

Psalms 38:0 ¶ A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

This psalm of David is titled as a psalm to bring to remembrance. As I read through the psalm, it seems to be a reference to the fact that David wants God to remember him.

Psalms 38:1 ¶ O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

As I read through this psalm, it appears that David is sick in body and soul because of some sin. Verse 12 indicates that he feels his life is in danger. So, as he starts to pray, he asks that the LORD not deal with him in wrath or anger.

I think we can safely imply from many other of his psalms that he is asking God for mercy. In fact, Psalm 6 opens the same way as this psalm and other psalms often depict David asking God to deal with him in mercy.

Psalms 6:1-2 "O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed."

Psalms 25:16 "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted."

Psalms 51:1 "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions."

Psalms 38:2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

Psalms 38:3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.

David paints a word picture of how he feels, that God has wounded and broken him in body and soul. He feels that God has dealt with his sin in anger, causing his whole body to suffer in pain.

We should note that a consequence of sin can result in physical suffering; however, it is not true that all physical suffering is a consequence of a person's sin.

John 9:2-3 "And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

John 11:3-4 "Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

All physical suffering is a result of sin in general because of the onset of physical deterioration that was one of the consequences of Adam's sin.

Spurgeon: "Mental depression tells upon the bodily frame; it is enough to create and foster every disease, and is in itself the most painful of all diseases. Soul sickness tells

upon the entire frame; it weakens the body, and then bodily weakness reacts upon the mind.”

Psalms 38:4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

Psalms 38:5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.

Psalms 38:6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

Psalms 38:7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease*: and *there is no soundness in my flesh.*

Psalms 38:8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

It seems that David’s physical suffering is due to wounds that stink and suffer, e.g., leprosy, boils and ulcers. David is quick to identify foolish sin as the cause of his suffering. He is depressed in spirit and is in mourning the whole day. The Hebrew for “mourning” indicates that he is wearing sackcloth or garments of mourning. The sickness seems to affect his whole body. His body is weak to the point of collapse, and he moans and groans in anguish and distress.

Gill re verse 4: “Like an inundation of waters, as the waves and billows of the sea; for the waters to come up to the neck or chin shows great danger; but when they go over the head the case is desperate, and a person is sinking and drowning....”

Psalms 38:9 Lord, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

Psalms 38:10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

David acknowledges that God knows all that he is suffering both in body and spirit. He basically feels like he is at the end of his rope, so to speak. Either his vision has been affected or he is saying that all happiness is gone from him—or both.

Psalms 38:11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

Psalms 38:12 ¶ They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

Everyone, including those closest to him, are avoiding David, presumably because of the stink; or maybe because they can’t stand to see him in such agony. Evidently, his suffering has his enemies looking to take advantage of his situation to get rid of him, using slander and devising plots against him.

Psalms 38:13 But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not; and I was as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.

Psalms 38:14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.

I am not sure what David is saying. Is he pretending not to know what is going on and refusing to speak out in his own defense? Is he saying that others are treating him like he is deaf and dumb? Is it both?

Psalms 38:15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

Psalms 38:16 For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me.

Psalms 38:17 For I *am* ready to halt, and my sorrow *is* continually before me.

Psalms 38:18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

In spite of his sin and suffering, David has placed his hope in the LORD, and he is confident that God will hear him. Note that he still recognizes the LORD as “his” God. He begs the LORD to hear him and not let his enemies rejoice over him and gain the victory over him because of his situation. His physical condition is growing worse, and he is suffering great anguish because of sin that he readily confesses.

I liked this quote from JFB: “Consciousness of sin makes suffering pungent, and suffering, rightly received, leads to confession.”

Psalms 38:19 But mine enemies *are* lively, *and* they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

Psalms 38:20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow *the thing that good is*.

His enemies, on the other hand, are vigorous and strong; and their numbers seems to be multiplying. They are the kind of men that repay good with evil, so it seems that David had treated his enemies well. They resent David because he tried to do what is good before the LORD.

Psalms 38:21 Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.

Psalms 38:22 Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

David begs the LORD not to forsake him. He pleads with the LORD for his help and deliverance.

I liked the way Ironsides summarized the psalm: “Over the first four verses we might write the word “Conviction.” We have the expression here of a convicted soul, of a man who is not trying to make excuses for his sins.... Over verses 5 to 14 we may write the word, “Humiliation.” As he continues looking into his own heart, as he continues dwelling upon the sin that has crushed his life, he is bowed down before God in a sense of deepest humiliation.... From the 15th to the 20th verse we have his confession.... In the last two verses he expresses his confidence....”