

PSALM 16 – Preserve Me O God!

Life is full of dangers. If you are a Christian the dangers are increased many fold. As a non-believer Satan leaves you alone. The non-believer is not doing anything that hurts him or retards his evil deeds. Instead the non-believer enhances the evil deeds of Satan and helps Satan without knowing it. However, the believer is a child of God. He is made aware of the spiritual struggles that he faces daily. He does the work of God faithfully with God's enabling. To this end, he retards Satan's work and wins souls for Christ. His ministry helps believers become more like Christ so that they grow spiritually in the grace and knowledge of God. For these ministries alone and that he is a child of God, Satan will try his utmost to put down God's children.

The sovereignty of God in protecting all of God's children does not negate praying to God for help and for His divine protection. This was what David did in Psalm 16. This psalm is called a Michtam (i.e. an engraving) of David. The theme of this psalm is stated very clearly by David from the onset of his cry to God. With an urgent cry (use of the imperative) David asked God to preserve him i.e. to guard over or protect him. The dangers that David faced here is subtle. They are not like the enemies that he wrote about in Psalms 14 or 5 where they verbally abuse or persecute him. The attacks in Psalm 16 are more covert than overt. Perhaps these covert attacks are more dangerous than the overt ones as David's urgent cry for God's protection signifies! The fact that David addressed the LORD as God points to his cry for help emphasizing the power of God that He is ABLE to protect.

I. THE BASIS FOR PRESERVATION – 16:1b-3 – Not all who cry to God are heard by God. God does not hear the cry of people because their cry is more intense or their sufferings are more grievous. In the case of David who already has a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, he testifies of his relationship by declaring that it is in God that he has put his trust and not in anyone or anything else. No matter what other might do to him or whether others would trust in God or not, David said that as for him, personally, he would trust in God. To trust God means to accept what God has given whether they are times of plenty or adversity. Trust is not dependent upon the circumstances but in the person of God Himself, who is immutable. Circumstances will fluctuate from happiness to sadness but David's trust in God remains constant. This was his declaration in Psalm 16.

David now speaks in the third person which was a common literary style in Hebrew poetry. His own soul had declared before to the LORD that He will be David's LORD. The emphasis here is in the change of Name from God to the LORD. This is a

covenantal emphasis where David was appealing to his personal relationship with God. This appeal to God for protection was not something new to David. This covenant is based upon God's promises in His holy Word. He was David's personal LORD as the use of the personal pronoun "my" emphasized. He is not just the LORD of Israel, the nation but David's personal covenantal God. Jesus Christ is not just the LORD of the church but the believer's personal God. This is the thrust of what David declares.

David also added that his goodness does not extend to God i.e. will not in any way add to God's goodness. God will always remain as the LORD regardless of David's response in believing or not. God's goodness is absolute and is independent of David's goodness. However, David's goodness extends to the saints who are on earth and to the excellent i.e. the worthy in whom are all his delight. David's was glad to be a good testimony to other believers like him who also would trust in the LORD. These would be encouraged and delighted that David the King would be such a godly testimony.

II. THE CRITERIA FOR PRESERVATION – 16:4-8 – Using the third person on the enemies, David declared that their sorrow shall be multiplied rather than reduced if they were to trust in other gods. They rushed to another god for help instead of the LORD and they will receive nothing but more trouble. Their sorrows will increase exponentially. David will not follow in their footsteps. These enemies will offer blood sacrifices of their own children to these gods and this will definitely add to their sorrows to find that after sacrificing their own child, help did not come. David would not even want to mention their names i.e. the names of their gods upon his lips. To even mention their names would be like acknowledging their legitimate existence! David declared unequivocally that he will not allow that to happen to him.

However, the LORD is the portion of David's inheritance and of his cup. What David meant was to regard the LORD as his weighed out inheritance. David was not interested in the gold and silver and riches of the idol worshippers. David was not moved by such material gain. The LORD was his inheritance and he has considered this very carefully as one who has weighed them and found the wealth of idol worshippers wanting but not the LORD. This imagery is also illustrated by the portion of David's cup. It is what David puts into his cup for his consummation. In other words it means that David wanted the LORD and nothing else. This similar double illustration is to emphasize the certainty of David's choice i.e. his LORD! The LORD in turn maintainest i.e. sustains David's lot. David was thankful to God for making him an Israelite amongst God's people. He was thankful to God for who he was and the knowledge he has of the LORD. David's salvific relationship with the LORD was sustained by the LORD alone and he acknowledges here. This was all that matters to

him than all the material blessings. David was ever contented with what the LORD has given to him as the verse 6 intimates, “The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places*; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” The lines here refer to the measured blessings that the LORD gave to him. David calls it a goodly heritage!

David blesses the LORD because the LORD has always given him counsel i.e. helped him made the right decisions in life especially during trying times. The LORD was there for David day and night. When men were sleeping, the LORD never sleeps. David was able to cry to Him for guidance any time and any day or night. The word “reins” used in verse 7 refers to the innermost being like the gut or the heart of man. David’s had an intimate relationship with the LORD that money could not buy. He would not exchange it for all the gold in the world. Those who worship idols are rewarded with materialism whereas David’s relationship with the LORD was the reward itself! This was all that David wanted.

For the above experiences that David had with the LORD he says that he has set the LORD always before him i.e. the anchor in David’s life. David would not do anything without first praying and consulting the LORD! David adds that the LORD was at his right hand. The right hand is a position of trust like the right hand man! Nothing is hid from the right hand man. Every thought and desire is shared with the right hand man. He is also always nearby and never far away. The right hand man is always available for consultation and help. David’s conclusion was that he shall not be moved. Nothing will ever move him or shake him from trusting his LORD. He will not be frightened or threatened to turn from his LORD. He will not be seduced into betraying his LORD. The LORD will be David’s God forever.

III. THE BLESSINGS OF PRESERVATION – 16:9-11 – Knowing that the LORD will always be in control of David’s life regardless of the dire circumstances surrounding him, David concludes by declaring that his heart is glad and his glory rejoices. The word for “glory” here refers to David’s heart or inner being. His flesh i.e. his entire being shall rest in the hope of the LORD’s deliverance and help. Based upon David’s relationship with the LORD David can trust the LORD to care for him today and forever more. His rejoicing and gladness were based upon his experiential knowledge of the LORD. The hope is beyond this life and is eternal.

Verse 10 is prophetic as it is no longer about David. David died and was buried and he saw corruption when his body lied in the grave, but not the body of Christ. Two NT passages attest to this reference to Christ as the fulfillment of what David declares in Psalm 16:10. They are:- **Acts 2:22-28** (KJV) “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus

of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: **23** Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: **24** Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. **25** For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: **26** Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: **27** Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. **28** Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.” And **Acts 13:34-37** (KJV) “And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. **35** Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. **36** For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: **37** But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.”

David was blessed with this special prophesy about the LORD Jesus Christ his LORD. This strengthens his heart to know that his LORD is also the LORD who has defeated death and resurrection of David's own body is assured just as the resurrection of Christ was guaranteed. David was able to declare that the LORD will show him the path of life. He no longer gropes in darkness. The LORD's Word will be the lamp and light unto his feet and path. In the presence of the LORD David finds the fullness of joy. He does not depend upon material blessings in life but the presence of the LORD to give him the greatest real joy. When David was near the LORD (i.e. at God's right hand) there are pleasures for evermore. The life of David was one of nearness to the LORD regardless of his lot in life be they good or bad it matters not to him as long as he has his LORD! This must be true of every believer.

CONCLUSION – The preservation of the LORD for His children is based upon the believer's relationship with the LOTRD through Jesus Christ. The criteria for this preservation are based upon the believer's unyielding devotion and loyalty to Christ and to no other. The blessings that come with this preservation is beyond death and into eternity. There is hope of the resurrection from the dead which is life after death. This is assured as it is based upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ!