



Studies in Psalms by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

Psalm 39

11/8/12

Vs. 1-2 show David with nothing to say;
Vs. 3-6 show David's frailty is shortness of life;
Vs. 7-11 give David's respectful praise for God;
Vs. 12-13 make David's final appeal to God.

There are several similarities between Psalm 39 and Psalm 38. It's possible that they were written close to the same incident in David's life, with Psalm 38 showing the great cost he was paying for his sin.

Sometimes silence is essential. Cautiously, David says nothing "while the wicked are before me," which Jesus Christ also did (Mark 15:3-5). In the heat of the moment, answering enemies who are attacking with lies may not be best (Ephesians 4:26-27). The problem, however, as David said, "I held my peace *even* from good."

Remember our time is limited (**verses 3-6**) in our struggle with sin and sinners. This is encouraging because we don't have to withstand sin or sinners for long, but discouraging because we also don't have much time to seek God's forgiveness! When David's "heart was hot within" him, he spoke to God about his concerns. Solomon said, "Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2). David's "measure of my days," compared to God, are like a "handbreadth," "age as nothing," "best state but vapor," "shadow," all of which are terms for short or fleeting. This expression does NOT say, "God has predetermined the length of every life," BUT that humans need comparisons to show them how limited their time is, compared to God and eternity. A life of "busy-ness" is for nothing when death comes, for control of that wealth is lost. Wise Solomon will say: "Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun *was* distressing to me, for all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind. Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me" (Ecclesiastes 2:17-18). A life of sharing blessings is fuller and more rewarding than one of grasping and heaping up (Ecclesiastes 1:14).

Through it all, **verses 7-11** remind us that God, who is over all, is to be respected. Hard times remind people to draw closer to God, who is the source of blessings. David "was mute," because it was God who, "with rebukes," "correct man for [*man's, jtpII*] iniquity." For emphasis, in verses 5 and 11 human lifespans are brief, like "a vapor," a thought repeated in the New Testament (James 4:14).

David's personal responsibility for his sins causes his personal outcry and appeal to God for forgiveness, while he is still alive ("Before I go away and am no more"). Time is not on our side!

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**All Scriptures and comments are based on the New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.**