



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Book of Psalms

Psalm 16

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Introduction

- David was the author with no doubt as St Peter attributed it to him, (Acts 2:25-31)
- The title of this Psalm is Michtam of David
- Some think the word Michtam refers to the tune in which this psalm is sung
- And according to the Septuagint translation it means, “The inscription on a pillar to David“ so the word signifies to engrave or stamp as if the Psalm had been inscribed on a pillar, to keep it in remembrance
- Some think the word Michtam is derivative of a word signifying to hide, and signifies a secret or mystery, and indicates the depth of spiritual meaning



Introduction

- And some think the word here is 'Michab' that is found in (Isaiah 38:9); also in many other passages in the Holy Book, and thus it means 'written'
- The word Michtam also means pure or stamped gold
- This title was given to it as a reflection of its value
- A golden Psalm, expression for something rare and precious or a Psalm worthy to be written with letters of gold
- It is a very precious Psalm because it speaks so plainly of Christ and His resurrection
- There is something of David in it, but much more of Christ



Introduction

- It begins with such expressions of devotion as may be applied to Christ
- And concludes with such confidence of a resurrection which must be applied to Christ, to Him only, and cannot be understood of David, as both St. Peter and St. Paul have observed, Acts, 2:24 Acts, 13:36 that David died, and was buried, and saw corruption
- David speaks of himself as a type of Christ
- So he speaks the language of Christ Himself, to whom all the rest of the psalm is definitely and clearly applied



Introduction

Psalm Outline

- David's Introductory Prayer of Faith 16:1
- David's Confidence in God Alone 16:2-5
- David's Contentment of his Faith in the Present 16:6-7
- David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11

David's Introductory Prayer of Faith 16:1



- *Preserve me*, These words are evidently spoken by one in trouble and distress, or in danger, either from his enemies or in some other way
- As David was frequently in such circumstances, they were probably primarily spoken by him in his own person
- And this prayer is proper to Christ as man
- He offered up many prayers and supplications upon His entering on His great atoning work, particularly His passion in the garden of Gethsemane
- These also are words which often suit the circumstances of any believer, who has frequently need to pray for support under troubles and distresses

David's Introductory Prayer of Faith 16:1



- We pray to be protected against our spiritual enemies, and preserved and kept from the sins to which we are exposed
- *Preserve me*, Some other scholars think the tone of this psalm is not despair or complaint; it is settled joy
- It does not appear that the Psalmist is threatened by any special danger
- He simply calls upon God to continue His protecting care
- Only in God's keeping can soul and body be safe
- Then David follows up his request for protection with a justification for that request
- God should protect David because David puts his trust in God
- David has sought and taken refuge in God

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- David had told the Lord that He was his only hope
- He had no good beside the Lord, in the sense that he knew that he had no goodness of his own *apart from* God
- Whatever virtue, or goodness may be in him, or be done by him, it does not add any thing to God's value or worth, for He does not need him nor his service
- It was *nothing* because David's *goodness* was itself a gift of God; therefore apart from Him, it was *nothing*
- Some take these to be the words of David speaking to the church, who had owned the Lord to be her Lord, and had declared what follows in verse 3

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- St. John Chrysostom comments and says, “The psalmist moreover says, “My goodness is nothing apart from You”; therefore, you tell me, of what is God’s use if I am righteous and just? How will He be harmed if I am wicked? Is not His nature incorruptible? Is not His nature unharmed, and above any kind of pain? The slaves, however rich they may be, have nothing of their own. What they have, only belongs to their masters.”
- In verse 2 David had no hope of anything except in Him; none beyond Him; none besides Him
- In verse 3 he states, as a further proof of his attachment to God, that he regarded with deep affection the saints of God

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- That he found his happiness, not in the society of the wicked, but in the friendship of *the excellent* of the earth
- Thus he was deliberate and determined of true attachment to God and to His people
- Thus he had what must ever be essentially the evidence of true virtue - a feeling that God is all in all, and real love for those who are His
- A feeling that there is nothing beyond God, or without God, that can meet the wants of the soul, and a sincere affection for all who are His friends on earth

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- If God be ours, we must, for His sake, extend our goodness to those that are His, to *the saints who are on the earth*
- What is done to them He is pleased to consider it as done to Himself
- We must all be *the saints who are on the earth*, or we shall never be saints in heaven
- All that have taken the Lord for their God *delight* in His saints as *excellent ones*, because they bear His image
- This is applicable to Christ; the salvation He wrought out for us was no gain to God, for our ruin would have been no loss to Him
- But the goodness and benefit of it extend to us men, in whom He delights

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- Having showed his great respect and affection to the saints and servants of the true God, David now declares his outrage he had for those that worshipped idols
- He understood that those who served other gods found many *sorrows* in life
- This is the only note of sadness in the entire psalm, and it is inserted to add force by contrast to the joyful expression in ver. 5
- If men would not obey God but would *hasten after another god*, then they must not expect prosperity or joy of any kind
- Their *sorrows shall be multiplied* 'distress and anguish' will come upon them (Proverbs 1:27)

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- David knew that his life, lived for God, was not an easy one
- He experienced many hardships because he remained faithful to God
- Nevertheless, he also knew that life lived for *another god* was even *more difficult*
- It was the attitude of Peter in John 6:66-69, when he said “*Lord, to whom shall we go?*”
- Hardships are allowed to the wicked ones for they might search for repentance and turn to God
- The Lord allows these hardships for His children to purify them

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- *Their drink offerings of blood*, It seems to imply that the blood of the animals slain in sacrifice that was offered to their gods
- So David continues to vow that he will never offer the drink offerings of these other gods or even mention their names
- Some make this also applicable to Christ and His undertaking, showing the nature of the sacrifice He offered *“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood.”* (Hebrews 9:12)
- Showing also the multiplied sorrows of the unbelieving Jews, who hastened after another king, Caesar, and are still hastening after another Messiah, whom they in vain look for

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- *You are the portion of my inheritance*, God had said to Aaron, when He gave him no special inheritance in Canaan, *“I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.”* (Numbers 18:20)
- David claims the same privilege
- Most men place their delight in the enjoyments of the world and in their possessions
- But for David God is his *portion* and he needs no other regardless of how poor his condition is in this world
- Heaven is an inheritance and God Himself is the inheritance of the saints there, whose everlasting happiness is to enjoy Him

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- *my cup*, The same thing repeated in other words
- The portion of *my cup*, is the *portion* which is put into *my cup*
- The cup often denotes a man's portion or condition, as Matthew 20:22,26:39
- *my cup*, It may mean here *the cup* that refreshes and sustains me - is the Lord
- He find comfort, refreshment, happiness, in Him alone
- David was confident that God would *maintain* what He had first given to him
- God is pictured as maintaining David's assigned land

David's Confidence in God Alone

16:2-5



- Nothing shall grab him out of God's hands, nor separate him from His love
- The saints are kept by the power of God
- It may also be applied to Christ who desired to do the will of God
- He took the cup of sorrows and sufferings, which being measured out, filled up, and put into His hand by His Father
- He freely took it John 18:11
- It is God who has given Him this lot - to redeem mankind - to have them as His inheritance
- From Him Jesus has received the cup of suffering, which He shall drink for their sake

David's Contentment of his Faith in the Present 16:6-7



- *The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places*, Because God holds his lot
- *The lines*, The reference is to the measuring ropes or strings by which portions of land were measured
- The hint is the same as it was in the preceding verse
- Lines signifying the lot or piece of land which it was the custom to divide and measure by lines
- These had fallen to him *in pleasant places*
- He was pleasantly content with God and found great delight in Him

David's Contentment of his Faith in the Present 16:6-7



- David spoke with satisfaction of the Lord as something that someone had given him
- *in pleasant places*, In Jerusalem and its surrounding area; a sweet land, flowing with milk and honey, and, above all, blessed with the presence and knowledge of the true God
- David has God, a worthy portion, a goodly heritage
- What can anyone have better? Or, what can they desire more?
- *I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel*, The false gods of the nations could never give *counsel* the way the Lord gave it to David

David's Contentment of his Faith in the Present 16:6-7



- God has become David's Counselor
- *My heart also instructs me*, David's heart was instructed first by God and His Word, and therefore his heart could also instruct him in the ways of God
- His heart directs him what course to take, how to please and serve God, and to put his whole trust and confidence in Him
- David has indeed taken God for his portion and preferred spiritual and eternal blessings before those that are temporal, he thankfully acknowledge the power and goodness of divine grace directing and enabling him to make that choice
- Therefore, he praises God

David's Contentment of his Faith in the Present 16:6-7



- All this may be applied to Christ, who made the Lord His portion and was pleased with that portion
- He made His Father's glory His highest end
- He sought His Father's counsel
- He depended upon His Father to maintain His lot and to carry Him through His undertaking
- In the time of His passion, His determinations concerning the redemption of man support Him *"For the joy that was set before Him he endured the cross, despising the shame;"* Hebrews 12:2
- We may also apply it to ourselves in singing it, renewing our choice of God as ours, with a holy contentment and satisfaction

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- This verse, and all to the end of Psalm 16:11 are quoted by St. Peter in his first sermon, Acts 2:25
- He tells us expressly that David in them speaks concerning Christ and particularly of His death and resurrection
- They must certainly be applied to Christ
- In all that our Lord did, said, or suffered, he kept the glory of the Father and the accomplishment of His purpose constantly before His eyes
- Jesus tells us that He did not come down from heaven to do His own will, but the will of the Father who had sent Him, John 17:4

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- If we apply to David, he decided to put God first in his life
- He determined that God would always be his focus, his perspective
- *at my right hand*, All this is spoken by Christ as man
- Jesus has the Father's constant presence, approval, and support
- He was always in the intimate presence of His Father
- *I shall not be moved*, Nothing can change Jesus' mind from His purpose; nothing can prevent Him from fulfilling the Divine counsel, in reference to the salvation of men
- He persevered in it, till He could say, *It is finished*

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- *Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved*, This was the plain result of David's decision to put God first
- He continued to describe the benefits of his decision to *set the LORD always before him*
- This decision brought *gladness* and *glory* to David's life
- God was at his right hand for his support and assistance
- The word also denotes an inward joy, and fulness of it, because of the Lord's presence with him
- There was a security in David's life that would not have otherwise existed

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- *my heart is glad*, Jesus should go on with His undertaking, not only decisively, but joyfully, and with unspeakable pleasure and satisfaction “*shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given me,*”(John 18:11)
- It was *for the joy set before him* that *he endured the cross*, Hebrews 12:2
- *and my glory rejoices*, The Septuagint translate this, "my tongue," and this translation is followed by Peter in his quotation of the passage in Acts 2:26
- *My flesh also will rest in hope*, He should be brought from under the power of death by a glorious resurrection

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- He rested in hope, and that made His rest glorious, Isaiah 11:10
- He knew he should be justified by His resurrection, and immediately glorified, John 13:31-32
- There was happiness and a glory David knew by this life commitment that he would not have known otherwise
- The joy he spoke of in verse 9 is based on the confidence of verse 8 *I shall not be moved*
- These two verses should make us feel secure to know that God is near us
- We can be glad and can rest securely at night
- No matter what is going on around us, God is with us

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- This verse is a prophecy about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- The term, *Holy One* is several times given to the Savior, Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Acts 3:14; Luke 1:35
- It is applied to Him as being eminently Holy
- As the passage here is expressly applied to Him in the Acts of the Apostles Acts 2:27, there can be no doubt that it was intended by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to designate Him in this place
- St. Peter says that David was a prophet, and he knew that God had promised to seat one of his descendants on his throne forever

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- And so, according to Peter, David was actually looking ahead to and speaking of Christ's resurrection
- St. Paul said the same in Acts 13:34
- There Paul is arguing that Jesus was raised from the dead and that the Scripture had predicted that would happen
- He first took a passage from Isaiah 55 and interpreted it as God promising to give to Christ the promises that were made to David
- So, Christ inherits all the promises that were originally David's
- Then Paul says that one of those promises is found in Psalm 16 – the second line of verse 10 – that God wouldn't allow His Holy one to undergo decay

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- Paul says directly that indeed David did undergo decay after he died
- But – he says – the one whom God raised up – Jesus – He did not undergo decay
- The Apostle Paul referred to Psalm 16:10 as a messianic prophecy of Jesus Christ's resurrection (Acts 13:35)
- The last three verses of Psalm 16 apply directly to Christ and that they couldn't possibly apply to David in any immediate sense because his body did experience decay, but Christ's did not
- All human beings see corruption, because they are born in sin, and liable to the curse

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- The human body of Jesus Christ, as being without sin, saw no corruption
- At the same time, the psalm speaks about reassurance in death
- David described a further benefit of his life decision to *set the LORD always before him*
- It was the confidence of God's care and blessing in the life beyond
- David had the settled *hope*, total confidence, that God would not leave his *soul* in the grave (*Sheol*), but that his life would continue on in the presence of God
- This is a wonderful statement of trust in resurrection and eternal life

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- Eternity with the Lord is one great reason to be satisfied with God – even when life is hard here on earth
- We are going to be with Him forever – where, *Eye has not seen and ear has not heard what God has prepared for His people*, 1 Corinthians 2:9
- David is just generally speaking of his confidence that God would raise him from the dead some day to be with the Lord forever
- And this would be the ultimate reason why David is *satisfied with God*
- All must die, but they shall rise and though in their case they shall see corruption, yet they shall rise to everlasting life

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- Because Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of the rising of all His people
- Christ was the first fruits of them that slept
- Several had before risen from the dead, but they died again
- Jesus rose from the dead, and is alive for evermore
- Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead was the first entrance out of the grave to eternal life
- So in summary: as applicable to David, it implies that he had a firm belief in the resurrection of the dead, and a confident hope of happiness hereafter

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- As applicable to Christ, it denotes that He would be raised up to exalted honor in heaven
- As applicable to believers now, it expresses their firm and assured faith that eternal happiness and exalted honor await them in the future world
- Happiness that will be eternal
- It is not enjoyment such as we have on earth, which we feel is soon to terminate; it is joy which can have no end
- Here, in respect to any joy which we enjoy, we cannot but feel that it is soon to cease

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- *the path of life*, David seemed to understand that the benefits of this life commitment to God were received in both this life, and the life beyond
- *The path of life* is something enjoyed by the believer both now, and in eternity
- God gives us eternal life to enjoy as a present gift, extending into eternity
- *At Your right hand*, Jesus's followers will be at the right hand of God
- The right hand, even on earth, is the place of esteem, the place of honor, the place of dignity, and the place of respect

David's Joyful Confidence of his Faith for the Future 16:8-11



- And here it refers to the place which the saints will occupy in heaven
- God's people will dwell at His right hand
- When we go back to the first verse, we remember that this life of gladness and rejoicing and fullness of joy *is not* a problem-free life
- It is a life that may be challenged and face attack on many levels
- Yet in that a life commitment to God has been made and is enjoyed, it is a secure, happy, blessed life



Discussion

- What is David asking for in this Psalm? What is his request?
- How does the Psalmist speak of God in this Psalm?
- What does it mean that apart from the Lord, I have no good thing?
- Is it okay to enjoy things other than God (family, friends, possessions, etc.)? When do they become idols?



Discussion

- Is the Lord the most important part of our lives? What will our perspective of death be if God is our chief desire in life?
- This messianic psalm radiates with joy. David derived great joy from a personal relationship with the Lord. How can believers experience the joy of the Lord?
- What does this Psalm teach us?