

# Psalm Sundays

**Text**

**Psalm 16**

**Topic**

**David praises God for the hope he has  
that no saint will be left in Sheol after death**

**Title**

***"No Saint Left Behind"***

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It doesn't take much to get a song stuck in your head. A few bars, and you'll be singing it all day.

*It's a small world, after all...*

Do you ever wonder how many songs you know?

I couldn't find a research study, but I did run across some fascinating statements about your brain and music by a university professor who specializes in memory and cognition.

Dr. Emily Mason said, "Your brain has almost an unlimited capacity for memory. It can store about 2.5 petabytes of memory." A petabyte is a million gigabytes. To put that in terms of digital memory: If your brain was a smartphone on

1 of 12

Psalm 16

*"No Saint Left Behind"*



which you downloaded TV shows, *it could record 300 years of continuous TV before starting to run out of space.*

Our brains are hardwired to latch onto repetition and rhyme - which most songs have. "In elementary school, that's why things are put to song," Dr. Mason said.<sup>1</sup>

It's likely that Jewish children in the Second Temple Period could sing or recite all or most of the psalms. In adulthood, those memorized lyrics were readily recallable.

The apostle Peter, with help from God the Holy Spirit, quoted a little bit of Psalm 16 in the sermon he delivered on the Day of Pentecost. After encouraging his audience to recall Psalm 16:8-11, he said, "[King David]... spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:31-32).

Peter understood that David wrote prophetically about Jesus a thousand years before the Lord was crucified and rose from the dead. A common psalm known to them all since childhood suddenly became a fulfilled prophecy that identified their Messiah.

Thanks to Peter's application, we see Jesus in this psalm. We don't just see Him in it; we *hear* Him. It reads (or sings) as Jesus conversing with His Father about His life on earth, and His homecoming to Heaven. It is an intimate love song from the Son to the Father.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://wfpl.org/how-many-songs-can-our-brains-actually-hold/>



As we eavesdrop, I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Jesus Sings Praise To His Father For The Life He Lived For You**, and **#2 Jesus Sings Praise To His Father For The Death He Died For You**.

### **#1 - Jesus Sings Praise To His Father For The Life He Lived For You (v1-7)**

On earth, in His incarnation, Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was God in human flesh. He rose from the dead in a glorified body. He was, and remains forever, the unique God-Man.

- 👤 Jesus voluntarily set aside the privileges and prerogatives of His deity in order to live a fully human life (Philippians 2:5-8).
- 👤 We're told He was made for little while lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:9), and that He was under the Law (Galatians 4:4).
- 👤 He could and did genuinely grow in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52).
- 👤 Jesus was subject to the Father (John 5:30).
- 👤 He did not come to do His own will, but the will of the Father (Luke 22:42).
- 👤 Jesus was not sent of His own initiative but of the initiative of the Father (John 8:28).
- 👤 In John 12:49, Jesus said, "For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken."

This psalm is from the perspective of Jesus, the submissive Son, on earth, conversing with His Abba Father, about His passion for **you**.

Psa 16:1 A Michtam of David. Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

No one knows what a "michtam" is. In your Bible it might be translated "miktam." Scholars say the word is derived from words that mean *engraved* and *golden*.

3 of 12  
Psalm 16  
"No Saint Left Behind"



Psalms 56-60, all penned by David, are the only others designated *michtam's*. Together they were David's engraved in 'gold records,' so to speak.

"Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust." Jesus' life on earth was full of danger:

- 👤 As an infant, a jealous, tyrannical king was trying to murder Him.
- 👤 His sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth ended with men trying to throw Him off of a cliff.
- 👤 Then there was that whole 40 day thing in the desert with the devil.

If Jesus was going to live long enough to die as planned, His Father must providentially see to it Jesus *could* and *would* get to the Cross. An example of God doing just that: Joseph was warned in three dreams to (1) flee with Jesus and Mary to Egypt, (2) to return from Egypt, and (3) to settle in the region of Galilee (Matthew 2).

Jesus "trusted" His Father to "preserve" Him. He trusted in God to keep His promises by His providence.

This is certainly a Messianic Psalm. That doesn't mean it had no application to David, or to us. While we will keep our attention on the Lord, we don't want to miss any encouragement for ourselves.

Our lives, as believers, are full of spiritual danger. We, too, should trust God's promises and His providence. He will "preserve us," although it may not be in the way we would desire.

Psa 16:2 *O my soul, you have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, My goodness is nothing apart from You."*

4 of 12  
Psalm 16  
"No Saint Left Behind"



Adam Clarke says of this verse, *"There are almost endless explanations of this [verse]; no man can read [it] without being confounded by [it]."*

In terms of it being applicable to David, and to us, it makes sense. For one thing, no amount of "goodness," no amount of *good works*, are commendable unless done for the Lord, empowered by Him. But in the Lord, our "goodness," our good works, affect others for God, and will be rewarded.

But what does this mean if Jesus is talking? Perhaps, as we've already said, that He would live a fully human life on earth, depending upon His Father just as all human beings must. We are not at liberty, therefore, to think that life on earth was easy for Jesus because He was, after all, God. He depended upon His Father just as all believers ought.

Jesus understands us - like a peer who has experienced the same things we have. As the writer to the Hebrew believers said, Jesus "has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet he did not sin" (4:15).

Psa 16:3 As for the saints who *are* on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."

Note: Saints are "on the earth." No one is declared a saint after death by meeting certain man-made criteria. All those who believe God are saints right now.

They are set-apart and God already sees saints - sees **you** - as "excellent." He sees you completed. He can see you that way because He is the One who will finish what He has begun in you. Like an artist or craftsman who sees the final creation in his or her mind.

5 of 12  
Psalm 16  
*"No Saint Left Behind"*



Jesus and David took “delight” in fellowshiping with the saints. In Christ, we are all members of His one body. We have an immediate intimacy with Christians who are strangers

Psa 16:4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten *after* another *god*; Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer, Nor take up their names on my lips.

Seems an odd thing for the Lord to say; of course He wouldn't do this. Don't forget, though, that He was tempted to. In the desert, the devil came to Jesus, seeking worship, offering the world on a platter. Satan must have thought Jesus *could* sin.

In fact, it must have baffled Satan to deal with Jesus. There had never been, nor ever will be again, a God-man. The devil must have been massively frustrated trying to find Jesus' kryptonite.

(BTW: Jesus did not sin; not ever, in any way. Theologians still argue, however, about whether or not He *could* have sinned).

David knew the Jews had a tendency toward idolatry. How often in their history we read of them chasing after other gods, offering them sacrifices.

“Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten *after* another *god*.” Think of this as applying to saints. Turn from following the Lord and you will experience spiritual ruin. You may prosper materially; the devil still offers his kingdoms to those who are willing to turn aside. Remember, we aren't living for a measly 70 or 80 years on earth. We are prepping for eternity. You don't have a moment to waste on materialism.

Psa 16:5 O LORD, *You are* the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.

6 of 12  
Psalm 16  
“No Saint Left Behind”



Psa 16:6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant *places*; Yes, I have a good inheritance.

These two verses augment one another. They picture life on earth, as a believer, as if it were a "pleasant" estate. Like an estate, life has boundary "lines," and we call it your "lot" in life. You "have a good inheritance," meaning you have inherited everything that belongs to a member of God's family.

Think of Jesus saying this, knowing His "lot" was to go to the Cross. It was God's "cup" for Him to drink. He nevertheless knew what He would inherit - You & me.

You may feel bound by circumstances beyond your ability to change. Your lot in life may indeed be poor. You can be certain God will provide every spiritual resource. It's your promised, provided inheritance. You may never be rich - but you are "rich in faith."

Psa 16:7 I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

Jesus thought of "counsel" as hearing from His Father, then doing what He said. He spent many a night, even all night, in prayer; and here we see it was to be "instruct[ed]." Again the idea is to hear and obey.

Can we talk about what we commonly call "counseling" for a moment? First - You really cannot counsel a nonbeliever. You can, but you must realize they haven't the indwelling Holy Spirit in order to obey God. All counseling with nonbelievers is pre-counseling; it is evangelism.

Second - Regarding believers, something Tolkien wrote applies. Frodo asked Gildor the Elf for counsel. Gildor replied, "*Elves seldom give unguarded*

7 of 12  
Psalm 16  
"No Saint Left Behind"



*advice, for advice is a dangerous gift, even from the wise to the wise, and all courses may run ill. But what would you? You have not told me all concerning yourself; and how then shall I choose better than you?"*

Omissions and, sometimes, lies, hinder giving correct counsel. Even if you are truthful, without a supernatural word of wisdom, it is hard to give wise counsel, beyond suggesting Scripture that seems appropriate.

Follow the example of Jesus. Get His counsel and instruction directly from Him through His Word, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. As the Donut Man sings,

*I like the Bible, I like the Bible  
I read it and I do it; I read it and I do it*

When you do seek human counsel - Be sure it is from solid believers and that it involves hearing submissively what the Lord has said in His Word.

The only way to properly close this first point, on the life Jesus lived for you, is to quote from Philippians 2:5-8.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

That is the life He lived for you, excellent saint.

## **#2 - Jesus Sings Praise To His Father For The Death He Died For You (v8-11)**

8 of 12  
Psalm 16  
*"No Saint Left Behind"*





I like to think Peter sang these four verses in his Pentecost sermon. The Jews gathered in the Temple would have recognized it immediately. Maybe even sung along?? If not, it would have been stuck in their minds afterwards.

Let's read them in their entirety:

Psa 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me; Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.

Psa 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

Psa 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Psa 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

Peter applied them:

Act 2:29 "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

Act 2:31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

Act 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

Act 2:33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

Peter quoted a few other passages from the Hebrew Scriptures.

9 of 12  
Psalm 16  
"No Saint Left Behind"



Those Jews hearing that first sermon of the Church Age - It might have been the first time in their lives they understood that their Scriptures were alive.

There had been 400 'silent years,' when YAWEH had revealed nothing new to Israel. Then in a short span of less than four years, John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah... Jesus did amazing works... And now the followers of Jesus had received the promised Holy Spirit.

Psa 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me; Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.

Where is Jesus seated today? According to Colossians 3:1, Jesus is "seated at the right hand of God." In verse ten, Psalm 16 says the same. Many Scriptures concur.

Because we know that, we can easily miss something in our text. Read verse eight again: "Because **He is** at **my** right hand I shall not be moved." David is picturing God at **his** right hand.

Because, on earth, David was in a relationship with God, as he set, and thereby preferred, the Lord before himself in his daily life, the Lord could be considered David's 'right-hand man.'

There have been a few truly great right-hand men in literature and on film. Two of the greatest: Chewbacca and Samwise Gamgee. Sam in particular. Without him, Frodo would have failed. Sam was there for him at every twist and turn.

On the basis of this psalm, I think it is orthodox to say that, while we are on earth, we can think of Jesus as our right-hand man. Without Him, we WILL fail - and not just at every twist and turn, but on straight, level paths, too.

10 of 12

Psalm 16

*"No Saint Left Behind"*



Of course, in reality, Jesus ascended to Heaven, where He currently sits at God's right hand.

It signifies His shared power and authority with the Father. It insures us He will complete His work in us.

And not just in us, but in Creation. Having redeemed His creatures and His Creation, Jesus will return and the future history we read in the unfulfilled prophecies of the Bible will consummate in His new creatures living in His new creation.

Psa 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

I wonder if the back-up singers were singing, *I'm So Glad?*

David was "glad, and he "rejoice[d]" knowing death would not be his end. He even hinted at resurrection when he said his "flesh also will rest in hope."

If you didn't know those words are from a psalm, you'd probably think they were New Testament

Psa 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

There is a lot of debate about "Sheol," e.g., whether it is Hades or someplace else. It's probably shorthand for the afterlife, and in the case of believing Old Testament saints, that would be Hades.

11 of 12

Psalm 16

*"No Saint Left Behind"*



The insight the Holy Spirit gave Peter: David's "soul" WAS in Hades. His physical body DID "see corruption." He was writing, without realizing it, about his future descendant - Jesus.

Jesus had absolute confidence He would rise from the dead as the Firstfruits of those who would believe in Him.

We may not all die; the rapture is imminent. If we do die, being absent from our bodies we will be present with the Lord, to await our resurrection.

Psa 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

The first phrase - that is our life on earth. We've already talked about Jesus doing and saying what His Father revealed to Him. His Father showed Jesus His "path" to the Cross.

How does God "show" us "the path of life?" He certainly doesn't show us much in advance. He "shows" us the way a Realtor "shows" a house. He accompanies us, pointing things out if we will go with Him and listen. He's a companion along the way.

The final phrases in verse eleven - that's eternity. It's guaranteed. It's glorious.

Your right-hand man is seated at God's right hand. From that seat, He sent the promised Holy Spirit to dwell within you. You can thereby do all things through Jesus as He strengthens you.

