

# Psalm 16 • Our Walk in This Life

## Introduction

It is interesting to note that to make a covenant is an agreement by which both parties obligate themselves and commit to their respective terms of the agreement so as to enjoy its proposed benefits. The overwhelming and repeated focus of Scripture is to remind those having entered into a covenant with God of their need to uphold their end of the bargain as God incapable of even the smallest letdown on His part. Those forgoing such a covenant are here described as having “bartered” with a substitute god for something temporal in this life but with follow-on eternal consequences. One ends with multiplied sorrows, the other with contentment both now and in the life to come.

A Mikhtam of David.

<sup>1</sup>Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You.  
<sup>2</sup>I said to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.”  
<sup>3</sup>As for the saints who are in the earth, They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.  
<sup>4</sup>The sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied;  
I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood,  
Nor will I take their names upon my lips.

## Read verses 1-4

**Q: In this passage, who is this basically comparing and contrasting?**

A: Those who authentically follow the One True God— “the saints”, and “those who have bartered for another god” .

**Q: What is the meaning of “saints”?**

A: It can be literally translated as “holy ones”. Such are set apart and exclusively set apart to God, living for and serving Him according to His Word and ways.

**Q: In v.1-2, what are the characteristics of the saints?**

- They take refuge in God rather than the world.
- They acknowledge the sovereignty of God over their life personally. (“You are my Lord” .)
- They are wholly committed to God. (“I have no good besides you” .)

**Q: What is telling about the phrase in v.2, “I said to the LORD, ‘You are my Lord’”?**

A: “LORD” is rendered in this way to indicate when God’s name “Yahweh” is found in the text, but “Lord” when it is “Adona’i”, which is understood as “one who rules me”. It is a way of stating, “The One True God is the one who truly rules over me”.

**Q: What is the source of the spiritual corruption found in those who pursue another god?**

A: They “have bartered”. In other words, they have sought and accepted a trade. Their rejection of God for another in His place is not accidental or against their will but a negotiation.

**Point:** The world’s notion of selling one’s soul actually has a scriptural basis. Whereas the saint completely trusts in God as his sole “refuge”, the opposite extreme is someone whose lack of trust drives their bartering it all away for their temporary comfort apart from that refuge.

**Q: What will be the outcome of this barter?**

A: Their “sorrows...will be multiplied” .

**Q: How does a saint deal with such individuals?**

- Saints avoid their ways of worship. (“I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood” .)
- Saints refuse to publicly acknowledge them. (“Nor will I take their names upon my lips” .)

**Q: Why is a drink offering mentioned?**

A: The drink offering is part of the sacrificial requirements and is a metaphor for the working of the blood of Christ to come. Their “drink offerings of blood” to making a personal substitution for the work of Christ on the cross.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot.  
<sup>6</sup>The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.

<sup>7</sup>I will bless the LORD who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.  
<sup>8</sup>I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.  
<sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely.

**Point:** They not only barter in exchange for the things in this life, but for the wrong thing in eternity.

**Application:** To walk in the Lord means not just **devoting** one's self personally but avoiding and rejecting all **alternatives**.

### Read verses 5-6

**Q: How might this provide a contrast to those who have bartered for a replacement god?**

A: This describes what has been bartered away and comes instead to those whose sole refuge is taken up in God.

**Q: How is the Lord our inheritance?**

A: Rather than a guarantee of things in this life, it is all found in Him for the next.

**Q: Who, exactly, receives an inheritance?**

A: In this case, it is implying that we are His children, more than mere followers or subjects in His kingdom.

**Q: How is the Lord our "cup"?**

A: In Scripture, one's "cup" is their lot or condition in life which is given them to drink. (Ps. 11:6; 23:5) This is David's poetic way of stating that we are to consume God alone in the course of this life.

*"Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.*

— Revelation 18:6

**Q: What is the meaning of, "You support my lot" in v.5?**

A: The Promised Land was originally divided by casting lots (Num. 26:55-56), akin to our drawing numbers from a hat or choosing straws. This describes God's control even over the things which appear in life to happen by chance.

**Q: What are "the lines" referring to in v.6?**

A: This also originally referred to the division of the land where cords or ropes were used to mark the precise boundaries of one's assigned plot. This is a figurative way of acknowledging all that God has done for and given to us. These are further described in v.6 as having occurred for us in "pleasant places"—that is, the superior quality of our inheritance and lot in the Lord.

**Q: How should we personally apply "my heritage is beautiful to me"?**

A: We are firmly fixed and looking forward to all that will come to us in our spiritual inheritance through Christ.

**Application:** Our walk in the Lord is **secure** in our inheritance to come, and God's control over every **variable** in life.

### Read verses 7-11

**Q: What are v.1-2 addressing?**

A: Verse 1 is following through and applying God's Word which leads to consistently walking with the Lord in verse 2.

**Q: What is the difference, if any, between "counseled" and "instructs"?**

A: "Counsel" comes from a source who is passing along knowledge and advice based on their age and/or life experience; it is the culmination of their wisdom. "Instruct" is not purely conveying just information, but as appropriate may

<sup>10</sup>For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.  
<sup>11</sup>You will make known to me the path of life;  
In Your presence is fullness of joy;  
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

involve chastening or disciplining. How much more powerful when coming from the Lord.

**Q: What is being conveyed in v.8?**

A: First, David sees God as such a real person that He is ever present with him. (“He is at my right hand”.) Second, the Hebrew word for “shaken” describes something that slips or totters from its place; this is describing his confidence and trust in God.

**Q: In v.9, what are the three conditions the qualities of this Psalm speaks as the results?**

- “...my heart is glad...”
- “...my glory rejoices...” (“Glory” is another way of describing one’s soul.)
- “My flesh also will dwell securely.” (In other words, the physical body.)

**Q: Why is the closing verse a stark contrast to the world’s wisdom and way of thinking?**

A: The world seeks many substitutes it believes will bring them joy and pleasure, but it is actually only found in a consistent walk—that is, personal relationship, with Christ.

**Application:** There is personal contentment in **heart, soul, and body** when seeking to walk consistently in his presence.

**Overall Application**

- How well do we not only enthusiastically embrace our walk with Christ, but actively reject the influences of those who have bartered a substitute?
- How strongly do we pursue and relish our inheritance in Christ vs. bartering for things in this life?
- How might our discontent or fluctuations in our heart, soul, and body be testifying to an underlying spiritual condition?