

## PSALMS 16

This Psalm is strongly, if not entirely, Messianic. As we go through the verses, we will see expressions of the feelings of Christ's human nature related to His suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation. We will see how these feelings He had are similar to those we have. (See Also Hebrews 2:18 and 4:15)

Several references in the New Testament by Peter and Paul link verses from this Psalm to Christ. Peter in Acts 2:25-31 argued that the words of the Psalm are related to Christ and not to David. Paul made a similar argument in Acts 13:35-37.

{16:1} Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge. {2} I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." {3} As for the saints who are in the land, they are the glorious ones in whom is all my delight.

Clearly, the life of Jesus showed that He was kept safe from harm during the early years as He grew up from a child to a man. Examples are: The danger from Herod, the preservation of the family in Egypt, the time in the Temple when was away from Mary and Joseph, the wilderness experience, and the many traps and tricks of the Pharisees during His earthly ministry.

Applying the first verse to our situation we see that the most basic need people have is security from harm. Next on our "needs" list is provision for sustaining life. We cannot move past the most basic needs until those needs are met. If our life is threatened, then enjoying the finer things of life pales into insignificance. We may attempt to satisfy such needs with locks on doors, insurance, savings accounts, and a freezer full of food, but our place of safety must be in God Who (only) is able to protect us. Once we have committed such matters to Him, then we can go on with life. Those who are paranoid are prevented from enjoying anything else in life.

Once our "safety from harm" need has been satisfied, we then move to providing for food and shelter. If we are not careful we can let such concerns dominate our lives. When this happens we miss the higher joys of life because materialism becomes all consuming. Jesus (in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:25-34) told us to "take no thought" about such things. The truly "good things" are not material but are spiritual and are found in the Kingdom of God. Therefore, Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these other things will be added unto you."

The rendering of the first three verses of this Psalm varies greatly among the available translations and paraphrases. The King James Version and the ASV start verse 2 with an additional phrase that is not in the original text: "*O my soul.*" The second part of verse 2 in the King James Version appears to tie in with verse 3. We do not see this connection in the NIV. The thought expressed in the NIV is very different from that which is in the KJV. Even the NKJV agrees with the NIV, the RSV, NRSV, and the ASV. Having pointed out all this, I would add that it appears that we can make a case to tie verses 1, 2 and 3 together.

*Keep me safe, God since I am depending only on You and by this trust I am saying that Jehovah is my Master. Any good I have is the essence of Yourself and any good that results from my life is not going to make You greater or more worthy but will benefit the saints in whom Your light shines and that gives me great delight.* (Paraphrase of verses 1-3)

{4} The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

We can but look around us to see the contrast of those who have aligned themselves with God and those who go after pagan gods or false philosophies. David writes as a type of Christ (the King) in His delight with those who have responded to God's call to come apart from the way of the world. If we want to give joy to Jesus, then we will do what He tells us to do (our actions must testify that He is Lord of our lives).

As David wrote, we must avoid the practices or even the mention of the philosophies of the ungodly and those who exalt themselves in their pride. Many of the philosophies of the humanists sound plausible and we hear and see such philosophies coming from television, we read about it in magazines, hear it in the classrooms of our schools, and even hear it coming from the pulpits of many churches. By endorsing the philosophies of the world either by practice (pour out their libations of blood or drink offerings of blood) or in our speech (take up their names on my lips) we are doing the equivalent of "running after other gods."

{5} LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. {6} The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

In a Messianic sense, Christ came to earth on an assigned mission and his lot in life was predetermined to be born to a peasant family and grow up among the common people. He did not own property or possession beyond the necessities of clothing. His portion in life was what was needed for Him to accomplish His mission. His "cup" (as used here) may be a reference to the previous verse that addressed a drink offering that the ungodly would make to their false gods. The cup that Christ had was the subject of His prayer in the garden before His arrest and crucifixion. In looking toward the drinking of that cup, He was (in His humanity) abhorred by the severity of it. He prayed to be delivered from it. However, He knew that was His assignment and He thus prayed "Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." Because He put His trust in Jehovah for His safety and a place of refuge (see verse 1) He was confident in the outcome - "you have made my lot secure." The outcome was a "delightful inheritance."

If we can accept it, God knows and will give to us exactly what we need (our portion). While we are in the midst of our "portion and our cup" we may have suffering and pain, but as we trust in God's promises we can know that the outcome of our "lot" will be plentiful and pleasant. And it is only a token of what He has laid up for us in eternity.

{7} I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

If we have Jesus in our hearts and He is enthroned as Lord of our lives, then we can trust the leading of our heart. We will do the works of God as part of who we are as the New Nature replaces the Old Nature.

{8} I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. {9} Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, {10} because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. {11} You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

The Messianic references here are many. After His exaltation, the Son is ever in the presence of the Father. We should not be confused with the reference to the right hand. We have reference where Jesus (upon completion of His mission) sat down at the right hand of the Father. Here we see that the Lord is at His right hand. These reference are not so much about physical location as to positions of power and esteem. The right hand is the hand of power, it is the position where one who is highly regarded is seated in a formal setting. The "resting secure of the body" may be a reference to the time in the grave before the resurrection or it may like be a reference to the security of the believers – those in the body of Christ who are "at rest" in Him. The mention of not being abandoned to the grave and no decay is a clear reference to the

Resurrection. The path of life is surely the way of salvation and the reference to joy in the presence of God are expression of what we will all experience in Heaven.

When we make God the number one and only priority in our lives, then we find Him at our side as the Enabler and Comforter. When we sense His presence, we are filled with joy and that joy overflows in spontaneous praise. We find security from the great enemy of death in that we know we shall live eternally with God.

As believers we have confidence that the grave is not our eternal home but that we will be raised with bodies that are incorruptible and that we will experience an exaltation (glorification) like unto that of Christ when we are presented as His in the heavenly realm.