

OUR REDEEMER AND LORD (Ps. 16)

There are six psalms which share this Hebrew term, *The Michtam of David* (Ps. 16,56,57,58,59,60). It's meaning is not altogether certain, but on each occasion, it refers to a time when David was facing trials, for example, **Ps. 16:1** *Preserve [guard, protect] me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust [seek refuge].* Some say the word 'michtam' is derived from the verb 'to engrave', and this would be supported by the Septuagint, in which the psalm begins, "To be inscribed/engraved and hung up on a pillar to commemorate victory". It has also been called the 'golden psalm', Matthew Henry explains, "This psalm is entitled Michtam, which some translate a golden psalm, a very precious one, more to be valued by us than gold, yea, than much fine gold, because it speaks so plainly of Christ and His resurrection, who is the true treasure hidden in the field of the Old Testament". Another possibility relates to how the word *michtam* has an origin in a word which refers to the *calmness* of the sea, as in **Ps. 107:29** *He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. ...* Basically, this psalm brings peace in troubled times.

It is a very personal psalm between the psalmist and God ... There are two major sections. The first seven verses speak of David's personal daily confidence in the Lord, **Ps. 16:1** *Michtam of David. Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. ² O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee; ³ But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. ⁴ Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. ⁵ The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. ⁶ The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. ⁷ I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. ...* In the second section David trusts in how the Lord directs his ways, **⁸ I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. ¹⁰ For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. ¹¹ Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**

While, with other Messianic psalms, the primary application is to David but the psalm also its secondary application to the Messiah. In its initial context, the psalm describes David's reliance upon God, which is a foreshadowing of how the Saviour on earth depended upon His Father, as is shown by how He regularly entered the quiet place. Jesus worked within the Divine plan, always in obedience to His Father, **Ps. 16:1** *Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. ² O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee [Tanakh, There is none above You].*

In verse three, there is the picture of Christ's love for the Church, **³ But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.** He loves His people, and it was for them He entered this world to pay the price of their redemption. It is His Bride who He will one day present before His Father, **Eph. 5:27** *... a glorious church, not having*

spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. ... His Church which bares no resemblance to the surrounding idolatry, ⁴ Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. ... Indeed, the world and the saints are in stark contrast, to which the psalmist declared, **Ps. 16:5** The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance. ...

In the Old Testament, each tribe was given their inheritance within the land of Canaan, - ... each tribe except the Levites, **Num. 18:20** And the LORD spake unto Aaron [*a Levite*], Thou [*Levites*] shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. ... They were privileged of having God as the portion of [*their*] inheritance ... and that again points to the Saviour Who had no material possessions of any value, **Mt. 8:20** The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. ... His inheritance was not of this world.

And *the cup* points to the cup of suffering from which the Saviour drank, **Mt. 26:39** And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

... The 'lot', - thou maintainest [*support*] my lot, - His Father's care was His safeguard, and even though He had to 'drink of the cup', He knew His Father's purposes would be achieved through Him, with Divine precision, ⁶ The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage [*inheritance*] ⁷ I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins [*Heb. kilyah, kidneys ... 'heart'*] also instruct me in the night seasons. ... During the day, Jesus was busy healing and preaching, but His nights were spent in prayer with His Father, particularly as the cross approached, **Mt. 26:42** He went away again ... and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Then, in the second section of the psalm, the emphasis changes ... and this is the part where we see the Messianic application as preached by the New Testament Apostles. The heartaches He would endure are implied in v.8, I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved ... He set His face towards Jerusalem and the cross, and none would deter Him, - none would *move* Him. Some wanted to crown Him King, some tried to involve Him in actions outside His purpose, and at His arrest some tried to make Him deny His deity but *He would not be moved!* ... In another *michtam* psalm David wrote, **Ps. 56:11** In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me ... And in the verses of this second section of Ps. 16, the Personhood of Christ shines as He speaks of 'my heart' (v.9), 'my glory' (v.9), 'my flesh' (v.9), 'my soul' (v.10) ... Everything is arranged in the Father's plan, and the psalm reaches its pinnacle in the closing verses, ¹⁰ For thou wilt not leave my soul in

hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. ¹¹ Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Where and what is this place referred to as hell ... and what has it to do with Jesus? The Hebrew word is *sheol*, - the Greek equivalent is Hades, - and it refers to a place beyond death consisting of two 'compartments', - *Gehenna*, the place of the damned, and *Paradise*, affectionately described by the Jews as "Abraham's bosom" (Lk. 16:22). The first mention of Paradise was in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, **Gen. 2:15** And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden [*παράδεισος, a place of blessedness; Eden is the Hebrew word for 'pleasure'*] to dress it and to keep it. This Paradise was also what David referred to, **Ps. 23:6** I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

When the saints died in the Old Testament, they entered the Paradise compartment of Sheol in anticipation of their redemption being paid at Calvary. For example, this is explained by Paul concerning Abraham, **Gal. 3:6** Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. ... It was when the payment of that price was settled, and Matthew refers to that occasion, **Mt. 27:50** Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. ⁵¹ And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ⁵² *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,* ⁵³ *And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* ... It was also the place Jesus told the thief on the cross, **Lk. 23:43** To day shalt thou be with me in paradise ... and to which Paul referred, **II Cor. 12:3** And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) ⁴ How that he was caught up into paradise ... and John also, **Rev. 2:7** To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Paradise was how the early Christians understood Heaven, and it was into Paradise Jesus entered when He died. He didn't go straight to Heaven because following His resurrection He told Mary Magdalene, **Jn. 20:17** I am not yet ascended to my Father. He did not enter Gehenna for that was the place of the damned, out of which there is no opportunity to be saved (cf. I Peter 3:18ff). ... At His death He descended into Sheol, to where the Old Testament saints were, - **Eph. 4:8** When he ascended up on high [*i.e. on the cross*], he led captivity captive [*i.e. the Old Testament saints*], and gave gifts unto men. ⁹ (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things), - and Eph. 4:10 refers to His resurrection and ascension when He removed the saints to Heaven where they presently are, **I Cor. 15:20** But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is a fundamental truth of the Gospel, - there can be no compromise on it for we serve a risen *living* Saviour. If Jesus had not risen, the

best we have is a dead martyr. But when Peter began to preach on the Day of Pentecost he knew what he was preaching because he had already been with and experienced the risen Lord for forty days, during which he along with the other ten disciples were taught the doctrines of the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). ... So, when Peter stood to preach in Jerusalem, he expounded the Word of God from Ps. 16, Acts 2:25 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 [Ps. 16:8]: 26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: [Ps. 16:9] 27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. [Ps. 16:10] 28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. [Ps. 16:11] ... 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. ... It was the same passage from which Paul preached to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13:35 Wherefore he [David, v.34] 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. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. ... There is no Gospel without the risen Christ!

And the final verse of the psalm is the guarantee Jesus would achieve His purpose, and ultimately return to His Father, 11 Thou wilt shew me [Thou wilt make me to know] the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.... The writer to the Hebrews also wrote concerning that 'path', Heb. 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame ... the earthly 'path' of the Saviour. But when His work was completed, He ascended into Heaven's glory, into the presence of His Father. David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, described it, in thy presence is fulness of joy ... as the writer of Hebrews also wrote, Heb. 12:2 ... [He] is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. ... And then the concluding scene in Ps. 16 is the Messiah reigning upon the throne, Ps. 16:11 at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore ... That is the confidence promised to every believer, who will one day share in those pleasures with Lord throughout eternity. Amen.