

PSALM 16

THE HOPE OF RESURRECTION
(or, THE LORD'S PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE)

AUTHOR: David (noted by Peter in Acts 2:25)

INTRODUCTION: In this psalm, as in Psalm 22, David speaks prophetically (Act2:30) from the point of view of the LORD's "Holy One" (v10), that is the Messiah. In reference to this psalm, both Peter and Paul make it clear that David spoke not of himself, but of Christ (Acts 2:24-31, 13:30-37).

While it can be seen how the petitions of Psalm 16 could have arisen from the context of David's own life, it's ultimate and prophetic context is to be found in the life of Christ. This psalm is a prayer petitioning the LORD for His promise of resurrection (v10), and as such many have viewed it as the prayer the Lord might have prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane as He faced the cross (Matt26:37-44; Mk14:32-41; Lk22:41-44).

The inscription to this psalm indicates that it is a "Michtam of David". *Michtam* is not a translation but a transliteration of the Hebrew word, indicating that the translators are hesitant to provide a translation due to some uncertainty as to the meaning. The Hebrew word is derived from a root meaning to "engrave, stain or permanently mark" and may carry the idea of something of such importance as to necessitate its preservation. Psalms 56-60 are also identified as *Michtams* of David, and each of these psalms centers on the theme of trusting the LORD when facing death.

- [1] Facing the certainty of death, Christ put His trust in God alone. From the cross, the Lord Jesus prayed, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk23:46).
- [2] The key word in vv2-3 is "goodness". Here Christ confesses that Jehovah is His Lord [Heb., *Adonai*], or Master. However, in facing death Christ does not plead His "goodness" or righteousness before the LORD? Why not?
- [3] Because on the cross Christ had no "goodness" or righteousness; His righteousness had been imputed to "the saints", whereas the sin of the whole world (2Jn2:2) had been imputed to Him (2Cor5:21; 1Pet2:24). On the cross Christ, in our place, was guilty. For this reason, Christ offered no defense before Pilate (Mk15:4-5).

Those who will accept Christ's offer of His righteousness, rather than seek to be justified by their own works, He refers to as "saints", "the excellent", "in whom is all my delight".

- [4] But those who seek righteousness another way, either by an attempt to establish their own righteousness (2Cor10:12-18) or to gain favor from another 'god' (1Cor8:4-6), "their sorrows shall be multiplied". For these, Christ will not "take up their names into my lips", but for the saint He promises to "confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Rev3:5).

- [5] Christ is at peace knowing His destiny is in the hands of His Father; "portion", "cup" and "inheritance" all speak of future reward, and Christ did indeed look beyond the shame of the cross anticipating the glory that would follow (Philip2:5-11; Heb12:2; 1Pet1:11).

The tribes of Israel received their inheritance from the Lord by "lot", but Christ knows well that even the result of the lot falls within the providence of the LORD (Prov16:33).

- [6] Here "lines" is a reference to a surveyor's lines, and continues the thought of inheritance begun in v5. In placing His destiny in the hands of His Father, the Lord is confident of a "goodly heritage". In fact, the inheritance the Father has in store for the resurrected and glorified Son is "all authority... in heaven and in earth" (Matt28:18); Church Age believers, as members of the Body of Christ (Eph1:18-23; Col1:24), are joint-heirs with Him (Rom8:14-17) and will also inherit "all things" (Rev21:7).
- [7] Here, Christ acknowledges the answer to His prayer He received from the LORD, "Who hath given Me counsel", "in the night" at Gethsemane. He has decided to "bless the LORD" by submitting to the Father's will, and not to His own (Matt26:42). Christ, "for the joy that was set before Him", has committed "to endure the cross, despising the shame" (Heb12:2).
- [8] The Lord is at peace despite His circumstances because He is in fellowship with His Father. "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (Jn8:29). The believer today can have this same peace as he walks in fellowship with God (Philip4:6-7,11).
- [9] As used in the Bible, hope has the meaning of "confident expectation" of the future fulfillment of a promise of God (cf., 1Thess5:8; Tit1:2, 2:13, 3:7). When David says, "my flesh also shall rest in hope", he is alluding to the resurrection of the body; Job also had knowledge of a future resurrection of the body (Job 19:25-26). It is the hope of resurrection that gives the Lord, and us, peace (1Cor15:19-23).
- [10] This verse is synonymous parallelism. Thus, "my soul" is a reference to the soul of the "Holy One" of Jehovah, that is the Messiah, and to not allow the Messiah to suffer corruption is equivalent to not leaving His soul in Sheol. Thus, this verse teaches the resurrection of Christ, as is made clear in Acts 2:24-31 and 13:30-37.

During the 3 days between the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His body went to the grave and His spirit went to *Sheol*. *Sheol* is the transliteration of a Hebrew word directly into English, which depending on context can mean "grave", "Hades", or "Hell". Though the KJV translates *Sheol* as Hell in this verse, this is not correct. *Sheol-Hades* was the temporary abode of the spirits of the dead (both just and unjust) who await resurrection (see Lk16:19-31). With the resurrection of Christ, the spirits of the saints have been liberated from *Sheol-Hades* and are with the Lord in heaven (Eph4:8; 2Cor5:8; Philip1:20-23); the

spirits of the unjust remain in *Hades* awaiting their resurrection and judgment at the Great White Throne (Rev20:11-14). Thus, the teaching of some that Christ "descended into Hell" at His death is not correct, and is not taught by this verse of Scripture.

Comparison of God's "oath" in Acts 2:30 and the "sure mercies [Heb., *chesed*] of David" in Acts 13:34 with 2Sam7:15 indicates that the resurrection of Christ was a necessary part of God's covenant with David, so that a glorified Messiah Who is the Seed of David can forever occupy David's throne (2Sam7:16).

- [11] Christ's resurrection was to be followed by His ascension to heaven and session at the Father's right hand (Mk16:19), indicated here by the expressions "in thy [Jehovah's] presence" and "at thy right hand". This was part of the "path of life" or ordained plan of God for Christ.

But the ordained plan of God for Christ is simply a preview of what He also has in store for us (1Cor15:20-23)! Paul, speaking of the positional truth relative to the Christian today, says that "God... hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph2:5-7).