory. Luther translated: “Thou must be successful in Thy glory.” “Rakab,” go forward, proceed, as on the way of war. Against whom is He going into combat? This is said in what follows: “Hal debar aemet,” for sake of truth. “Hal debar” means “for sake of.” For the sake of truth shall He proceed, shall He fight. The Truth here appears as being suppressed. The King, the Mighty One, is opposed by enemies, who have offended against truth, who hold down the truth. By “truth” here is meant divine truth, God’s Word. He Himself is that truth and He is to make free and to give it free course. To that end He is to use His might, His majesty. (Stoekhardt)

righteousness – Next to the enemies, who have suppressed the truth, appear the followers of the truth. These are meek, righteous people. But it lies even nearer to take “hanwah” in another sense. It may well be derived from “honi,” poor and miserable. “Honi” is also frequently understood as describing frame of mind. “Hanaw” sometimes signifies miserable, poor. It may be taken here: “For the sake of the poor,” i.e. of those who are in want. The righteous, the pious are on the side of the King, they are His people. They are now in want and need, and yet in the power of the power the enemies. The enemies of the truth, of divine truth, are also enemies of the people of God. For the benefit of the poor, of the persons in want and need, is He again to bring forth the truth. (Stoekhardt)

right hand – This kingly hero and groom inspires awe by His victorious acts. (TLSB)

The right hand is a figure of power. (A Commentary of the Psalms - Ross)

awesome deeds. See 66:5; 106:22; 145:6. (CSB)

These would be exploits that would strike fear and awe in people. (A Commentary of the Psalms - Ross)

45:5 *peoples will fall under you* – On Judgment Day every knee will bow to him. (PBC)

The king will go to war, but it will be on behalf of truth and righteousness, and it will be triumphant. (A Commentary of the Psalms - Ross)

45:6-7 No sin and no sinner will be allowed to enter Jesus' eternal kingdom. Only His friends, whose sins have been covered by the wedding garment of their Savior's righteousness, will be able to share in His eternal joy. See Rev. 21:27 (PBC)

45:6 *O God* – Possibly the king's throne is called God's throne because he is God's appointed regent. But it is also possible that the king himself is addressed as "god." The Davidic king (the "LORD's anointed," 2Sa 19:21), because of his special relationship with God, was called at his enthronement the "son" of God (see 2:7; 2Sa 7:14; 1Ch 28:6; cf. 89:27). In this psalm, which praises the king and especially extols his "splendor and majesty" (v. 3), it is not unthinkable that he was called "god" as a title of honor (cf. Isa 9:6). Such a description of the Davidic king attains its fullest meaning when applied to Christ, as the author of Hebrews does (Heb 1:8–9). (The pharaohs of Egypt were sometimes addressed as "my god" by their vassal kings in Palestine, as evidenced by the Amarna letters. (CSB)

This king is thoroughly human, a son of David, and therefore subject to death. Yet He is also addressed as, and must be, none other than the true God. (TLSB)

Verse 6 is very important as one of the clearest OT testimonies to Christ's deity. The Messianic King is called God, and He rules an eternal kingdom. (PBC)

for ever and ever – See vv. 2, 17. Such was the language used with respect to kings. (CSB)

The king's life has been spared—to live for ever and ever. It here gains added significance in the light of God's covenant with David (see 89:4, 29, 36; 132:12; 2Sa 7:16). In Christ, the Son of David, it is fulfilled. (CSB)

scepter – Heb 1:8–9 applies 45:6–7 to prove Christ's divinity by His superiority over the angels as His rule extends over all things. (TLSB)

45:7 *companions* – The noble guests of the king, perhaps from other lands. (CSB)

Guests who have come from every place for this royal occasion. (TLSB)

anoint you – Verbal form of the word "Messiah." As in a coronation ceremony (cf. 1Sm 10:1; 16:3). God anoints and sends Him forth. The Anointed is addressed as, and truly is, God worthy of all worship. Iren: "The Spirit designates both [of them] by the name of God—both Him who is anointed as Son, and Him who does anoint, that is, the Father" (ANF 1:419). Jn D: "Scripture often uses the past tense instead of the future... For as yet God was not seen nor did He dwell among men when this was said [prophetically]" (NPNF 2 9:76b) (TLSB)

oil of gladness – God has anointed him with a more delightful oil than the aromatic oils with which his head and body were anointed on his wedding day—namely, with joy (see 23:5; Isa 61:3). (CSB)

Joy and abundance of the Holy Spirit (Is 61:1, 3) (TLSB)

The King is also distinguished from God. This distinction is meaningful on in light of the doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ's incarnation. Although the Messianic King is true God, he is also the obedient Son who became a man in the obedience to his Father's will. Jesus is set above all other human beings because He is exalted in joy at the right hand of God. He is worthy of the exalted position because as the God-man He has completed the work of our salvation. (PBC)

45:8–9 The glory of the king's wedding. (CSB)

These verses are a transition to the next section of the psalm. (PBC)

45:8 *myrrh* – Probably to be identified with labdanum, an aromatic gum (see Ps 45:8; Pr 7:17; SS 3:6; 5:13) exuded from the leaves of the cistus rose. Its oil was used in beauty treatments and it was sometimes mixed with wine and drunk to relieve pain (see Mk 15:23). As a gift fit for a king, myrrh was brought to Jesus after his birth (Mt 2:11) and applied to his body after his death.); SS 1:13. (CSB)

aloes – Aloes is a sweet-smelling wood from India. (Leupold)

cassia – Cassia is a dried cinnamon blossom that is used for incense. (Leupold)

Expensive perfumes and spices. Cf Pr 7:17; Sg 4:14. (TLSB)

ivory palaces – Describes richest of royal dwellings, decorated with ivory inlay or carvings. Neighboring Phoenicians were famous for their ivory work, which they exported to Israel. Carvings include depictions of plants, animals, humans, and sphinxes. (TLSB)

stringed instruments – Festive music and songs praise the exalted King. (TLSB)

45:9 *Daughters of kings* – Whether members of his royal harem (see 1Ki 11:1–3) or guests at his wedding, they represent international recognition of the king. (CSB)

Ladies-in-waiting and “daughters of kings” join the wedding procession. (TLSB)

queen – Hus: “This Jerusalem, our mother, the temple of the Lord, the kingdom of heaven and the city of the Great King; and this whole church” (*The Church*, p 5). (TLSB)

in gold of Ophir – Adorned with jewels of finest gold – The source of much of King Solomon's gold (see 1Ki 9:28; 10:11). Its location seems to have been south of Palestine, perhaps somewhere in Africa or south Arabia.); 1Ki 9:28) and all the finery associated with it. (CSB)

Gifts of gold adorn the chosen queen (source of Solomon's gold; cf 1Ki 9:26–28). (TLSB)

45:10–15 The word to the royal bride. (CSB)

45:10–11 Be totally loyal to your adoring king. (CSB)

In marriage a man and woman leave their parents and enter a bond with each other which takes precedence over all others. When we become God's children through faith in Christ, this too is a relationship which demands exclusive loyalty and which must take precedence over all others. (PBC)

The church must ever continue to learn that lesson: forget her worldly attachments and associations. (Leupold)

45:10 *daughter* – King calls to his bride just as Christ calls and regenerates His Bride, the Church, by the Gospel. (TLSB)

father's house – The bride leaves her former life and relationships to be joined with her adoring husband. (TLSB)

45:11 *your Lord* – The royal wife submits to her husband's love and care, just as the Church submits to Christ, her Lord and Savior (Eph 5:22–24). (TLSB)

bow – Possibly part of the marriage rite. On Israelite weddings. (TLSB)

45:12–15 The royal bride's glory. (CSB)

45:12 *people of Tyre*. A personification of the city of Tyre and its inhabitants. The king of Tyre was the first foreign ruler to recognize the Davidic dynasty (see 2Sa 5:11), and Solomon maintained close relations with that city-state (see 1Ki 5; 9:10–14, 26–28). As a great trading center on the Mediterranean coast, Tyre was world-renowned for its wealth (see Isa 23; Eze 26:1–28:19). (CSB)

Ancient Phoenician city on the Great Sea known for its wealth. Its king was the first to officially recognize David's reign (2Sm 5:11). Representing all nations, it is here a shadow of the King and His kingdom's universal reach. (TLSB)

seek your favor – Desire to be in your good graces as the wife of this king. (CSB)

Seeking the favor of this desirable bride. (TLSB)

richest of the people – Such as those from your homeland. (CSB)

45:13-15 Bride and her maids would dress richly and be led to the groom's home. Such garments were often dyed scarlet and embroidered with gold thread (2Sm 1:24; Ezk 16:13). (TLSB)

45:13 *princess* – The “daughter” of v 10, the bride. (TLSB)

her chamber – Wherein she prepared for the wedding call. (TLSB)

interwoven with gold – Her clothing is majestically embroidered, just as the Church is clothed by the grace and perfect righteousness of her Christ. (TLSB)

45:14 *many-colored* – Embroidered. Further describing the bride's beauty, which symbolizes the unsurpassed beauty of God's true people. (TLSB)

virgin companions – She too has “companions” (see v. 7), perhaps her permanent attendants. (CSB)

As the King has “companions” (v 7), so does the bride have bridesmaids. Cf Mt 25:1–13. (TLSB)

The bride is the church. Her ladies-in-waiting, the men who seek her favor, and the her children will represent individual believers who are brought to Christ through the church. (PBC)

45:15 *palace of the king* – Bride and her attendants depart from her father’s house and joyfully process to the home of the king for marriage and the consummation. (For betrothal language and the heavenly joys of life with Christ, cf 2Co 11:2.). (TLSB)

45:16 *Your* – The king’s. (CSB)

take the place of your fathers – As the family line continues (dynastic succession). Perhaps it is also hinted that they will surpass the fathers in honor. (CSB)

The royal “sons” of this marriage will share in the expansive rule of this kingdom (cf 1Pt 2:9; Rv 5:10, which talk of believers as royalty). (TLSB)

45:17 *Your name* – Psalmist’s song will extol our great God and King into eternity. (TLSB)

Ps 45 The psalmist uses a royal wedding to portray our King, who is God, and the fulfillment of His kingdom in His Son. The grand picture of this King and this marriage—illustrating Christ and His Bride, the Church—stands in contrast to the hard realities of suffering and death that we continue to see in the Church and endure in life. Behind the weak appearances of our life in the Church, Jesus Christ forgives, cleanses, and nourishes us by the baptismal washing and holy food He gives for His Bride (Eph 5:26, 29). • Though our lives are yet hidden with Christ in God, Your throne and reign, O God, are forever and ever. Amen. (TLSB)