Psalm 16 — The LORD, My Portion and My Cup

1.0 Introducing Psalm 16

1.1 “Mikhtam of David”

♦ The same heading is found on Psalms 56–60.
♦ Luther gave the meaning of “mikhtam” as “golden jewel.”
♦ The Latin Vulgate translation interpreted the word as “humble” or “blameless.”
♦ A recent suggestion was that it referred to what was called “an atonement psalm.”
♦ Others have given the interpretation as “secret (or, silent) prayer.”
♦ One of the more likely explanations was found in the old Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) 250 years before Christ: “inscription.”
♦ “Inscription” fits well with the idea of indelible preservation.
  - Jeremiah 2:22 — a related word (nikhtam) is translated “stain” to express that something is indelible.
  - Job 19:23-24 — the description of words written on stone in order to preserve them.
1.2 New Testament Usage

♦ Non-Messianic
  - Immediate crisis and immediate deliverance.
  - The psalmist’s experience is typical of all mortals.
  - The psalmist’s experience is applicable to Christ.

♦ Messianic
  - Paul in Acts 13:35.

2.0 Reading Psalm 16

16:1 A Mikhtam of David.

Preserve me, O God,
for I take refuge in You.

16:2 I said to the LORD,
“You are my Lord;
I have no good besides You.”

16:3 As for the saints who are in the earth,
They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.

16:4 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.

16:5 The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You support my lot.

16:6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;
Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.

16:7 I will bless the LORD who has counseled me;
Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.

16:8 I have set the LORD continually before me;
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

16:9 Therefore my heart is glad
and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will dwell securely.

16:10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

16:11 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.
3.0 Understanding Psalm 16

3.1 Outline

I. Petition (v. 1)
II. Confession of Faith (vv. 2-4)
III. Thanksgiving (vv. 5-11)
   A. Experiencing Blessing (vv. 5-6)
   B. Expressing Praise (v. 7)
   C. Explaining Confidence (vv. 8-11)

   (1) Looking Above (vv. 1-2)
   (2) Looking Around (vv. 3-4)
   (3) Looking Within (vv. 5-8)
   (4) Looking Beyond (vv. 9-11)

3.2 Notes

• v. 1 “God”
  ■ The name of God used here is El (as in “El Shaddai”). It is the title used of the supreme deity and indicates His strength and power.
  ■ “LORD” (= Yahweh; some pronounce it Jehovah) is the divine title that points to the covenant relationship that God has with His people.
  ■ “Lord” (= Adonai) speaks of the sovereignty and authority of God.

• vv. 3-4
  ■ David delights in the fellowship he experiences with fellow believers (“saints.” v. 3).
  ■ But, he detests the deeds and character of the ungodly. See Psalm 15:4.

• v. 4 “sorrows … will be multiplied”
  ■ The language is basically the same as that in the first line of Genesis 3:16.

• vv. 5-6
  ■ Compare David’s blessings with those of the Levites in Numbers 18:20, 24.
  ■ Expresses David’s total trust in the LORD.
- v. 7 “has counseled me”
  - The psalmist speaks of the LORD’s guidance.
  - Note that it is counsel, not coercion.

- v. 8 “I will not be shaken”
  - The reference is to stability in the life of the psalmist regardless of the circumstances in which he might find himself.
  - I will not be, I will not be moved ...

- vv. 9-10
  - Resurrection is deliverance from the realm of the dead (Sheol).
  - Peter (Acts 2:25-28) indicated that David understood the reference.
  - Paul (Acts 13:35) tied it to the covenant with David (2 Samuel 7).
  - God will not abandon David or God’s promised “seed” in the grave.

- v. 10 “to undergo decay”
  - The second half of the verse could have been fulfilled only by the Messiah. See Psalm 49:7-9; 89:48; Acts 13:36-37!
  - “[T]his language is too strong even for David’s hope of his own resurrection” (Derek Kidner, Psalms 1 – 72, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary [Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975], 86).

- v. 11 “fullness of joy”
  - See 1 Peter 1:8 (“joy inexpressible and full of glory”).

- v. 11 “the path of life” = Heaven or Earth?
  - Earth
    - “not the afterlife, but the fullness of life here and now” — Peter C. Craigie, Psalms 1–50, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 158.
    - The psalmist’s prayer was already answered – refers to undisturbed life in this world.

  - Heaven = eternal life
    - Traditionally and liturgically taken as reference to immortality.
    - Is eternal life an Old Testament concept? See Psalm 133:3.
4.0 Singing Psalm 16

**O God, Preserve Me**  
(Tune: “Amazing Grace”)

O God, preserve me, for in Thee  
Alone my trust has stood;  
My soul has said, Thou art my Lord,  
My chief and only good.

I love Thy saints, who fear Thy Name,  
And walk as in Thy sight;  
They are the excellent of earth,  
In them is my delight.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied  
Who worship aught but Thee;  
I share not in their offerings,  
Nor join their company.

The Lord is mine inheritance,  
The Lord alone remains  
The fullness of my cup of bliss;  
The Lord my lot maintains.

The lines are fallen unto me  
In places large and fair;  
A goodly heritage is mine,  
Marked out with gracious care.

— Author unknown

5.0 Praying Psalm 16

- O God, keep me safe and faithful (v. 1).
- You are my Lord. Teach me obedience (v. 2).
- Thank You for Your blessings (vv. 5-6).
- Praise the Lord for His counsel (v. 7).
- Father, thank You for being with me and strengthening me (v. 8).
- Lord, show me the path of life and give me joy (v. 11).