

A Humble Cry to God for Deliverance

Psalm 39

Psalm 39 is a psalm of David in which he is crying out to God to reveal what he has done to require God's chastening and a plea for forgiveness, knowing that his life is short and wanting to again enjoy life in fellowship with God.

There and Then

Outline:

A complete outline for Psalms is available on the [Downloads](#) page in the *Outlines & Word Lists* folder.

Group ¹	C	V	Description
The Vanity of Life	39	1-6	A resolution to remain silent and a petition for God's wisdom
		7-11	An appeal for forgiveness and deliverance from God's chastening
		12-13	A humble cry to be heard by God

People:

Jeduthun, David as the psalmist, the wicked, LORD

Location:

Context:

Key Words:

Old Testament, Wisdom, Psalms, Poetry

Key Verse:

[Psalms 39:12 NASB](#) "Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears; For I am a stranger with You, A sojourner like all my fathers.

Cross References²:

[2 Chronicles 35:15 NASB 15](#) The singers, the sons of Asaph, *were* also at their stations according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and **Jeduthun** the king's seer; and the gatekeepers at each gate did not have to depart from their service, because the Levites their brethren prepared for them.

References to Jeduthun: [1Ch 9:16](#); [16:38](#); [16:41](#); [16:42](#); [25:1](#); [25:3](#); [25:6](#); [2Ch 5:12](#); [29:14](#); [35:15](#); [Neh 11:17](#); [Psa 39:1](#); [62:1](#); [77:1](#)

[James 1:26 NASB](#) If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this man's religion is worthless.

1 (NASB) "Group" column from the headings in the NASB text.

2 (Smith)

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Psalms 25:11 NASB For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

Psalms 25:18 NASB Look upon my affliction and my trouble, And forgive all my sins.

Psalms 119:133 NASB Establish my footsteps in Your word, And do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.

Micah 7:18-19 NASB Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. **19** He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.

Matthew 1:21 NASB "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Matthew 6:12-13 NASB 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'

Titus 2:14 NASB who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Difficulties:

Questions:

1.

Notes & Commentaries:

Spurgeon³

39:1 - "...but neither bird nor beast has anything of this kind of language, of reflecting or discoursing with itself."

39:1 - "If they believed to give account of every idle word, they would be more sparing of foolish speaking. I like either to be silent, or to speak that that may edify. At tables or meetings I cannot stop the mouths of others, yet may I close mine own ears, and by a heavenly soul-speech with God divert my mind from fruitless talking."

39:1-2 - "There is a time to meditate in silence. The greater the silence without, often the greater commotion within."

39:2 - "...if thou hold thy peace, God speaks for thee; and if God speaks for us, it is better than we can speak for ourselves."

39:3 - "There is a time to speak. *"Then spake I."* The time to speak is when the truth is clear and strong in the mind, and the feeling of the truth is burning in the heart."

39:5 - "Man's life is styled *days* because it is not conferred upon us by wholesale, by months and years, but by retail of days, hours, minutes, moments, as to check our curiosity in making enquiry how long we have to live (**Psa 39:4**); so acquainting us with the brevity thereof, we may learn to depend upon God's bounty for the *loan* of our life, employ it for his glory, and every day prepare for the Bridegroom, Christ."

3 (Spurgeon) on Psalm 39.

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39:5 - "If a man be so diminutive a creature, compared with the fabric of that great world, and the world itself so little that it cannot contain the Lord, so little and light that he feels not the weight thereof upon the tip of his finger, man will well merit the name "*nothing*," when he is placed before the Lord."

39:6 - "The plentiful showers of tears which stand in our eyes when we come from the womb, and when we draw to the tomb, are faithful witnesses of man's vanity. We bid the world "good morrow" with grief, and "good night" with a groan."

39:7 - "There are seasons that should lead us specially to look up to God, and say, '*Now, Lord*.'"

39:7 - "Sweet is it that our hope should rest in him who is never shaken; should abide in him who never changeth; should bind us to him who can hold us fast to himself, who alone is the full contentment of the soul; should, as it were, enter into him; since "in him is our being," who is love."

39:8 - "Afflictions should remind us of our sins. If we pray to be delivered from all transgressions, we are sure to be delivered from the one for which affliction was sent. ... The thought that many watch for our halting should be a preservative from sin."

39:9 - "We digest not a blow from our equals, but a blow from our king we can well digest. If the King of kings lays his hand on our backs, let us, beloved, lay our hands on our mouths. I am sure this stopped David's mouth from venting fretful speeches."

39:10 - "Having first prayed off his sin, he would now pray off his pain, though it less troubled him; and for ease he repaireth to *Jehovah that healeth*, as well as woundeth. [Hos 6:1](#)."

39:11 - "How in a world like this could any expect to be exempt from trials! The world is the same to the Christian as before, and his body is the same. He has a converted soul in an unconverted body, and how can he escape the external ills of life?"

39:11 - "The moths of the East are very large and beautiful, but short lived. After a few showers these splendid insects may be seen fluttering in every breeze, but the dry weather, and their numerous enemies, soon consign them to the common lot. Thus the beauty of man consumes away like that of this gay rover, dressed in his robes of purple, and scarlet, and green."

39:11 - "What is greatness? Can we predicate it of man, independently of his qualities as an immortal being? or of his actions, independently of principles and motives?"

39:12 - "Now, in this prayer of David, we find three things, which are the chief qualifications of all acceptable prayers. The first is *humility*. ... The second qualification of this prayer is, *fervency* and *importunity* ... The third qualification is *faith*, "He who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." [Heb 11:6](#). And, certainly, as he that comes to God must believe this, so he that believes this, cannot but come to God; and if he be not presently answered, "he that believes makes no haste," he resolves patiently to wait for the Lord, and to go to no other."

39:12 - "How settled soever their condition be, yet this is the temper of the saints upon earth - to count themselves but strangers. All men indeed are strangers and sojourners, but the saints do best discern it, and most freely acknowledge it. ... So the children of God in relation to a country of their own in another place, namely, heaven, they are denizens there, but strangers in the world; and they are sojourners and pilgrims in regard of their motion and journey towards their country."

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39:13 - "Man in his corrupt state is like Nebuchadnezzar, he hath a beast's heart, that craves no more than the satisfaction of his sensual appetite; but when renewed by grace, then his understanding returns to him, by which he is enabled in praying for temporals to elevate his desires to a nobler end."

39:13 - "May not the very elect and faithful themselves fear the day of judgment, and be far from fetching comfort at it? I answer, he may."

The Preacher's Commentaries⁴

Introduction - "Psalm 39 expresses a deep awareness that this world is passing away. Overwhelmed by its temporal nature, especially in light of divine judgment, the psalmist breaks his silence to question God. This issue is severe because of his own sin and God's displeasure. This makes him sense the futility of life all the more. Thus he feels like a "stranger" toward God. If God won't lift His wrath, then the psalmist will just vanish away."

39:1-3 - "Thus David's silence turns to speech because the sorrow or the pain which has been turning over and over in his heart finally overpowers him. Engulfed in an emotional torrent, he can contain himself no longer."

39:4-6 - "In summary, David tells us: First, human life is frail; we are like vapors and shadows. Second, time is fleeting; for each of us it is like a few handbreadths. Third, wealth as the goal of life is futile; if we spend our days gathering it, someone else will spend it when our days are gone. Now David knows his "end," his death, and "the measure of [his] days," his life. Armand Nicholi, the Harvard psychiatrist, says that only when we are ready to die are we ready to live. David here accepts both his death and his life in light of his death. Now he is ready to move to the deeper issues before him."

39:7-11 - "When we come to Christ, we receive God's forgiveness, knowing that He has borne the wrath of God on the Cross, and that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Him ([Rom 8:1](#)). This means that in Jesus God comes to heal us rather than to punish us. The Holy Spirit has anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to deliver the captives, to give sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to announce 'the acceptable year of the Lord' ([Isa 61:1-2](#); [Luk 4:18-19](#)). Thus we can say with even more assurance than did David, 'My hope is in You.'"

39:12-13 - "David now holds his sorrow before the Lord, pleading with Him to speak: "Do not be silent at my tears." He identifies himself to Yahweh with the humble titles "stranger" and "sojourner." Under biblical law the "stranger" is a protected resident alien. The "sojourner" is an alien passing through the land. Provisions were made for both of these groups to be incorporated into Israel's life (see [Exo 12:48-49](#)). Here David stands with them, as did his ancestors, "all my fathers."

Bible Knowledge Commentary⁵

Introduction - "David acknowledged that God had made man's life brief. So he cast himself on the Lord as his only hope, praying that God would stop chastening him so he could enjoy his remaining days."

Here and Now

⁴ (Williams) on Psalm 39,

⁵ (Walvoord and Zuck) on Psalm 39.

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Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this study⁶: *my LOG vs others SPECK*

S – Are there *sins* to avoid or confess?

-

P – Are there *promises* from God to claim?

-

E – Are there *examples* to follow?

-

C – Are there *commands* to obey?

-

K – How can this passage increase my *knowledge* about God / Jesus Christ / Holy Spirit?

-

Other Application Questions

Are there principles to guide?

Are there warnings to heed?

Are there attitudes to adopt?

Are there actions to take?

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⁶ (The Navigators) [with additions] & Matthew 7:1-5.