



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 45

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Introduction

- This Psalm describes a celebration of a royal wedding, that could not be applied to any human wedding; but only to the spiritual wedding between the Lord Christ, the King, and His church
- The three previous Psalms expressed the sufferings of individuals and of a congregation
- Now they are followed by this royal Psalm of glory; whose prophetic goal is to reveal Christ the King, and the church, His bride
- Christian scholars interpret this Psalm as a Messianic prophecy
- It is a prophecy pointing to Jesus as both the future King and a Bridegroom of the church



Introduction

- The title of this Psalm is *To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies."* *A Contemplation of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love*
- *To the Chief Musician*, Some suppose to be a leader of choirs or musicians in David's time, such as Heman the singer or Asaph (1 Chronicles 6:33, 16:5-7, and 25:6)
- *The Lilies*, Some say that it may refer to general beauty of the composition, or to the tune, or even to a six-stringed instrument that had a resemblance to a lily, or that was shaped like a lily
- Others say that it is concerning Christ and His church, who are manifestly the subject of this Psalm, and are compared to lilies, *"I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys."* (Song of Solomon 2:1)



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- *the sons of Korah*, The author of the Psalm is wholly unknown
- However, some claim that *the sons of Korah*, who were Levites, from the family of Kohath, wrote this Psalm
- And others say that David is the author, and the Psalm was directed for them to sing it
- However, there is no certain evidence that David was the author, as his name is not mentioned
- *A Song of Love*, Would properly denote a song devoted to love, or in celebration of love
- Or marriage song, setting forth the mutual love of Christ and His Church



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- Or "a song of the beloved ones" or "friends" of Christ, who is the beloved and friend of His church; and the church, who is the beloved and friend of Christ; *"Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my beloved regarding His vineyard."* (Isaiah 5:1)
- Because the word here used is in the feminine, some have given the word "virgins", and render it thus, "a song of the beloved virgins"; sung by them on account of the marriage between Christ and His church, who are the companions of the bride, mentioned in verse 14, and friends and lovers of the bridegroom; as we read in Song of Solomon 1:3



Introduction

- Some claim that this Psalm was about David's son Solomon
- However, he though was wiser than all men, is never said to be fairer; nor was he a warrior, as the person is represented; nor was his throne and kingdom for ever and ever; nor he the object of worship; nor was his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter is a thing that so commendable; nor is she ever praised, as the queen herein mentioned is
- But the person who is spoken of is Jesus Christ the Messiah which almost all Christian scholars confirm
- This Psalm is one of the third hour Psalms in the Book of Agpeya, by which we remember the gift of the Holy Spirit



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- It is also included in the liturgy of Matrimony
- And the church quotes certain verses of this Psalm in the feast of St. Mary to praise her
- The vesper during the month of Koiahk includes many verses of this Psalm
- St. Augustine writes, “For it is sung of the sacred Marriage-feast; of the Bridegroom and the Bride; of the King and His people; of the Savior and those who are to be saved....His sons are we, in that we are the “children of the Bridegroom;” and it is to us that this Psalm is addressed, whose title has the words, “For the sons of Korah, for the things that shall be changed.”



Introduction

Psalm Outline

- The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9
- The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- This is more than the exaltation of an earthly king
- The psalmist begins by saying that he is about to express words that proceed from his very heart
- They are not vain, or impulsive or false words, but are most earnest genuine thoughts and warm affections
- *Overflowing*, it is boiling up, as the word signifies; being heated by the fire of the divine Spirit
- It expresses how it was hot within him, and caused him to speak with his tongue
- And from the abundance that was in it, this *good theme* flowed like water out of a fountain

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The tone of this Psalm is a *good theme*
- There is a sense of joy and celebration throughout the Psalm
- Yet these words also hint that the psalmist had a sense of inspiration in writing this, as if the *good theme flowed up* within him
- According to some scholars, *My heart is overflowing*, is a testimony about the birth of the Son from the Father
- St. Ambrose says, “He is the ‘Word’, by whom the Father’s heart is overflowing.”

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- St. Augustine says, “Who is the speaker? The Father, or the Prophet? For some understand it to be the Person of the Father, which says, “Mine heart hath uttered a good word”
- He also says, “By ‘I utter’, he mean, ‘I say a word’?! ... ‘From His depths’, He utters ‘His Word’! You, yourselves, would not utter except what comes out of your heart. Yet, what you utter is uttered once and then disappear; But what God utters is “everlasting”
- *I recite my composition concerning the King, This Psalm was composed for the King's honor alone*
- The King of the whole world over whom He reigns in righteousness

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- *the pen of a ready writer*, Gives the literal sense of a skillful and swift penman
- Or he may mean that he is but the pen or instrument in uttering this Psalm
- It has another and higher original meaning, the Spirit of God, by whose hand this pen is guided
- Before Christ the Groom, the psalmist stood, and his tongue became like the pen of a ready scribe
- St. John Chrysostom says, “The tongue is the pen by which we write down our covenants with God. We confess His kingdom on us and reject the dominion of the devil. This is our signature on the covenant.”

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- Verse 2 begins a powerful description of the King, praising and exalting Him both for who He is and what He does, and this description is true of Christ, but not of Solomon
- The psalmist begins by simply noting the *beauty* of the King, saying He is more beautiful *fairer* than all others
- There was never a more beautiful human being than Jesus Christ
- The psalmist was not specifically according to many commentators speaking of His physical appearance or beauty but because He was without sin and therefore, he added *Grace is poured upon Your lips*

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- St. John Chrysostom comments on the word *fairer* and say, “Being inspired, you see, he now speaks to Him, and direct his words to Him. Now, he did not say this by way of comparison; his words were not, note, more comely (beautiful), but comely to behold beyond all human beings. The former beauty, he is saying, is different from the latter.”
- And according to St. Jerome, “The splendor and greatness of His divinity, became hidden under the veil of the body, and sent its radiation upon His physical features, to captivate all those who have the honor of looking at Him.”

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- *Grace is poured upon Your lips, In His early years it was said, “So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22)*
- *Even the opponents of Jesus said, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (John 7:46)*
- *What does the psalmist mean by saying, Therefore God has blessed You forever?*
- *According to Fr. Onesimus, depending upon the words of the fathers, the Lord Christ here, speaks concerning His Manhood*

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- Although being the incarnate Word of God, the One, and Equal to the Father in the same essence, Yet, concerning Manhood, and as a representative of mankind, He calls His heavenly Father, *God*
- And according to Manhood “*He increased in wisdom and stature*” (Luke 2:52), not gradually in them, but gradually proclaiming them.... For wisdom was not something foreign to Him, being *The Wisdom of God*; but He gradually revealed it, and practiced it being a true Man

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- Having described the beauty and eloquence of the King, the psalmist now proceeds to portray His power, and to arm Him as a warrior for the battle
- The King is beautiful in character and speaks grace-filled words, but is nothing like a weak man
- This King is a man of war, a *Mighty One* armed with a sword
- Some think his *sword* is called Messiah's *glory and majesty*
- Others supply "put on," as implied in the *gird* of the first clause, and translate, *Put on Your glory and Your majesty*; i.e. show Yourself in all the majesty and glory that naturally belong to You
- This is quite in accordance with the context

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- *Sword*, May mean the word of God; which is sharp in reprovng sin, and in refuting error and heresy; and a two-edged one (Hebrews 4:12)
- Christ made use of the word of God against Satan in the wilderness, and against the Scribes and Pharisees; and which He will make further use of in the latter day, against the man of sin, and his followers
- It may also mean His cross by which He has crushed the devil, broke *the sting of death*, and overcome it
- And that is why those who are saved see the cross as “*the power of God*” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The Lord Christ *girds* His sword on His *thigh*, a reference to His Manhood and to Him bearing His cross
- *And in Your majesty* Being thus gloriously girt and armed
- Now, *ride prosperously*, march on speedily (which is signified by riding) and successfully against Your enemies
- The King is full of *majesty* and blessing, but not primarily out of conquest and force
- It flows from His *truth, humility, and righteousness*
- The psalmist is beseeching the armed *Mighty One* to ascend His victory chariot to conquer our spiritual enemy and seize by power the souls whom He has bought with His blood

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- If the kingdom of the devil is set upon vanity (lies), pride, and oppression; the Word of God is incarnated to destroy by truth, humility, and righteousness, the kingdom of darkness, and to set the kingdom of the divine righteousness in us
- St. John Chrysostom says, “All other people exercise royal power by making war so as to gain cities or wealth, ... God, by contrast, acts not for any of these things but for the sake of truth, to plant it on earth; and for the sake of gentleness, to make those who are more savage than wild beasts become gentle; and for the sake of righteousness, to make those who are in bondage to lawlessness become righteous, firstly from grace, and secondly from good deeds.”

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- *Your right*, is a symbol of power
- Your power shall perform great things
- As it did in the work of redemption, by conquering and destroying His enemies and the enemies of His people
- St. Augustine explains, “He was led on by His own right hand; i.e. by His own power. For the power which the Father hath, He hath also; the Father’s immortality He hath also; He hath the Father’s Divinity, the Father’s Eternity, the Father’s Power. Marvelously will His right hand lead Him on, performing the works of God; undergoing human sufferings, overthrowing the evil wills of men by His own goodness.”

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The weapons of the King are many
- He not only has a *sword*, but also sharp *arrows*, ready and sent out against His *enemies*
- His might brings the world into submission, *the peoples fall under You*
- Nothing that Jesus does is poorly done, He uses no pointless arrows but *sharp arrows In the heart of the King's enemies*
- The arrows may also mean the instruments with which He conquers His enemies; which are the truths, teachings, and the promises of His word

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- Upon hearing His word, people acknowledge themselves sinners; fall down at His feet; humbly appeal His grace and mercy
- St. John Chrysostom says, “He is calling the power of His word arrows. You see, He moved around the whole world more quickly than arrows and touched the hearts of those who previously were enemies to the King, not to destroy them but to win them over. This happened also in Paul’s case.”
- Some commentators say that the sharp arrows are the apostles, sharpened by the Holy Spirit to pierce the hearts of peoples and nations, to testify to the teachings of the Lord, and to the works of His amazing grace, as on the day of the Pentecost

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The description of verses 2-5 might apply to a remarkable man who was nevertheless merely a man
- As the description continued, it clearly refers to this King Himself as God, seated upon an eternal *throne*
- So, the psalmist's intention is to address the King, whom he has already declared to be more than man in verse 2
- *is forever and ever*, A dominion to which there will never be any end
- This is never said, and could not be truly said, of any earthly kingdom

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The psalmist cannot restrain his adoration
- His enlightened eye sees the Bridegroom of the church
- God's reign is everlastingly
- This passage is quoted by St. Paul in Hebrews 1:8 in proof that the Messiah is exalted above the angels, and it is, beyond all question, cited by him as having original reference to the Son of God
- He noted not only that these words say that Jesus is the eternally enthroned God, but also *that God the Father regards Him so*

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- St. Paul explained that prophetically, the Psalmist gave us the words that God the Father spoke to God the Son
- The *scepter* is the symbol of royal authority; and the authority of the true king
- This King's reign is not founded on mere aggression and conquest
- His *kingdom* is founded with *righteousness*, so much so that the symbol of His authority (*a scepter*) is *righteousness* itself
- The Coptic church made this verse a famous melody sung for about 20 minutes, by which the soul meditates in the throne of the crucified King, on Tuesday of the passion week, as well as before the burial of the Lord on the Great Friday

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The righteousness of His kingdom comes from the natural result of His *love* of righteousness and His *hate* toward wickedness
- He does not have to work hard to make His kingdom righteous; it is in His nature and character
- *Therefore God, Your God*, According to His human nature
- Jesus has given so many and great proofs of His love to righteousness, and of His hatred to sin; His whole life on earth proved the truth of these words, especially, by His death and passion, therefore God has raised and exalted Him far above all men and angels, to a state of joy and endless glory at His right hand: which is fully expressed by the oil of gladness

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- He was anointed by the oil of gladness; for He received that anointment with joy; according to the words of the apostle: *“who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame”* (Hebrew 12:2)
- He received it as the pleasure of His Father who testified to Him, saying: *“You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* (Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22)
- By His unique anointment, He grants us, members of His body, the anointment of gladness in the Sacrament of ‘Meron’, to be counted as kings and priests (Revelation 1:6)

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- This Psalm shows a striking interaction between the Persons of the Trinity
- *God, Your God* speaks of the Father and His position of authority
- *You* refers to the Son
- *Anointed* has in mind the ministry and presence of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity
- Then in verse 8 the psalmist gives another reference to the beauty and pleasantness of the anointed King
- The divine anointing causes fragrance to come from the robes of the Mighty One

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- *with myrrh* Many say the inspired Psalmist is referring here to His burial
- These spices, *myrrh and aloes and cassia*, refer to the spices used in anointing the body of the Lord Jesus Christ
- St. Augustine says, “By His garments are meant His Saints, His elect, His whole Church, which he shows forth, as His garment, so to speak; His robe “without spot and wrinkle,” which on account of its spots He has “washed” in His blood; on account of its “wrinkles” extended on His Cross.”
- They also formed part of the sacred oil described Exodus 30:23-24

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- Also, for the custom of perfuming clothes and beds (Song of Solomon 5:5; Proverbs 7:17)
- According to the scholar Origen, the garments of the Word of God refer to the sweet fragrance of the teaching of the divine wisdom
- He explains that Myrrh refers to the death of our Lord Christ for the sake of mankind; Aloes refers to His condescendence and emptying Himself to bear the image of a servant; and the Cassia, extracted from a plant that grows in places with a plenty of rain, refers to the redemption of humanity through the water of baptism

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- St. Augustine explains that the spiritual sense of *ivory palaces* is the magnificent houses, and tabernacles of God, and the hearts of the Saints
- He says, “who bring into subjection to themselves the rebellious commonalty of human affections, who chastise the body, and reduce it to bondage: for it is from these that the daughters of kings have made Him glad.”
- The churches and the believers make Christ glad, by speaking of His glory and living according to His will and teaching
- The image is that of the king as coming out of the palace where He dwelt, and as dressed in apparel appropriate to His position, and surrounded by His people, spreading joy all around them

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The marriage scene now begins
- The bridegroom has been portrayed in all His glorious majesty
- The bride has now to be brought forward
- She comes, accompanied by a procession of *honorable women*, many of whom are *Kings' daughters*
- This is one measure of the greatness and majesty of Jesus is the greatness of the men and women through the centuries who have been His most devoted followers
- These were and are, men and women *of whom the world was not worthy* (Hebrews 11:38)

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The *queen* is clothed in the richest garments made of the best fine gold
- *At Your right hand stands the queen*, By whom is meant the church, whose title is a *queen*, being the bride
- He is King, she is queen; this title is founded not in her own right, but upon her relation to Christ, being His bride
- St. Augustine comments and says, “She which stands on the left is no Queen. For there will be one standing on ‘the left’ also, to whom it will be said, ‘Go into everlasting fire.’ But she shall stand on the right hand, to whom it will be said, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’”

The Might and Glory of the King 45:1-9



- The Coptic Church sees that verses 9-11 speak of St. Mary
- These verses provide a complete visual of the magnitude of her importance
- Our Lord Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, rightfully His mother also receives the title of "Queen" and stands at His side
- Mostly like Him in humility, He chose her to become His mother

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- Now the psalmist turned to the bride and spoke to her
- These words are either spoken by the prophet, the author of the psalm; or by the King, the bridegroom Himself
- Or, as others think, by God the Father, whose daughter is the church
- *Listen, O daughter*, First of all, he commands her to *Listen, Consider and incline* her ear
- To reflect deeply on the new relation in which she is about to be placed, and the new duties which she will have to discharge
- She must give herself wholly to her Lord and Groom; she must have no thought for any one but him

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- Using the concept of Genesis 2:24, this was an invitation to this royal daughter to leave her people and her father's house to be joined to the anointed King in marriage
- St. Jerome says, "Yet, it is not enough for you to forsake your land, unless you forget your people and your father's house; namely, unless you despise the carnal desires, and attach yourselves to the Groom in a firm and close embrace."
- St. Basil says, "They have to depart from their father's house, means that they have to quit committing sin, and to be born to God by baptism, to become His children."

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- Devotion to her Lord will win her His tender love and care
- Speaking of St. Mary, she is both Queen and Daughter, because she, like everyone else, is a subject of the King
- St. Mary is Jesus' mother, and that earns her a glorious title – Queen – but she still looks to Jesus as her Savior; she is a child of God just like the rest of us
- *your beauty*, Which lies in the *beauty* or righteousness of Christ put upon her and in the holiness of Christ reflected on her
- This beauty is not natural, nor acquired by her, but what is given her

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- It is not an outward, but an inward beauty
- Worship, in a certain sense, is due from every wife to every husband; but the Church's worship of Christ is worship in the absolute highest sense (Revelation 5:6-14)
- He is worthy of all worship and obedience for *He is your Lord*
- Being joined to the anointed King in marriage means many benefits for this royal daughter
- She receives *gifts* from the nations and is set in such a high place that even the *rich* seek her *favor*
- Normally others seek the favor of the rich; the anointed King has set her in an even higher place

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- Tyre refers to the nations drawn to the worship of God
- He mentions the Tyrians, because they, among others, were to be converted to Christ, Mark 3:8; Mark 7:24
- But they are here put for and on behalf of all the Gentiles
- When the church thrives in obedience and holiness, she will be well respected by the surrounding people
- Her glory shall then impress and attract the Gentiles and other nations around, till they also unite in worshiping the Lord with the gift or offering of praise and thanksgiving, for the grace and blessings of it bestowed upon them

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- She is *glorious*, not only in her robe of *gold of Ophir*, but also and especially within; in the inner deep of the heart where she is indeed *glorious*, through the sanctifying presence of God's Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:26-27)
- She is *all glorious*, not because of herself but because of her connection with the King
- The Bride of Christ the church, is all glorious within and is dressed in white robes of His righteousness
- In internal graces and gifts with which she is adorned
- She enjoys such communion with Him that reflects a glory upon her and she is spotless now

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- St. Augustine says, “Not only is her robe, outwardly, ‘of gold, and of divers colors;’ but He who loved her beauty, knew her to be also beautiful within. What are those inward charms? Those of conscience. It is there Christ sees; it is there Christ loves her: it is there He addresses her, there punishes, there crowns. Let then thine alms be done in secret; for ‘all the glory of her, the King’s daughter, is from within.’”
- *She shall be brought to the King*, The description is of an Oriental marriage procession, where brides were commonly escorted and ushered into the presence of the bridegroom, attended by her virgin companions

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- *robes of many colors*, The beauty of the soul and her virtues
- *The virgins*, because of their spiritual purity and chastity, *“For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 11:2)
- These may also symbolize the Gentile converts that should attach themselves to the original Church
- It reminds us of another wedding that will take place when the King comes for His bride
- A bridal procession could not but be a festive one

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- It is a beautiful description of what will occur when the redeemed church shall enter heaven
- They will be received into the heavenly dwelling-place
- According to St. Basil the Great, the talk here concerns the one church that draws many away from their corrupt beliefs, to provide them with the true spirit of joy, and bring them forth to the heavenly kingdom

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- A blessing is pronounced on the marriage of the anointed King
- The union between the Messiah and His bride brings forth children who themselves are *princes in all the earth*
- This cannot be understood of Solomon, and his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter
- But this was fully accomplished in Christ; who, instead of His fathers of the Jewish nation, had a numerous heirs and children of Christians of all the nations of the earth, which are called *princes and kings*
- St. Cyril the Great says, "Here the blessed David speaks about the choice of the saintly apostles."

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- St. John Chrysostom says, “Since he had made mention previously of people and parents in the words, Forget your people and your father’s house, he added this to show that she will have complete joy in every way, ... Now, he seems to me to be referring to the apostles, who became teachers in her, ... The apostles traveled the whole world, and became ruler more masterful than all other rulers, more powerful than emperors.”
- As he began the Psalm with the celebration of the King’s praises, so now he ends with it
- These are the inspired words of the psalmist, spoken to the King Messiah

The Glory of the Bride of Messiah the King 45:10-17



- His name, or He Himself to be remembered, desired, loved, thought of, called upon, and praised in all succeeding generations
- This song should be remembered and sung in all successive generations
- Because it was composed upon that great, and glorious, and everlasting marriage between Christ and His church

Discussion



- Who is the King?
- How do we know this is Jesus?
- What does the psalmist admire about Jesus in this Psalm?
- Who is the daughter of the king mentioned in this Psalm?



Discussion

- Whose arrows are referred to?
- Will each enemy know why he has been struck?
- Who are the enemies of the King?
- What can we be doing now to be prepare ourselves for the eventual coming of Jesus, our King and Bridegroom?