

Psalms 18-10-25b

We're ready to resume our study in Psalm 16. David says, Preserve me, O God, for in you I have taken shelter. I have said to the Lord, You are my Lord.

I have said to Yahweh, You are my Sovereign. You are my Provider, my Protector, my Defender, and my goodness is nothing beside You. Now, verse 3, As for the saints who are on the earth, the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight, their sorrows shall be multiplied.

They hasten after another, their drink-offerings of blood I will not offer, nor take up their names on my lips. As I said, interpretation on this Psalm is wide and various. Let me give you a couple of the alternatives.

My brother Matthew and I have this translation of the Psalms by Robert Alter, and when he gets to verse 3 and 4, he translates it this way, As to holy ones in the land, and the mighty who were all my desire, let their sorrows abound, another did they betroth. I will not pour their libations of blood, I will not bear their names on my lips. Do you see the difference there? In our King James, it appears that David says, I've taken shelter in the Lord, and he's the standard of goodness, my goodness is as nothing beside him.

Or, if you want to take it as it lies here in the translation, he is the source of all goodness, nothing wrong with that. But then in the New King James, it says, the saints and the excellent ones, you get the idea, these are my compatriots. And you could make hay out of that, you could say, well, it's the vertical and the horizontal, I've got my trust in the Lord, and he's the source of righteousness, and here's holy ones and excellent ones in the land, and I delight in them.

So I delight in the Lord, and I take shelter in him, and all of my delight is in these holy ones. Well, I don't buy that. David, when he typically talks about his keppets, which is the word here for delight, keppets, remember it shows up in David's last words, we covered that when we did the books of Samuel, and what does he say in Psalm 1? The man who is blessed doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the sea of the scornful, what is his delight in? The holy ones of the land? The mighty nobles? What's his delight? His delight is in the of the Lord, and in that law he reflects and meditates day and night, that's where his delight is.

It would be an odd thing for David to say, he doesn't just say my delight, or I delight in them, he says all my delight, and the word all is there. So what does this mean? Well, the altar seems to be on the track of this when he says, as to the kadoshim, the holy ones in the land, and the nobles, the high and mighty, the krem de la krem, who were all my desire. There is no verb for being here, so it could be present tense, it could be past tense.

But then he goes on in verse 4 and says, let their sorrows abound, and 4 seems to be talking about the people named in verse 3. So how can they be holy and mighty and excellent, and

David saying, let them have sorrows, and I won't even speak their names, and I'm going to have nothing to do with their libations of blood. Who are these people? If they're not named in verse 3, who are they? The most you could say is, well, they've got loyalty to another. It doesn't even say gods.

This has been theorized that David finds himself in Gath or something, and he's in the midst of idolaters, and so he's saying, well, these that pour out libations to false gods. There's not a word for false gods anywhere in here, and it just doesn't track semantically to me. Let me tell you what the Tanakh has to say, how they translate this.

This is your Jewish Publication Society translation. Psalm 16, a miktam of David, and these people, they're the Jewish Publication Society. If anybody knows what miktam means, it's them.

Their footnote on miktam says, meaning of Hebrew uncertain. So there you go. They translate it this way.

Protect me, O God, for I seek refuge in you. Good translation, seeking refuge for that kasam. I say to the Lord, notice they fix that defective verbal construction.

I say to the Lord, or I have said to the Lord, you are my Lord, my benefactor, there is none above you. Now that's kind of an NIV type of semantic translation, for my good is nothing beside you, or I have no good apart from you, however you want to construct that. They just say there is none above you, but they have a footnote down that says, others translate this, I have no good but in you.

Fine. Now we get to verse three. As to the holy and mighty ones that are in the land, my whole desire, my whole kapetz concerning them is that those who espouse another, God is in brackets, those who espouse another God may have many sorrows.

I will have no part of their bloody libations, their names will not pass my lips. So the JPS, the Tanakh here, understands these holy and mighty ones, and the question is, is it my desire that they have many sorrows, or did I formerly have a desire for them in the past that I no longer have? And it's just stating, they will have many sorrows, rather than my desire is that they may have many sorrows. That's the JPS.

So I am going to side with those who see this as not necessarily complimentary. These are those who consider themselves to be holy, these who are considered by others to be the excellent and the mighty, the nobles. David is the king, or the anointed one certainly, and it seems unlikely that he would be taking all his delight in the nobles of the land.

The nobles of the land typically get pretty short shrift in the Old Testament. They're usually corrupt, they're oppressing the poor, they're adding land to land and house to house. Isaiah, the first 39 chapters, is all a great diatribe against the mighty ones and those who have power who are oppressing the poor.

And if there's plenty of these excellent ones and holy ones in the land, why doesn't he take shelter with them? Why doesn't he see them as God's provision? I think this is, in a sense, sort of ironic. These supposedly holy ones in the land, these sanctified and set apart ones, kadosh just means set apart. These that are off by themselves and sanctified in that sense, and these excellent ones in whom I once took delight.

David went to the court of Saul, remember? And he was a prince, and he married Saul's daughter, and there was all of the possibility for advancement and promotion and making liaisons and establishing understandings at court to politically advance himself. He says, you know what? You are my refuge, and I don't have anything good apart from you. The ones that seem to be good, holy, set apart, that were high and mighty in the land, their sorrows are going to be multiplied.

Why? Because they're looking for another. Another what? Anytime you have a referential word like this in a sentence or a paragraph, where's the antecedent? Another what? Well, you have in your King James another god in italics. There's been no other gods mentioned.

There's no antecedent in terms of idols or false gods or gods of the land or something. So their sorrows shall be multiplied who are pursuing, the altar uses the word betrothed. They've betrothed themselves.

They're after it. They're going after is the idea. Another, well, another what? Another goodness, another shelter, another provider.

David says, I know you're the only good one. You are the only shelter. Preserve me, oh God.

I have taken shelter with you. I have nothing to offer beside you. Anything that is tov, belonging to me, is nothing next to you.

I can't shelter myself. I can't sanctify myself. I can't protect and preserve myself.

I cannot promote or elevate myself. No good thing apart from you. I have nothing to offer beside you.

You can take it either way and it essentially semantically means the same thing. So as for these kadoshim, these sanctified ones and these high and mighty ones in whom was all my delight. At one time, my kippets, I was focused on them.

I was focused on advancing myself among men and having reliance and security in my relationships and in my confidences and in trusting in man. The Bible over and over again tells us, cursed is the man who trusts in man, who makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. David says, my heart hasn't departed from the Lord.

He is my shelter. There is no good that means anything compared to him, beside him, apart from him. Take it any way you like.

As for these supposedly sanctified ones, this could be a corrupt priesthood. This could be corrupt leadership in whom was kippets. And this can also be sort of a we of majesty here in the sense of, I'm speaking for anybody who puts their confidence in them at any time in their life.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied. They are hastening after another, another shelter, another God, another Lord, another source of good. And it says drink offerings, but the word offerings isn't really there.

This word means libations. In the sacrificial system of Israel, which as you know was restored in David's day, was initially defined in the law of Moses, you have offerings and there's a lot of blood. Read Hebrews 9, without the shedding of blood, you know, nothing was sanctified without blood.

Without the shedding of blood, there's no remission. The blood is poured out at the base of the altar. There's blood being sprinkled on curtains and altars and blood being splashed hither and yonder.

There's blood everywhere, right? So you say, well, there's sacrifices, there's meat, there's meal, there's incense, there's different kinds of sacrifices, but the offerings typically involve the slaying of an animal and blood. So what does David mean when he says, the only antecedent for them, their sorrows shall be multiplied? These who are pursuing something else. It's not God, it's not Yahweh, it's not, he's not their Adonai.

They're not taking shelter in him and they are not looking to him as the standard of good and the source of good. Their sorrows shall be multiplied. Perfectly good translation there.

The JPS says, may their sorrows, my desire is, may their sorrows be multiplied. Well, that's stretching the Hebrew a little bit. It just says, David just says, their sorrows are going to be multiplied.

Anybody who looks someplace other than God, other than the Lord, is on a path to sorrow. You say, well, but look at them. They're considered to be the Kadoshim, they're considered to be the Adir, they're the high and mighty.

David says, they're on a road to sorrow. You know, God resists the proud. He gives grace to the humble.

And then he says, their libations poured over blood. This is a libation celebrated. There's blood on the altar, but they're drinking a libation.

There is a sacrifice. The difference is, David says, the libation is something you drink. The blood is something offered to God.

And he says, their drinks I will not participate in. It says, their drink offerings I will not offer. And the word translated offer here literally means pour or pour out.

And to, it's used for anoint, to pour the anointing oil. This is the word that was used. And to pour out as a libation.

And so there's blood, but it's not a cup of blood. You don't, you know, offerers didn't pour out the blood, that was the priest's job. So this is a separate liquid.

And you remember David does pour out a drink offering one time. Remember that? When he's tired and he expresses an idle wish, oh, that I could drink from the pool. And his men cross enemy lines and risk their lives and bring back a skin of water from that pool.

And it impresses David so much, their loyalty and their love and their desire to be a blessing to him that he says, it's too valuable for me to drink. I'm going to give this to God. And he honors the men who brought it to him because he says, it's too precious.

I would cheapen this gift if I partook. Let me give it to the one who really deserves it. And he pours it out before the Lord.

It's a libation of this. David says, I'm not pouring out libations. The other thing about a libation is it's a public act.

He didn't do this in private. It wasn't done inside the temple or inside the tabernacle. A libation that is poured out is a very ceremonious public action.

They're libations of blood I will not pour out. And you get the idea that this is a very, these high and mighty and these sanctified ones are making a big show of their righteousness. And he says, I'm not going to do that.

It's they're pouring out blood and it doesn't really have so much to do with sacrifice as with a big show. There is a footnote in your New King James that is worth looking at and that's Psalm 106 verses 37 and 38. In Psalm 106, it's talking about these who are degenerate.

And it says, they even sacrifice their sons and their daughters to demons and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrifice to the idols of Canaan. And the land was polluted with blood. The Eretz, the land is polluted with blood.

It's the same word that he used up here in the beginning of this Psalm. These holy ones in the land, these mighty ones are building their righteousness on something other than the Lord God. And it's their libations of blood.

Somebody is being sacrificed somewhere for them to be so high and mighty. Seems to be the idea to me. So what does this mean to us? Well, you get the best reading of it by continuing in verse five and following.

He says, Oh Lord, the portion of my inheritance and my cup. You notice you are is in italics. It doesn't materially change the sense there, but it's basically all a title here in verse five.

Oh Lord, portion of my inheritance and my cup, you maintain my lot. You see the subtle difference there? You uphold literally my lot. And that is your portion.

If this was in Greek, it would be meros. This would be division of the spoils, division of the inheritance. This is the apportionment.

So why would somebody be pouring libations and looking in some other direction, whether it's political power, social power, idolatry power, powers of liaison with surrounding nations, let's go along to get along, compromise. What is the contrast that David draws here? Those who are pursuing, hastening after something else. Remember when Naaman the leper came and the prophet comes out and says, Go bathe in the muddy Jordan seven times.

He says, What? That's ridiculous. And he's going home. And one of his servants appeals to him and says, Look, if the prophet had told you to do some mighty thing, wouldn't you have done it? All he said is, you know, he's all upset.

He says, We've got some really nice clear rivers back home. He wants me to go in this mud hole and dip in that thing. And the servant says, Look, if he'd asked you to do something strenuous, you would have done it to get rid of your leprosy.

This is something simple. Just go do it. Naaman says, Well, okay.

So he goes and dips and he comes up clean. What does he do right after? He comes back and offers the prophet caravans of riches. The prophet says, I don't want it.

I don't need it. And so Naaman says, Well, let me take a little dirt back because the king is going to lean on my hand and I've got to go stand in this idol temple. I'm not going to participate in the worship, but I've got to accompany him.

It's my job. The prophet says, Go. It's fine.

And so he leaves and he goes over the hill. Then what happens? A little Bible trivia here. A guy named Gehazi.

What does Gehazi do? Runs over the hill, says, Wait, my master changed his mind. We could use some changes of raiment and some of that gold. And he is going after another.

The prophet is given a wonderful example. My portion is the Lord. My lot is given to me by God.

Keep your riches. I don't need them. I don't want it to confuse anybody that I'm for hire for healing.

It muddies the water worse than the Jordan. So you keep that stuff and go. He's got the example of Abraham after he defeated the five kings.

And Abraham tells the king of Sodom, I wouldn't even take a shoelace from you. He gives of his

own. He gives a tenth to Melchizedek, but it has nothing to do with the spoils.

He returned everything to Sodom and Gomorrah and the other three cities, Adonai, Zeboiim, or whatever they were. I can't remember the fifth one. But he says, I don't want any of your stuff.

It's polluted. You're a bunch of pagan heathen idolaters. You got blessing by association while I was rescuing my nephew.

So head on out. He doesn't take anything from them. Why? The Lord is his lot.

The Lord is his inheritance. And it is easy to think, well, but look, God has provided me these spoils. God has, you know, the prophet could say, God probably wants me to take this so I can support my prophetic ministry.

And he is clear on it. Gehazi is not. And who ends up with Naaman's leprosy? Gehazi.

Those who pursue something other than the shelter and the provision of God are going to have multiplied sorrows. And Gehazi was a leper to the day of his death. He's the servant of a prophet who has the power to heal leprosy.

Is his leprosy going to be healed? No. He has, by poor choices, excluded himself from that. I wouldn't have ever had it in the first place if he hadn't made poor choices.

So their libations, I will not pour out. I'm not going to associate myself with that. I'm not going to be seen publicly and I'm not going to take up their names on my lips.

Why is he talking about their names on his lips? Both of these are public, aren't they? In order to speak of someone, you got to be talking to someone. Unless you're crazy and you're talking to yourself. If you've taken up somebody's names on your lips, what are you doing? What do we call that in the modern day? Name dropping.

Oh, well, you know, I know so-and-so. I've got connections. I've got influence.

I've got, you know, let me just let you know that so-and-so knows me or I know them or whatever. I will not take up their names on my lips. What is he talking about? The holy and the high are the resort of those who are grabbing for human power, temporal power, humanly derived success, standards of righteousness.

In the modern day, this is the politically correct dogma that circulates. Oh, I'm for gay marriage. I'm for abortion.

I'm for women's rights. I'm for this. I'm for that.

I'm for the other. And it becomes a badge of righteousness. Yes, and I read the people who write on these subjects.

And I know the speeches and the writings of people who are in the forefront of this fight to

save the whales or stop global warming or, you know, whatever it may be. I'm in the know. Their names are on my lips.

The greatest evolutionary scientists. I know their writings. I know their arguments.

I can cite you chapter and verse on that because I get my credibility and my respect in the community from being one of them and knowing the prominent ones. This can be in venues large and small. It can be as small as a local church.

I'm one of the shakers and movers in this congregation. I'm talking about ones that have a building or a large enough group that there could be some sort of power politics going on. I don't make public demonstrations of my influence or my commitment or my belief in these things.

And I don't take up their names on my lips. Now he returns. He's still talking to the Lord this whole time.

And in verse 5 he says, Oh Lord, the portion of my inheritance in my cup. And by not saying you are, he's not telling God you are the portion of my inheritance in my cup. He says, Oh Lord, this is David's thought to himself.

David says, I think of the Lord, notice it's small caps there, Oh Yahweh, Yahweh, the portion of my inheritance and my cup. What's the difference? The portion of my inheritance and my cup. What's the difference in inheritance and a cup? The Lord Jesus has an inheritance.

The Lord Jesus had a cup, right? What was the difference? The cup is something that he drank here in time. Father, if it be of thy will, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

Psalm 23. You prepare a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. You anoint my head with oil.

My cup runs over. Right? That's what I'm drinking now. When the mother of James and John came and said, Grant, my two sons can sit at your right hand and at your left.

And Jesus says, Well, that's not my power to grant. That belongs to the Father. But then he turns to James and John and he says, Are you able to be baptized with my baptism and to drink my cup? Paraphrasing.

Right? Are you able to be baptized with my baptism? Are you able to drink the cup that I'm going to drink? And they said famously, Lord, we are able. Are ye able, said the master? Right? It's a cup. It is the present circumstance.

What is inheritance? The New Testament talks about the Lord Jesus being the firstborn of many brethren. He's going to divide the inheritance with the strong. Right? That's the future.

David says, Oh, Lord, my future and my present. You will determine the lot that I have in the future, my inheritance, and you determine my cup now. And it may be a difficult cup.

You uphold my lot. The word translated lot here is goral. G-O-R-A-L.

And it actually means it's the same as what's used for casting lots. It literally means like pebbles or flat stones. You uphold my lot.

And you say, well, is this my lot in the trailer park? Is this my lot in life? But it literally means this is what happens in terms of your fate. What happens in terms of circumstance. But David starts with, I know my future is secure.

You are the portion of my inheritance. You are my cup. You uphold my course in life, whatever my lot may be.

Then he goes on to say, the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places. And you'll notice there again that places is in italics and there's a lot of variation how this is translated. The Tanakh again says, delightful country has fallen to my lot.

Lovely indeed is my estate. And up above they say, the Lord is my allotted share and portion. You control my fate, which is a good semantic translation.

You control my fate. Lot is determined or your fate is determined often by lot in the Old Testament. So delightful country has fallen to my lot.

Lovely indeed is my estate is how they translate that. Robert Alter has a slightly different take on it. He says, the Lord is my portion and lot.

It is you who sustain my fate, who uphold my fate. Verse six, an inheritance fell to me with delight. My estate too is lovely to me.

And I like Alter's translation here because he says, inheritance fell to me with delight. My estate too is lovely to me because this mirrors what he says about the Lord. You are the portion of my inheritance, which mirrors inheritance at the end of verse six.

And the cup and lot is the estate that falls to us, the delightful estate. So the outside bracket of this little mini chiasm is inheritance. And the inside is current circumstance.

And it's a reminder to us that our course through life, the way we look at what happens to us day by day should be enveloped in the eternal perspective. We should wake up in the morning thinking, okay, I'm headed for eternity. We should end the day thinking I'm headed for eternity.

In between, we have our cup. In between, we have our fate. In between, we have circumstantial ups and downs.

But the outside bracket is the Lord is my inheritance. I have a good inheritance. Make sense?

The inheritance in verse six is nachalat.

The inheritance in verse five is chalak. They're two different words, but they both have the same idea of apportionment. The portion of inheritance is all tied up there in this.

And that leads us then to verse seven, I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel. Notice he's not prizing the kadoshim or those who have gotten excellence and nobility in life as all of his delight. He delights himself in his inheritance.

He delights himself in his portion. I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel. People like to say, oh, you know, in the multitude of counselors, there is safety.

It's kind of a mistranslation. The Lord gives me counsel. And this is really guidance, advice, plans for the future.

This comes from the Lord. How do you negotiate your cup? How do you negotiate your circumstance and your fate? God gives counsel. And he says, I bless the Lord.

He has given me counsel. My heart also instructs me in the night seasons. It's not actually heart, it's kidneys.

I didn't know exactly how your internal organs work back then. And, you know, sometimes your kidneys instruct you to get up in the middle of the night and you think, well, how is this a blessing? But my heart instructs me in the night seasons. And, you know, if you literalize this and say, well, I'm laying in bed in the middle of the night and suddenly I get some sort of internal impulse that instructs me, the night seasons are when the light is not shining.

And it is metaphorical for any time that the way doesn't seem clear. The Lord gives me counsel. And I've got an internal source of guidance when the external way is not evident.

When my eyes don't tell me how I can walk and where I can go, I've got internal guidance. It's the reins. It's the kidneys.

It's what is inside. Verse 8, I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

How do you have that internal guidance? This is why I've emphasized from the beginning, you can't be a neophyte believer and follow everything that's in Psalm 16 because you've already got to have what God has given and implanted and secured. In the New Testament, we call it epinosis. It's the knowledge of God that has been reinforced by experience and by practice and by application.

And David says, even in the night seasons, I've got GPS. I've got guidance that doesn't rely on what I can see. It's internal.

It's within me. God has given me counsel and it's within me. How much more so in this day

when we've got the Holy Spirit and the word of God.

But even in those days, those who were faithful, God made special provision for guidance. Maybe he would send Nathan the prophet. Maybe he would warn someone in a dream or communicate to somebody at night.

But God would guide those who were looking to him for that guidance and who trusted him as their shelter, as their inheritance, and as their portion in their cup. So he says in verse 8, I have set the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. And we talked about this being moved in a previous Psalm and we said it means not to be shaken.

And this is the very same word. We saw it, I think, just in the previous Psalm. Not to be moved.

It's the last verse of Psalm 15. He who does these shall never be moved. Same word.

Same expression of confidence. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices.

And he uses the same word. He says my heart celebrates and my kavod rejoices. And you get the idea that this is set in contrast to the shallow glory that he mentioned up above.

The high, the noble, the excellent ones, the adir. He's got glory that is from a genuine source. My heart is glad and my glory rejoices.

And then we get this very Christological section that starts, my flesh also will rest in hope. And this is where we're going to break off for tonight because the last portion of this is quoted in Acts chapter 2 and directly applied to the Lord Jesus. And what we're going to see, and if you want to do a little homework for next time, is as with so many uses of the Old Testament in the New, when there is an allusion or a partial quotation, it typically invites you to remember the entire context.

People in the olden days didn't just memorize a verse, they memorized sections. They didn't even have the chapter divisions, but they would get the chunk. They would get the entire thought unit and commit that to memory.

Memory in big chunks. So if in Acts 2 Peter quotes this psalm and applies it to the Lord Jesus, you know that in his heart it's at a minimum the entire psalm, possibly a couple of psalms. Well, what about the Lord Jesus himself? Was this a source of guidance and encouragement and sustaining strength for him? I think we'll see that as a miktam, something to reflect on when it's life and death, all of these thoughts have special pertinence for the Lord Jesus.

But I don't want to look at that and shift it away from the application that we gain from it, and the guidance and strength that we can derive from it, because this is how when the lights are off and it's dark, you find that guidance from within. You have that strength from within. You take shelter in the mighty God who is also the personal God.

He is El and he is Yahweh. He is both our eternal hope and he is our immediate circumstance determiner. He's the one that decides how much for how long that we face.

How much blessing can we survive without going off the rails? How much testing can we endure without going off the rails? He is our cup. He is also our inheritance. He is what we partake of now, which is often difficult.

More often than not, I mean, you have the cup running over in Psalm 23, but you think about the cup of God's wrath. You think about the cup the Lord Jesus drank. Many times the cup is kind of a mixed blessing or maybe not a blessing at all.

It can be full of bitter gall instead of wonderfully sweet refreshment. So we'll leave here at the beginning of verse 9, Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices. Notice the distance from the beginning of verse 1. Preserve me, O God, I've taken refuge in you.

Now I'm blessing the Lord because he's given me provision. David has stabilized himself and there is a light shining in his soul that makes his path clear. And he doesn't need his eyes to see it.

He doesn't need the kadoshim or the adirim to give him guidance. He's got it from within. God has put it there.

God has given him strength and counsel. And because he has set the Lord always before him, he's not going to be moved. It's going to be okay.

And he'll be vindicated now and in the ages to come. So, therefore his heart is glad and his glory rejoices. And his flesh will rest in hope.

If it turns out to be death rather than life, fine. I'm not finished. My flesh will lay there in hope because I'll be right back.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for these wonderful thoughts that you've preserved across the centuries from David, the man after your own heart, David the king, David the lineal ancestor of the Lord Jesus himself, who takes to himself the title son of David.

These are such precious thoughts and insights. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will take them and minister them to our hearts and help us to see how we can live in their light, how we can be those who take shelter in you and who find comfort, encouragement, strength, and guidance in your presence. We pray these things in Jesus' name.

Amen.