

The King and His Bride

Psalm 42:1 *To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song.*

(Targum): To the singer. For those who sit in the council of Moses: that which was spoken through the Holy Spirit by the sons of Korah. Good insight. A song and thanksgivings.

(LXX): For the End, for alternate strains by the sons of [Korah]; for instruction, a Song concerning the beloved.

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.¹

² You are the most handsome of the sons of men;² grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever.³

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.

¹ “My heart has uttered (the Fathers translated this as “belched”) a good matter (*logos*): I declare my works to the king: my tongue is the pen of a quick writer” (LXX).

² NAS: “You are fairer than the sons of men.”

³ Targum: “Your beauty, O Messiah [Anointed King], exceeds that of the sons of men; the spirit of prophecy is given upon your lips; therefore Yahweh has blessed for forever.”

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.

Psalm 46:1 *To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamo. A Song.*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

⁶ The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷ **The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

Selah

⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth.

⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

¹¹ **The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

Selah

Psalm 45-46

Marriage in the 21st Century

MARRIAGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY is a far cry from what it has been for the last 4,000 years of world history. Never has an institution been under this brutal of a frontal assault from the very people who have cherished it. Pagan who had it didn't do it. God knows nations influenced by Christianity didn't do it. But in the past 50 or so years, the moral compass of Western Civilization has completely lost its magnetism. The needle not only no longer points north, it spins around

in circles at 90 miles an hour. And the nations are no longer able to even begin to define the once most highly cherished, treasure, and exalted of all the institutions common to mankind.

Instead, marriage has become a thing of scorn. On television and in the movies, it is regularly mocked. Marriage is a joke. In politics, laws have been created that fundamentally redefine what the term has meant since before the advent of writing. There is plenty of blame to go around. We need look no further than the church, which as it lost its sense that the laws of God are morally binding upon all people at all times, began to soft-peddle around things like divorce, adultery, and fornication. Yet, we still insist on parts of the whole. “Christians” became the chief hypocrites who opened the dam to the flood of changes we are seeing today sweeping not only the culture away with respect to marriage, but the church as well.

I could spend a whole sermon talking about the woes of 21st century marriage. But maybe something else has gone wrong. Maybe we have [lost the positive understanding](#) of how great marriage can be? Maybe we no longer see the beauty and resolve of a faithful wife and mother, the

strength and gentleness of an honorable husband and father, the stability and goodness of roles. Maybe sin has so tainted what marriage is supposed to be that we can no longer appreciate what it can be ... and is.

Psalm 45 is about a marriage. The first half is about [the husband](#) in that marriage. The last half is about the [bride](#). Psalm 46 is indirectly about the groom taking care of her. The result of singing these songs should be the recovery of the beauty and high majesty of marriage, because the Christian understands that there is a greater marriage, a perfect marriage, a heavenly marriage that stands behind the earthly concept that all nations have known since the beginning of time.

The NT and the Bride

The NT speaks often about something called [the Bride of Christ](#). She is a sight to behold, a beatific vision that shows the Bridegroom. So glorious the holy angels want to speak of her. “[One of the seven angels ... spoke to me, saying, ‘Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb’](#)” ([Rev 21:9](#)). Her beauty is her righteous deeds ([Rev 19:8](#)).

Her splendor is her purity—being transformed into a clean virgin without blemish in God’s sight through Christ’s blood which cleanses and washes her (**Eph 5:26**; **2Co 11:2**). Who is she? She is called “**The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride**” (**Rev 21:2**).

Where does this idea come from? John and Paul both heard it **from Jesus**. Jesus’ first miracle was a great seventh-day new-creation miracle at a wedding feast in Cana (**John 2:1-11**). This foreshadowed who he called himself. One time Jesus asked the disciples, “**Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast**” (**Matt 9:15**). Thus, John the Baptist when he saw Jesus said, “**The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete**” (**John 3:29**). But perhaps the harder question is, where did Jesus get this? Did he just make it up?

I was taught that there are two brides in the OT wed to two different Persons. “**There are ‘Two Brides’ mentioned in the Scriptures, one in the Old Testament and the other in**

the New. The one in the Old Testament is ‘Israel,’ the Bride of Jehovah, the one in the New Testament is the ‘Church,’ the Bride of Christ ... the ‘Wife’ of the Old Testament cannot be the ‘Bride’ (Virgin) of the New Testament [bold original].”⁴ In this teaching, Jehovah seems to be the Father, and the saints of the OT are not part of the bride of Christ.⁵ But this is to badly misunderstand the Bible.

Psalm 45 and the Bridegroom

In the OT, Yahweh/Jehovah does have a wife. But the bridegroom Jehovah, as we see in Psalm 45, is where Jesus takes the idea for *himself* from. He knows his Bible. He does not make stuff up. It is he and not the Father who is married in this passage. The bride he takes is his church.⁶ This is how the NT uses this psalm.

⁴ Clarence Larkin, *The Second Coming of Christ* (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1918–1922), 51.

⁵ Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation: A Study of the Last Prophetic Book of Holy Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1919), 168.

⁶ **Going Deeper:** I put it this way to keep from getting overly complicated. Dispensationalists like Larkin are right to see in the OT the physical nation being married to Yawheh. I believe they wrong that this is the Father. But the church side of this is even more difficult to think through than that. Instead, remembering the discussion of “two-Israels” from Psalm 44, the Son (i.e. Ps 45) marries the nation *and those who are true Israel within it simultaneously*. It isn’t like he is taking two brides, but only one—Israel. But “Israel” must be thought of via typology: sign and destination, type and antitype. Hence the complication.

To get at this, let's look first at the superscription. "*To the choirmaster: according to the Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song*" (Ps 45:1). As always, the LXX translates "to the choirmaster" as "*for the End.*" Hence, it has a mystical prophetic intent. "A love song" is interpreted as "A song concerning the beloved." Who is the Beloved?

The Targum has an interesting addition that is worth mentioning. "*To the singer. For those who sit in the council of Moses: that which was spoken through the Holy Spirit by the sons of Korah. Good insight. A song and thanksgivings.*" I couldn't figure out why they added this "Holy Spirit" language made familiar to us by of Peter (2Pe 1:21), until I read the Church Fathers who also saw the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the opening verse through the words "my heart overflowing" (which the LXX translates as the heart "belching").⁷ This "overflowing heart" is viewed as an

The metaphor of creating a spotless virgin bride in the NT is really just another way of talking about pruning the dead branches off of the vine. At the end of the day, the Psalm, like the NT, speaks of Jesus marrying true Israel. He does not take a totally different or second bride in the NT, for the nation is the *ekklesia*. He loved her as she was, but conditionally via the covenant with Moses. Because she persistently broke that covenant, he divorced her. But now, he purifies this adulterous wife from the OT by his blood, making her what she was supposed to be from the beginning through a miraculous act by his death and resurrection. He prunes off the dead branches that bear no fruit (the physical root). He creates a virgin out of an adulterous and takes her to be his own forever.

⁷ See Basil, Theodoret, Eusebius, Jerome, and Diodore in Robert C. Hill, "Psalm 45: a locus classicus for Patristic Thinking on Biblical Inspiration," in *Studia Patristica* Vol. XXV: Papers

explicit reference to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was very important to Jews and Christians to see the Holy Spirit speaking the things that are talked about here. These are extremely precious words to both groups. Why? Because of **what and whom they speak**, words that only the Spirit of God could illuminate.

presented at the Eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1991, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1993): 95-100. The best example is this fascinating quote from Chrysostom: “At the opening he does not say, My heart says, for the reason that nothing of what he was saying is human, but he was at the point of explaining heavenly and spiritual matters, not of his own invention but of divine impulse; so he signified as much by use of the word ‘belches’ [*exereugomai*]. We do not belch when we choose to; such and such a speech we utter when we want to, either speaking or holding it in; belching is not like that. The psalmist accordingly shows that what he says is not the result of human efforts but of divine inspiration guiding him, and this by calling his inspired authorship ‘belching.’ As in the case of belching what happens is due to the quality of the food, so in the case of spiritual teaching: you ‘belch’ what you have already eaten ... The heart of the psalmist, when it was freed from sin, received the grace of the Spirit, and burst out in good news. We learn something else from this,¹¹ that the inspired authors were not like the seers. In their case, after all, when the demon takes possession of their soul, it cripples their mind and clouds their reasoning, and so they utter everything without their mind understanding anything of what is said; rather, it is like a flute sounding without a musician to play a tune. This was said also by a philosopher of theirs in these words, “Just like the soothsayers and seers saying many things without knowing anything of what they say.” The Holy Spirit, [by contrast], does not act like that; instead, he allows the heart to know what is said. I mean, if the psalmist did not know, how could he have said “good news”? The demon, you see, being enemy and foe, commits an assault on human nature; the Holy Spirit, by contrast, being caring and beneficent, renders those who receive him sharers in his purposes, and with them understanding him he reveals what he has to tell” (Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Psalms* 45.1). The first half of the quote (up through the ¹¹) comes from John Chrysostom. *Commentary on the Psalms*, Trans. Robert Charles Hill (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998), 1:258–59. Quoted in Craig A. Blaising and Carmen S. Hardin, *Psalms 1–50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 344. The second half comes from *Patrologia Graeca* 55, 183-84; quoted in Hill, “Psalm 45: a locus classicus,” 97.

Of what do they speak? The song begins, “My heart overflows with a pleasing theme” (45:1). Chrysostom calls this “pleasing theme” the “good news.”⁸ What we have before us is the heart of the mystery of the Gospel, right here in the OT. It is a “great mystery” revealed now to you (Eph 5:32).

Of whom do the Spirit and the psalmist sing? Let me give you eight things from the song that show you who they are singing to. First, the LXX translates the word “theme” (*debar*) as *logos*. Fathers like Ambrose and Eusebius interpreted it as the Lord Jesus.⁹ It is the good news of the *logos*.

Second, he is called “the King” (Ps 45:1). This continues the theme from the previous songs of the sons of Korah

⁸ See the quote in n. 7.

⁹ “‘My heart has produced a good word’ may be explained as referring to the constitution and coming into being of the primal Word, since it would not be right to suppose any heart, save one that we can understand to be spiritual, to exist in the case of the supreme God” (Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 4.15.180). “The Son lives by the Father, because he is the Son begotten of the Father; by the Father, because he is of one substance with the Father; by the Father, because he is the Word given forth from the heart of the Father, because he came forth from the Father, because he is begotten of the “bowels of the Father,” because the Father is the fountain and root of the Son’s being” (Ambrose, *On the Christian Faith* 4.10.133). “And how can he be made of things that are not, when the Father says, ‘My heart belched forth a good Word’” (Alexander of Alexandria, *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 2.3).

where God is the **King**. But you need to remember that it is in the context of the king that we learn of Jesus and his bride and the royal wedding of heaven. “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb ... [and] 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 ... and he is called The Word of God ... On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, “King of kings and Lord of lords ... ‘Come, gather for the great supper of God’” (Rev 19:9, 11, 13, 16, 17). That is from Revelation.

We will see this very same language in our Psalm from “the tongue like the pen of a ready scribe” (Ps 45:1) when they sing (**thirdly**) of someone **fair and handsome** above all. “You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever” (45:2). So the king is among the sons of men. In a more literal translation however, the NAS has, “**fairer than the sons of men.**” This hints that our King is *not* among the sons of men.

Forth, the Targum interprets it, “Your beauty, Q Messiah [Anointed King], exceeds that of the sons of men.”

This interpretation is correct. We sing of the **Messiah**, and idea that comes from later in the song where this king is “**anointed**.” So even the Jews are reading this Messianically! Our translation (ESV): “**The most handsome of the sons of men**” seems to take it in a more Jewish way, referring to the humanity of the King. Certainly, this is a song of Israel’s king on one level (perhaps Solomon, like the Song of Solomon sings about). The Jews thought it was about Solomon *and the future Messiah*. But their leadership rejected the Lord Jesus. The Church Fathers knew better. “**This psalm seems to refer to the Lord Jesus, not to Solomon, as Jews claim**” (**Diodore of Tarsus** [d. 394 AD], Commentary on Psalms 45). We’ve already seen four good reasons to read it this way. We will soon see even more. This is hinted at in the language at the end of the verse, “**Therefore God has blessed you forever.**” What does this mean? I’ll leave it simply as a teaser for now.

Suddenly, the Psalm begins to read exactly like Revelation. **Fifth**, he is a **mighty warrior**. Revelation language comes back into view. He has a **sword**. “**Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one [gibbor], in your splendor and majesty!**” (**Ps 45:3**). He has a great **war-steed**

(white in Revelation, like Gandalf's Shadowfax). "In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness" (Ps 45:4a). He fights against his enemies with his unstoppable bow. "Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you" (Ps 45:5). He is a warrior *par excellent*. No one can match his victories in battle. He wins whenever he goes out to war.

Sixth, not only is this the language of the Revelator, it is worth impressing upon you that the handmaiden here of "truth" and "righteousness" is "meekness." This shows you something vital and new about this king. There are some who love the cause of God and truth, who love to uphold "righteousness" (so they say), but at the expense of the moral virtue of meekness or humility. But Jesus said to the meek belong the inheritance of the earth. And the word says to humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord. Humility and meekness are always accompanied by gentleness, self-control, and other fruit of the Spirit. The opposites of these are harshness, meanness, unkindness, brutality, cruelty, and callousness. These are the vices that too many Christians show to one another and to the world as they seek the cause

of God and truth but not meekness. But this king rides out victoriously for the cause of truth, righteousness, *and meekness*. This is exactly what our Lord became as he **humbled himself**, taking the very nature of a bond-servant, and lived his life in such a way that his gentleness and humility was evident on most occasions. This is the kind of King we have riding out victoriously. Do you know him?

Seventh, he does great **deeds** by his Right Hand. The verse finishes, “**Let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!**” (**Ps 45:4b**). This is the theme of the Right Hand that we saw last time. But the language here is rather strange. The humble king is said to need his right hand to teach him awesome deeds. Could the Right Hand be Israel’s (Solomon’s) heavenly warrior? Is it possible that the heavenly King himself has a Right Hand known as the Holy Spirit? That someone is the hand upon the Right Hand (**Ps 80:7**). The Spirit is at various times called the hand and finger of God.¹⁰ And he is the Teacher (**Ps 143:10; Luke**

¹⁰ Compare **Matt 12:28** where Jesus casts out demons by the “Spirit of God” with **Luke 11:20** where he casts them out with the “finger of God,” language that goes back to the Exodus (**Ex 8:19; 31:18**) where Moses also proves that God is on his side. See also the fingers of God creating (**Ps 8:3**) with the Word and Spirit creating in **33:6**; or the Spirit and hand of God lifting the prophet in **Ezek 3:14; 8:1-3; 37:1**). See **David W. Pao** and Eckhard J. Schnabel, “**Luke**,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 323.

12:12; John 14:26), even of the Lord Jesus (Matt 4:1 and Luke 1:80).¹¹

Just as he finishes this glorious description of the King, and rightly so, the singer breaks into an inspired moment of pure worship. This leads to an eighth (for the End!) description, and fittingly so. “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. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions” (Ps 45:6-7). This passage becomes the *crux* for our understanding that this song really is about Christ.

If nothing else said thus far is convincing, this must be. For it is quoted in Hebrews which begins with the quote by saying, “But of the Son he says, ‘Your throne, O God is forever...’” (Heb 1:8). The language here is so theologically problematic for many people, that they just can’t accept it. Why? Because it speaks of **two Gods** (literally two “*elohims*”).¹² “Therefore God, your God, has anointed

¹¹ The Targum seemingly tries to eliminate the difficulty by saying, “... the LORD will teach you to do terrible things with your right hand,” thus the hand becomes the hand of the King himself. It is his own hand.

¹² On these problems see Murray J. Harris, [Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus](#) (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 188-205 and 205-27.

you...” This is like the two Gods in **John**, “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side has made him known” (**John 1:18**), of **Genesis 19:24**'s two Yahwehs and so on. The word “anointed” is the verbal form of Messiah (hence the Targum). God the Messiah himself is said to have a God. Yet, *both are God*.

This kind of language in the Psalms began way back in Psalm 2 with Yahweh and his Anointed (**Ps 2:2**), with One in heaven and the Lord (Adonai; **vs. 4**), with Yahweh and his Son who is called the King (**6-7**). Remember, as our Psalm itself tells us, these words are the good news of the Logos (**Ps 45:1**), the king who is fairer than the sons of men, but also the most handsome among them, who is the Messiah (**2**), who fights for his people with truth and righteousness and meekness (**3**), whose enemies fall at his feet (**4**), who is himself called God (**6**). He is the one that God has blessed forever (**2**). Have you met this king? Do you know him? Look upon his face and yearn for a marriage to one such as this. He calls you to himself even this hour. Come to the wedding. Make yourself ready. Do you anticipate this marriage? It is the antidote to all the false views of marriage we have around us today.

Next, we find him preparing himself for the wedding! He is dressed in robes, fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia (Ps 45:8a). Isaiah said, “I the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple” (Isa 6:1). Jesus says he saw him (12:41).¹³ When Jesus was born, the wise men brought him myrrh and other gifts for the baby-king (Matt 2:11).

But this is more than just royal garments for a king. This is the preparation of for his royal wedding. He is being covered in spices and oil as he is anointed for his marriage. Christ the bridegroom is being prepared. There is the sound of music that has begun to be played in the halls. Stringed instruments are being tuned. Trumpets are being sounded. The king rejoices at the sound. “From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad” (Ps 45:8b). His royal temple is alive with wedding music ... the music of this prophetic Psalm!

The word goes out now to the far recesses of the world. The anticipation is palpable, like that of a young (or

¹³ Jesus says that Isaiah saw his “glory.” The Targum of Isaiah 6:1 reads, “In the year that King Uzziah was struck with it, the prophet said, I saw the glory of the LORD resting upon a throne, high and lifted up in the heavens of the height; and the temple was filled by the brilliance of his glory.”

sometimes even old) American girl who gets wakened up to see a Royal English wedding at two in the morning. “Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor” (Ps 45:9a). The royal bridesmaids take their places. They fill the throne-room with their own beauty. Then they begin to stare. *But not at the King.* Instead, this first half of the song now gives way to the second. The vision of King Jesus now gives way to his glorious bride.

Psalm 45 and the Bride

What is she like and what is her duty? Let me show you ten things. **First**, she is a **royalty**. “At your right hand stands the queen” (9b).¹⁴ She takes his arm as they begin to walk forward. As the right hand, she has the position of authority over the kingdom that is granted only to the queen. She is powerful over the kingdom.

Second, she is **rich** beyond measure. “... in gold of Ophir” (9c). “All glorious is the princess in her chamber,

¹⁴ This idea of her coming from royalty could be reinforced from the first part of the verse if, rather than bridesmaids or princesses from the nations as guests, it reads in parallelism *ala Craigie*’s translation from a Syriac copy, “A princess is stationed among your noblest women...” In other words, she, the princess, will soon become the queen.

with robes interwoven with gold. In many-colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her” (13-14). This queen is decked out in gold on her wedding day. This gold comes from the mysterious land of Ophir, which helps to identify how extraordinarily rich she has become through this marriage. Ophir remains a mystery to this day. Where Ophir was from there is anyone’s guess.¹⁵ Solomon used to have ships come only once every three years (1Ch 9:21) full of gold from here. These ships came from the end of the known world in Tarshish in far-off Spain. The great Phoenician sea-king Hiram of Tyre and Solomon brought so much gold from this place that it added up to a minimum of \$400 million at today’s gold prices (1Kg

¹⁵ Some have argued very conservatively for Saudi Arabia. Others more exotically Zimbabwe, India, and even South America. On Saudi Arabia see L. Berkowitz, “Has the U.S. Geological Survey found King Solomon’s Gold Mines?,” *BAR* 3/3 [1977] 1, 28–33. On Zimbabwe see David Hatcher Childress, *Lost Cities & Ancient Mysteries of Africa & Arabia* (Stelle, IL: Adventures Unlimited Press, 2002), 335ff. Childress rejects the theory. On India see “Locating Ophir – The Search for the Biblical El Dorado!,” Hope of Israel Ministries (Azusa, CA), <http://www.hope-of-israel.org/ophir.htm>. On South America see Gunnar Thompson, *Ancient Egyptian Maize* (Seattle, WA: New World Discovery Institute, 2010), 68ff. On the speculative etymology from Ophir to Peru see Father Bernabe Cobo, *History of the Inca Empire: An Account of the Indians’ Customs and their Origin Together with a Treatise on Inca Legends, History, and Social Institutions*, trans. and ed. Roland Hamilton (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1979), 64–66. Cobo states that Christopher Columbus thought he had discovered Ophir. On the absurdity of this Spanish political exegesis see D. A. Branding, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State 1492-1967* (Cambridge University Press, 1991) 314ff.

9:28).¹⁶ There was 7 times that much gold from Ophir in the temple (1Ch 29:4), a minimum \$2.8 billion with the upper scale being near \$9 billion. The point is, this king has unending piles of gold and he has lavished his queen with as much as she could ever desire.

Third, she the word makes her glorious. Hear the word of the King. “Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear” (10a). Spurgeon says, “Ever is this the great duty of the church. Faith cometh by hearing, and confirmation by consideration ... Lean forward that no syllable may be unheard. The whole faculties of the mind should be bent upon receiving holy teaching.”¹⁷ Are you listening now?

What is the word he speaks? It is critical for life as the queen. Fourth, she is not naturally of this king’s house. “Forget your people and your father’s house...” Perhaps she is foreigner being taken into the royal house, coming from a far like the queen of Sheba to Solomon or Ruth to Boaz. Perhaps she is an Israelite being given a position of highest honor like Michal (a princess in her own right) or Bathsheba.

¹⁶ This is the most conservative figure using 1 talent = 47.4 lbs. The number is likely double to triple that, depending on whether they were using a light (66.8 lbs) or heavy (133.6 lbs) talent (this is the Babylonian number) or the silver talent (96.2 lbs) from the Talmud.

¹⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: Psalms 27-57*, vol. 2 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 319.

But she was not born into this house. She is invited and taken in at the King's good pleasure.

Fifth, she is **beautiful** and the King desires her greatly, more than even his own life. “**The King will desire your beauty**” (11). To have a king desire you for your beauty would be the highest compliment. To have The King of kings desire you is beyond what words can express. His anticipation is growing by the moment as he considers his bride. Does this not cause you to sit there in wonder that it is even real? Yet it is! This great honor for this Lady is granted to her as a gift because the beloved has set eyes on her.

However, she has a **duty** to her new king. This is the **sixth** thing. The entire thought reads, “**Forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him**” (10-11). The Prince of Preachers tells us what this means, and listen well for it is the King's word to his queen,

To renounce the world is not easy, but it must be done by all who are affianced to the Great King, for a divided heart he cannot endure; it would be misery to the beloved one as

well as dishonour to her Lord. Evil acquaintances, and even those who are but neutral, must be forsaken, they can confer no benefit, they must inflict injury. The house of our nativity [birth] is the house of sin ... we must come forth of the house of fallen nature, for it is built in the City of Destruction ... We part with folly for wisdom; with bubbles for eternal joys; with deceit for truth; with misery for bliss; with idols for the living God. O that Christians were more mindful of the divine precept here recorded; but, alas! wordliness abounds; the church is defiled; and the glory of the Great King is veiled. Only when the whole church leads the separated life will the full splendour and power of Christianity shine forth upon the world.¹⁸

Seventh, if she will harken to his word, she will be the envy of the nations. “The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the rightest of the people” (12). We have already heard about Hiram. His people were the envy of the nations because of their wealth. But the promise to the king’s wife is that even Hiram will be envious of her. All will seek out her favor and lavish her with gifts. Not all kings

¹⁸ Ibid., 319-20.

themselves. The rulers of this world often do not love this woman. But the people. The people, they will see her and long to be blessed by her. Anyone who desires this wish can have it if they come to the Queen. They can come to the King through the Queen!

Eighth, her **companions are happy** beyond measure. “**With joy and gladness they [the virgins] are led along as they enter the palace of the king**” (15). Those who come into proximity of the queen as she enters the chambers of the king are enraptured in joy at the sight they behold. This is what marriage can be. This is what all long for. This is what we are told belongs to the bride of Christ.

Ninth, she is **fertile** and produces sons and kings. “**In place of your fathers shall be your sons; you will make them princes in all the earth**” (16). These last three all illustrate that the bride of Christ belongs to all who are called and come to the King. The metaphor is mixed, for the bride is the church, but so also are her sons. These sons are not born the natural way, but through believing in his name he gives them the right to become sons of God, born not of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God through the lady who gives them birth. **Cyprian** said in some ways quite

rightly said, “He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the church for his mother.” Here, we also much speak of Christ, who through the church gives birth to new sons and daughters.

Tenth and finally, her memory will last throughout all the ages. Many long to be remembered. This queen will be. “I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever” (17). This ends Psalm 45 and its celebration of the great wedding of Christ to his bride, even as it has explained to us what he is like and what his church is like, even as we have seen many of these themes explained further in the NT with the beauty of holiness and righteousness and meekness and so on.

Psalm 46 and the Bride

Now I want to look briefly at Psalm 46, for it adds something even more for our consideration. It is that of our eternal home and more of the Groom-King we have gazed upon. What does he do for his church and where does he take her? The song begins again, “To the choirmaster.” It is another of the songs of the sons of Korah. It is “according to

the Alamo,” or literally “the young maidens.” Perhaps it is to be sung with high voices. This is interesting to me in that it follows right after a wedding song attended by a group of princesses.

The song is divided into three sections. God’s Permanent Presence no matter what (1-3). God’s protection of the holy city (4-7). God’s Power over the warring nations (8-11). Each of these has the central theme of God as a fortress and a refuge, with this idea as the repeating chorus of the song (compare vv. 1, 7, and 11).¹⁹

The last section shows a close relationship to the beginning of Psalm 45. For in it we have warriors with bows and spears and horses. And in it we see the works and deeds of the LORD. But this time, those with these things are men, not God. Those who set themselves up against this King will not come to the wedding, but will be punished most severely. But in his power to discipline, he also leads many to the wedding hall. The works God performs put an end to men’s wars and violence. As such, he is the defender of his bride against any who would seek to harm her.

¹⁹ This is seen both in the repetition of the chorus and in the chiasmic structure which has at the center vs. 7.

The song begins with a soothing word: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps 46:1). We get ourselves into trouble all the time. What kind of trouble does the song have in mind? The absolute worst you can imagine. “... though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling” (2-3). The worst disaster in human history was Noah’s flood, called by Peter a baptism. For most, it was a baptism into death. They never came out of it, but went down to the heart of the seas into Sheol as they perished in massive waves of God’s wrath. But God is a present, an immediate and nearby help even in trouble like this. How much more so anything you can bring upon yourself?

The promise is that he is the refuge that protects you from the storm. He is the strength that carries you through. God did not stop the flood for Noah. He had to live through it. But he was safely carried through by the refuge of the ark. If you are going through difficult times, or even if you are not, you need to pause and think about God’s protection and presence in the midst of trouble. And you must trust that these words are telling you the truth. For he is a bridegroom

who loves his bride so much that he will not let anything finally harm her. *Selah*.

In keeping with [the water theme](#), the song moves from the roaring waves and pounding breakers that carry even mountains away, to the peaceful quiet streams of a river that make glad the city of God. It is one of my favorite verses in the Bible because of how it describes the abode of God and his welcoming us to his holy habitation. “[There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High](#)” (4).

The original habitation was [Eden](#), with its lush Garden and tall mountain from which sprang forth the great River which watered the trees and the animals and turned into four headwaters to cover the earth. God was there with our first parents, walking with them in the cool of the day. So also in Psalm 46. “[God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns](#)” (5).

Revelation (again) picks up this theme from Psalm 46, and it combines the imagery from Psalm 45, combining them into a single verse. What is the city of God? “[I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from](#)

God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2). The city is the Bride of Christ, his Church!

Then, continuing with the Psalm 46 theme it says, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God” (3). The promise that he will wipe away every tear and death and mourning and crying and pain shall be no more (4) sounds very much like the end of Psalm 46. And who is the one who does these things? “The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. The one who has the water of life (6), who offers it freely to all without payment. It is the bridegroom, the Lord Jesus.

At the end of Revelation we read, “The angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations ... Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates” (Rev 22:1-2, 14). The call

of **baptism** is heard in the voice of these waters. Bathing of the robes to serve in the city as priests, cleansed by the blood and washed with the word of Christ.

Because God is in her midst, he fights for and protects his city-bride. “**The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; the utters his voice, the earth melts**” (Ps 46:6). Combining the language of Psalm 2 (“**Why do the nations rage**”) and 29 (“**The voice of Yahweh**”), the focus is on God’s awesome power over nations or nature. He is the LORD of hosts who fights for his people. **The LORD of Hosts, the Warrior-Angel is with us—Emmanuel. God is our fortress (7).**

In the wake of his stirring, with nations shaking and the earth melting away, **he brings to his people peace.** “**Come, behold the words of the LORD, how he has brought desolations on the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire**” (8-9). And therefore, a response is demanded of you. It is **a response of worship.** Your highest duty.

Look at how you are to worship. God does not require of you anything but your stillness. “**Be still, and know that I am God**” (10). In the midst of your disasters, your trials,

and your troubles, when your heart stirs and your mind worries with anxiety, when all you can think about are those cares and anxieties of life, when all seems hopeless around you, when the suffering seems too great, don't stir. Be still. Stop moving. Stop worrying. Stop distressing. And believe.

Know that God is God. Know that he “will be exalted among the nations.” Know that he “will be exalted in the earth” (10). Know that he is not only the bridegroom, but also the warrior who cannot be defeated. Know that he has gone to war and has already won the battle over sin, death, and the devil. Know that all his enemies are being made his footstool by God. Know that he is God. Trust him. Believe him. For he is the LORD of hosts. He is with us. He is our fortress and our protection. He is our stronghold and our deliverer. He loves his bride and his church. He died to save her. She will not be moved. He is doing this Today.

The call goes out. The announcement resounds in the streets. Behold how great is his marriage, this wedding, this city. “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’” Make yourself ready. Come. Be washed and cleansed of your iniquities. Come. Drink from the waters. Prepare yourselves for the great Supper and Wedding Feast of the Lamb within the safe

confines of the holy city where God is. Know what marriage is and the glories of the King and of the Bride. And sing about these things long into the night. Be filled with joy and gladness. For these things are offered freely to you in Christ who invites you now to the wedding.

Selah.