

PSALM 16

I. BIBLICAL TEXT

The Lord the Psalmist's Portion in Life and Deliverer in Death

A Mikhtam of David

1 Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You. 2 I said to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good besides You." 3 As for the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight. 4 The sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied; I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, nor will I take their names upon my lips. 5 The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot. 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me. 7 I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. 8 I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. 11 You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. TYPE OF PSALM

1. INDIVIDUAL TRUST

- o Like Psalms 4; 11; 16; 23; 27:1-6; 62; and 131

2. A 'MIKHTAM'

a. In the heading of five other Psalms

- **Psalms—56-60**—are all laments

b. Possible meanings

1. From **nichtab** = 'writing'

- A poem or song
- Hezekiah's 'writing'—was a poetic song—celebrating his recovery from illness—cf. **Is 38:9-20**

2. From cognate of Akkadian **katamu** = 'to cover'

- Possibly—a 'silent' prayer
- Possibly—referring to atonement
- Possibly—a Psalm previously unknown

3. From noun **ketem** = 'gold'

- A 'Golden' psalm

4. A technical term—meaning ‘inscription’

- An epigram with pithy sayings—like mottos

B. AUTHORSHIP

- DAVID—ATTRIBUTED IN HEADING—“**A Mikhtam of David**”

C. OCCASION

1. A DIFFICULT SITUATION

- o Eliciting from David a strong affirmation of trust in the Lord

2. POSSIBLE SITUATIONS

- a. While being pursued and persecuted by Saul—I Sam 18-26

- b. While David lived in exile with the Philistines—I Sam 27

- This would fit context of David being among idolaters—v4

- c. During a severe illness or similar danger

D. THEMES

1. TRUST IN GOD—A PRAYER OF CONFIDENCE

- o Petitions the Lord for protection
- o Affirms what God delivers to those who trust Him

2. LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS

- a. The **loyal servant**—devoted and dependent upon God for all things

- Security—v1
- Welfare—v2
- Human relationships—v3
- Worship—v4
- Aspirations—vv5-6

- b. The **faithful Lord**—who gives [the following]

- Guidance
- Stability
- Deliverance—resurrection
- Life—eternal bliss

3. GOD SUSTAINS AND PROTECTS THE TRULY RIGHTEOUS PERSON

E. STRUCTURE

1. FOUR STANZAS—*Keil and Delitsch*

- o vv 1-3—5 lines
- o vv 4-5—5 lines
- o vv 6-8—6 lines
- o vv9-11—7 lines

2. OUTLINE

A. STATEMENT OF TRUST—PETITIONING FOR PROTECTION

1. Those who trust in the Lord—**vv1-3—stanza one**
 - a. Take refuge in God—**v1**
 - b. Depend exclusively on the Lord—**v2**
 - c. Have fellowship with likeminded saints—**v3**
2. Those who do not trust in the Lord—**vv4-5—stanza two**
 - a. Their sorrows are multiplied—v4
 - b. I will not worship with or support them—v4
 - c. By contrast—the Lord is my portion and cup—v5

B. AFFIRMATION OF WHAT GOD DELIVERS TO THOSE WHO TRUST

1. The ‘trust’ bequeathed—my inheritance in the Lord—**vv6-8—stanza three**
 - a. Its boundless beauty—**v6**
 - b. His counsel and instruction—**v7**
 - c. His strong presence—**v8**
2. The ‘trust’ gives certain hope—**vv9-11—stanza four**
 - a. Joyful security—dwell securely—**v9**
 - b. Promise of deliverance—**v10**
 - c. The path of life—in God’s presence—**v11**

F. BIBLICAL CONTEXT

1. LIKE **PSALMS 4 AND 11**—EXPRESSES GREAT CONFIDENCE IN JEHOVAH
2. CONTINUES THIS THEME FROM THE END OF **PSALM 15**

15:5b—*He who does these things will never be shaken.*

16:8—*Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.*
3. PETER QUOTED IT IN HIS FIRST SERMON—AT PENTECOST

- o Acts 2:25-28 = LXX version of Ps 16:8-11a

4. PAUL QUOTED IT IN HIS FIRST SERMON—AT PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

- o Acts 13:35—quotes v10b—*You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay*
- o Paul explained—how this messianic prophecy applied to Christ—in Acts 13:32-37

III. EXPOSITION

STANZA ONE—THOSE WHO TRUST IN THE LORD—vv1-3

Take refuge in the God—v1

Depend exclusively on the Lord—v2

Have fellowship with likeminded saints—v3

VERSE 1—THE PETITIONER TAKES REFUGE

1. He appeals to 'Ei'
 - o Not creator God Elohim—God above all gods
 - o But to the 'Mighty One'—the only One who is mighty
2. **The Petition = Preserve** me = guard—keep—protect
 - o Suggests imminent danger—actual suffering
 - o Repeated theme of pilgrim's Psalm 121—the Lord is your keeper
3. I **take refuge** in You—the **refugee** finds safety here
 - a. Perfect verb—have taken refuge—regularity from past to present
 - Parallels 7:1 and 11:1—in you I **have** taken refuge
 - b. Refuge = trust (chacah)
 1. Not just believe (aman), be sure, hope
 - But confident enough to take refuge
 2. Usages previous to Psalm 16
 - How blessed are those who trust—2:12
 - Let all those who trust in Thee rejoice—5:11
 3. Used 24 times in Psalms

VERSE 2—DEPEND EXCLUSIVELY ON THE LORD

1. Psalmist moves from God the Mighty One—to covenant God and Lord

o Personal aspect of God—contrasted with impersonal idol-gods

2. I said to **Jehovah** you are my **Adonai**

- a. Emphasizes lordship aspect of Jehovah God—You are my Owner
- b. Suffix to Lord—my—is emphatic—**my** Lord
- c. You are my Lord—implies I am Your servant

3. I have no good besides you

- a. My good = welfare, prosperity—not moral goodness
- b. Literally = my good is not beyond (in addition) you
- c. Means two things
 - 1. My good is in you—what I need is You
 - Jehovah Himself is the *summum bonum*—the greatest happiness
 - 2. And it cannot come from anything beyond You
 - a. Not existentially—no other god possesses what You do
 - b. Not provisionally—no other provision can satisfy
 - c. It cannot be found in anything else—like the idols of verse 4
 - d. Just as no affliction can diminish this goodness
 - ▲ Likewise—nothing else outside God can increase it
- e. Further explained in **Ps 73:25**

Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.

4. The Psalmist is confident—his needs will be met—by God

- o Normally—the servant takes care of the master’s needs
- o Here—the Lord takes care of the servant’s needs

5. The Lord is the only source of good things

- a. The Father is the giver of every good/perfect gift—**Jas 1:17**
- b. Implies the Psalmist service must be exclusive—*only* to the Lord
- c. Monotheistic view—repudiates all other gods—v4—who cannot deliver

VERSE 3—HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH LIKEMINDED SAINTS

1. **KJV** reads—“With the saints”

- a. Seems to connect them with verse 4—the pagans—where the next verb is

- b. But a better reading is—“As for the saints”—a stand-alone clause
- 2. Saint = **kedoshim**
 - a. Like **αγιοι** in NT—those dedicated to service of the Lord
 - b. ‘Saints’—in OT sometime are heavenly beings—so distinction must be made—*in the earth*
- 3. They are the congregation upon this earth—dedicated to God
 - a. Like the Psalmist—in verse 3—they depend on the Lord for all ‘good’
 - b. Contrasted with pagans—in verse 4—who depend on empty gods
- 4. The Psalmist delights in fellowship—with these ‘saints’

STANZA TWO—THOSE WHO DO NOT TRUST IN THE LORD—vv4-5

Their sorrows are multiplied—v4

I will not worship with or support them—v4

By contrast—the Lord is my portion and cup—v5

VERSE 4

- 1. If this was when David was with the Philistines
 - o There were those who had intentionally driven him away
 - o Their expectation—David would lose his inheritance and serve other gods—I Sam 26:19
- 2. Contrast—those who *‘bartered for another god’*
 - o Who ‘have strived to attain another god’
 - o Who ‘have chased after another god’
- 3. Obvious violation of First Commandment—**Ex 20:3**—*have no other Gods before Me*
- 4. The result
 - a. Their sorrows are multiplied
 - b. Like the curse of Eve
 - Gen 3:16**—*I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth*
- 5. David’s response—because He served only the Lord—He would not associate with them
 - a. I will not participate in their worship—drink offerings of blood
 - Drink offerings of blood = animal blood sacrifices
 - Possibly—offering sacrifices with blood-stained guilty hands
 - b. I will not acknowledge them—not utter their names

VERSE 5

1. The main benefit = *the Lord is my portion of my inheritance*
 - a. Portion = allotment of Promised Land assigned to each tribe
 - b. David applies the Levites' 'portion' to himself
 1. Levites did not have security of territory—no 'portion'—Dt 18:1-2
 2. Instead—God told them—*I am your portion and your inheritance*—Nu 18:20
 3. David's 'portion' was the Lord Himself
 4. Maybe David understood this to apply to all Israel—the 'kingdom of priests' Ex 19:6
 - c. Even—no *especially*—in the face of adversity—He was David's portion
 - d. When Israel lost everything else—it still had Him as its portion—Lam 3:24
2. The Lord is *my cup*
 - a. Contrasts with pagan drink offerings of blood
 - b. He is the source of all refreshment and nourishment
 - c. Ps 23:5—*He anoints my head with oil, my cup overflows*

STANZA THREE—THE TRUST BEQUEATHED MY INHERITANCE IN THE LORD—vv6-8

Its boundless beauty—v6

His counsel and instruction—v7

His strong presence—v8

VERSE 6

1. *Lines* = —probably refers to boundaries of allotments to tribes
2. David's 'lines' were bigger than any single territory—because His heritage was the Lord
3. New Testament parallel

Ph 1:21—*for me to live is Christ and to die is gain*

Ph 3:8—*I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish, so that I may gain Christ and may be found in Him*
4. *Pleasant places* = the beauty of the Lord
 - o **Greek ideal**
 - o **Catholic description = beatific vision**
 - o **Beulah Land**

Ps 27:4—*One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD And to meditate in His temple.*

Is 33:17—*Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; They will behold a far-distant land.*

VERSE 7

1. The Lord's guidance—is two-fold
 - a. God counsels—but does not coerce—but guides
 - He has encouraged David—faithfully along the right path—and will continue to do so
 - c. God teaches—with firmness
 1. Closer to 'chasten'—in **6:1; 94:12**
 2. Warning against false ways
 3. Schooling in hard facts of life
2. His 'mind' instructs him
 - o Literally—'my kidneys'—innermost being—heart—instructs him
3. In the night

Ps 63:6-7—*When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy.*

VERSE 8

1. Right hand—You stand by me
 - a. Position of nearness that offers protection—in battle
 - b. Position of defender—advocate—in court
2. Right hand—reiterated in **v11**
3. New Testament parallel—the preserving presence of God

I Th 5:23—*Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without lame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*
4. Peter quotes LXX version **vv8-11a**—as Messianic prophecy—**Acts 2:25-28**

STANZA FOUR—THE 'TRUST' GIVES CERTAIN HOPE—**vv9-11**

Joyful security—dwell securely—v9

Promise of deliverance—v10

The path of life—in God's presence—v11

VERSE 9

David's heart is joyful—because he dwells securely in the Lord

VERSE 10

1. **Soul**—here means the whole person
2. You will not abandon = you will not give me up
 - a. Reminds us of **Ps 6:4-5**—*rescue me, for there is no mention of you in death/Sheol*
 - b. Great confidence—even in the face of death
3. Not undergo decay
 - a. Not accomplished by humans—but at great cost

Ps 49:7-9—*No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever, that he should live on eternally, that he should not undergo decay.*
 - b. Paul quotes 10b—and applies its meaning to Christ—**Acts 13:35-37**
 - c. Peter quotes it—in his Pentecost sermon—**Acts 2:27**
 1. Explains—however—that David did die
 2. But points out—David was prophesying about Christ
4. Not just delivery from death/grave—but permanent safety
 - o This points to life—**eternal**—in last verse

VERSE 11

1. **Make known to me** = not just theoretical knowledge—but practical experience
2. The **path of life**—leads **upward**—in contrast with Sheol
 - o The 'living' way—alludes to Christ—who is The Way
 - o Points to the ultimate goal—eternal life
3. **Your presence is**
 - o Walking with God daily—is a present opportunity
4. **Fullness** = satisfying
 - o Same root used in **17:5**—*I will be satisfied when I awake*
5. The same **right hand**—that is present to guard now (**v8**)—will guide us then

