

Psalms 45:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord;
and worship thou him.

Analysis

So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. This verse reveals the blessed consequence of the bride's forsaking her former life (v.10): the king's delight in her. It also establishes the nature of their relationship—he is Lord, and she owes him worship—foreshadowing Christ's relationship with His church.

"So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty" (וַיִּתְּאוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ יְפִיָּהּ/veyit'av hamelekh yofyekh) presents the king's desire as consequence ('so') of the bride's choice to leave all for him. Ta'av (desire) indicates strong longing, passionate delight. Earlier (v.2), the king's beauty was celebrated; now the bride's beauty evokes his desire. This isn't merely physical attraction but delight in her wholehearted devotion, her choice to forsake all for him.

The spiritual application is profound: Christ delights in His church. She is beautiful to Him—not intrinsically but through His transformative work. He 'loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish' (Ephesians 5:25-27). Her beauty is His gift, yet He delights in it.

"For he is thy Lord" (כִּי־הוּא אֲדֹנָיִךְ/ki-hu adonayikh) establishes the relationship's foundation. Adon (lord, master) indicates authority, ownership, headship. This isn't

merely romantic love between equals but covenantal relationship with proper hierarchy. The king is lord; the bride is subject. Yet this headship is protective, loving, sacrificial—as Christ is Head of the church (Ephesians 5:23).

"And worship thou him" (וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִי לוֹ/vehishtachavi-lo) commands reverence, submission, honor. Shachah means to bow down, prostrate oneself, worship. While earthly husbands must never accept worship (it belongs to God alone), this command reveals the psalm's messianic fulfillment. The king who is 'thy Lord' worthy of worship is ultimately Christ, who is both Lord (Kurios) and God (Theos), worthy of the worship due to deity alone (Philippians 2:9-11, Hebrews 1:6).

Together these elements picture the church's relationship to Christ: He is our Lord, our King, our Bridegroom. He delights in us (His beauty reflected in us through sanctification), and we worship Him with wholehearted devotion, glad submission, and reverent love.

Historical Context

In ancient Near Eastern royal marriages, the bride owed the king reverence and submission. However, 'worship' (hishtachavah) typically applied to deity, not mere humans. This language confirms the psalm transcends historical royal weddings, pointing to the divine King who alone merits worship.

Throughout Scripture, marriage illustrates God's covenant with His people. In the Old Testament, Israel is Yahweh's bride (Isaiah 54:5, Jeremiah 31:32, Ezekiel 16, Hosea 1-3). In the New Testament, the church is Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2, 9). This intimate covenant involves exclusive loyalty, faithful love, and fruitful union.

Ephesians 5:22-33 most fully develops this imagery. Wives submit to husbands as to the Lord; husbands love wives as Christ loved the church. The marriage relationship mirrors Christ and the church—His sacrificial love, her glad submission; His headship, her honor; His cleansing work, her responsive beauty. Human marriage at its best reflects this divine pattern.

The consummation of this relationship awaits the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). When Christ returns, the long betrothal period ends, and eternal union begins. The church, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2), will dwell with Christ forever in perfect communion, joy, and love.

Early church fathers saw this verse as calling Christians to worship Christ. Against heresies denying Christ's deity (Arianism, etc.), orthodox theologians cited this and similar passages proving Christ's worthiness of worship—only God may be worshiped; Christ is worshiped; therefore Christ is God.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's delight in His church's beauty (which He Himself created through sanctification) demonstrate grace?
2. What does it mean that Christ is 'thy Lord' in the context of the loving marriage relationship, and how does this differ from worldly concepts of domination?
3. How should believers 'worship' Christ in daily life beyond formal worship services?
4. In what ways does human marriage, at its best, reflect Christ's relationship with His church, and how does this elevate the meaning and purpose of marriage?

Interlinear Text

וְיִתְאַוּ	הִמָּלֵךְ	יְפִיָּךְ	כִּי	הוּא	אֲדֹנָיִךְ
greatly desire	So shall the king	thy beauty	H3588	H1931	for he is thy Lord
H183	H4428	H3308			H113
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִי	לֹ:				
and worship	H0				
H7812					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 95:6 (Worship): O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

Isaiah 54:5 (References Lord): For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Zephaniah 3:17 (References Lord): The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Luke 24:52 (Worship): And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

Psalms 45:6 (Kingdom): Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

Song of Solomon 1:8: If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

Philippians 3:8 (References Lord): Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Acts 10:36 (References Lord): The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Psalms 2:12 (Parallel theme): Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Romans 14:9 (References Lord): For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

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