

How, O Lord, for what do I wait?
My hope is in you. Deliver me
from all my transgressions.

(PSALM 39:7-8A)

STRUCTURE

- v. 1-3** David's internal dialogue over whether or not he will sing the psalm.
- v. 4-6** Confession of how short this mortal life is and how fleeting we are.
- v. 7** The pivotal moment in the psalm: David cries out that in the midst of life, God alone is our hope.
- v. 8-11** A confession of sin and a cry for forgiveness.
- v. 12-13** David's final plea for God to hear his prayer.

AT A GLANCE

FROM THE TOP

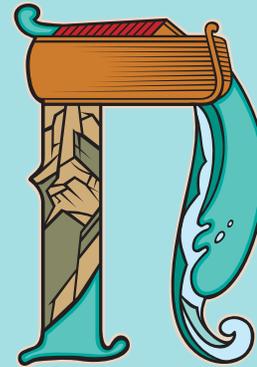
To Jeduthun — one of the cantors David appointed to oversee the liturgy (1 **CHRON.** 16:41-42; 25:1-6). Three psalms are devoted to his care.

"AS I MUSED"

This expression (v. 3) only occurs two times in the Old Testament, both in the psalms.

"HAND-BREADTHS"

Generally an architectural term, similar to the modern measurement of feet. Here (v. 5) it describes the shortness of our lives.



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CHRIST IS HERE

Christ is seen in verses 8, 10 and 11 where He stands in the breach for us. The sacrificial death of Christ is our only deliverance from our transgressions.

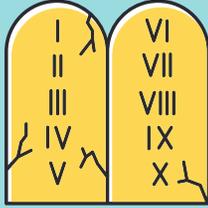


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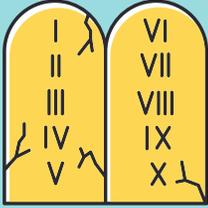
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David sits and tries to meditate — musing, whispering, silent and holding his peace. But he cannot. He cries out in this psalm that life is so short. It is like dust in the wind, here today and gone tomorrow. David's son Solomon will internalize this psalm, declaring that there is nothing in life other than to "fear God and keep his commandments" (ECC. 12:13). This is what David sings. He cries out about the shortness of life, praying that God would lead us to remember this and ardently confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. David sings that in this short life filled with sin, only the Lord can deliver us, forgive us, renew us and lead us to delight in His will and walk in His ways. May the Lord always hear this prayer and give ear to this cry.



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SPIRITUAL CARE

- For divine comfort.
- Upon receiving a bad diagnosis.
- For wisdom.
- When our sins are known.
- For mercy.



USE IN THE CHURCH

Antiphon: v. 1b ("That I may not sin with my tongue")

In the Daily Office: Tuesdays at Matins

At the Divine Service:

One-Year:

Introit verses for the Last Sunday of the Church Year

Three-Year:

Introit verses for Proper 29AB



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PSALM PRAYER

O Lord, grant that we may guard our lips, and do not let the enemy of the human race rejoice, for he never ceases to accuse Your faithful ones. Overcome him with the strength of Your arm, that we may know Your forgiveness of our sins, follow in the way You desire, and rejoice in the inheritance of the righteous; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

PSALM

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