

A Glorious and Eternal Kingdom

Psalm 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.

You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever.
Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!

In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!
Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.

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;
your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;
daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:
forget your people and your father's house,
and the king will desire your beauty.
Since he is your lord, bow to him.
The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,
the richest of the people.

All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.
In many-colored robes she is led to the king,
with her virgin companions following behind her.
With joy and gladness they are led along
as they enter the palace of the king.

In place of your fathers shall be your sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.
I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

The kingdom of Israel in the days of kings David and Solomon was at its pinnacle. We read of its glory, wealth, and power, of kings and queens coming to pay tribute, and coming to hear and marvel at the wisdom given Solomon. David's palace was magnificent, Solomon's Temple glorious. There was joy and peace and prosperity. This psalm talks about all those things. There had never been anything like this!

It didn't last, however. As with all things of this world, sin crept in and brought this kingdom down. Sin corrupted it and ate away at it from the inside out. Without God's power, Israel was powerless. Without his wisdom, foolish. And without His glory, just another nation like any other nation.

It is a good warning to us today. All we have is a gift from God and without God, it will, sooner or later, come crumbling down.

But there *is* a kingdom which lasts forever. A kingdom far more glorious than Israel in those days, or any kingdom or nation since then. The kingdom of our Lord. His kingdom makes the kingdom of Israel in its heyday look like nothing. We cannot even begin to imagine what it will be like. But if you imagine the most glorious thing you've ever seen, and then magnify that by hundreds, you might be getting close. The glory, wealth, and power of Old Testament Israel was just a tiny taste.

But what makes this kingdom so glorious is not *anything* that is in it - but our Lord Himself. He made Israel powerful and glorious. Without Him, they were nothing. The same is true for each of us. Without our Lord Jesus, whatever we have in this world will crumble and pass away - our wealth, our glory, our life. But with Jesus, we have what nothing in this world can take away: the promise of life eternal with Him in His glorious kingdom. We're getting a small taste of that now in the Church, where we are with our Lord and receiving his gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation in His Word and Sacraments. But you ain't see nothin' yet! The best is still to come. And is coming, when Jesus returns in glory.

You see, the Church is the glorious princess in this psalm that the king delights over. He is preparing all things in love for you! And what joy there will be when all the people of God - past, present, and future - are all together with our Lord in His kingdom.

Until then, we give thanks to our Lord for all that He has given us. We repent of our sin and receive His sustaining and cleansing forgiveness, so that we will not crumble and fall away from Him. And we praise Him for all that He has done for us in His Son Jesus, proclaiming His death and resurrection victory for us. When you have that, when you have Him, you truly have all you need - for both now and eternity.

Lord Jesus, thank You for all Your great and precious promises to us! But thank You most of all for what makes all those promises sure and true - Your death and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins. Without that, we are nothing and have no hope. But forgiven our sins, we will rise on the Last Day to the glory and joy of Your kingdom! Keep us in Your Word and truth until that day, and help us look forward to Your coming even in a world of sin and death, knowing that though all this will pass away, Your kingdom and life are eternal. Amen.