

Contemplative Lament Turning

Psalms of David · Book I

"For the Chief Musician. For Jeduthun. A Psalm by David."

PICTURE WORD

Handbreadth

IN ONE SENTENCE

*David asks the LORD to show him how short life is, calling every person a breath, and waits for God alone.***Remember it:** Thirty-nine: a handbreadth of days, a breath of life; my hope is God.

MEMORY VERSE

"Yahweh, show me my end, what is the measure of my days. Let me know how frail I am.

Psalm 39:4 · World English Bible

HEBREW WORD

הָבֵל

"breath" · verse 5

In the Psalms: nine times, in 6 psalms

הָבֵל means "breath" or "vapor," like breath on a cold morning that is there and then gone. It is the word behind "vanity of vanities" in Ecclesiastes. David says every person, even at his best, is just a breath.

HOW THE PSALM MOVES

1-3 David tries silence, but his heart burns until he speaks.**4-6** He asks to know how short and frail life is.**7-11** His hope is in God; he asks for deliverance.**12-13** As a stranger, he asks God to hear and spare him.

MY NOTES

**Listen.** Hear Psalm 39 sung in the **Psalm Song** app, or free at ispress.de/psalms/39.**Cantillated.** Sung: chanted back and forth between a leader and the people.

Life Is Short

Waiting on God

FILL IN THE BLANKS

David asks the LORD to show him how _____ life is, calling every person a _____, and waits for God _____.

CHECK YOURSELF

1. What does David say he will keep his mouth with?

☐ (A) A bridle

☐ (C) A cloth

☐ (B) A lock

☐ (D) A stone

2. What does David say God has made his days?

☐ (A) Like the grass

☐ (C) Like the stars

☐ (B) Hand widths

☐ (D) A thousand years

3. What does David call himself before God?

☐ (A) A king

☐ (C) A stranger and a foreigner

☐ (B) A shepherd

☐ (D) A servant of servants

TALK IT OVER

1. Why did David try to stay silent, and what happened when he did?

2. How does knowing life is short change the way David speaks to God?

3. If your life is a breath, what is worth giving it to?

IN YOUR OWN WORDS: WHAT DOES PSALM 39 TEACH?

☐ I listened to the song

☐ I can say verse 4 by heart

☐ I can say what it teaches

☐ I know the picture word

Answers: Blanks: short · breath · alone · Check yourself: 1. A (v. 1) · 2. B (v. 5) · 3. C (v. 12)