

Psalm 16 is a “Mikhtam” (pronounced “mick-tame”) of David. This term “mikhtam” is only used in reference to six psalms—Psalm 16, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60.

Although the exact meaning of the word “mikhtam” is unclear, there seems to have been three views as to the meaning of the Hebrew word:

- 1) Some suggest it means a poem psalm;
- 2) Some suggest it refers to a golden jewel psalm;
- 3) Some suggest it refers to an atonement psalm.

If we combine all three views together, we could say that Psalm 16 is a poem written by David that unlocks the key to a golden and valuable and joyful life both here and in eternity, which is based on being in a right relationship with God, which is based on the atoning work of God.

It is interesting that one of the critical themes of the mikhtam psalms is the predicted resurrection (**16:10**). The atonement that can bring joy to a life is one in which the sacrifice is raised from the dead. The main point of the psalm is this:

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF JOY AND HAPPINESS IN THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT, AND THE ONLY PLACE A PERSON CAN FIND THIS JOY AND HAPPINESS IS IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THAT IS BASED ON AN ATONING WORK THAT FEATURES THE RESURRECTION.

This psalm expresses the idea that David had joy in his life because of his trust in God and his fellowship with God, even when facing dangerous things. Psalm 16 is contextually connected to Psalm 15. **Psalm 15 informed us who may have intimate fellowship with God and Psalm 16 informs us why we would want to have intimate fellowship with God.** The reason is because this is where a person will find real joy, happiness and security.

Now in Acts 2:25, the Apostle Peter directly connects this psalm to Jesus Christ. In Acts 13:35, the Apostle Paul directly connects this psalm to Jesus Christ. We may conclude that real joy and happiness and security may only be found in a relationship with God that comes through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the atonement and He is the resurrected Savior and without a relationship with Him there will never be true happiness, fulfillment and security. There are three main sections to this psalm:

SECTION #1 – David asks God to preserve him. 16:1-4

The Hebrew word “preserve” is one that means to preserve something by carefully watching and guarding something with the idea of keeping it safe (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 837). The contextual implication of this is that real joy and happiness is found when one realizes the God, who provided the atonement and raised Him from the dead, is carefully watching, guarding and keeping us safe.

Now David gives four reasons why God should preserve him:

Reason #1 - Because God is David's refuge. **16:1b**

Now a refuge was a place to which one would flee for safety. A refuge was considered to be a strong safe haven (*Ibid.*, p. 294). David spent a great deal of time alone and his safe haven was God. When he found that he was in threatening circumstances and situations, he quickly ran to God. Obviously a key lesson we see is that happiness in life comes to us when we quickly flee to God in times of trouble. Times of trouble will not eliminate a joyous life if we learn to flee quickly to God.

Reason #2 - Because God was David's good. **16:2**

This is an important verse. Notice that David said to Jehovah (LORD) that He was his Adonai (Lord). In other words, the sovereign God of the universe, who is the great I AM, who can do whatever He wants to do, was the Adonai, the master and ruler of David's life and David could not find any good apart from God being the master of his life.

The word "good" is one that refers to what is happy, bright, beautiful and pleasant (*Ibid.*, p. 319). David could not find any good or happiness in any place other than his relationship with God. Everything else stemmed from this. It is possible to find pleasure for a brief moment apart from God, but one will never find happiness apart from God.

Two observations we may make:

- 1) One will not find the ultimate good or happiness in life apart from God.
- 2) One will not find the ultimate good and happiness in life until God is master of one's life.

Govern your own life as your own master apart from God and you will end up miserable. Make God the master of life and one will experience many good and wonderful and happy things. So the real question of this text is who or what is master of our life.

By the way, do not overlook what David says at the end of this verse: "I have no good besides Thee." Here is David's theology. He knew that he did not have goodness on his own apart from the grace of God. God is good and righteous, we aren't. We are all sinners who have all gone astray; therefore, we all need to depend on God's grace for our righteousness, just as David did.

Reason #3 - Because God's people are David's delight. **16:3**

David found his great delight in his fellowship with God's faithful people on earth. People who are right with God, long to fellowship with others who are right with God. People who love the Word of God, long to fellowship with others who love the Word of God.

This becomes a good healthy test concerning our spirituality and a great key to our happiness. Those who love God's Word will be drawn to others of like mind. Those who are growing deep in doctrine will have kindred fellowship with others doing the same thing.

By the way, when God's people love God and His Word, there is a majestic quality to them.

Reason #4 - Because godless people are not David's delight. **16:4**

Look at the implication of the opening part of this verse—if one goes after anything other than God, that one will experience one sorrow after another. Not only will happiness be missed, but sorrow will be multiplied.

David would not associate with religious people who were involved in false religion. David's loyalty was to God and His Word and he refused to fellowship with others who were not after that.

Now the context of this decision not to fellowship with those godless was in the context of asking God to preserve him. David could honestly ask God to preserve him for these very reasons.

SECTION #2 – David acknowledges that God is his portion. **16:5-6**

God was David's portion. Everything he had in life and would receive in life came from God. God had drawn the lines for David and the lot of David's life was in God's hand.

Now God had been very good to David and David knew it. God had specifically marked off David's inheritance to receive the blessings of God. David compared his relationship with God as a valuable inheritance that had been passed down to him from his ancestors. He compared it to a cup filled with blessing and to an allotment that was wonderful.

There is a prophetic message in **verse 6**. Specifically, it is implied in **verse 6** that Israel would one day live in a beautiful, pleasant land because of her Davidic connection and also that someone would come through David's line who would be beautiful.

That someone would be none other than Jesus Christ. God had blessed David and he acknowledged that.

SECTION #3 – David offers God his praise. **16:7-11**

There are four reasons why David praises God:

Reason #1 - Because God is David's counselor. **16:7**

God directed the thoughts of David. He worked through the thought processes of this man who loved him and lived for him. God had counseled David through His Word and obviously David thought a lot about it even at night. There were many nights when David would go to sleep thinking about the Word of God, the promises of God and the grace of God.

Reason #2 - Because God was David's protector . **16:8-9**

David thought in terms of God continually. God was continually present in David's life and continually protecting him. He could not be moved or toppled because God was at his right hand. God was, as it were, his "right hand Man" and God would not fail David. **When you know for sure that God is at your side, no one can shake you or rattle you.**

In fact, in **verse 9**, we learn that David knew that he would not die just then. He says, "my flesh will dwell securely." Apparently God had revealed to David that He was protecting Him and that he was not going to die. God was going to spare David's life at the present time.

So the assurance David had was in a life-threatening situation. But in that life-threatening situation he knew God was at his side and the outcome would be determined by Him. That is why he could have this confidence even in the face of death.

Reason #3 - Because God was David's future . **16:10**

David could enjoy his life because he knew that God would take care of him beyond the grave. These words specifically apply to Jesus Christ (Acts 2:27, 31; 13:35), who was not abandoned in death and whose body was not even in the ground long enough to decay. This verse predicts a Davidic King who would be resurrected, who would ultimately sit on David's throne and reign forever and ever.

For David, personally, he saw death as a separation of soul from the body. But he knew when he died he had nothing to fear, because God would take care of him, even beyond the grave.

Reason #4 - Because God was David's director . **16:11**

The first time I met Dr. Warren Wiersbe, I asked him to sign my Bible. He graciously did and he signed his name and alongside his name he wrote Psalm 16:11.

This is a great verse because it clearly teaches us that the path of life that knows fullness of joy and wonderful pleasure is a life being lived close with God.

It is impossible for one to even know what path to take, apart from the directing work of God. God was directing David's life. God would make known to David the paths to take, and as a result he would know full pleasure and full joy in life.

David was praising God for these wonderful things. He knew all of this hinged on his walk with God.

Happiness, in this life and the next life, is found in our relationship with God. Psalm 16 reveals the truth of the chorus, "happiness is the Lord." Those believers today who walk on the paths of God and find their refuge in Him will be the happiest people on earth. It is the richest life one may have.