

A Song of Messiah

*“Let us be glad and
rejoice, and give
honour to him: for
the marriage of the
Lamb is come, and
his wife hath made
herself ready.”
—Revelation 19:7*

THE BIBLICAL DECLARA-
tion respecting Adam and Eve is that they were created in the image of God, blessed, admonished to be fruitful, and certified as being “very good,” or perfect, like all the Creator’s handiwork.—Gen.

1:27,28,31; Deut. 32:4

Their disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit caused them to be condemned to death and cast out of the Garden of Eden. Nevertheless, in mercy, God, as he condemned the serpent, gave our first parents the promise, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”—Gen. 3:15

A PROMISED SEED

The serpent, which was the instrument used to beguile our first parents, was actually a personification of Satan, the author of all sin. (Rev. 20:2) The identity of the “seed” that would ultimately destroy Satan was obscured from Adam and Eve, but the hope that this would sometime occur endured in their hearts.

More than two thousand years after sin entered the world, God confirmed this hope of a “seed” in a covenant made with Abraham. Because he had obediently prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice, God promised that through Abraham’s seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed.—Gen. 22:15-18

The Jews, Abraham’s natural descendants through Isaac and Jacob, have clung to the hope that their Messiah would fulfill this prediction. Devoted Christians now accept Paul’s declaration, that this promised seed consists of the glorified Christ and his faithful body members, who are “heirs according to the promise” made to Abraham.—Gal. 3:16,29

A POETIC FORECAST

A most beautiful portrayal is penned by David, who focuses upon the central figure of God’s plan of salvation, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In David’s descriptive words, he also makes reference to Jesus’ associates in the great redemptive work. He begins, “My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”—Ps. 45:1

It has been suggested that this psalm was composed for a festive occasion, and possibly was penned in anticipation of one of the weddings of Solomon, David’s son and future king of Israel. Since it has been included as a portion of the sacred writ, however, we may properly view it as an admonition for the church, the espoused “bride” of Christ. (II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 21:2,9) Thus, there is a deeper significance to these words than merely reflecting on some past occasion of a royal wedding.

From the descriptions given in the various passages of this psalm, we suggest that in verse one and in most verses, the “king” referred to is our Lord Jesus Christ. In the natural order of things, none of us has ever seen a perfect specimen of humanity. To be sure, there are some very handsome or beautiful individuals in the world. Sometimes, however, those who are physically attractive may be lacking those qualities of inner beauty that would make them appeal to us in the fullest sense. It is that inner loveliness which especially marks Jesus. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” and as a result, was “made higher than the heavens.”—Heb. 7:26

We read in John 7:31,32 that many people believed in Christ after seeing his miracles and hearing him speak. This happened to such a degree that the Pharisees sent officers to capture him. However, his manner and majestic presence was so overpowering that these officers returned to the chief priests and Pharisees empty handed. When they were questioned as to why they had not brought Jesus, they replied simply, “Never man spake like this man.”—vss. 45,46

REWARD FOR FAITHFULNESS

Thus, even though his enemies despised and rejected Christ, he was the epitome of beauty, truth, purity and righteousness. His character stood head and shoulders above every human being who ever lived. Because of his faithfulness and obedience to God in laying down his life, Christ Jesus has been highly exalted to the divine nature, and he is the one who is described in this royal wedding song of the psalmist. “Thou art fairer than the children of

men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.”—Ps. 45:2

Our glorified Lord is no longer a suffering servant, but has been exalted and “given a name which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:9,10) Present world conditions and the fulfillment of various prophetic signs suggest we are living in the time described in the Scriptures as the “day of the Lord,” and that Jesus’ invisible presence at his Second Advent has commenced. Our Lord’s presence is as “a thief” in the night, in which he has entered Satan’s house for the purpose of breaking it apart. (I Thess. 5:2-4; Matt. 24:43) Indeed, the many changes observed during this Time of Trouble demonstrate that the present social and ecclesiastic order is being removed, to make way for God’s kingdom of righteousness. There is the exposing of many systemic injustices, as people clamor for their presumed rights on every front, while governmental forces are incapable of solving these grievances. Similarly, turmoil occurring in various houses of worship has largely eradicated mankind’s confidence in their spiritual guides, as their followers are keenly aware of many practices that do not square with justice and righteousness.—II Pet. 3:10-13

In God’s kingdom, for which Jesus taught his disciples to pray, the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth. (Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34) At that time, Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, along with his church as the bride, will provide instruction as to God’s plan for the salvation of all the human family who desire to live in peace and harmony with each other. During this time, Satan will be bound and no longer able to deceive mankind. (Rev. 20:1-3) Obedience to just

laws will be enforced, but mankind will be grateful for divine intervention in their lives to accomplish this. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee."—Ps. 45:3-5

In another of David's psalms, the ending of this present evil order is graphically portrayed, as he writes prophetically of this time. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."—Ps. 46:6-10

KINGDOM OPERATIONS

When the law of righteousness is established, all opposition to the work of the incoming king will cease. Under his rule, mankind will submit to the government which will be in existence at that time. God's law will go forth from Mount Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2) As that period of judgment does its work, all who will ultimately attain life on the earth will respond to the instruction provided by Messiah through those faithful servants of past ages. Then it will be true

that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Hab. 2:14) Christ, who was despised by the religious rulers during his earthly sojourn, will manifest his great power and glory, which will be recognized by all. “That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:11

The psalmist continues: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Ps. 45:6,7) Paul quotes this passage, and tells us that the “throne” of which David prophesied is that of Christ Jesus. The apostle states, “Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever.” (Heb. 1:8) The word “God,” as used by Paul as well as the psalmist, has the meaning of “magistrate” or “mighty one,” and can apply, depending on the context, to either the Heavenly Father or his Son Christ Jesus. In this case, Paul makes it clear that “the God,” the Heavenly Father, has told his glorified Son that he is a mighty one, “a God,” and has been given a throne, from which he will exercise rulership.

Although not equal in glory to the Almighty Creator, the glorified Christ is “The mighty God,” having been made so by the power of the Father. (Isa. 9:6,7) God’s Son has earned the right to rule, symbolized by a scepter, because of his faithfulness in carrying out his sacrificial course during his earthly ministry. Thus, Christ Jesus not only is the agency by which the work of the Day of the Lord is to be accomplished, but his invisible presence will continue throughout the coming kingdom to

accomplish the mediatorial function of reconciling mankind back to the Heavenly Father.

The following quote seems to be in harmony with this thought: "The relationship of the Son to the work of restitution with which this Seventh Epoch-Day will close and bring terrestrial perfection, will be wholly different from any of his previous works. In all the previous creations, the Son simply acted for Jehovah, using powers and energies not in any sense his own; but in this grand work to come he will be using a power and authority that are his own—which cost him . . . humiliation, culminating in his crucifixion. By that transaction, which the Father's wisdom and love planned for him, he 'bought' the world, bought Father Adam and all his progeny, and his estate—the earth—with all his title to it as its monarch 'in the likeness of God.'"—*Studies in the Scriptures*, Volume 6, page 47

CHARACTERISTICS OF BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE

Christ's love for righteousness and hatred of iniquity were striking qualities of his character. He had a profound appreciation of righteousness in every facet of his life, but he also would not gloss over iniquity or sin. One illustration of this latter point was the hardness of the Pharisees, who condemned Jesus for doing good on the Sabbath in the healing of a man with a withered hand. (Mark 3:1-4) We then read in this connection: "When he [Jesus] had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other." (vs. 5) Our Lord was angered and

grieved at the evil spirit which the Pharisees demonstrated. After he performed the miracle, they took counsel together as to how they might kill him. (vs. 6) It is because the Master “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity,” that God, his Heavenly Father, anointed him with the Holy Spirit without “measure,” or limit.—John 3:34; Heb. 1:9

Jesus’ footstep followers do not receive the Holy Spirit without measure, as he did. However, they may acquire it in a greater portion, depending upon their faithfulness in utilizing the measure which God has already bestowed upon them. Indeed, they must similarly develop a love for righteousness and an abhorrence of sin and unrighteousness. God has given assurance that he will provide his Holy Spirit in sufficient measure to help in the accomplishment of this important endeavor.—I Cor. 12:7; Rom. 12:3

“All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.” (Ps. 45:8) The spices mentioned permeate the garments of the anointed bridegroom, and may refer to character qualities demonstrated by our Lord that were evidenced during his earthly sojourn. We are reminded of the Scripture that speaks of being “clothed with humility,” a character trait profoundly evident in the Master. (I Pet. 5:5) Paul further states that Christ’s “offering and . . . sacrifice to God” was “a sweetsmelling savour.”—Eph. 5:2

In Psalm 45:9, David identifies one who stands as “the queen in gold of Ophir.” This reference may aptly picture the completed church beyond the veil as the king’s wife, the bride of Christ, “the Lamb’s wife,” attired in gold, symbolic of the divine nature.

(Rev. 21:9; II Pet. 1:4) These faithful overcomers will reign with Christ a thousand years.—Rev. 20:4,6

A PROFOUND INVITATION

The grandest invitation ever extended came from God himself during this Gospel Age, in which he has invited individuals from among the world of mankind to be a bride for his Son. (Ps. 45:10,11) This invitation was at first made exclusively to the nation of Israel, but as a nation they rejected the offer. In Jesus' parable of those invited to a wedding feast, we read of the excuses that were made, which are instructive with regard to Israel's rejection of God's invitation. "They all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. . . . And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."—Luke 14:15-24

Commencing with Cornelius and his house, the Gentiles were given the opportunity to become part of the bride of Christ. This is aptly illustrated in the latter portion of Jesus' parable. "The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel [meaning constrain or entreat] them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."—vss. 23,24

PROMISES FOR THE BRIDE

In some cultures, there are arranged marriages whereby the parents decide who their children will marry. In such cases, the love between the two parties may not have much to do with the marriage decision and subsequent wedding. While it is true

that God is seeking a bride for his Son, there will most assuredly be a reciprocal love of the highest kind when the wedding takes place. It will also not be after the marriage that this bride and groom will learn to love each other.

Christ has been very active in demonstrating love for his prospective bride. The Scriptures describe what he has done on our behalf if we prove faithful to him. He promised to prepare a place for us. “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2,3) Jesus also left us a legacy of peace that passes human understanding, even in the midst of experiences that cause turmoil to our fleshly interests. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—vs. 27

Christ has made us free from Adamic condemnation by imputing his righteousness to us. This justification “by faith” in the blood of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice is based upon God’s acceptance of our unreserved consecration to do his will. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, . . . who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”—Rom. 5:1,9; 8:1,4

There are many other blessings we have received from our espoused bridegroom, which assist us in our pilgrim journey along the narrow way. We also have a special promise, which will be fulfilled if we prove faithful. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”—Rev. 3:21

FEATURES OF THE KINGDOM

We have been called for the purpose of taking part in fulfilling God's eternal purpose regarding mankind, which is to reconcile them back to the Creator in the next age. From a personal standpoint, the exaltation of the bride of Christ in glory will be like no other wedding in all eternity. John the Revelator described this scene with these symbolic words: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."—Rev. 19:7-9

Returning to the words of the psalmist, we read: "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace." (Ps. 45:13-15) In this instance, we suggest that the opening phrase, "the king's daughter," refers to the Heavenly Father and his "daughter," those called to be his consecrated children during the Gospel Age. (Rom. 8:16,17) In David's prophetic description of this class, he indicates they are being specially prepared to be brought to their king and bridegroom—Christ Jesus—and to enter into his palace as his bride.

As his prospective and espoused bride at the present time, we have been clothed with the imputed

robe of Christ's righteousness. (Isa. 61:10) Upon this symbolic robe we are to embroider the various fruits and graces of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, brotherly kindness and love, so that it becomes a beautiful “raiment of needlework.” (Gal. 5:22,23; II Pet. 1:4-8) By faithfulness in developing these character qualities, though our outward works are deficient, our efforts and heart's desire will be such that we will be “all glorious within,” and made fully perfect in the “first resurrection.”—Rev. 20:6; Jude 24

ASSOCIATES OF THE BRIDE

The “virgins her companions” that follow after the bride shall rejoice as well. Those virgins appear to represent a spiritual class, though with lesser glory, in that they are “companions” of the king's daughter. Yet, this implies righteousness and love for the Lord on their part. It would not be expected that the bride class would have as associates those who were not in harmony with God and walking in a similar manner as themselves.

There has not been a call during this Gospel Age to a lesser class, as we are “called in the one hope” of our calling. (Eph. 4:4) Those who ultimately make up this group of the bride's “companions” seem to be aptly described by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 3:9-16. In this passage, some, although called and accepted to be part of “God's building,” fail to properly build upon the foundation of Christ the gem-like qualities of character that are necessary to be part of the “temple of God,” and which will stand up to the fiery trials that will most assuredly come. These others, Paul

states, tend to build with “wood, hay, stubble,” materials which, when fiery experiences come, are burned.

The apostle says that those who build in this manner over the course of their Christian walk “suffer loss,” that is, the loss of being part of the completed temple of God. Thankfully, however, because in their heart they still love the Lord, God’s mercy is manifest on their behalf. We cite Paul’s full statement in this regard: “If any man’s work be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” These companions of the bride are elsewhere designated a “great multitude,” the number of which is unknown because it is not a called out class. Whatever may be the reasons they do not attain the “mark for the prize of the high calling,” they, nevertheless, wash “their robes,” and make them “white in the blood of the Lamb.”—Phil 3:14; Rev. 7:9-14

EARTHLY REPRESENTATIVES

“Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.” (Ps. 45:16,17) Abraham is referred to as a “father,” and we suggest this reference collectively refers to the prominent Jewish forebears and their prophets. (Luke 1:73) The lives of some of these individuals of past ages are chronicled, especially as to their great faith, by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews chapter 11. Isaiah 2:3, which speaks of the Word of the Lord going forth from Jerusalem, seems to point to the role of these faithful ones of old

as the earthly representatives of God's kingdom. Thus, through the work of God's Son, the great king, his bride, her companions, and faithful earthly representatives, the work of bringing the human family back to perfection will result in everlasting praise to God for his authorship of this wonderful plan of redemption.

THE GLORIOUS OUTCOME

In summary, Psalm 45 gives a beautiful outline of God's plan of redemption for mankind. The central figure in this love song is Christ Jesus, for whom the Heavenly Father is seeking a bride. Those who have responded to the invitation during this Gospel Age are urged to faithfulness, as they embroider their imputed robe of righteousness with the graces of the spirit. Realizing that the time is short, we should press on with diligence to the end that we will be "faithful unto death" and become a part of the Christ, who will bless all the families of the earth.—Rev. 2:10; Acts 3:25

"Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4-6, *New Revised Standard Version* ■