

Psalm 38 is a very unusual Psalm of David. It is a song of sorrow. We may notice from the superscription that it is a Psalm of David for a memorial or remembrance. David wanted these things remembered. Many Biblical students believe that this is a prophetic description of the Lord Jesus Christ taking our sin on Himself.

No one is certain as to exactly when the events of the Psalm occurred in the life of David because we have no Biblical record of a sickness he experienced to this level. It is possible that this occurred after the terrible sin with Bathsheba, but we don't know for sure.

What we do see when we go through the Psalm is:

- 1) David was under deep conviction for his sin.
- 2) David was experiencing the judgment of God because of his sin.
- 3) David was surrounded by enemies who wanted to destroy him.
- 4) David knew he needed God's help to get deliverance from his sin and from his enemies.

THERE WILL BE TIMES IN LIFE WHEN EVEN GOD'S GREATEST SERVANTS SIN, AND AT TIMES GOD WILL CHASTISE HIS SERVANT WITH A SEVERE PHYSICAL JUDGMENT AND EMOTIONAL DEPRESSION AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, IF THE SERVANT WILL SEE HIS SIN AND CONFESS HIS SIN, GOD WILL DELIVER HIM FROM HIS SIN, SICKNESS, DEPRESSION, AND ENEMIES.

David had a problem, which is the problem of us all—we are all sinners. There were times when David's fleshly humanity got the better of him and he sinned. However, in this Psalm there was a very unusual sin that brought on him a judgment of God, which apparently included terrible physical problems. David was King and many did not want him to be king so David did the only thing he could do; he went directly to God and appealed to God for His grace. David was sick, he was depressed and there were enemies who wanted him gone.

Now this Psalm may be broken down into three prayer matters:

PRAYER MATTER #1 – David prays to God because of deep conviction, depression and physical pain due to God's judgment against him for his sin.
38:1-12

In **verse 1** we learn that God was very angry with David. His rebuke and chastisement were coming against David because He was burning mad. In fact, in **verse 2**, David further explains that the arrows of God and the hand of God were on him. In other words, David was being hammered by God because of his sin.

There are many people who want a loving God who would never get angry with them, but God's Word does not paint such a picture of God (i.e. Heb. 10:30-31). For example, as Godly a man as the prophet Jeremiah was, he did not want God to get angry with him (Jer. 10:24).

The image of “arrows” (v. 2) is that of a silent, secret, swift, sharp and surprising attack. The plural of the noun indicates God was sending many negative judgments into the life of David because of his sin. David was being bombarded with an attack from God that was designed to get him to turn back to Him. In fact, David identifies his own sin as sin (3b), iniquities (4) and folly (5). David knew he had missed the mark and done depraved foolish things and he knew this was the reason God was tracking him down. There is no doubt that David knew his sin was the cause of God’s arrows and their effects were devastating.

There were 11 negative results of God’s arrows:

Negative Result #1 - There was no soundness in David’s flesh. **38:3a**—no health, no vigor

Negative Result #2 - There was no health in David’s bones. **38:3b**—bones ached

Negative Result #3 - There was no lifting of burdens. **38:4**—could not lift the weight

Negative Result #4 - There was no healing of his wounds. **38:5**—emotional scars

Negative Result #5 - There was no straightening out of his condition. **38:6a**—no standing straight

Negative Result #6 - There was no deliverance from his depression. **38:6b**—no joy in anything

Negative Result #7 - There was pain in his legs. **38:7a**—Not one step without pain

Negative Result #8 - There was no strength in his flesh. **38:7b**—Whole body broken down

Negative Result #9 - David was benumbed. **38:8a**—very weak and feeble

Negative Result #10 - David was crushed. **38:8b**—physically and emotionally crushed

Negative Result #11 - David’s heart ached. **38:8c**—David had a broken heart

David was emotionally and physically shot and his sin was the cause of it and he knew it.

In **verse 9**, we learn that what David did was turn to the Lord. **Any thought of deliverance from this dilemma must come from God and David knew it.** David cried out to God. He did not find any hope of deliverance within himself (**38:10**). He did not find any hope of deliverance from any of his friends or family (**38:11**). He did not find any hope of deliverance in his enemies (**38:12**). His only hope for deliverance was in the Lord.

When one is being chastened by God, one will not be able to find a cure in any other person other than God.

You can run to person after person, but relief will not be found because that relief may only be found in our relationship with God. The next time you find yourself totally depressed and drained, try doing what David did: go to God and ask for His help.

Before moving on there are three observations we may make:

- 1) When God's hand of chastening is on a believer, he knows it. Deep inside, he has a God-produced conviction that God's hand of judgment is on him.
- 2) When God's Spirit is convicting one of his own sin, there will be a profound sense of the deep level and burden of sin. When one feels the weight of his sin, it is God's Spirit that is producing that conviction.
- 3) When God disciplines His child, He is trying to bring him to repentance. We need discipline and when it comes, we need to get right to God in confession.

PRAYER MATTER #2 – David openly and honestly confesses his sin. **38:13-20**

David confesses his sin in this section and there are six admissions David makes:

Admission #1 - David confesses he is like a deaf man—he hears the Word but doesn't obey it. **38:13a, 14a**

Admission #2 - David confesses he is like a dumb man—he cannot give any verbal excuse—he is guilty. **38:13b, 14b**

Admission #3 - David confesses he is totally relying upon God's grace for forgiveness. **38:15-16**

David said in **verse 15** that his hope for deliverance was totally and only in God. In fact, David uses three different nouns for God in this one verse: LORD (Jehovah), Lord (Adonai), God (Elohim). He knew that forgiveness could only be found with this one and only true, triune, Sovereign God. He needed the help of God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.

David had many enemies who were just hoping he would slip up. They would rejoice if David blew it, so he asks God, in His grace, to deliver him from his sin (**38:16**). The only chance we have for deliverance is confession of sin to God.

Admission #4 - David confesses he has slipped and is ready to fall. **38:17a**—cannot stand on his own; he needs God's help.

Admission #5 - David confesses that he was continually sorry. **37:17b**—a critical key to deliverance is not to continually love yourself, but loathe yourself.

Admission #6 - David confesses that he was continually worried about his sin. **38:18b**

David was in a physically weakened state, but his enemies were strong. There were many who hated David wrongfully. They opposed him because he had followed what was good, not because he had done wrong. David was worried that this sin would give those enemies a great cause for rejoicing and he asked God to intervene (**38:19-20**).

PRAYER MATTER #3 – David asks God not to forsake him but deliver him. **38:21-22**

David had literally seen God forsake Saul and give the Kingdom to him. He knew the reason why God did that was because Saul had sinned against God. David did not want that same thing happening to him. So he prayed and he asked God not to forsake him, to be near to him, to hurry and help him because God is “my salvation.”

Do not miss this. God is our salvation. We are not our salvation. Our works are not our salvation. God is our salvation.

Notice again that the three main names for God are used. Notice also who is our salvation—God. He is our help in time of trouble. He is the One to whom we must turn.

PARTING LESSONS:

- 1) When God is chastening a believer, the believer will know it and sense it.
- 2) When God’s Spirit is convicting a person of sin, there will be a profound sense of the weight of it.
- 3) When God disciplines His own child, He is trying to bring him to repentance and nothing will lift the discipline except repentance. God wants His children to confess the sin and turn from it.
- 4) When God’s child does confess the sin and does turn from it, he will find the presence, the deliverance and the salvation of God.