

## Psalm 45

**Title:** A Royal Wedding Song

**Author and Date:** The Sons of Korah

**Key Verses:** Psalm 45:1, 17

**Type:** Royal / Messianic

### **Outline**

- A. The king's messenger (verse 1).
- B. The king's majesty (verses 2-9).
- C. The king's marriage (verses 10-15).
- D. The king's memorial (verses 16-17).

### **Notes**

Title: "For the Chief Musician; set to Shoshannim. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. Maschil. A song of loves." See the notes on Psalm 42. The following psalms have something similar to this title: Psalm 42, 44-49, 84-85, and 87-88. "Shoshannim" means "lilies" and it may refer to a particular instrument (lilly-shaped cymbals?) or tune of the day to which this song was sung. This was a musical instruction given to the chief musician to direct the song "after" or "in the manner of" Shoshannim. "A song of loves" (also called an epithalamium) refers to a song that describes the love between a king (verse 1) and his queen (verse 9) who are about to marry.

Summary: Psalm 45 is a royal psalm (see Psa. 2) describing the king and his marriage to the queen. It is a song celebrating the majesty (verses 2-9) and the marriage (verses 10-15) of one of the king's of Israel. The marriage of Solomon to the daughter of Pharaoh is one example that would fit this occasion (1 K. 3:1). First, the psalmist describes the king's physical features (verses 2-5, 8-9) and then his spiritual qualities (verses 4, 6-7). Next, the psalmist describes the queen (verses 10-11) and the royal wedding (verses 12-15). In closing, the psalmist promises the king that his children will be great and his name remembered (verses 16-17). A portion of this psalm (verses 6-7) is Messianic and is applied to Jesus in Hebrews 1:8-9.

Verse 1: The psalmist is excited to talk about his subject. His heart bubbles over like a fountain. The "pen of a ready writer" is the writing instrument of a scribe (Ezra 7:6).

Verse 4: The right hand "teaching" terrible things is the psalmist's way of saying that the king will demonstrate great powers in war as he conquers his enemies (Psa. 21:8).

Verses 6-7: The spiritual, moral, and ethical qualities of the king are now described. He rules (using a scepter or rod) with equity (fair and just), he loves righteousness, and he hates wickedness. He has the same qualities as the King in Heaven (Psa. 97). “God” (Heb. *elohim*) means “mighty one” (compare with verse 3). “God” is sometimes applied in the OT to men who hold a powerful position like a king or a judge (Psa. 82). “God” in these verses is the king (“Thy throne, O God...” in verse 6 and “Therefore God...” in verse 7). These verses are quoted by the author of Hebrews and applied to Jesus’ deity and his superiority over the angels (Heb. 1:8-9). Jesus the “Christ” (Heb. *messiah* = anointed one) was anointed by God to be a king who sits on a throne in heaven (Acts 2:33-36; Heb. 1:3, 13). Some commentators apply the entire psalm to Christ and his church, but verses 9 and 12 have to be radically reinterpreted in order to do this. While it is true that Christ and his church are described as bridegroom and bride (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7), there is no clear indication in scripture that anything more than verses 6-7 are to be applied to Christ.

Verse 7: God anointed kings by sending his representatives to anoint them (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13; 2 Sam. 5:3; 1 K. 1:34-39; 2 K. 9:1-3; etc.). Oil (“the oil of gladness”) was poured on the head of priests and kings to anoint them for office (Ex. 29:7; Lev. 8:12; 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13; 1 K. 1:39; Psa. 89:20; etc.).

Verse 8: Myrrh, aloes, and cassia are fragrant spices used for perfume (Exodus 30:22-25; Prov. 7:17; S. of S. 3:6; 4:14). There were buildings in Israel at this time with ivory inlaid walls and furniture (1 Kings 22:39; Amos 3:15). The song in our songbook titled “Ivory Palaces” is based upon this verse and applied to Jesus leaving heaven to come to earth.

Verse 9: The “right hand” of the king is the place of honor. “Ophir”, located in the southern region of Arabia, was known for its gold (1 K. 9:28; 10:11; 22:48; etc.).

Verse 11: For “he is thy lord”, see Genesis 3:16; 18:12; and 1 Peter 3:6. For “reverence thou him”, see Ephesians 5:33.

Verse 17: The “name” is a reference to one’s character or reputation (Mal. 1:11).

## **Questions**

1. What is the psalmist excited to speak about (verse 1)?
2. How does the psalmist describe the king and who blesses the king (verse 2)?
3. What does the king wear and what does he do to display his majesty (verses 3-4)?

4. What moral qualities does the king carry with him and what does his right hand do (verse 4)?
5. What is said about the king's arrows, the peoples, and the king's enemies (verse 5)?
6. How are the king's throne and scepter described (verse 6)?
7. What does the king love, what does he hate, and who anoints him (verse 7)?
8. How do the king's garments smell and how is his palace described (verse 8)?
9. Who are among the king's honorable women and who stands at his right hand (verse 9)?
10. What counsel is given to the bride who is about to marry the king (verses 10-11)?
11. What will the bride receive and from whom will she receive it (verse 12)?
12. What does the bride wear (verse 13)?
13. How is the wedding procession into the king's palace described (verses 14-15)?
14. What promise is given concerning the children born to the king (verse 16)?
15. What does the psalmist want his song to accomplish for the king (verse 17)?

## **Applications for Today**

1. An earthly king is nothing without God in heaven. God blesses the king, establishes his throne, and chooses him (verses 2-7). Who is king over all the earth (Psa. 47:2, 7; Zech. 14:9)?
2. Truth, meekness, and righteous are good, moral qualities for anyone to have (verse 4). What are the qualities of the “new man” (Eph. 4:24; 5:9)? What are Christians to put on (Eph. 6:14)?
3. We need to get our priorities right: love righteousness and hate wickedness (verse 7). If we love the Lord, what do we hate (Psa. 97:10)? If we love God’s law, what do we hate (Psa. 119:113, 163)? What did Amos preach (Amos 5:15)? What do some do (Mic. 3:2)?
4. How did the author of Hebrews apply Psalm 45:6-7 to Jesus (Heb. 1:8-9)?
5. In marriage, the husband and wife leave their families to become one with each other (verses 10-11). How is marriage described in the Bible (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:4-6; Eph. 5:31)? What is a wife to do with her husband (Eph. 5:33)?
6. The wedding ceremony is a joyous occasion (verses 12-15). What is to be joyous after the wedding is over (Eccl. 9:9)?
7. We must live righteously so that our children are successful and our name (character, reputation) is remembered for good (verses 16-17). What is the best thing to pass on to our children (Prov. 14:26; 20:7; 31:28)? What is better than great riches (Prov. 22:1; Eccl. 7:1)?