

When the Bride Finds Favor with Her Groom



“Daughters of kings are among your honored women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.”

Psalms 45:9

“Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.”

Esther 2:17

There’s nothing more charming than a woman in love, preparing to wed the man of her dreams, except when that woman is the beloved and beautiful Bride of Christ who is smitten with her King!

In **Psalms 45** we read about an upcoming royal wedding where the queen wears a one-of-a-kind stunning gold gown. The bridegroom, who was also a king, naturally had his

pick of all the honorable virgins in the realm. **“Kings’ daughters were among thy honorable women...”** But he searched for, and found, his one and only beloved. **“...upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir”** (Psalm 45:9).

At that time, the gold of Ophir was the purest, most valuable gold found anywhere, and this bride wore it from head to toe. As we can only imagine, she was a sight to behold as she was **“...brought unto the king...”** (verse 14). And because she was completely devoted to her man, with eyes for only him, she was in a class by herself, more beautiful than any other virgin.

Her gown was woven of rare and precious materials with incredibly fine handwork. Unlike any other gown ever made, its threads were made of pure gold, embellished with dazzling gems.

When her moment came, she walked slowly toward her King with adoring crowds watching, but she only had eyes for Him. Accompanied by an orchestra made up of stringed instruments and horns the sound was glorious. Following her was a long line of virgins, dressed in white finery, singing and dancing with great rejoicing. Together they approached the waiting groom.

Finally, we see her standing beside her beloved, and the crowd goes wild with joy, because this isn’t just any royal wedding. It’s the wedding of all time—the royal wedding of our Savior, Jesus Christ and His Bride. **“...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. 45:14-15).

Can you imagine such a sight? The greatest Holy Ghost celebration ever! These nuptials are the culmination—the very reason for all Creation! The groom, King Jesus, studies His beloved with eyes filled with tender love—toward the redeemed of all mankind, dressed in the very righteousness of Christ! She is gloriously covered in His favor, ready to be His Queen!

This is the heartwarming picture exemplified by the wonderful, courageous story of Esther, a foreshadowing of the wedding of the Bride and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Preparation of a Queen

In Esther 1: 12 it says, **“But when they conveyed the king’s order to Queen Vashti, she refused to come, this made the king furious and he burned with anger.”** When the queen was summoned to come before the king, Vashti decided that she didn’t feel like it. What did the king do when she refused to come? He became irate because nobody, but nobody was allowed to refuse a request from the king. Vashti is a type of the flesh, the willful, rebellious side of our human personalities.

So here we see the king rejecting the rebellious Vashti and seeking to replace her with a new queen. We see this same confrontation going on inside each and every one of us. God is seeking after His Queen—a mature Bride who has a heart for her Groom. And just as the king became angry and rejected the rebellious nature of his queen, we should also reject our carnal desires and become that wise virgin of Matthew 25, devoted to our King.

I can remember taking long walks at night, talking with the Lord. As I walked by each house, the Lord would ask me to pray that family to make room for Him. He spoke to me about the need for preparation, the need to keep oil in my lamp. He said, **“Steve, do you value the anointing? Do you really want it? The greater the preparation the greater the anointing.”** He spoke to me about the value of spending time in His presence, resting in His glory and being content to just be with Him. He said to prepare, because now is the time, as favor rests upon those who prepare!

In Esther 2:12 we read, **“Before each young woman was taken to the king’s chambers, she was given the prescribed twelve months of beauty treatments, six months with oil of myrrh, followed by six months with special perfumes and ointments. When it was time for her to go to the king’s palace she was given her choice of whatever clothing or jewelry she wanted to take from the harem. That evening she was taken to the king’s private rooms and the next morning she was brought to the second harem where the king’s wives lived.”**

Look closely at the process this beautiful bride Esther went through: a year-long purification process, preparing her for one night with the king. In other words, she didn’t go strolling into his chambers and say, “Hey, I’m Esther.” In fact, she went through months of preparation: she had to soak in certain types of ointments and perfumes and fragrances. She had to be as attractive as possible to vie with other contestants for the attention of a king in order to save her nation from extinction.

Did you know that, just like in the story of Esther, there is also a **purification process** through which the Lord takes His Bride where she’s soaking, saturating herself in the ointment in the Holy Spirit? She is being purified, prepared to be that mature Bride He is seeking, the one she will love and serve with all her heart forever.

The Wind Blowing Through the Church

I heard the Lord say that purification is coming to the church. In May of 1993, I was right out of Bible School when I had my first vision. I was downstairs in the family room sitting on a hope chest when I saw a powerful wind blow through a church and a broom begin to sweep from the back of the church all the way up to the pulpit. I was amazed at what I’d seen. My heart pounded hard in my chest as I saw the windows blow open and the wind blowing through the church when the Lord said, **“I’m cleansing My temple. I’m**

purifying My people and I'm causing the wind of the Holy Spirit to blow from the back row to the pulpit to purify it completely."

Since that day I've held on to that word knowing that God is doing exactly that—purifying His Bride in preparation for His soon return. The cleansing of both our hearts and the corporate body of the church.

The king loved Esther more than any of the other young women; he was so delighted with her that he set the royal crown on her head and declared her queen to replace Vashti. To celebrate the occasion, he threw a great banquet for all his nobles and officials in Esther's honor, declaring a public holiday in the provinces and giving generous gifts to everyone.

In our scripture passage, we see Esther, who has prepared after bathing and soaking in rare and precious oils, doing what she knew she needed to do. And because of her obedience, the favor of God rested upon her. **Today I declare that if you're preparing yourself to be the mature Bride of Jesus Christ, you have God's favor and anointing resting upon you so that you'll be blessed in every step you take!**

The favor of God will rest upon you as you draw near and prepare yourself, submitting to Him in every area of your life. If we want the favor of God we have to be willing to prepare ourselves, to seek holiness and purity and to pick up the cross and follow hard after God.

He Is a Jealous God

In Exodus 34:14 we read this profound statement: **"...for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God"** (Exodus 34:14).

Does that mean we can provoke jealousy in our God? Absolutely. In 1 Corinthians 10:22 we read, **"Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?"** Here Paul is asking, "You have testified that you love Him. You've even taken His name. Yet, has someone or something else stolen your heart?"

My heart's desire is that we're able to stand before the Bridegroom, so he can say, **"This is My beloved, the very one who spent a great deal of time with Me. You couldn't wait for morning to get up and meet Me, and you always spent time with Me at bedtime. We've had great times together because you were always expectantly waiting to be with Me. We are in harmony, never to be apart again."** His eyes filled with tender love when He spoke those words. It was His deepest heart's desire.

"Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah 2:32). We dare not let the fire of our love burn low but fan the embers into a flame that changes everything—forever.

In other words, going to church doesn't make you a Bride. A true Bride is one who simply loves God more than anyone or anything else and will follow Him wherever He goes. Are you seeking Him with all your heart? That's the question we must answer; our placement in eternity depends on it.

It's not easy. But who said it would be? Let's take a look at this word "crucify". Notice how Paul uses the phrase, "Crucify your flesh." Literal crucifixion means having massive nails mercilessly pounded through your hands and feet, but in the same way the crucifixion of your flesh is the prerequisite for becoming a mature Bride, where His divine nature and favor rests upon you.

As we end this article I want you to ponder the Lord's call to preparation. Will you be as Esther and respond to the call with a yes answer, soaking in His presence to be a carrier of the very glory of God so that, when the wedding day arrives (Revelation 19:7-9), you will be that mature Bride who knows Him intimately, and because you trust Him so implicitly you're willing to submit your life to His leadership?

Even as The Shulamite woman in the Song of Solomon went through purification in order to be a carrier of the manifest presence of God, we must open the door to the knocks and yearnings of the heart of God, daring to be carriers of the glory!

I see a crown of favor resting upon your head—the very beauty of the Lord is upon you. You are the Queen arrayed in gold! All the people of God call you blessed because the sweet aroma of divine favor rests upon your life. God is looking for those who will yield so they can carry the presence. May you be such a one!

Father, may my dear friend reading this article today yield to Your will, that they may flow in divine favor and be a glory carrier, so that the world may see You in us!

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