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The
Songs
39

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PSALMS - The SONGS

Thirty-nine

My Hope (and Tongue) Wait on the LORD

READ AND OBSERVE

Read through **Psalm 39** and mark every reference to the LORD, or God, including all pronouns and synonyms, with a red triangle.

Read through **Psalm 39** and mark every reference to the psalmist, including all pronouns and synonyms, with a blue capital “R+”.

Read through **Psalm 39** and mark every reference to the wicked, along with all pronouns and synonyms (i.e. foolish, etc.) with an orange capital “W”.

Read through **Psalm 39** and mark every reference to sin, transgression, or iniquity, along with any pronouns and synonyms with an orange “do not” symbol.

Read through **Psalm 39** and mark every reference to time with a blue box.

Read through **Psalm 39** and mark every comparison with a pink equal sign.

Read through **Psalm 39** and mark every contrast with a pink diagonal line. (Hint: Check out **verse 3** and notice what change took place in the psalmist’s behavior.)

Read through **Psalm 39** and divide the passage into the following segments. Mark and title these segments in your text using brackets in the margin.

1. Tongue does not speak in front of the wicked
2. Tongue speaks to God
3. Tongue does not speak because it is God Who chastens
4. Prayer for the LORD to hear what the tongue says to Him

READ AND ANSWER

Psalm 39:1-2

Who is speaking?

What will David guard?

1.

2.

Why does David say he will guard his ways? What is his purpose?

You may not see it at this point in the **Psalm**, but in what way has David determined to not sin with his tongue? Who would his complaint be against? Who would hear his complaint if he opened his mouth and spoke? Don't worry if you don't see it yet. But also, feel confident in your answer if you have carefully observed the entirety of this **Psalm** already.

How will David guard his mouth?

Just exactly what does it mean to guard your mouth as with a muzzle?

When will David guard his mouth in such an intense way?

Why will David guard his mouth so fiercely when the wicked are in his presence?

David describes his personal response to his situation. What was it?

1.

2.

3.

Psalm 39:3-6

What was the result of David's response?

1.

2.

3.

Have you wondered what David's situation was? Do you have any idea what David had been going through? (Don't worry if you don't see the whole picture yet. Just keep observing.)

What does it mean that David was musing?

There is a huge contrast or shift that takes place in David's decisions regarding his tongue. He records it in **verse 3**. What change in direction does David take?

Why did David finally speak?

To Whom did he speak when he finally unmuzzled his mouth?

What was David's request of the LORD?

1.

2.

3.

Although David said it in three different ways (**verse 4**) what was he actually asking God to cement in his mind? (Use your own words.)

Does David already know his end and the extent of his days? (How do you know—from this **Psalm**?)

Does David already know how transient he is? (How do you know—from this **Psalm**?)

Look again at what David is speaking to the Lord about (**verse 4**) and then read what David says next (**verses 5 and 6**). What is the connection?

In your own words, what is David saying in **verses 5 and 6**?

David asked God to let him know the extent of his days in **verse 4**. To what does David compare his own days in **verse 5**?

1.

2.



The Hebrew word for “handbreadth” is *tepach* and refers to the spread of the hand or palm, one of the smallest measurements of antiquity. Generally thought to be about 3 inches, it does not include the length of the fingers.

According to David, what is true even of the man who is blessed with strength to live a long life?

To what does David compare every man’s life?

Why does he compare every man's life to a phantom, image, or shadow? What is his point?

Who makes an uproar?

Why is it for nothing?

According to **verse 6**, what do men do during their lives?

What ironic folly is pointed out regarding amassing riches during your life?

Psalm 39:7-11

David reveals in this section a little more about his situation. But he first grabs his suffering soul and takes a stand—a very important and extremely wise stand. What is it?

In what does David put his hope?



The Hebrew word for “wait” is *qavah* and means to bind together, collect, or expect.

The Hebrew word for “hope” is *towcheleth* and means expectation or hope. *Towcheleth* comes from the primitive root *yachal* which means to wait patiently and hopefully.

Instead of focusing on his present situation, David puts his eyes and his hope on the only One Who can do anything about it.

**Trusting only Him...
Tarrying beside Him...
Intently bound together with Him...
Until He takes an action...**

Once David has taken his stand in the LORD, waiting intently on Him to move, what does he ask the LORD to do for him?

You have read and observed the entire **Psalm**—why is David bringing up transgressions at this point?

Whose transgressions does he bring up?

What does David want the LORD to spare him from?

Who are the foolish?

Why is David concerned with being reproached by the foolish? (What would make David be the reproach of the foolish?)

Once David was mute, especially in front of the wicked, in order to keep from speaking ill of the LORD. Then, when he couldn't contain himself any longer, he broke his silence and spoke directly to the LORD. For what reason does he now declare that he has silenced himself before the LORD?

Has David stopped speaking to the LORD, or has he vowed not to complain and criticize the LORD over his situation?

Who has caused David's situation or "plague"?

Why? (In case you aren't sure of the answer, let's just keep observing the rest of this section.)

What does David want God to do regarding the "plague" He has put on him?

What does the “plague” include?

1.

2.

What is happening to David because of God’s opposition?

Who is reproving David?

Why?

What is the purpose of God’s reproofs?

Why did David need chastening?

How, for example in **verse 11**, does God chasten a man?

What does David reiterate once more?

In what context did David speak this line previously (**verse 5**)? What was David’s point when he said it earlier?

Has the context changed?

Psalm 39:12-13

Proof that David has not become mute again is the fact that he continues to pray to the LORD. What does he ask the LORD to do? (Take your answers from *all* of **verses 12** and **13**.)

1.

2.

3.

4.

David personifies God and poetically attributes three senses of the human body to Him. What are they?

1.

2.

3.

First David asks for God's ears—he wants the LORD to hear his prayer and pay attention to it, "*Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry.*" What is the next "sense" David asks for the LORD to use regarding his prayer?

What reasoning does David give to convince the LORD to use His "mouth" and answer David's prayer?

1.

2.



Point of Depth

The Hebrew word for "stranger" is *ger* and means a guest, or by implication, a foreigner.

The Hebrew word for "sojourner" is *towshab* and means a dweller and is distinguished from a native citizen. It has the idea of being a resident but still an alien.

David is not saying that he is a stranger to God,

**rather he is a stranger *with or like* God—like God’s Son, Jesus Himself, was.
He is calling on God to take pity on him and rescue him from his situation
because he knows that God understands his situation—
he is an alien and a stranger in a hostile, foreign land.
He is reminding God that he doesn’t belong to this world
and is instead part of the family of God—
therefore he believes God will have a form of allegiance to him.**

What is the third “sense” that David appeals to the LORD to use?

What does David want the LORD to do with His eyes?

What does David believe will be the result if the LORD turns His gaze away from him?

What does David believe will be the result if the LORD does not turn His gaze away from him?

What does the phrase “turn Your gaze away from me” imply? What had the Lord been doing when He “gazed” upon David? (Let the context of this **Psalm** be your only source of information for your answer. Hint: Reason through why the LORD turning His gaze away from David would allow him to smile again. Reason through David’s belief that if the LORD did not turn His gaze away from David he would die.)

READ AND REASON

The LORD’S hand on David was heavy with chastening. In his suffering, David guarded his tongue to keep from speaking ill of his LORD in front of the wicked, but found that it made things worse for him emotionally.

He finally burst out in speech to the LORD regarding the futility of life—he wanted his suffering to end. And yet, in seeming paradox, he humbly complained to the LORD about the brevity and futility of life.

David silences his tongue once more, but this time for the right reason—he recognizes that it is the LORD Who is in control of his situation. He acknowledges that the LORD is chastening him for iniquity and decides that his only hope lies in the LORD, Himself.

Finally David asks the LORD to listen to his tongue as he cries out to the only One Who can do anything, ever, about anything. David asks the LORD to respond to his pleas for

deliverance and restoration, reminding Him that he, too, is a stranger in this world. He asks for a respite, an intermission of peace, before he ultimately leaves this earth through death and joins his LORD.

Segment by Segment

**Try titling these segments yourself.
Ask God to help you.**

Verses 1-2

Verses 3-6

Verses 7-11

Verses 12-13

Purpose of Psalm 39

**Try to identify the purpose of Psalm 39.
The purpose simply states “why the Psalmist wrote the Psalm”.**

Theme of Psalm 39

**Try giving Psalm 39 a title by identifying its theme.
The theme simply states “what the Psalm is about”.**
