

# *Ponderings in the Psalms*

---

The following is a Messianic Study on

## *Psalm 16*

By Paul Cohen, Messianic Bible Teacher.  
Brit Chadashah (Sydney)  
[www.BCSydney.com](http://www.BCSydney.com)



**Brit Chadashah**  
ברית חדשה

The *Pondering* studies were published in the Brit Chadashah Newsletter. Brit Chadashah (*New Covenant*) is a Messianic Fellowship in Sydney. Led by Paul Cohen a Jewish believer in Messiah Yeshua (Jesus). We meet together fortnightly for Bible studies from a Messianic Jewish Perspective. We are a unique fellowship made up of Jewish and Gentile people who are believers in Yeshua as the promised Messiah of Israel.

If you don't know Yeshua as your Messiah, we encourage you to search out the Scriptures for yourself. God promised in the book of Jeremiah, "*You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart*" (Jeremiah 29:13). And we hope you will make contact with us so that we can share more about the Messiah, His life and ministry.

Brit Chadashah is part of Celebrate Messiah (Australia). Celebrate Messiah's desire is to bring the Good News message of Messiah to the Original Messengers and to see God's Chosen People fully restored through faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Celebrate Messiah was founded in 1995 by Lawrence and Louise Hirsch. Lawrence is a Jewish believer in Yeshua. <http://www.CelebrateMessiah.com.au>.

Brit Chadashah is committed to building the Messianic Community of Jews and Gentiles who are a living testimony for Yeshua the Messiah. By donating to Brit Chadashah, you are partnering with us to do the work of "Reaching the Original Messengers". The funds will be used in outreach to Jewish people as well as in educating Christians in effective ways to reach out.

To Support the Ministry of Brit Chadashah or Paul please go to <https://www.celebratemessiah.com.au/donate/>

All "Scripture quotations taken from the (NASB®) New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. [www.lockman.org](http://www.lockman.org)" unless otherwise indicated.

For more information on Brit Chadashah, the Sydney Messianic Fellowship: Please visit us on the Web [www.BCSydney.com](http://www.BCSydney.com)

© 2021 Brit Chadashah / Paul Cohen  
Brit Chadashah; P.O. Box 304; Caulfield South, VIC 3162, Australia  
Email: [bc@celebratemessiah.com.au](mailto:bc@celebratemessiah.com.au)  
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/BritChadashah.Sydney>  
YouTube <https://tinyurl.com/BC-Video>

# Pondering Psalm 16

---

1 A Mikhtam of David.

Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You.

2 I said to the LORD, “You are my Lord;  
I have no good besides You.”

3 As for the saints who are in the earth,  
They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.

4 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.

5 The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup;  
You support my lot.

6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;  
Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.

7 I will bless the LORD who has counselled me;  
Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.

8 I have set the Lord continually before me;  
Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices;  
My flesh also will dwell securely.

10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

11 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.

## Psalm 16:1 an introduction

A מִכְתָּם (*mich-tam*) is an inscription, meaning to make wise. The word *michtam* is also found in Psalms 16 and 56-60; it is by King David.

## Psalm 16:1 Urgent Prayer to God

We are not aware of the historical setting but see that David is in danger. Once again David is seeking protection. The word preserve שָׁמַר (*sha-m're*) means to *keep watch* or *guard*, in other word David asks God to guard him for the Lord is his place of refuge (Psalm 17:7-8). This cry David prayed more than once.

## Psalm 16:2-4 Loyal to God with the saints

David declares LORD you are my Lord, my Master, and from the Lord he receives all that is good, he has nothing that does not come from God. The saints or holy ones - קְדוֹשִׁים (*kedoshim*) is used elsewhere as a reference to the *angelic host* (Psalm 89:5-7 and Job 15:15)

but here these are the saints on the earth, not the heavenly host. They are the earthly people that God set apart for Himself (Deuteronomy 7:6).

These are the majestic ones אֲדָרָא (ad-dere), this word also means “*excellent*” as in the name of the Lord in (Psalm 8:1; 76:4; 93:4). These *mighty* or magnificent ones are the saints and so these are godly leaders, the princes and rulers (the word elsewhere is describing leaders and nobles see 2 Chronicles 23:20, Nehemiah 3:5, Jeremiah 14:3 and Nahum 3:18). It stands in contrast to those who exchanged the LORD for a false god. David will not join them in worship nor even speak the names of these false gods.

### **Psalm 16:5-6 Thanksgiving to God**

David declares that the LORD is the true portion of his inheritance (this is also in Psalms 73:26; 119:57; 142:5). His land is a beautiful inheritance, filled with pleasant places. These are words that later resonated in Isaiah 64:11 about Jerusalem. When David had captured the hill of Zion it was small and seemingly insignificant, so was he speaking prophetically about the city, in all its glorious future, in the Messianic kingdom?

Interestingly the Rabbis connect *the cup* with the future Messianic kingdom in the Midrash Rabbah, (Bereshit 88, 5) “... *Corresponding to these the Holy One, blessed be He, will give Israel to drink four cups of salvation in the Messianic future, as it says, O Lord, the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup, You maintain my lot (Ps. 16, 5)....*”. If the rabbis are right they connect it with the cup that is drunk during the Passover Seder, *the Cup of Salvation* after the meal (Psalm 116:13). It is that cup which Messiah took, *the cup after the supper* (Luke 22:20), that Yeshua connected with the New Covenant. Later the apostle Paul calls this cup *the cup of blessing* (1 Corinthians 10:16). And there is a future cup (Matthew 26:29) during the celebration of the wedding banquet of the Lamb and His bride (Revelation 19:6-9). Perhaps these are things to ponder.

David’s confidence in the Lord is clear. He believed that God Himself not only maintained his lot but supported his lot. David had an assurance that none could rob him of his portion, the cup of his lot.

### **Psalm 16:7-9 Thanksgiving to God**

David gives thanks to God for instructing him by the Spirit throughout the night. Some confusion now comes in verse 7 and 9. Verse 7 (ASV/ESV) *my heart*, (JPS/KJV) *my reins*, (LEB) *my innermost being*, (Robert Alter) *my conscience*, (NASB) *my mind*. The Hebrew כִּלְיֹת (kilyot) up to now has been translated as kidneys (Exodus 29:13,22; Leviticus 3:4,10,15; 4:9; 7:4; 8:16,25; 9:10,19; Deuteronomy 32:14). The translators widely vary in their interpretation, so what do kidneys represent? According to the authoritative Keil and Delitzsch it is the seat of the most tender and deepest emotions (Keil and Delitzsch *Commentary on the Old Testament*; see their note on Leviticus 4:3). The heart לֵב (lev) which David mentions in verse 9 primarily represents the ruling centre of the person, for from here spring up all desires. So Biblically the heart is seen as the seat of the will and intellect.

David’s emotions instruct him to always set the Lord first, and then intellectually his mind is glad. Yes in this he is not shaken, for he knows the Lord is at his right hand, representing

strength (Exodus 15:6-12) and blessings (Genesis 48:17-22). As such he mentions *my flesh* בְּשָׂרִי (*besari*) which represents that his whole life is safe, for he knows who holds his future and as such he has assurance even in death.

### **Psalm 16:10-11 Happiness and assurance in death**

If we only had this psalm it would seem that David is writing about himself. However it is not until we come to the Brit Chadashah (New Testament) that we note that this is seen twice as a prophecy about Messiah. So we will explore both, what David appears to be saying about himself and secondly how the inspired authors of the Brit Chadashah saw this prophetically.

David's has an assurance even in death that God would not abandon him. The word שְׁאוֹל (*sheol*), which is mentioned over 60 times in the Tanach (Older Testament), is a description of the place where both the righteous (Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 2 Samuel 22:6) and the wicked end up (Psalm 9:17; Job 21:13-16). Note that only the LORD is able to bring a person out of Sheol (1 Samuel 2:6 & Amos 9:2).

David is saying he will die but that God would not leave him in the grave. God will restore him to life. Like Job he has confidence in the resurrection (Job 19:25-27), as such he pleads, as a faithful one, a *chasid*; a godly or pious man. The Hebrew term is 'חֲסִיד' *chasid*, this is related to חֶסֶד *chesed* meaning: mercy, lovingkindness, goodness and faithfulness. Many translations in light of the Brit Chadashah say Holy One.

The Hebrew poetry is missed as the word *decay* or corruption (KJV) is the word שָׁחַת (*shachat*) pit or the grave (Psalm 7:15; 30:9; Proverbs 26:27). In typical parallelism we see *sheol* corresponds to the *pit*. And *to see the pit* (Psalm 49:9) means to experience death (Psalm 89:48).

David finishes on a high note. Lord You have made known to me that I will be resurrected and so see You face to face. There will be the full abundance of joys (plural) for with You are pleasures forever.

### **Death and Resurrection of Messiah**

This Psalm was

1. Quoted by Peter on the day of Shavuot (Acts 2:25-32)
2. Quoted by Paul (Acts 13:34-36) at the Synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia.

This is a significant connection we ought not to miss. Like the rabbis, the authors of the Brit Chadashah saw this Psalm as Messianic, though with different verses. Let's explore what these two apostles saw.

Firstly, Peter mentions David's tomb which was well known then (not the current site in Jerusalem as it was '*in the City of David*'; 1 Kings 2:10). When Solomon buried him it was with much wealth (Josephus *Antiquities* 7.15.3). Josephus indicates that it was a vaulted sepulchre with a number of rooms. John Hyrcanus in about 130 BCE looted the sepulchre of David to pay for war-reparations, and took out three thousand talents (Josephus *Antiquities* 13.8.4 & *War* 1.2.5). Herod the Great was another one who opened the tomb in search for

money (*Antiquities* 16.7.1) but there was none left. Herod did build a white monument in front of the sepulchre. So it was a well known site at the time of Yeshua in the Biblical City of David.

Secondly, Peter in his sermon (Acts 2:31-32) on the day of Shavuot (*Feast of Weeks / Pentecost*) quoted Psalm 16:8-11, and pointed to the fact that David's tomb was nearby and that David could not have been speaking about himself but was speaking prophetically about his descendant (2 Samuel 7:11-16 & Psalm 132:11) who was the Messiah (Matthew 26:63-64). This descendant would not be abandoned to Sheol / Hades, nor would His flesh see decay. Yeshua died on the cross (Matthew 27:45-50) and was buried (Matthew 27:57-60) but God raised Him from the dead (Matthew 28:5-8). His flesh was not long enough in the ground to decompose. David on the other hand died about 1000 years earlier and he had not yet been raised back to life so his flesh had seen corruption.

Peter than says "*This Yeshua God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses*" (Acts 2:32). Yeshua did not only appear to Peter and James but to more than five hundred brothers at one time (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). Peter refers to the resurrection and that He ascended into the heavens and then quotes from Psalm 110 indicting that Yeshua is both LORD and Messiah.

Finally this Psalm is quoted by the apostle Paul in his sermon (Acts 13:34-36) in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (modern day Turkey). Paul quotes three passages (Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 55:3 & Psalm 16:10) as proof that God will give us the "*sure mercies of David,*" for by Messiah's death and resurrection He has ratified the Brit Chadashah and became the surety of the other unconditional Covenants. The "mercies" or blessings of the Covenants come from the grace and mercy of God, and display the mercy to His people. Messiah in His resurrection is the assurance of the fulfilment to come.

For Paul the resurrection was a foundation stone of our faith (1 Corinthians 15:1-58). Paul had seen the resurrected Messiah (Acts 9:3-5), and declared Him to be the firstfruits of the resurrection of much more to come (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

## Conclusion

Friends and fellow saints, do we in light of this rejoice in the Lord with psalms over our coming resurrection? Do we with the apostle Paul say: "*but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*" 1 Corinthians 15:57-58

*Selah*  
*Shalom in Messiah*  
*Paul & Sue*