

Rhema Christian Center Journey Through the Bible

March 1, 2022

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Book of Psalms: Psalm 39 - My Hope is in You.

Psalm 39 (ESV)
To the choirmaster: to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

Spoken to the People

1 I said, "I will guard my ways,
that I may not sin with my tongue;
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle,
so long as the wicked are in my presence."
2 I was mute and silent;
I held my peace to no avail,
and my distress grew worse.
3 My heart became hot within me.
As I mused, the fire burned;
then I spoke with my tongue:
4 "O Lord, make me know my end
and what is the measure of my days;
let me know how fleeting I am!
5 Behold, you have made my days a few handbreadths,
and my lifetime is as nothing before you.
Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath! Selah
6 "Surely a man goes about as a shadow!
Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;
man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather!
7 And now, O Lord, for what do I wait?
My hope is in you.
8 Deliver me from all my transgressions.
Do not make me the scorn of the fool!
9 I am mute; I do not open my mouth,
for it is you who have done it.
10 Remove your stroke from me;
I am spent by the hostility of your hand.
11 When you discipline a man with rebukes for sin,
you consume like a moth what is dear to him;
surely all mankind is a mere breath! Selah
12 "Hear my prayer, O Lord,
and give ear to my cry;
hold not your peace at my tears!
For I am a sojourner with you,
a guest, like all my fathers.
13 Look away from me, that I may smile again,
before I depart and am no more!"

Prayer to God

Life Is Fleeting
I will not complain
before the wicked

Human life is
only a breath

My Hope Is in You

I cannot complain
before God
(It is His right to
discipline)

Hear My Prayer
Please remove Your
discipline before I die!

Meaningful Center: Verse 7

Psalm 39 seems to be connected in theme to [Psalm 38](#). David is struggling under what he believes to be God's punishment. Even though he has received forgiveness for his sin, the consequences are harsh, and he doesn't necessarily see it as loving; quite frankly, he's frustrated by it.

The psalm is divided into three sections :

1. Life is Fleeting vv. 1-6
2. My Hope is in You vv. 7-11
3. Hear My Prayer vv. 12-13

The central phrase and main theme is found in verse 7, **"And now, O Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in you."**

Historical Background of Psalm 39

The prophet Nathan spoke to David, "You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.'"



"YOU are the Man!"
Not so cool when Prophet
Nathan says it.

IIIb. The consequences of sin (ch 12-20)

- ▶ Nathan rebukes David
 - ▶ Nathan said, "You are the man." (2 Sam. 12:7)
 - ▶ David proclaims "I have sinned against the Lord." (2 Sam. 12:13)
 - ▶ God forgives David
 - ▶ Why was he forgiven? Wasn't his sin worse than Saul's?
 - ▶ He sincerely repented. See Psalm 51
- ▶ Despite being forgiven, sin still has consequences:
 - ▶ Bathsheba's child dies
 - ▶ Amnon rapes his half sister
 - ▶ Absalom kills Amnon
 - ▶ Absalom rebels against his father and is killed
 - ▶ Sheba rebels
 - ▶ Cause of division of his kingdom after king Solomon

What does this Psalm teach us ?

A. Life is Fleeting:

1. I will not complain before the wicked. Psalm 39:1- 3



Psalm 39 talks about how David tried to keep the peace by keeping silent, David says in verse 2, "**I was mute and silent; I held my peace to no avail and my distress grew worse.**" David had been very reluctant to deal harshly with his sons even though they had greatly sinned against him, against God, and against each other, that reluctance only made things worse over time.

What did David do?

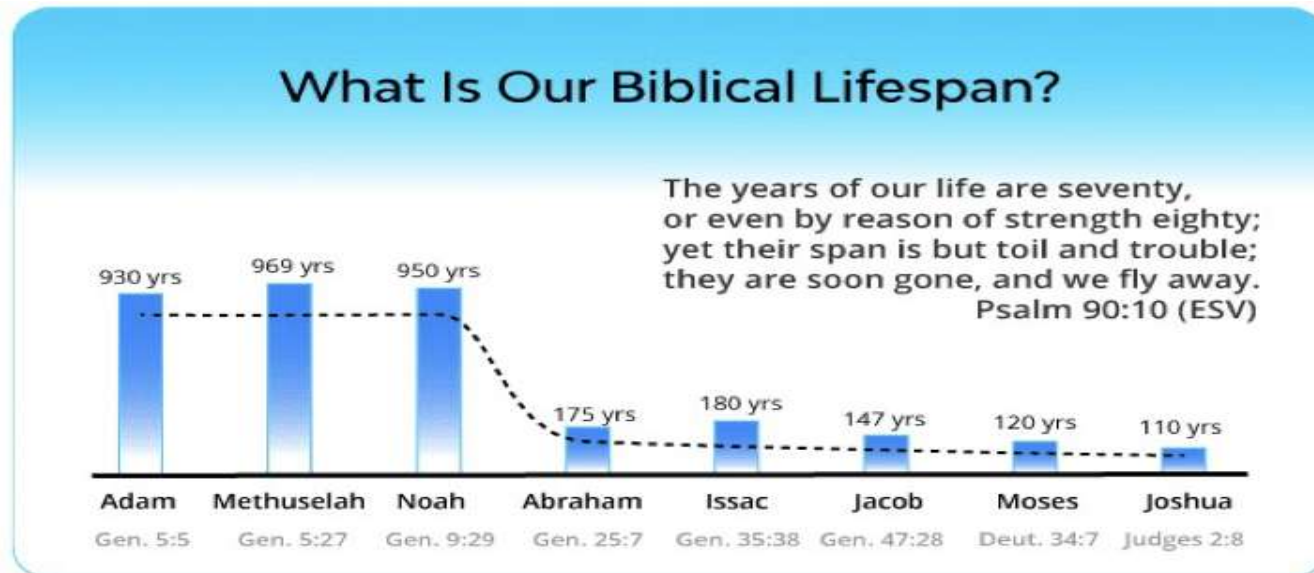
v. 1 "I will keep my mouth with a muzzle" - The muzzle is to restrain, to check, or guide the horse. The muzzle was something to bind or fasten the mouth so as to prevent biting or eating. The meaning here is, that he would restrain himself from uttering what he was thinking in his mind. **But, It's hard to keep your mouth shut.**

"While the wicked is before me" - In the presence of wicked people, David resolved to not speak. David was careful not to question God's actions in the presence of unbelievers; he didn't want others to distrust God because of his testimony.

2. Human life is only a breath. Psalm 39:4-6.

Warren Wiersbe, BE Worshipful Bible Study Series-Psalm 39 - Quote

“ David Was Despondent—a Burdened Heart. “David knew that life was short and that the days would pass swiftly. He also knew that he was frail and that one day he would die. He began to measure his days (Psalm 90:10) and saw that they were but a “**handbreadth**” (four fingers) and his age, nothing in God’s sight. “ **Surely all mankind stands as a mere breath!**”, verse 5 sounds like a statement from Ecclesiastes, by David’s son Solomon, and he also repeated the thought in verse 11. The Hebrew word translated “**vanity**” means “**a breath, emptiness.**”

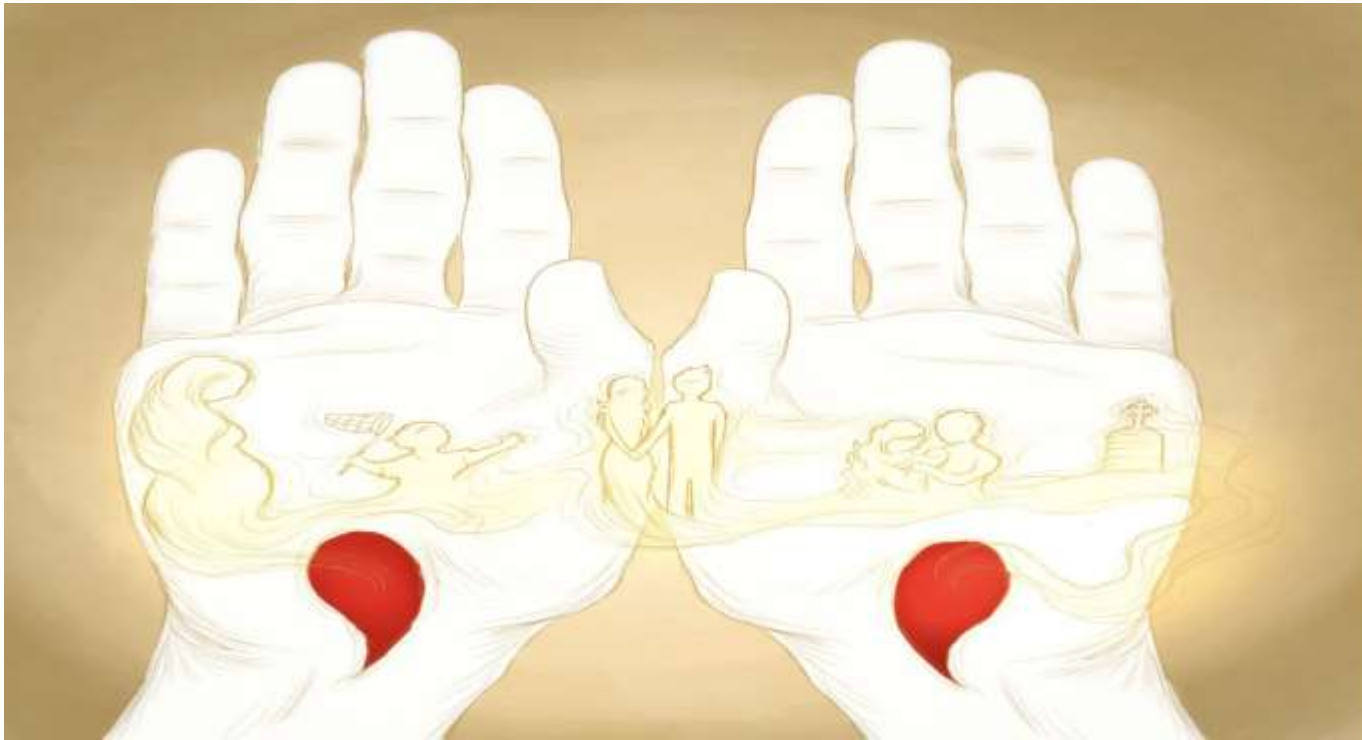


The chapters of Genesis 5 and 9 reveal that early man lived to almost one thousand years. After the worldwide flood (Genesis 7:1-8:22), men and women did not live as long. The universal flood changed environmental conditions on the planet and people could not live as long.

3. What is a handbreadth?

In verse 5, David is simply pointing to the commonly accepted measurement of his day. A “handbreadth” is a measurement about 4 to 6 inches, across the four fingers of a hand. But isn't it true that the life of a Christian, is measured by the “handbreadths” of the one whose hands were pierced in obedience to His Father and His love for us?

Isn't it true that JESUS measures the span of our days with His own hands? Read the words of rebuke, Jesus spoke to Peter:



(John 21:20-22)

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, “Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?” 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about this man?” 22 Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

B. My Hope is in You - Psalm 39: 7-11

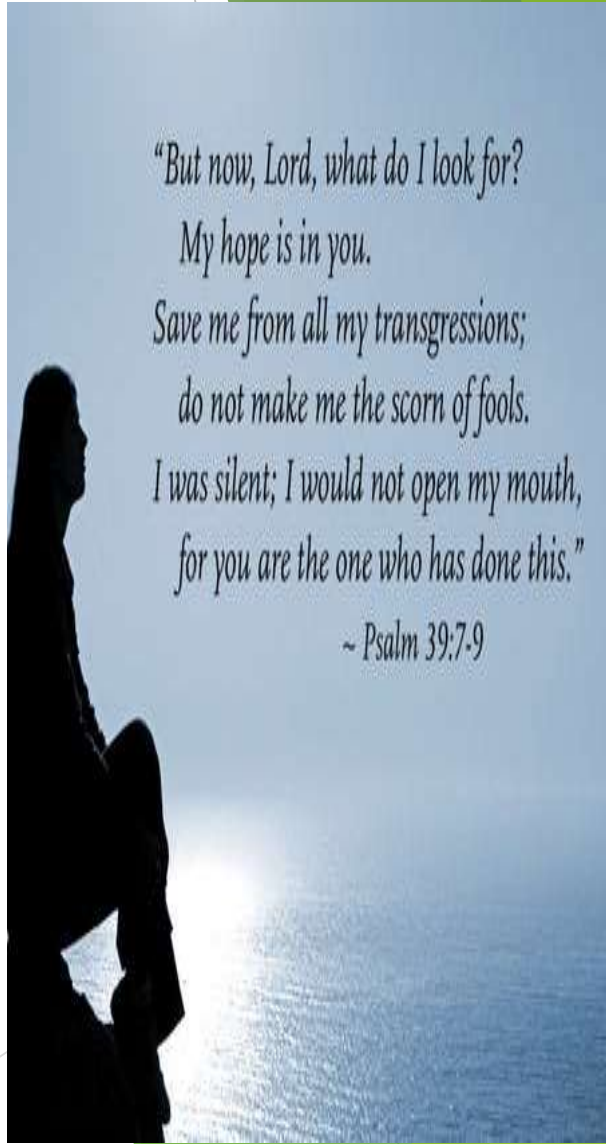
David knows that God is his only hope (39:7). He has no one else to turn to. David is a man who encountered the mixed emotions of a man who is struggling under God's discipline.

He says in verse 9, "**I was silent...**" He learned the silence of submission. He realized that whatever troubles he faced were coming from the hand of God, "**because it was You who have done it.**"

Sometimes God disappoints us, but we can be assured, He will never leave us alone. All too often, we expect certain outcomes, only to be disappointed. Sometimes a loved one, who we prayed for to live, dies. Sometimes we lose our job. Sometimes a friend becomes a foe.

Sometimes we fall into a sinful habit again. Sometimes the person who is being persecuted, does not escape. Sometimes medical reports are threatening. Sometimes ministry comes to an end. Sometimes children rebel. Sometimes prayers are answered with "**No!**" When we are being attacked by satan attitude must always be like that of Daniel's friends, who when cast into a fiery furnace, boldly declared:

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." (Daniel 3:16-18)



*"But now, Lord, what do I look for?
My hope is in you.
Save me from all my transgressions;
do not make me the scorn of fools.
I was silent; I would not open my mouth,
for you are the one who has done this."*

~ Psalm 39:7-9

“ v.11 ...you consume like a moth what is dear to him”

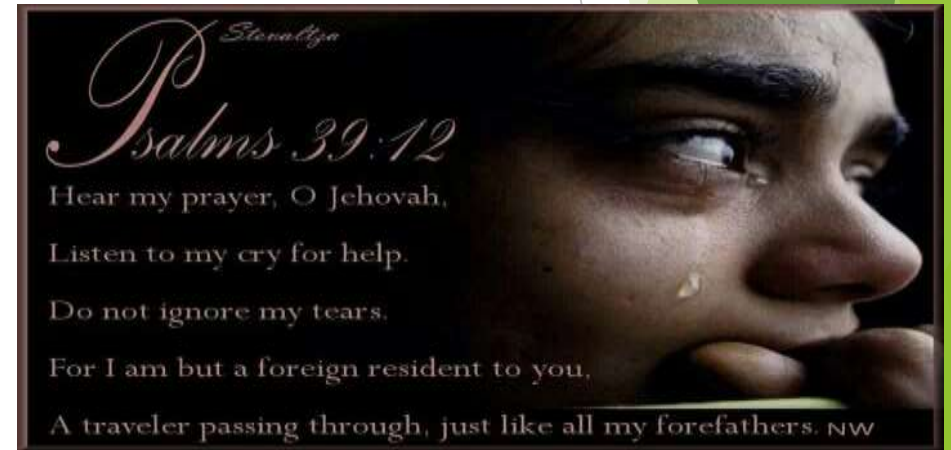
Moths are known for destroying objects which are considered valuable. Jesus states in Matthew 6:20, **“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.** In ancient times the moth was seen as a symbol of ruin and destruction.

C. Hear My Prayer Psalm 39:12-13

David had tried to be silent. But it is one thing for us to be silent; it is entirely another thing when God is silent. Sometimes it feels like the windows of heaven are closed. David tearfully pleads for the Lord to break the silence. He pleads for God to speak into his disappointment.

Galatians 6:7-8, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” We see in David’s history that God is no respecter of persons.

Leave me alone, so I can smile again before I am gone and exist no more. Psalms 39:13



Psalm 39 Lesson References:

Worship Arts Conservatory, My Hope is in You-Psalm 39, worshiparts.net

Lambert McDaniel, I Samuel: Samuel, Saul, David PowerPoint slide 29

Warren_Wiersbe, [BE Worshipful Bible Study Series-Psalm 39](#)

Life Expectancy of World Population, www.worldmeters.info/demographics