

1. My title for this lesson is, "Understanding Jesus as our future husband and our conqueror." That strange combination should keep us focused for a few pages. ☺ So my opening question is, "What do I mean by that combination and what does it have to do with us and this psalm?"
 - a) Let me first focus on understanding Jesus as our future husband. Believe it or not, this topic is hinted at in the New Testament, and is a key topic here in Psalm 45.
 - i) To understand this concept, one must have an idea of what happens to Christians in our next life. Our eternal life is compared in the New Testament to a wonderful eternal marriage between Jesus and ourselves. (See Revelation 21). I'm not saying all saved people develop female organs in heaven. ☺ I am saying the Christian church collectively becomes the bride of Jesus. How that physically works is a mystery, but I do know that all believers are somehow unique in heaven and at the same time we are all "one" and are all part of the bride of Christ.
 - ii) This is why, near the end of the book of Revelation (Chapter 21), a wedding is described, between Jesus and His bride. The same way a marriage begins on earth with a celebration, so our eternal relationship with Jesus begins with a celebration.
 - b) OK John, enough future theology, what does it have to do with Psalm 45?
 - i) This psalm describes a wedding. It obviously has future implications involving our future and I will explain that as we study the psalm.
 - ii) Besides God the Father, there is a mention of another "God entity". Religious Jews will argue that this other "entity" is simply a Jewish king, as such a king is also a judge. In the Hebrew language a man could be called a god (small "g") as such a judge can sentence people to their death if they are found guilty of a crime.
 - iii) As Christians, we will see how this other God "entity" is Jesus in His future role as our husband. Again, I'll explain that we go through this psalm.
2. OK John, you also said this psalm is about Jesus as our warrior. What does that mean?
 - a) Let me say, right off the bat, I have always struggled with the concept of Jesus or God as a warrior. I think of God as being too big to be involved in the struggle between good and evil. It is important to understand that God and the devil are not equals struggling for control of mankind. God is "bigger than that". God allows the devil to exist ultimately for His own good. A job of the devil is to get us Christians to be ineffective witnesses for God by getting us interested in other things. Along the same lines, God uses the devil to test believers to see whether or not we remain loyal to Him and close to Him.
 - b) OK John, what does this have to do with God the Father or Jesus being a warrior?
 - i) Again, this is where I struggle. It's hard for me to visualize God or Jesus getting involved in a battle on our behalf. I envision a God that can wipe out the devil whenever He wants too. As my daughter likes to ask, "If God is all powerful, why doesn't He just wipe the devil out once and for all and get it over with?"
 - ii) If God could just wipe out His enemies and our enemies just by "saying so", why do we struggle so much with evil and sin in our lives? In other words, how is God like a warrior and does God Himself get involved in that struggle?
 - iii) My view is God works behind the scenes "orchestrating the battle" and the victory on our behalf when we are trusting in Him. I don't see God so much as a physical warrior but as an "architect of the battle" who can orchestrate our battles that we fight in life and give us the victories that He desires for our lives.
 - c) Surprisingly enough, this does lead me back to this psalm. There are references to God the Father and another "God entity" that leads our battles for us. That is describing Jesus as our warrior who fights on our behalf over whatever battles we face in life.

3. Now, that I have given a really strange introduction so far, I will add one more unusual thought here and then we can start Verse 1 of Psalm 45.
 - a) There are some scholars who see a big pattern between the last three psalms (the previous lesson) and the psalm of this lesson. The last three psalms dealt with really bad suffering and pondering during such times where is God through that suffering? The last three psalms were not about suffering due to some sin issue, but just suffering that God allows us to go through in life to test us and see how much we trust Him.
 - b) With that said, my question is, "Why do the psalms go from suffering (last lesson) to the "marriage of God and believers" and God as our warrior here in Psalm 45?
 - i) For those of us who hold the view of a literal (future) 1,000-year "millennium" where Jesus rules the earth from Jerusalem, one can read all of these psalms tying to that view. A lot of Christians like myself believe that when Jesus comes back, there is going to be this 1,000 year period where Jesus will literally rules the world from Jerusalem. There are also lots of Christians who don't take that view literally. In fact most Roman Catholics scholars don't believe in a literal 1,000-year period, while most evangelical Protestants do believe in a literal 1,000-year period.
 - ii) So what does all of that "millennium stuff" have to do with these psalms? One can read all of the suffering of the last three psalms as compared to the suffering (i.e., the "tribulation") that occurs just before Jesus returns. In other words, all of the "bad stuff" of Revelation can tie to the last three psalms. Then Psalm 45 can be described as the marriage ceremony that takes right before Jesus returns. Then this psalm and the next three psalms (next lesson) describe Jesus in his role as our kingly husband who fights on earth against all who refuse to turn to Him.
 - c) I would say that is enough strange stuff to ponder for one lesson. ☺ Let's get started.
4. Psalm 45, title: For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of the Sons of Korah. A *maskil*. A wedding song.
 - a) We get a lot of stuff in this title. First, lets go over previous ground. The writer(s) claim to be the "Sons of Korah". As I stated in the last lesson, all we know about the Sons of Korah is that they are Levites (one of the 12 tribes of Israel) and they probably wrote this psalm around the same time David or Solomon was king. This psalm was written to being sung. That is why it is addressed to the "director of music", whoever that was.
 - b) I also stated in the last lesson that the word "maskil" as used here is an untranslated word. It essentially means we should contemplate and think about what this psalm is saying.
 - c) The end of the title says a "wedding song". I believe (besides the fact it may have been used at weddings of Jewish kings) this refers to the future wedding in heaven between Jesus (called God) in this psalm and believers. I'll explain that some more as we go.
 - d) Finally, we have a reference to "the tune of Lilies". It is possible that this is some long lost song that existed back then. There is another biblical reference to lilies I want to bring up:
 - i) That word "lilies" is used a lot in the "Song of Songs" also called the "Song of Solomon". That short book in the Old Testament that comes soon after Psalms and Proverbs. That book is about a love between a man and his bride. That book also ties together our relationship between God and believers and shows how much love God has for as individuals.
 - ii) The reason the title of this Psalm ("tune of the Lilies") ties to the "Song of Songs" is they both could to refer to the "Lilies of the Valley". That reference in the book of Song is sort of like saying, "The field is full of beautiful flowers, but you (that's us) stand out among those flowers".
 - iii) My point about the lilies reference in this psalm, might be like the lilies reference in the Song of Songs, where says in effect, "Among all of the people in the world, I consider you (that's you and me) to be special because I (God) have drawn you close to Me to have an eternal close relationship to last all through eternity.

5. Psalm 45, Verse 1: My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.
 - a) This verse is focusing on the writer of the psalm. For the moment I will assume the writer is "singular", even though the title says the "Sons (plural) of Korah" wrote this psalm.
 - i) With that said, it is not significant to know whether or not the writer was one person or more than one person and I won't bring it up anymore.
 - b) It might be best if I paraphrase what this verse is saying: "I am so excited right now, I have this song in my head and I can't wait to sing it out as if my tongue was a pen of a skillful writer". In other words, let me write down for you this psalm that is inside my head.
 - c) You may find it interesting that the original Greek translation of "skillful writer" (which was written prior to Jesus First Coming) is a technical term. During the times of the Greek Empire and later into the Roman Empire, we know that some wrote in professionally trained "shorthand". That shorthand is a recognized abbreviation of the Greek language so a writer could take accurate notes quickly of what someone else was saying. That is what "skillful writer" means in that original Greek translation.
 - i) I mention that here as since there were no copy machines, such writers had to keep accurate notes of what others were saying. Therefore a shorthand version of Greek was invented for that reason. Many scholars believe Matthew, in the New Testament had such knowledge. Matthew was a tax collector, and had to write down notes quickly. That knowledge may have given him the ability to write down the "Sermon on the Mount" accurately as it was dictated by Jesus.
 - ii) OK, enough of that. Let's get back to the psalm. The main point here is that the writer was excited about the psalm "notes" floating around in his head.
6. Verse 2: You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever.
 - a) The most important thing to note about Verse 2 is that the first word "you" is not about God the Father. That is because this verse says that God the Father is calling this "You" "the most excellent of men".
 - b) There are two ways to read this verse: One is that it is talking about a specific man or a specific king. The other is to read it as saying you are more excellent than any man.
 - i) So, is this verse talking about say, the King of Israel or Jesus? Based on this verse alone, one can argue either.
 - c) The verse goes on to say that this man's lips have been anointed with grace because God has blessed you forever. It was common in ancient times to say to a king "May you live forever". My point here is one can read this verse as just giving flattery to the king of the moment or whoever the man is in this picture.
 - d) The problem is, is that all the psalms were designed to be praising God. If this verse is just about praising a king of Israel or some other person, why is it in the psalms? That is why I (and many others) hold the view that the psalm writer is talking about something much greater and even though the verse says a "man", it is about the Messiah.
 - e) It may help to remember that Christians of all major denominations hold the view that Jesus was "fully man" and "fully God". That is not a contradiction. God the Son became man for our sake and remains a man to this day even though He is God. That is part of the Christian doctrine about who is Jesus.
 - i) In this verse, we are seeing Jesus as being "man" for our sakes.
 - ii) Did the writer of the psalm understand that concept? Probably not. The Jewish idea of a Messiah to this day is that he will be just a man who was picked by God the Father. We will read in this psalm that the "entity" being discussed in this psalm is both a man and God. That is why in order to comprehend Jesus, one must understand the concept of Jesus as being "fully man and fully God".

7. Verse 3: Gird your sword upon your side, O mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. ⁴ In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness; let your right hand display awesome deeds. ⁵ Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; let the nations fall beneath your feet.
- a) Let's start say remembering these verses are talking about this "man" to be married. Whoever this man is, he is "set for battle". These verses describe this man has having a sword and riding in victory over the enemies of the kings people.
 - b) OK John, I can read the verses too. What does it mean?
 - i) On one level, we can read these verses as being about a Jewish king. The verses wish the king to be the army leader and lead the country to victory. Remember that for Israel, the king was also the leader of the army.
 - ii) Personally, I see it as much more than that. Again, if the purpose of the psalms is to praise God, I can't see this psalm or any psalm about praising a man. Maybe it is just praising God for the good things God is doing through this "man". That is a possibility, if one reads these verses out of context.
 - c) Let me go back to something I discussed in the introduction: God as our warrior:
 - i) As I stated in the introduction, we tend to think of God as being above war. We think of God sending angels to help us in our struggles against evil. To put it another way, if "God is God", He can wipe out any enemy just by saying so. If that is true, why are their pictures in the New Testament in Revelation of Jesus as someone who fights on our behalf?
 - a) If you study Revelation, there is a lot of reference to warfare and at times, Jesus is even pictured as one who has victories over the enemies of God. (For examples, see Revelation 2:16, 13:7, 17:14, 19:11 and 19:19.)
 - ii) So does Jesus actually fight on our behalf? In the same sense we trust in God to lead us to victory over the battles and issues we face in life, God the Son is our "warrior". Yes "God is God" and by definition could wipe out people or forces by saying so. The reason God allows spiritual enemies to exist is to give us another reason to stick close to Him in the first place. Just as ancient Israel looked to the king to lead the armies in battle, so we do look to God to lead the battle over whatever forces or issues we face in life.
 - d) This leads us back to these verses. These verses are describing some sort of entity that has a sword and it appears as if this entity is "single handedly" defeating the enemies of Israel.
 - i) If you study the second coming of Jesus in the later chapters of Revelation, Jesus single handedly defeats all who oppose His rule over the world. It's not Jesus leading an army to victory, but Jesus doing all the conquering work by Himself.
 - ii) That is the picture in this verse as well as in the New Testament. This is a picture of the "Messiah" (i.e., "The Christ") winning as a warrior over all forces and entities that oppose the will of God.
 - e) OK John, what does it mean practically? Does it mean I stand still and wait for God to win battles over all who oppose Him? No. It means that we as Christians do trust that God's will, will be done on His timing and His way. That is what these verses are praying for. That is what we should be "petitioning for": For God's will to be done.
 - i) That is how we should be petitioning Jesus to be our warrior on our behalf.
 - f) OK John, if I believe God is going to win in the long run anyway, why should I pray for it to happen? The answer is not to remind God, but to remind us. It is to remind ourselves to stay close to Him and live for His desires for our lives, as He is our warrior who will fight and win our battles for us if we trust in Him. Again, that doesn't mean we will never feel defeat or suffering in this lifetime. It means that God will win in the end.

8. Verse 6: Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
- a) Before I say anything else about this verse, notice that whoever is being discussed in this verse, is called God. To prove that, let me quote part of Verse 7 (next verse) that reads:
 - i) "Therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions". My point is whoever is being discussed in Verse 6, is being called God and it is a different "entity" from God the Father.
 - ii) Jewish commentators will argue that this "lower God" is a reference to a man. In the Hebrew language, a judge (as in someone who could send you to death or to prison) is called a "god" (lower "g"). Therefore, Jewish scholars do argue that the "God" in this verse is not referring to God the Father, but just the Jewish king.
 - iii) Christian scholars see this as a reference to Jesus as "God the Son". I'm not alone in that view. In the New Testament, book of Hebrews, Verses 8-9, it quotes Verse 7 of this psalm as being about Jesus. My point is the book of Hebrews is, like me trying to point out that Psalm 45 is focusing on Jesus as both God and as the "Promised Messiah" even though that word "Messiah" is not used in this psalm.
 - b) Meanwhile, back in Psalm 45 itself, the writer of the psalm is crying out for God to rule "for ever and ever". Yes it is a "cry" to remind our self that God will rule forever, and one day, Jesus will rule the world from the earth (Jerusalem). At the same time this verse is another reminder that we are to trust that God is going to win, no matter how bad or difficult the situation of our lives seem at that given moment.
 - c) It's time for me to talk about what is a "scepter": This verse mentions a "scepter of justice" that is held by this entity. A scepter is actually a stick (for the lack of a better word) that represented the fact the owner of that stick is the king. The point is when that king rules, it will be a "stick (or scepter) of justice". OK, what does that mean?
 - i) One of the biggest problems with this life is too many people get away with too many bad things. What we want of our leaders is someone to issue "fair justice".
 - ii) It could refer to eternal judgment and in a sense that is a big part of it.
 - iii) I suspect it refers to the concept of God ruling and people getting what they deserve in terms of either trusting or not trusting in the God of the Universe.
 - iv) I am reminded of a bumper sticker that said, "Jesus is coming back and this time He is really pissed!" (Pardon the bad language, but it makes a good point here.) There is a false notion of Jesus returning and well, everyone is just sitting around being happy with no conflicts to deal with.
 - v) The reality is the second coming of Jesus is about "justice". Revelation 19:15 speaks of Jesus ruling with a "rod of iron". That rod is similar to the scepter as mentioned in this verse. The point is when Jesus comes to rule again, He is coming to bring justice. What does that mean practically? It means all theft, murder and stealing with be somehow quickly and fairly punished for that action. It means that all rebellion against God will come to an end by force. How will that actually work? I'm not sure, but I'm counting on God's justice to happen. The point is if we want to be on God's side, we do expect Him to win in the end.
9. Verse 7: You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.
- a) Again, notice that the "God reference" in Verse 6 is not God the Father. That is because the "God" reference here in Verse 7 is the God who raised up the "entity" (who is also called God) in Verse 6. My point is simply to notice that we have two separate entities called God here. It is a reference to God the Father and God the Son in two verses.
 - i) That is why Hebrews Chapter 1, Verses 8-9, makes the argument that here in Psalm 45:6-7 is talking about the Messiah as "God" as well as being a man. That reference in Hebrews is specifically talking about these two verses here.

- b) Let me move on and talk about the phrase "above your companions" in Verse 7. Since I just argued that the "entity" being raised up above His companions is Jesus, what does that mean? How is Jesus raised up above His companions?
 - i) My way of seeing this is simply that Jesus did become man and God raised Him above the stature of others to rule over our hearts and one day rule over the earth. It doesn't take away from Jesus being a "deity", it is just one way to see Him.
 - c) As to the rest of the verse, since He (Jesus) was set apart for us, what is the "oil of joy"? This is another cultural reference. Oil was poured on the heads of those set to be a leader. It is possible this psalm was used to anoint kings of Israel. One can read the psalm as being in the "short term" about a leader of a country, but the psalm is only completely fulfilled when the Messiah (Jesus) comes to rule over the world.
 - i) The "oil of joy" is for our sake. The idea here is that we have joy that future Messiah (king) will rule over the world.
 - d) OK, and what about the "love righteousness and hate wickedness" reference?
 - i) It means that this "Messiah" loves to do what is right. So what is right? It is God the Father's will being done on earth as it is in heaven.
 - e) Let me go a little off topic before I move on: (Since you can't stop me anyway. ☺)
 - i) How do we know that this psalm is not just about God the Father and Jesus ruling over our hearts? Why does it involve all of this world conquering as well?"
 - ii) Think of it this way: The majority of people in this world to this day do not believe or want Jesus to rule over them. I believe that view also includes the idea of Jesus literally ruling over the world one day, from a throne in Jerusalem.
 - a) My other proof of this view is based on Luke 1:32. In that verse, God tells Mary that her son (Jesus) will rule the world one day from David's throne. Jesus is currently at God the Father's throne in heaven. David's throne is being a king over Israel. Jesus never ruled from Israel in His first coming, so therefore, I see that prediction as part of His Second coming.
10. Verse 8: All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad.
- a) The imagery changes in Verse 8. Instead of focusing on the Messiah the "warrior", we have this reference to fragrant robes and the fact the palaces of the king will be adorned with ivory and music. OK John, what gives here? To understand, one has to go back to the title of this psalm. The title said it was a wedding psalm.
 - i) Jesus is not only our warrior on our behalf, but also, somehow He is our future husband in that all of the Christian church becomes married to Him.
 - ii) I've always been puzzled about how that works practically, but I suspect it has something to do with our heavenly bodies existing in more than three dimensions. Somehow we each will be "one" and each will be separate entities at the same time.
 - iii) The point of this verse is our "husband to be" Jesus is not only preparing to be our warrior, He is also preparing to be our husband. In Jewish culture, to prepare for a wedding, a groom would put on fragrant robes well, in order to entice the wife.
 - iv) Personally, I don't see anything sexual about this in our future, it is just an image being painted for us to help us relate to our marital relationship with Jesus.
 - b) This leads to the imagery of the ivory palaces. To put it in modern language, we get to spend our eternal life in a beautiful palace made of rare and expensive material. This may tie to Jesus description of "mansions" we get as believers. (See John 14:2) In heaven we may get this great place to live, but it is not so we can kick back and watch television all day. ☺ It is a great house of a great king and as the bride of that king we share that home.
 - c) The final image is that of "stringed instruments". Does this mean we have to take harp or guitar lessons for our eternal lives? No. The idea is music makes the king happy and in our eternal love relationship with Him, we have the joy we can experience from music.

11. Verse 9: Daughters of kings are among your honored women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.
- a) OK, if things are not strange enough, I present Verse 9. ☺
 - b) We as bible studying Christians tend to think of eternity in heaven as just between the "Christian Church", represented as all believers somehow being united as one woman and Jesus as the husband of that woman. If that is true, who are the "daughters of kings" as stated this verse? If this verse is talking about our relationship with Jesus as taught in Hebrews, Chapter 1, who are the "daughters of kings"? (Notice "kings" is plural.)
 - i) Yes of course, these verses can be read on a "lower level", but I am particularly focused here on how these verses affect you and I as believers in Christ. On one level this verse could be talking about say, the marriage of a king of Israel and how some of the honored guests include daughters of other kings.
 - ii) To answer the question about who the daughters represent, let me start by saying, I don't think heaven only has believers in Christ. How is God going to fairly deal with all babies who die? Further, what about Old Testament people who did trust in the God of the bible? What about the "naïve" who got the concept of a God, but were never exposed to the Gospel message?
 - iii) What I am getting at is the idea of the Christian church being a "special subset" of all those who are saved in heaven. Paul said the only mystery of the Old Testament is the church. (See Ephesians 5:32). Every aspect of Jesus First and Second Coming is hinted somewhere in the Old Testament as we are learning in the psalms. Yet, the concept of a Christian church is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was a mystery that was first revealed by Jesus and Paul.
 - iv) My point is the church is the bride of Christ, but there will be saved people in heaven besides Christians. What does that have to do with this verse? That is how I see the "daughters of kings" reference in this verse. It is a poetic way of saying there are other women (saved people) in heaven, but those other people are not part of the "special subset" of all saved people that we call the church. In other words, there are more saved people in heaven besides the Christian church, but those who are members of the church are a "special subset" of all that are saved.
 - c) OK, John nice theory. ☺ How do you know it is true? How do you know the daughters of the kings (again, notice kings is plural) is not just talking about the invited guests to the wedding of the king of Israel and not some special group in heaven?
 - i) The short answer is I don't know for sure. What I simply suspect is that just as Christians collectively are called the "bride of Christ" (even though that bride consists of men and women), so I see other saved people in heaven collectively called "daughters of kings".
 - ii) Is it possible I am totally off base here? Of course. The text never says that this psalm is about the Messiah in His role as our future husband. What I am presenting is a theory that fits the facts of what we can deduce about our next life in heaven as stated in the bible. What the verse do say is the daughters of other kings are not the one's getting married to the king, so that is why the thought deserves a page of discussion to analyze that reference.
 - d) One last thing about the verse. The bride is wearing gold of "Ophir". The location is debated among scholars, but it was known for its fine gold. This is another image to show how the bride is made beautiful in preparation for her wedding.
12. Verse 10: Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father's house.
- a) This verse reads like marital advice from any good father to a grown daughter about to get married. The advice is in effect, "You are about to be the wife of your husband. Your priority is now to be his wife, and that takes priority over being my daughter."

- b) Time for a few quick words on the biblical topic of marriage. Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament sees women as being inferior to men. The key point is that God calls each sex to a different role. Here is how I like to put it: If there are two equal people who work as a team, somebody has to be the leader. It does not mean that either one on that team is better than the other, it simply means that one leads.
 - i) That is how "God the Father" is superior to "God the Son". It does not mean that God the Son has any less power or intellect or "whatever" than God the Father. It simply means if there are two or more "equals", somebody has to be the leader. Therefore God the Father is considered superior to God the Son simply because someone has to be the leader of that "group".
 - ii) The same principal applies to a marriage. Of the two entities (husband and wife), someone has to lead, and that is the role of the husband in a marriage.
 - iii) This does lead us back to Verse 10. The verse is not literally saying to this woman to forget about your parents as if they never existed. The verse is the father of the bride saying, "Now that you are getting married, priority one in your life will now be to your husband. That takes priority over your role as my daughter or as a member of my family."
 - c) OK, now that I have that straightened that out, ☺ what does this have to do with our present and future relationship with Jesus? The verse is implying that as the future wife of Jesus, (i.e., the Christian church) our number one priority is to please Him. That takes priority over our relationship with our parents and our family.
 - i) OK, what does it mean practically? Does it mean we ignore our family when they are sick and need our help? Of course not. One of the first miracles in the New Testament was when Peter's mother in law was sick. The disciples brought her to Jesus. (See Matthew 8:14-15). The point is Jesus is now the "lead" in how we deal with others in our life. Helping a sick love one may mean physically helping them or getting them to a doctor. At the same time, we should pray about them and over them as Jesus is our future "husband" and in charge of our lives.
 - ii) Another way to view this verse practically is to think in terms of "we would never want to do anything that makes our husband Jesus unhappy". We should avoid sin as much as possible, because we are to be married to Jesus and we care about serving Him more than any other priority in our life. Christians are called upon to avoid sin is not because we have to, but just because we want to please God our Father and we want to please Jesus our future husband.
13. Verse 11: The king is enthralled by your beauty; honor him, for he is your lord.
- a) Like the last verse, I see this verse as a continuation of the "visual picture" of a father of the bride talking to his daughter. The advice of the father is, "that king happens to love you and is taken away (loves) your beauty. Honor that man, for not only does He love you but He is also the "Lord of Your life".
 - b) Let me focus first on the concept of how God the Son sees us believers as "beautiful".
 - i) We as humans tend to look at ourselves in the mirror and see the flaws in our appearance. Before we call ourselves either "ugly or imperfect", remember that the God of this world sees us as beautiful. If that is true, what should it matter what we think or anyone else thinks of our imperfections?
 - ii) I like to describe it as God the Father and God the Son seeing us Christians in our future "perfect, made sinless" state of being. The reason God sees us as beautiful is because He understands we have accepted His gift of total forgiveness of sins, and therefore sees us in our future state of being as sinless creatures who will be worthy to be married to "God the Son".

- c) This does lead me back to the verse. The rest of this verse says in effect that since our "husband to be" sees us as beautiful we are to honor him as our Lord.
 - i) That does not mean if you are married we are to get divorced in this lifetime because Jesus is now our "Lord". In fact, one of the clues that Jesus gave about heaven is that all the saved people will be like angels in the sense that angels are not married. (See Luke 20:34 on that point).
 - ii) I once had a conversation with a Mormon where that person argued that whoever you marry in this lifetime, you stay married to forever. They based that argument on Luke 20:34 where it says in effect that there is no marriage in heaven.
 - a) I now understand that the Mormons miss the point of Jesus' statement. It is not that our current marriages continue to heaven. Jesus statement is that in the next life, the "Christian church" is married to God the Son with the blessing of God the Father. There is a marriage in heaven, but it is a single marriage between the church and "God the Son". We don't continue our present marriage in the next life because we as Christians get married to "God the Son". That wedding is described in Revelation, Chapter 21.)
 - b) The point as it ties to Verse 11 of this psalm is that since Jesus is going to be our future husband and God the Father is going to be our father, we should honor them as a loving bride honors her husband and father in law.
- d) Speaking of "heresy", I can't leave this verse without commenting on something else once said on this issue. There was a book that came out a while ago by a religious Jew that said in effect, "You Christians take Jesus and We (the Jews) will take God the Father."
 - i) In other words, the author is making the point that Christians think they are getting eternally married to "God the Son", but we Jews, "the chosen people" are eternally married to God the Father. That is the implication of that book.
 - ii) There are lots of things one can say in response to that type of argument.
 - a) One can state Jesus' command that no one comes to God the Father except through God the Son. That in effect is what Jesus said in John 14:6.
 - b) The other problem with that argument is the "sin issue". Yes, the Jews had animal sacrifices to forgive their sins. At the same time, all of us still have our "sin nature" within us. Without the free gift of Jesus' payment for our sins, we still have our sinful nature and cannot be eternally forgiven.
- e) Let me wrap all of this up by bringing the focus back on us Christians and how we should act in this lifetime as believers.
 - i) The point of this whole verse is not about what Mormon's or Jews think about our eternal relationship with God the Father and God the Son.
 - ii) The key point is that we as Christians are to honor God the Son, not because we need to, but just because we desire to please our future husband. In other words, we are to avoid sin not to "earn points" with God the Father. He can't love us any more or less based on how much we sin.
 - iii) Our motivation to avoid sin and live the type of life that God desires us to live is simply based on the concept of love, as compared to an "ideal marriage".
- f) Let me explain this a different way: An ideal marriage is where both the husband and the wife do their best to "outdo each other". If one is truly committed to one's marriage, then one cares about pleasing one's spouse. One is more interested in their spouse's happiness than their own happiness. Yes there are times where say, one spouse is sick and the focus needs to be on the sick one. Over the long term, it should be the desire of both spouses to outdo each other in love for each other. Since we can't fix our spouses, all we can do is love them simply because that is what God calls us to do. Changing our spouse is God's problem, and not ours. Our job is just to love our spouse for who they are.
- g) OK, with all of that out of my system, let's finish the psalm. ☺

14. Verse 12: The Daughter of Tyre will come with a gift, men of wealth will seek your favor.
 - a) For an Israelite who lived during the time of David, the richest city-state of that era was Tyre. They existed for centuries as a mighty power. Alexander the Great many centuries later conquered that city, and it fell permanently at that time. The point here is that if this was a song about wedding of an Israelite king, it would be something special if the daughter of the king of Tyre came with a gift.
 - b) The second part of the verse makes a similar point. Remember that this psalm was meant to be a wedding psalm. One could read this as a positive and say in effect that if the bride here is so special due to this marriage, that great men of wealth now desire to see this woman as well as bring gifts.
 - i) On the surface, it does seem to be a pleasant thought and say in effect that people of power and influence are desiring the bride.
 - c) OK John, by now we all know this whole psalm is symbolic of our present and future relationship with Jesus. Given that view, what is this verse talking about?
 - i) Personally, I see a whole different meaning to this verse. I could be right or wrong about it, but I'll throw it out there for consideration: There are a few chapters in the Old Testament that mention Tyre and its leaders. (See Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 28.) Neither one of those chapters say anything positive about Tyre. In fact the implication is that Satan is behind the power of Tyre and this place is "buried in pride" due to its wealth and ignores God and what He desires of all people.
 - ii) What I am leading up to is the idea that the king desires his bride (symbolic of us believers) and the bride should desire to be with the king. At the same time the bride has to beware of temptations that could turn her away from the king.
 - iii) Back at this wedding, wealthy people show up. This verse could be alluding to the temptation for the bride to turn away from God and be tempted by what could be gained in this world. The point for you and me of all of this ancient history is that God wants us to desire Him and Him alone. The temptation to turn from Him to other things of this world (including wealth) is always there.
 - iv) If I'm wrong, the verse just means we get some nice wedding gifts one day. ☺
15. Verse 13: All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold.
 - a) Meanwhile, positive things are being said about the princess. Again, remember that this is a "wedding psalm", and the allusions in this verse about how the bride is being prepared in a wonderful way for her groom. In the last verse, we had references to men of power coming to the wedding. Here in Verse 13, we have the bride in preparation for the wedding getting dressed in a fine wedding gown mixed with gold.
 - b) OK John, all of this sounds really nice. How do we know this section of the psalm is not just describing an ancient wedding? The answer is earlier in this psalm we had references to the groom as God and at the same time is not God the Father. Christian scholars see this as a reference to Jesus as our future husband and the fact He is God at the same time.
 - i) Which leads to these latter verses of the psalm. If we are being prepared to marry Jesus, we should take joy in that. We will be prepared for this eternal marriage and have all sorts of blessings and honors that go with it.
 - ii) For a person living at the time when this psalm was written, one could only imagine a world where a bride could wear a dress lined with gold and the guests coming to the wedding were powerful people of that region.
 - iii) I believe what this psalm wants us to realize is just how blessed we are to be eternally married to the Son of God forever. The greatest way to show the love that God has for us and the love that God wants us to return to Him is to show that eternal love as being described as a royal wedding. It is a picture that most people can relate to as a relationship of perfect love.

16. Verse 14: In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her and are brought to you. ¹⁵ They are led in with joy and gladness; they enter the palace of the king.
- a) At this point, the bride is lead to the king for the wedding itself. The ceremony even describes bride maids that follow the bride to see the king. This verse may be an origin of why we have bride maids at a wedding, but I'll save that discussion for another day. Finally, these two verses describe the joy and gladness as the ceremony is taking place.
 - b) OK John, all of this sounds very happy. What should I get out of these verses?
 - i) Well, if we are that bride and we are to marry our king, we should be happy as this psalm represents our future. For us men, it may be hard for us to visualize being a female marrying Jesus. The idea is not about all of us being grown women marrying Jesus. The idea is Christians in heaven will be individuals; we will also be united as one entity, and united for the purpose of marrying Jesus forever.
 - ii) I don't know what God has stored for believers for eternity in heaven. I'm sure it won't be boring. I can't think of a better way to start an eternal love relationship than to have a wedding ceremony to express the love between Jesus and believers. It is God who has drawn us to Him. God in return asks us to express that love back to Him. That is what this wedding ceremony represents.
 - iii) Well John, if this is describing an eternal wedding, who are the virgin companions in the wedding? It could be a reference to other saved people who are not part of the Christian church. On the other hand, it could just be part of the wedding picture that people can relate to.
17. Verse 16: Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land.
- a) This verse is another promise to the new bride of the king. The promise is that this marriage will produce sons, and those sons will be princes through out the land.
 - i) Again, on one level, this psalm is about the marriage of a king. If one is the bride, one could hope to produce sons for the king who would be princes in the land.
 - b) I have to admit, in my analogy of us marrying Jesus as our king, this verse is puzzling. I don't believe we produce children in heaven. The bible never, ever even hints of the idea of new babies being born in heaven. It wouldn't be "fair" if there were new babies, as such children would never be tested to see if they deserve to be in heaven forever.
 - c) So John, if this verse is not about literally producing sons, what is it saying?
 - i) For starters, it could be simply an allusion to a wedding, giving our lives to serving God and in that sense our children here on earth would be princes in that they would be raised to serve God as well.
 - ii) The image for the bride is to "forget" about where she came from in the concept that her family is now second because her primary focus is on the king and doing his will. Just like a woman getting married, she must put the needs of her parents and her siblings "second" as she is now part of a new family in her new marriage.
 - iii) The point is that when we "marry our king", which again, is an reference to our present and future relationship with Jesus, that relationship now becomes the main focus of our lives over and above our previous family relationship. Even whatever is produced by that relationship becomes greater than our "old" family here on earth. In practicality, it doesn't mean we ignore our siblings and our parents. It means we see them in the light of being secondary importance to whether or not we are living a life to be pleasing to our king.
 - iv) Another way to view the idea of children as it is being discussed in this verse, is that once a husband and wife dedicate their lives to following Jesus, usually such a couple then raise children to also follow Jesus. That is another way to read that sons (or children) reference in this verse.

18. Verse 17: I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.
- a) First question: Is this final verse talking about the bride or the groom? Who is the "I" in this verse and why do the nations praise "I" forever and ever?
 - i) I believe the "I" is for Christians. Even believers of that day could possibly apply in that they may see their lives as married to God, even though they didn't fully grasp the concept of the Messiah and what was His role for Israel.
 - ii) The fact that we live a life pleasing to God is passed on to other people. Until God does wrap up the world as we know it, Christians are to continue to spread the word about Jesus and praise of His name will continue through all generations.
 - iii) Let me tackle this issue another way: At the time of this writing, the knowledge of God was limited to the nation of Israel and maybe a few nations around that area. After the time of Jesus, Christianity spread around the world. Therefore, this verse has come true in that the name of God has spread to the nations and the name of God will be spread throughout the rest of human history and we will praise Him both now in our lives and forever in Heaven.
 - b) The point of this final verse for us Christians is not only should we see Jesus as our future husband, but as someone we should honor Him with our lives here and now. The point is we make God first and foremost in our life, and that gives us the ability to interact with those people who are around us.
 - c) Let me also add this important thought: All of this allusion to a wedding does not mean we as Christians have to stay single as we are only marrying God. It means that we honor God with our lives and trust Him through our lives. If we think of God as being first and foremost in our lives, then we draw on His strength to interact with those around us and that even includes our spouses, family and friends.
 - d) If you recall, the last lesson was fairly depressing and focused on suffering and not knowing why we are going through suffering. I promised at the end of the last lesson that this lesson would be a lot more upbeat and positive. After all of this happy talk about our future wedding, I believe I came through with that promise. ☺
19. I want to end this lesson with another thought. Why have one psalm that combines the images of God not only as our future husband, but as our warrior? Why have both images in this psalm?
- a) Part of the answer is to understand what God does for us, both now, and in our future eternal relationship with Him. In other words, God is not just some "entity" we are going to marry for eternity in heaven. He is also a God who cares about us now and wants to protect us now, since He wants to be with us for eternity.
 - b) In summary, how is Jesus like a warrior on our behalf? In the present, I see it as calling upon God to fight against the evil forces we have to deal with in our life. He is somehow orchestrating our battles so that He does get His will accomplished through us.
 - i) In the future, there will come a day after we are married to Jesus, where He, as a warrior will come to earth to defeat all forces that refuse to accept Him as ruling over the world at that time. More on that thought in the next three psalms.
 - ii) Therefore, we can and should see God both as our warrior who fights on our behalf now as well as our future husband who desires to be with us forever.
20. On that happy note, let's pray: Father, I thank You that You are always watching over me and watching out for my life. I don't know what is going to happen to me "today or tomorrow" but I trust that You are looking out for my best, You are fighting on my behalf in that You want to lead me down the path You desire for me. You want me to have victory over whatever obstacles and forces that resist Your will for My life. At the same time, we as believers, need to remember that we have a wonderful, eternal future with You in heaven, where we share an eternal love relationship that will go on for eternity. We thank You in advance for all that You will do for us and thank You Father, for providing Jesus for us now and for all of eternity.