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A Psalm by David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

PSALM 3: 1 LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are those who rise up against me.

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David complains, in great distress, of the number of his enemies, and the reproaches they cast on him, as one forsaken of God, Psa 3:1, Psa 3:2; is confident, notwithstanding, that God will be his protector, Psa 3:3; mentions his prayers and supplications, and how God heard him, Psa 3:4, Psa 3:5; derides the impotent malice of his adversaries, and foretells their destruction, Psa 3:6, Psa 3:7; and ascribes salvation to God, Psa 3:8.

This is said to be A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son - See the account, 2Sam 15:1 (note), etc. And David is supposed to have composed it when obliged to leave Jerusalem, passing by the mount of Olives, weeping, with his clothes rent, and with dust upon his head. This Psalm is suitable enough to these circumstances; and they mutually cast light on each other. If the inscription be correct, this Psalm is a proof that the Psalms are not placed in any chronological order.

The word Psalm, מִזְמוֹר mizmor, comes from זָמַר zamar, to cut, whether that means to cut into syllables, for the purpose of its being adapted to musical tones, or whether its being cut on wood, etc., for the direction of the singers; what we would call a Psalm in score. This last opinion, however, seems too technical.

#### Verse 1

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me? - We are told that the hearts of all Israel went after Absalom, 2Sam 15:13; and David is astonished to find such a sudden and general revolt. Not only the common people, but his counsellors also, and many of his chief captains. How publicly does God take vengeance for the sins which David committed so privately! In the horrible rebellion of Absalom we see the adultery of Bath-sheba, and the murder of Uriah. Now the words of Nathan begin to be fulfilled: "The sword shall not depart from thy house."

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PSALM 3: 2 Many there are who say of my soul, "There is no help for him in God." Selah.

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#### Verse 2

No help for him in God - These were some of the reproaches of his enemies, Shimei and others: "He is now down, and he shall never be able to rise. God alone can save him from these his enemies; but God has visibly east him off." These reproaches deeply affected his heart; and he mentions them with that note which so frequently occurs in the Psalms, and which occurs here for the first time, סֵלָה selah. Much has been said on the meaning of this word; and we have nothing but conjecture to guide us. The Septuagint always translate it by Διαψαλμα diapsalma, "a pause in the Psalm." The Chaldee sometimes translates it by לעלמין lealmin, "for ever." The rest of the versions leave it unnoticed. It either comes from סָלַל sal, to raise or elevate, and may denote a particular elevation in the voices of the performers, which is very observable in the Jewish singing to the present day; or it may come from סָלַח salah, to strew or spread out, intimating that the subject to which the word is attached should be spread out, meditated on, and attentively considered by the reader. Fenwick, Parkhurst, and Dodd, contend for this meaning; and think "it confirmed by Psa 9:16, where the word

higgaion is put before selah at the end of the verse." Now higgaion certainly signifies meditation, or a fit subject for meditation; and so shows selah to be really a nota bene, attend to or mind this.

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PSALM 3: 3 But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.

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Verse 3

Thou, O Lord art a shield - As a shield covers and defends the body from the strokes of an adversary, so wilt thou cover and defend me from them that rise up against me.

The lifter up of mine head - Thou wilt restore me to the state from which my enemies have cast me down. This is the meaning of the phrase; and this he speaks prophetically. He was satisfied that the deliverance would take place, hence his confidence in prayer; so that we find him, with comparative unconcern, laying himself down in his bed, expecting the sure protection of the Almighty.

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PSALM 3: 4 I cry to the LORD with my voice, and he answers me out of his holy hill. Selah.

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Verse 4

I cried unto the Lord with my voice - He was exposed to much danger, and therefore he had need of fervor.

He heard me - Notwithstanding my enemies said, and my friends feared, that there was no help for me in my God; yet he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah: mark this, and take encouragement from it. God never forsakes those who trust in him. He never shuts out the prayer of the distressed.

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PSALM 3: 5 I laid myself down and slept. I awakened; for the LORD sustains me.

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Verse 5

I laid me down and slept - He who knows that he has God for his Protector may go quietly and confidently to his bed, not fearing the violence of the fire, the edge of the sword, the designs of wicked men, nor the influence of malevolent spirits.

I awaked - Though humanly speaking there was reason to fear I should have been murdered in my bed, as my most confidential servants had been corrupted by my rebellious son; yet God, my shield, protected me. I both slept and awaked; and my life is still whole in me.

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PSALM 3: 6 I will not be afraid of tens of thousands of people who have set themselves against me on every side.

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Verse 6

I Will not be afraid of ten thousands - Strength and numbers are nothing against the omnipotence of God. He who has made God his refuge certainly has no cause to fear.

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PSALM 3: 7 Arise, LORD! Save me, my God! For you have struck all of my enemies on the cheek bone. You have broken the teeth of the wicked.

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Verse 7

Arise, O Lord - Though he knew that God had undertaken his defense, yet he knew that his continued protection depended on his continual prayer and faith. God never ceases to help as long as we pray. When our hands hang down, and we restrain prayer before him, we may then justly fear that our enemies will prevail.

Those blast smitten - That is, Thou wilt smite. He speaks in full confidence of God's interference; and knows as surely that he shall have the victory, as if he had it already. Breaking the jaws and the teeth are expressions which imply, confounding and destroying an adversary; treating him with extreme contempt; using him like a dog, etc.

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PSALM 3: 8 Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing be on your people. Selah.

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Verse 8

Salvation belongeth unto the Lord - It is God alone who saves. He is the fountain whence help and salvation come; and to him alone the praise of all saved souls is due. His blessing is upon his people. Those who are saved from the power and the guilt of sin are his people. His mercy saved them; and it is by his blessing being continually upon them, that they continue to be saved. David adds his selah here also: mark this!

1. Salvation comes from God.
2. Salvation is continued by God.

These are great truths; mark them!

The occasion of this Psalm was Absalom's rebellion. David being deserted by his subjects, railed on by Shimei, pursued for his crown and life by his ungracious son, and not finding to whom to make his moan, betakes himself to his God; and before him he expostulates his wrong, confesses his faith, and makes his prayer.

There are three strains of this accurate Psalm: I. His complaint. II. The confession of his confidence. III. His petition.

I. He begins with a sad and bitter complaint, amplified,

1. By the number and multitude of his enemies. They were many, very many; they were multiplied and increased: "All Israel was gathered together from Dan to Beer-sheba, as the sand of the sea for multitude;" 2Sa 17:11.

2. From their malice they came together to do him mischief. They rose up, not for him, but against him; not to honour, but to trouble him; not to defend him as they ought, but to take away his crown and life; 2Sa 17:2.

3. From their insults and sarcasm. It was not Shimei only, but many, that said it: "Many-say there is no help for him in his God."

II. The second part of the Psalm sets forth David's confidence:-

1. To their multitude, he opposeth ONE GOD. But THOU, O LORD!

2. To their malicious insurrection, Jehovah; who, he believed, 1. Would be a buckler to receive all the arrows shot against him. 2. His glory, to honour, though they went about to dishonour, him. 3. The lifter up of his head, which they wished to lay low enough.

3. To their vain boast of desertion, There is no help for him in his God, he opposeth his own experience, "I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me."

4. By whose protection being sustained and secured, he deposes all care and fear, all anxiety and distraction. 1. He sleeps with a quiet mind: "I laid me down and slept, I awoke." 2. He sings a requiem: "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people, that have set themselves against me round about."

III. In the close, or third part, he petitions and prays, notwithstanding his security: "Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God!" To move God to grant his request, he thankfully reminds him of what he had done before:-

1. "Arise and save me, for thou hast smitten all mine enemies." Thou art the same God: do then the same work; be as good to thy servant as ever thou hast been.

2. He inserts an excellent maxim: Salvation belongeth unto the Lord. As if he had said, It is thy property and prerogative to save. If thou save not, I expect it from none other.

3. Lastly, as a good king should, in his prayers he remembers his subjects. He prayed for those who were using him despitefully: Thy blessing be upon thy people! To the same sense, Coverdale, in his translation.