

Psalms 39:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

Analysis

Deliver me from all my transgressions—Having confronted life's vanity (v. 6), David now identifies the core problem: sin. The Hebrew *pəshā'ay* (פְּשָׁעַי, transgressions) means willful rebellion, not mere mistakes. David pleads for *haṣṣîlênî* (הַצִּילֵנִי, deliver/rescue me) from rebellion's consequences. This shows spiritual maturity—recognizing that existential despair often stems from guilt and separation from God.

Make me not the reproach of the foolish—*Ḥerpāh* (חֶרְפָּה, reproach/disgrace) means shame or scorn. The *nābāl* (נָבָל, foolish one) is the moral fool who lives as if God doesn't exist (Psalm 14:1). David's concern isn't primarily reputation but that his sin might give atheistic fools ammunition to mock God. When believers fall into persistent sin, the wicked conclude, "See? Their God is powerless or indifferent." Paul later echoes this concern: "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Romans 2:24).

This verse reveals that sin's worst consequence isn't personal suffering but bringing reproach on God's name. David understands covenant theology: Israel's obedience demonstrated Yahweh's reality to watching nations (Deuteronomy 4:6-8). His prayer for deliverance is thus simultaneously personal and theological—rescue from sin's bondage to restore God's honor. Christ's atonement answered this prayer ultimately: our deliverance from sin's mastery (Romans 6:14) enables lives that glorify rather than blaspheme God's name (Matthew 5:16).

Historical Context

David's sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah had indeed made him "the reproach of the foolish"—enemies mocked, and Nathan prophesied that "by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" (2 Samuel 12:14). This psalm may reflect David's ongoing wrestling with that moral failure's aftermath.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does viewing sin primarily as something that dishonors God (rather than merely hurts you) change your motivation for holiness?
2. In what ways might your unaddressed transgressions currently give 'the foolish' reason to mock God's power or goodness?
3. What does deliverance from sin look like beyond forgiveness—how does God rescue you from sin's ongoing mastery?

Interlinear Text

מִכָּל H3605	פְּשָׁעַי H6588	הַצִּילֵנִי H5337	חֲרִפְתִּי H2781	נֶבֶל H5036
me from all my transgressions	Deliver	me not the reproach	of the foolish	
אֵל H408	תַּשְׁיֵמְנִי H7760			
make				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 44:13 (Parallel theme): Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

Psalms 79:4 (Parallel theme): We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

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