

Psalm 16

A Michtam of David.

“Psalm 16”: The attitude of the righteous man is described in life (verses 1-8) and death (verses 9-11).

1. In life, his attitude is one of trust (verse 1);
2. Gratefulness for God’s goodness (verse 2);
3. Delight in God’s people (verse 3);
4. Separation from idolatrous worship (verse 4; compare Exodus 23:13; Deut. 12:3);
5. Satisfaction in God’s gracious provisions (verse 5);
6. Satisfaction in God’s gracious provisions (verse 6);
7. Praise for the Lords counsel (verse 7);
8. And steadfastness in spiritual devotion (verse 8);
9. In facing death, the righteous man rejoices and is hopeful (verse 9);
10. He is confident that God will preserve him for the decay of death and that death will not result in his corruption (verse 10);
11. Rather, he will travel down “the path of life”, that is, the path leading to life, which will terminate in God’s joyful presence (verse 11).

David’s confidence in his ultimate destiny is valid for him (and for all believers), only because Christ has traveled down that path and paved the way for all who believe in Him (Acts 2:25-28).

Verses 1-11: The only prayer of Psalm 16 comes in the first line. The rest of the psalm consists of David’s weaving together his personal testimonies of trust in the Lord. In view of this, David’s opening prayer is bolstered by two cycles of testimony.

- (1) David’s Introductory Prayer (16:1);
- (2) David’s Testimony (16:2-11).
 - A. His testimony of Communion (16:2-4).
 1. Its divine dimension (16:2);
 2. It’s human dimension (16:3-4).
 - B. His Testimony of Confidence (16:5-11).
 1. Its past and present dimensions (16:5-8);
 2. Its present and future dimensions (16:9-11).

“A Michtam of David”: Compare Psalms 56, 57, 58, 59 and 60. In spite of many conjectures, this designation remains obscure.

Verses 1-2: These verses include three different names for God: Elohim (the powerful creator God), Yahweh (the covenant-giving God), and Adonai (the Lord and Master of life). David saw in all these names the personal presence of God in his life. "My goodness" speaks of the psalmist's welfare, not his character.

Psalm 16:1 "Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust."

"Preserve me": This is a frequent request begging God to protect the psalmist (compare 17:8; 140:4; 141:9).

Michtam means engraving, or a poem. This prayer of David not only asks for God to preserve him, but shows the perfect trust that David has in the Lord as well. Preserve here, is really a protection as a shepherd protects his sheep. Jesus is the great Shepherd. He watches over us and keeps us from harm. The blood of Jesus protects us from the wiles of the devil.

Psalm 16:2 "[O my soul], thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou [art] my Lord: my goodness [extended] not to thee;"

"My goodness extended not to thee": I.e., "My well-being is entirely dependent upon You."

Psalm 16:3 "[But] to the saints that [are] in the earth, and [to] the excellent, in whom [is] all my delight."

Who are sanctified or set apart by God the Father in election. Whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ in redemption, and who are sanctified or made holy by the Spirit of God in the effectual calling. And who live a holy life and conversation. These are said to be "in the earth", not to distinguish them from the saints in heaven, to whom the goodness of Christ extends as to them. Unless it be to distinguish them from the angels in heaven, who are called saints (Deut. 33:2); as Aben Ezra observes. But to point out the place of their abode, scattered up and down in the earth. And to show that love, grace, goodness, and kindness of Christ reaches to them in the present state of things. Notwithstanding all their meanness and imperfection in themselves, and their despicableness in the eyes of others (see John 13:1).

"And to the excellent": The same with the saints, who though reckoned by men the faith of the world, and the off scouring of all things, are in high esteem with Christ. They are "nobles" in his account, as the word is rendered (in Jer. 30:21). They are princes in all the earth, and these princes are kings. They are made kings and priests unto God by Christ. They wear and live like kings, and have the attendance, power, riches, and glory of kings. They are guarded by angels, they have power with God, they are rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom.

"In whom is all my delight": Christ's delights were with these sons of men before the world was, and have always continued with them. They are his "Hepzibah" ("My delight is in her"), and "Beulah" (as in Isa. 62:4). Hence, he became incarnate, and suffered and died for them, and makes application of all the blessings of his grace and goodness to them.

The soul of man has to do with the will of man. The flesh and the spirit are in conflict. The man's will (soul), either follows the flesh and sin, or follows the spirit and God. Notice the soul of the man above has declared the Lord. Man has no goodness to extend to God. God's goodness extends to man, when the man decides to follow God. The difference in a Christian and a non-Christian is: Christians follow the will of their spirit, and non-Christians follow the desires of their flesh. Saints are followers of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2 "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called [to be] saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"

Psalm 16:4 "Their sorrows shall be multiplied [that] hasten [after] another [god]: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips."

David had seen the idols of Moab and Philistia, and he had heard about his own people's history of idolatry (106:37-38). The principles of God's holiness kept him from giving in to the same temptations.

He will have nothing to do with false gods or the people pursuing them.

False gods are everywhere today. Satan worshippers actually drink blood as part of their ceremony. The drinking of blood is absolutely forbidden by God. The things the believers in Christ had to keep were the following.

Acts 21:25 "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written [and] concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from [things] offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication."

God is a jealous God. He will not share His people with false gods. The very first commandments in the 10 commandments are:

#1 "Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

#2 Exodus 20:4 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness [of any thing] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth:"

#3 Exodus 20:5 "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate me;"

#4 Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

God does not even want the names of false gods mentioned.

Exodus 23:13 "And in all [things] that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."

Verses 5-6: These lines use Old Testament metaphors to describe the blessing of God.

Psalm 16:5 "The LORD [is] the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot."

The word "lot" means circumstances, or the place God has put a person. People do well to recognize, as David did, the daily provisions of God.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Galatians 5:24 "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

The LORD Jesus Christ is our portion. We inherit eternal life because of our faith in Him. Just as God was the portion for Aaron, and he owned no earthly treasures, we need no earthly portion. The earth is not our home. Our treasures are in Jesus in heaven. We have inherited eternal life, just by our faith in Jesus Christ. He is the only portion we need.

John 6:39 "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." John 6:40 " And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and will raise him up at the last day."

Jesus is our protection now and at the end. If we profess the Lord here as our Savior, He will profess us to his Father.

Revelation 3:5 "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Psalm 16:6 "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant [places]; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

In a sweet land, flowing with milk and honey, and, above all, blessed with the presence and knowledge of the true God. The allusion is the same as it was in the preceding verse. Lines signifying the lot or tract of land which it was anciently the custom to divide by lines. Those have reason to speak in this language who have God for their portion. For they have a worthy portion, a goodly heritage. What can they have better? What can they desire more?

"Yea, I have a goodly heritage": So the Lord's people are called (1 Peter 5:3). These are Christ's heritage, his peculiar treasure, his jewels, with whom he is greatly delighted and well pleased.

More than men are with their gold and silver, houses and land, and their greatest wealth and substance. These persons are the inheritance with which he is contented and fully satisfied.

The Christian's heritage is through Abraham. He was counted righteous, because he believed. We are counted righteous, because we believe in Jesus Christ, as our Savior and Lord.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Psalm 16:7 "I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons."

God has become David's "Counsellor" (see Psalm 32:8). He makes suggestions to him which he follows, and so guides his life that he feels bound to praise and bless him for it.

"My reins also instruct me in the night seasons": The reins, according to Hebrew ideas, are the seat of feeling and emotion. David is "instructed" or "stimulated" (Hengstenberg), to bless God by the feelings which stir within him as he lies awake at night. Feelings, we must suppose, of affection and gratitude.

David was guided by the Lord in all that he did. Christians are taught and guided by the Holy Spirit of God within them. We should bless and praise the Lord continually for guiding our life. Jesus said He would send us the Comforter who would guide us into all truth.

John 14:26 "But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be our counselor.

Psalm 16:8 "I have set the LORD always before me: because [he is] at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

I have brought myself, that is, to realize the continual presence of God, alike in happiness and in trouble. I feel him to be ever with me.

"Because he is at my right hand": I.e. close to me, ready to protect and save. Therefore;

"I shall not be moved": Nothing will shake me or disturb me from my trust and confidence.

The Lord is with us even unto the end of the world. We must walk in His Light.

1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

If God be for me, who can be against me? (Romans 8:31).

Psalm 16:9 "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope."

“My glory”: Starting back at verse 7, the psalmist referred to his core of being as “my mind”, then “my heart”, now “my glory”, and next “My flesh” and “my soul”. The anthropological terms stand for the whole person, so it is best to consider “my glory” as referring to that distinctive way in which man is created in the image of God. I.e., his intelligence and ability to speak.

We must not just have faith, but rejoice in the faith. We are not like those who have no hope. Christians are assured that because Jesus rose from the grave, we shall rise also. Our joy is not in circumstances, but in knowledge of what awaits us.

Psalm 16:10 "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

These words expressed the confidence of the lesser David, but were applied messianically to the resurrection of the Greater David (the Lord Jesus Christ), both by Peter (Acts 2:25-28), and Paul (Acts 13:35).

“Hell (or Sheol)”, is the abode of the dead or the grave. “Holy One” (“Faithful One”), points prophetically to Jesus’ future resurrection (Acts 2:27; 13:35).

This is all about David who died before the crucifixion of Jesus and also about the Holy One, Jesus Christ, who rose from the grave before corruption of the flesh set in. Jesus rose on the third day. Corruption of the body begins on the fourth day. We must all die in the flesh, but we will rise again as our Savior did.

Psalm 16:11 "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence [is] fulness of joy; at thy right hand [there are] pleasures for evermore."

I.e. the path which leads to the Source and Center of all life, even God himself. The way to heaven, in contrast with corruption and Sheol. In thy presence is;

“Fulness of joy”: Literally, satiety of joy. Enough, and more than enough, to satisfy the extreme cravings of the human heart.

"At thy right hand": Rather, in thy right hand, ready for bestowal on thy saints.

"Are pleasures for evermore": An inexhaustible store, which may be drawn upon for ever.

Jesus is the path to life. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father now. We Christians will be at the right side of Jesus in heaven.

Matthew 25:34 "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"

There is joy in heaven at the throne of God. Jesus arose, and we shall arise to be in heaven with Him where there will be no more sorrow or crying. We will be in the heavenly garden with Him and rejoice forever more.

Psalm 16 Questions

1. What does Michtam mean?
2. What does the word preserve, mean in verse 1 chapter 16 of Psalms?
3. What does the soul of man have to do with?
4. What protects us from the wiles of the devil?
5. The flesh and the _____ are in conflict.
6. What is the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian?
7. Who are saints?
8. What is one terrible thing Satan worshippers do that God has directly forbidden?
9. God was Aaron's _____, and he owned no earthly treasures.
10. Where are the Christian's treasures?
11. We have inherited eternal life, just by what?
12. Who will raise the Christian up on that day?
13. Who is the Christian's Teacher and Guide?
14. What cleanses us from all sin?
15. Because Jesus arose from the grave, we shall _____.
16. Our joy is not in circumstances, but in what?
17. What day does corruption of the body begin after death?
18. Who is the path of life?
19. Jesus is the _____, the _____, and the _____.