

Psalm 16

How to Be Secure in Life and Death, 16:1-11

(16:1-11) Introduction: one constant reality in life is that life is uncertain and unpredictable. With so many advances in modern technology happening at such a rapid pace, it is no wonder people feel insecure! Walls and weapons have been replaced by sophisticated electronic systems. Trust has been replaced by cameras—some hidden, others on every street corner. Satellites capture information on everyone from cab drivers to national leaders. People do not know in whom or what or where to place their confidence. For most people, there is little security in the event of illness, disaster, or death. Economic security for the future is being threatened around the world.

On earth, nothing is absolutely safe. No product or service can be bought or built that provides foolproof protection. Economies collapse; electronics malfunction; locks can be deactivated or broken; humans fall asleep on the job; uncontrollable natural disasters occur.

Psalm 16 emphasizes that only one true source of security exists: God. God's people, while exercising wisdom, caution, and discretion, understand that real security is found only in Him. At a very hazardous time in his life, David realized that only God could preserve him in life and in death.

The heading to this psalm informs us that it is a michtam psalm. The meaning of this technical term, used also in Psalms 56-60, is unknown. Commentator John Phillips offers an excellent summary of opinions about its significance:

Some think it comes from a word meaning to engrave, or sculptured writing. Applied thus, the thought would be that here something is preserved that should never be forgotten. Interestingly enough, each of the michtam psalms preserves the thought of resurrection. Some think the word michtam is mystical in nature, "a psalm of hidden, mysterious

meaning." Others say the word means "a golden psalm." Michtam suggests that this psalm was one of David's golden meditations, dealing with truth so significant it should be preserved forever, although originally a personal, private meditation.

This is, How to Be Secure in Life and Death, 16:1-11.

1. Take refuge in the Lord (vv. 1-2).

2. Take delight in fellowship with other believers (v. 3).

3. Separate from the ungodly (v. 4).

4. Praise the Lord for His blessings (vv. 5-7).

5. Set the Lord before you: Because He is at your right hand, He will not let you be shaken (v. 8).

6. Rejoice in the great hope God has given (vv. 9-11).

1. (16:1-2) Take refuge in the Lord.

David trusted God to shelter him. Because the occasion of this psalm is not given, we do not know the immediate threat or situation David was facing. However, David was concerned about staying close to the Lord—about abiding in His presence and not straying away from Him. Details within the passage suggest that he was in the midst of those who worshipped idols; therefore, he had reason to fear the temptation to turn away (vv. 2-4). Perhaps David wrote this psalm while he was dwelling in the land of the Philistines where he had fled in order to escape Saul (1 Sam. 27-29).

a. Ask Him to keep you safe (v. 1).

Preserve (*shamar*) is most frequently translated as keep and means "to hedge about." A hedge serves two purposes: it keeps outsiders out and insiders in. By using this word, a word frequently used of shepherding, David asked God to protect him the way a shepherd keeps his flock (Ge. 30:31; Jer. 31:10). He was trusting God to prevent his enemies from

coming near him and also to stop himself from straying outside the boundaries of fellowship with God.

b. Acknowledge Him as your Lord—the Source of every good and perfect gift (v. 2).

The two names of God used by David reveal the strength of his commitment: the Lord (Jehovah) was his Lord (Adonai)—his master, his ruler, his king. David confessed his absolute devotion to the Lord, declaring that he would worship and serve only Him.

David fully recognized every blessing he enjoyed as the gift of God's hand. He was nothing and had nothing apart from God's goodness (Ja. 1:17). Why would he stray from the Lord when God had blessed him so abundantly? Why should he seek anything in any other god when the Lord had given him all things? The Lord had won his full devotion. To depart from Him was unthinkable to David; it would be the greatest failure he could imagine.

Thought 1. David's prayer proclaims a vital truth: we need the Lord and His Word to keep us in close fellowship with Him. The tendency of our flesh—the sin nature—is to escape the boundaries God has placed upon our lives to protect us. These boundaries are the commands of His Word for holy living. God's presence is within these holy hedges; we can only live in close fellowship with Him when we obey His commands. Outside these commands lies great danger. We are safe only when we stay within the confines of God's laws for living.

Yet it is so easy to stray. We desperately need the Lord's help in order to stay close to Him. We are kept—safeguarded and directed—only by His power and His strength. Just as a shepherd uses his rod and staff to chasten a straying sheep and pull it back into the safety of the fold, the Lord chastens us and draws us back to Him when we begin to stray (Ps. 23:4; Heb. 12:6-11). We always need to be on guard lest we wander

away from the Lord. This means living in daily dependence on Him to deliver us from everything that would tempt us to stray (Mt. 6:13).

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th. 5:23).

“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12).

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

“The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore” (Ps. 121:7-8).

“He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee” (Pr. 4:4-6).

2. (16:3) Take delight in fellowship with other believers.

David compared two distinct groups of people in this psalm: the saints and those who worship idols. The saints are those who are holy, godly, separated unto the Lord. The saints who lived in Israel and faithfully worshipped and served the Lord were the joy of David’s heart, not the heathen idolaters among whom he was dwelling. His use of

excellent refers to their noble character and worthy conduct. David confessed his delight in the holy people of God, and longed to return to their society. Earth (erets), here, is also translated as land and is used

many times throughout the Old Testament to refer to the land of Palestine. In light of verses 5-6, which speak of the land David is inheriting from the Lord, this is the preferable understanding here. The land is the inheritance given to Abraham and his descendants by the Lord (Ge. 15:18-21). David's statement to Saul in 1 Sam. 26:19 may very well be the background for this psalm:

“Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods” (1 Sam. 26:19).

Thought 1. One of the great privileges and blessings of knowing Christ is that we are a part of a family, the family of God (Eph. 3:14-15). We belong to the household of God (Eph. 2:19). Our family is a heavenly family, one whose true home is the “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22-24).

True, we are commanded to love the lost and to win them to Christ, but we should take the greatest delight in our fellowship with other believers. We who know Christ share a special bond—a spiritual bond—one that often runs deeper than blood relationships within families. The Bible encourages us to treasure fellowship with other believers and not to neglect it in our lives. In reality, we need to help each other remain faithful to the Lord and hold each other accountable, especially as we draw closer to the coming of Christ (Heb. 10:24-25). Note what Scripture says about being faithful to other believers:

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and

breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Ac. 2:42-46).

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19).

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:24-25).

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:22-24).

3. (16:4) Separate from the ungodly.

The Lord is a jealous God (Ex. 20:5; 34:14). Remember, in His first two commandments He declares that He and He alone is to be worshipped and served (Ex. 20:2-5). During David’s time in Philistia, he had ample opportunity to witness those who disobeyed those two prime commandments, people who worshipped idols. His observations helped shape a firm conviction in his heart.

a. Engaging in false worship increases trouble and sorrows (v. 4).

David concluded that the worship of idols results in multiplied pain and sorrow. How is this true? First, the worship of idols usually involves many pagan and immoral activities. Those who engage in sin always reap its painful consequences (Gal. 6:7-8). Sin perverts the soul, plagues the spirit, and destroys the body. It ruins relationships and corrupts every

part of the idolaters' lives. God's judgment is invoked upon those who persist in sin.

Second, idol worshippers forfeit the many benefits that are received from a relationship with the Lord, the true and living God. For example, the Lord promises to provide for us and to protect us. Although sorrow is an inescapable part of life in this sin-cursed world, we who truly follow the Lord are guarded by His providential care. Of course, this does not mean we are spared from all pain and sorrow, but it does guarantee that God will be with us throughout the trials of life and will help us triumph over them in the end. This is a glorious promise!

b. Vow not to participate in false worship with the ungodly (v. 4).

The goodness of God that David experienced in his life and the grief that idolaters experienced in theirs' generated a deep conviction in David's spirit: he would have nothing—absolutely nothing—to do with false worshippers and their vain practices. No doubt, during the time he dwelt among the idolaters in Philistia, David was pressured to acknowledge their religious system. But, he refused to participate in idolatrous worship. In fact, he went so far as to declare that he would not even speak the names of their gods (Ex. 23:13). He vowed that he would not compromise with them in any way.

Thought 1. God demands our total separation from all ungodliness. It is impossible to live in fellowship with God and unrighteousness at the same time. We need to take literally God's command not to even touch that which is unclean (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Many believers disregard this command, purchasing idolatrous objects and displaying them in their homes. Others embrace superstitious charms and other items they think will bring them good fortune. Some even participate in mixed religious services or activities where the worship of other gods is included. While we should not be unloving to those who are trapped in false religions, we must not condone nor participate in their worship or festivities. We must never be deceived by the satanic lie that all are worshipping the

same God. There is only one true and living God and His name is Yahweh, Jehovah. He can be approached only through His Son, Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:6).

Like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego of old, genuine believers in many places today pay a great price for remaining true to Christ. A number of pastors who receive this commentary will preach God's Word in countries where their lives are endangered for the gospel. Other believers reading these words will face the temptation to compromise their faith or else experience persecution. Stand strong! Do not compromise your faith and confession of Jesus Christ! You stand in great company when you are persecuted for the gospel.

We who live in countries where we can freely worship and preach without fear or threat must not forget our brothers and sisters in the Lord who face grave danger for the faith. It is our duty to lift them up in prayer and to do whatever we can to support them. If they are willing to proclaim the gospel at the expense of their lives, how much more should we take advantage of every opportunity to share Christ?

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (Jn. 15:19).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

“And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth” (Ex. 23:13).

“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord” (Isa. 52:11).

4. (16:5-7) Praise the Lord for His blessings.

Having just credited the Lord for every good thing in his life, David elaborated on God’s grace and blessings to him. He employed the language of the Israelites’ physical inheritance—the promised land—to describe God’s spiritual blessings in his life. In doing so, he mentioned three specific examples of God’s goodness:

a. Praise Him because He Himself is your inheritance (portion), and He secures your every need (v. 5).

The inheritance of every Jewish family was a share of the promised land, which Joshua had divided among the tribes shortly before his death (Jos. 13-21). During the time that Saul pursued David, he was forced to be away from the place God had allotted to him and his family. Yet he found something far greater to sustain him during his exile: the Lord Himself. Like the Levites who had no share in the land, David had received the Lord as his portion (Num. 18:20; De. 10:9). All that David needed was found in the Lord. Using Hebrew synonyms, David literally said, “The Lord is the portion of my portion.” Commentator H.C. Leupold views this double statement as a Hebrew superlative; David is implying that the Lord is the greatest portion or inheritance possible.

David used cup to further depict what he had been given in life. It may be the cup of God’s blessings (Ps. 23:5); or it may be another term for

his lot in life—that which had been portioned or assigned to him. Either way, he acknowledged God as the source and sustainer of his lot—all that was his.

b. Praise Him because He has given you a wonderful inheritance (v. 6).

The land had originally been divided through the casting of lots (Num. 33:54). This was not a matter of chance, though; God had providentially directed the falling of the lot (Pr. 16:33). Likewise, God providentially directed David's life. Remember that David was not speaking of the land itself in these verses but of his life. He was saying that he had enjoyed a rich, wonderful life, a life that overflowed with God's grace, mercy, and love. What God had dealt to him and where the lines or boundaries had fallen were all good.

c. Praise Him because He counsels and instructs you—even during the night (v. 7).

David praised the Lord for His guidance. Through every trial and challenge he had faced, David had heard God's voice. He could look back and recognize that God had directed his steps (Ps. 37:24).

Many believers assume that God spoke differently to people in Old Testament times than He does today, that He spoke audibly to them on a regular basis. The Old Testament does record occasions when the Lord spoke in an audible voice, but this was by no means the norm. David specified that the Lord spoke to him inwardly, to his spirit, instructing him in the night. To instruct (yasar) means to chasten or correct. As he lay awake on his bed at night, something inside David spoke to him and convicted him of any wrongdoing in his life. David was referring to his conscience or heart (reins). God speaks to all of us through this impressionable, innermost part of our being. He has engraved His holy law upon the conscience of every individual (Ro. 2:14-15).

Why is it so often true that the Lord instructs us during the night? When we retire to our beds, we usually lie in silence. We have quieted all the other voices in our lives and are able to better distinguish the voice of the Lord.

Thought 1. What a glorious truth is expressed in this passage! At one of the lowest points in David's life—forced from his home, fleeing from Saul into a foreign, pagan land—he viewed himself as abundantly blessed. David's gratitude toward the Lord is the most prominent element in this psalm. Fully focused on the goodness of God rather than on the difficulty of his circumstances, David made a deliberate choice to praise the Lord for his blessings

rather than to complain about his burdens.

We, too, must make a conscious effort to keep our eyes on the Lord. Like David, we should choose to see the goodness of God in our lives even in the midst of the most grievous situations. God is faithful. He is all we need and He is better than anything else we can imagine. To experience the fullness of God's presence, guidance, and comfort in the midst of trials is greater than living a trouble-free life without Him. In our darkest moments, His light shines the brightest. And in our most difficult hours, His sufficiency bursts into full view.

The Lord will guide us in every situation, trivial or critical, as long as we look to Him. He will direct our steps according to His plan for our lives. He promises wisdom that is sufficient for every trial (Ja. 1:5). Through His correction and discipline, God will keep us from drifting away from His presence by pulling us back to Himself when we stray. Even when He chastens us, God is good. We ought to praise Him for His discipline in our lives, for with His chastening hand, the Lord preserves us (v. 1; Heb. 12:5).

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss

of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:8).

“Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand” (Ps. 37:24).

“Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Ps. 73:24).

“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (Ps. 73:25-26).

“The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him” (La. 3:24).

5. (16:8) Set the Lord before you: Because He is at your right hand, He will not let you be shaken.

Up to this point David has emphasized the good work of God in his life, the Lord’s work of preserving David—guiding, keeping, guarding—him. Now, in bringing this psalm toward a close, David cites the one thing that prompted God to release His preserving power upon him: David kept the Lord before him continually. With God at his right hand, David would not be moved by anyone or anything. The right hand has great significance in the Bible. It is the place of...

exaltation, honor, and authority (Ac. 2:33; Eph. 1:20-21; Heb. 1:3-4)

support (Ps. 73:23)

protection and provision (109:31; 121:5)

security and defense (Ps. 110:5; Isa. 41:13)

guidance and direction (Isa. 45:1)

When David walked throughout the day and set the Lord before Him—in the place of authority—God honored him by providing the benefits

mentioned above. He supported David by protecting, defending, and guiding him.

With the Lord walking before him, David was confident that he would not be moved from the path he had chosen to walk, the path of integrity. David was determined not to risk losing all the blessings the Lord had given him. He would follow the Lord's instructions and guidance. As a result, the Lord would prepare the way for his dear servant and deal with any threats before they reached him. Nothing could approach David, unless it first went through God. God was next to him—at his right side, surrounding him with His presence, power, protection, and preservation. How could David be more secure?

Thought 1. What does it really mean to set the Lord before you? First, when you set the Lord before you, you are both proclaiming and claiming the Lord as your God. It means He should have first place in your life and be preeminent in all you do. Nothing and no one else should come ahead of Him (Ex. 20:3). How does this fit into daily life? When you get up in the morning and have devotions, does it mean that you are then free to go about your day doing whatever you please? Not at all! Once you have had your morning worship time, you are to continue setting the Lord before you, making Him a part of everything you do throughout the day. You should pray and seek guidance about...

decisions you need to make

problems that arise

the quality of your work

your relationship with associates

your witness before others

people who need salvation

God's purpose for your life

and on and on

No area of your life should be excluded from God and His involvement or guidance. You should be striving to honor Him in all you do. That is how you set God before you.

Second, look to God as your guide. If you call on Him and genuinely seek His will and guidance, He will lead you in every decision you face. He will not only prepare you but also prepare the way for you in all that is to come. Third, when you set God before you, He becomes your guard. He will surround you with His protection. He will not allow anything—no trial, temptation, or danger—to threaten you beyond what you are able to bear. He will either give you the grace to handle it or provide a way to escape it (1 Cor. 10:13). Fourth, with God before you, He will be your delight, your gladness (v. 9-11). You will find unspeakable joy by living in His presence.

The Lord desires to be first in our lives, and He longs to go before us. In fact, He seeks out those individuals who will worship Him, and He delights in their praise (Jn. 4:23). But, even though He loves us and wants to care for us in every way, He will not force Himself into our lives. We must be willing to yield to Him by surrendering our lives completely to His Lordship and giving Him the full measure of our devotion. When we truly set Him before us, He takes His place beside us and offers us all the benefits of His presence.

This is the example set for us by the Lord Jesus Christ. In his sermon at Pentecost, Peter noted that David spoke prophetically about Christ in this psalm. When Jesus walked up Calvary's hill, carrying the cross of our sin and shame, the Father was before Him and beside Him. In His entire mission—His incarnation, His life, His death—Jesus was fully surrendered to the will of the Father. He endured the persecution and betrayal by understanding God's great purpose for Him; and the hope of His resurrection and exaltation sustained Him every step of the way (Ac. 2:25-28; Heb. 12:2).

“And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice” (Jn. 10:4).

“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” (Ac. 2:25).

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night” (Ex. 13:21).

“The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes” (De. 1:30).

“And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you” (2 Chr. 15:2).

“For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward” (Isa. 52:12).

6. (16:9-11) Rejoice in the great hope God has given.

As David expanded on the goodness of God and the Lord’s preservation of his life, his heart overflowed with joy. He described his heart as being glad and his glory rejoicing. The root word for glory means weighty or heavy. The best understanding of it here is that David was describing the magnitude of his rejoicing. The ESV renders it “my whole being rejoices.”

David's proclamation of joy serves as a transition from the subject of the present time to the subject of the future, from life to death, from earth to heaven. God, who had faithfully preserved him in life, would also preserve him in death and beyond. The New Testament informs us that David spoke prophetically of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (Ac. 2:25-36; 13:34-37). But the complete revelation of the New Testament also confirms that David spoke here with personal application as well, for Christ became the firstfruits of all—the firstfruits of a great harvest—that sleep in Him (1 Cor. 15:20-22). Because He lives, we too shall live (Jn. 14:19). This passage is cause for double rejoicing, rejoicing both in Christ's resurrection and in our own.

a. The conquest of death (vv. 9-10).

David took a bold, fearless leap into the dark subject of death. He was confident that he would be as secure in death as he was in life. He looked to the future, the time when his rejoicing would cease and his flesh, or his body, would rest in the grave. Rest (*shakan*) means to lodge or reside and is usually translated as dwell. His body would rest or dwell in the grave in hope—in safety, security, and peace. He was absolutely sure that God would bring to pass all He had promised.

David spoke with absolute conviction: his body would not stay in the grave and his soul would not stay in hell or Sheol. Sheol in Old Testament thought was the place or realm of all the dead. Death and corruption were not his final destination.

Both Peter and Paul preached that the truths of verse ten, when strictly interpreted, can only be understood as prophetic of Christ (Acts 2:29-34; 13:36-37). David died and his body still lies corrupted in the grave. Christ, however, was raised on the third day after His death, before the process of decay had occurred.

b. The fullness of life: God has shown you the path to walk in order to experience the fullness of life (v. 11).

The path of life begins on earth. It is the way of wisdom and righteousness as contrasted with the path that leads to destruction (Pr. 4:18; 8:20; 12:28; 15:24). Jesus also spoke of two roads: one leads to destruction and the other leads to life (Mt. 7:13-14). When we choose the path of life through receiving Christ as Savior, we begin a new life, a life in which God's presence is with us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is the abundant life Jesus promised, a life that is full, satisfying, and joyful (Jn. 10:10). David knew the great joy and satisfaction of living in full fellowship with the Lord.

c. The joy of eternal life (v. 11).

The path of life begins on earth, but it does not end on earth, not at death's door. Life triumphs over death and marches into the very presence (*paniyim*, Hebrew for face) of the Lord Himself in heaven. David spoke of what lies at the end of this path: a face-to-face encounter with God. Scripture promises that we will see God's face (Re. 22:4-5). When we bask in the light of His countenance, we will know a fullness of joy—a level of bliss—we have never before experienced.

The pleasures of heaven will be far beyond any pleasures we have known here on earth, and as we enjoy the Lord and serve Him, we will not be restricted or encumbered by time, physical weakness, or the consequences of sin. So magnificent are the glories of heaven that the apostle John had to ransack human language to find words to describe it (Rev. 21-22).

Walking with the Lord on earth is comforting and wonderful, but it makes us long for something more: our eternal home, the City of God. We will be eternally satisfied when we behold God's face (Ps. 17:15).

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of this verse when He ascended to heaven and took His place at the right hand of the Father (Ac. 2:33; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3-4). As believers, we have been assigned a seat with Him in heavenly places, a seat we will occupy throughout the ages to come

(Eph. 2:6-7). Note this comforting and amazing truth: while we live on earth the Lord is at our right hand (v. 8), and throughout eternity in heaven we will be at His right hand.

Thought 1. What a glorious prospect awaits us as saints of God! Although Old Testament believers did not possess the full revelation we have through God's completed Word, they were nevertheless convinced of the resurrection to come (Jb. 19:26; Ps. 71:20; Da. 12:2). We are privileged to know the details of how and when the dead will be raised (1 Co. 15). The New Testament instructs us to comfort those who grieve for loved ones who are already asleep in Christ. We should remind them of what will occur when Christ returns: dead believers will be raised and reunited with their loved ones (1 Th. 4:13-18). Our blessed hope, the hope that anchors our souls through the difficult storms of life is a living hope (Tit. 2:13; Heb. 6:18-20)! Like David, we can be confident that our God will preserve us through life and death to receive our full inheritance—all that is reserved for us in heaven (1 Pe. 1:3-5).

“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:51-58).

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:8).

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th. 4:13-18).

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Th. 5:23).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pe. 1:3-5).