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A contemplation by David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer.

PSALM 142: 1 I cry with my voice to the LORD. With my voice, I ask the LORD for mercy.

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The psalmist, in great distress and difficulty, calls upon God, Psa 142:1-7.

The title says, "An Instruction of David," or a Psalm of David giving instruction; "A Prayer when he was in the cave."

David was twice in great peril in caves.

1. At the cave of Adullam, when he fled from Achish, king of Gath, 1 Samuel 22.
2. When he was in the cave of En-gedi, where he had taken refuge from the pursuit of Saul; and the latter, without knowing that David was in it, had gone into it on some necessary occasion, 1 Samuel 24.

If the inscription can be depended on, the cave of En-gedi is the most likely of the two, for the scene laid here. But were there doubts concerning the legitimacy of the title, I should refer the Psalm to the state of the captives in Babylon, to which a great part of the Psalms refer. Bishop Horsley calls it "A Prayer of the Messiah taken and deserted." It may be so: but where is the evidence, except in the conjectural system of Origen.

Verse 1

I cried unto the Lord - See on Psa 141:1 (note).

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PSALM 142: 2 I pour out my complaint before him. I tell him my troubles.

PSALM 142: 3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, you knew my route. On the path in which I walk, they have hidden a snare for me.

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Verse 3

Then thou knewest my path - When Saul and his army were about the cave in which I was hidden, thou knewest my path - that I had then no way of escape but by miracle: but thou didst not permit them to know that I was wholly in their power.

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PSALM 142: 4 Look on my right, and see; for there is no one who is concerned for me. Refuge has fled from me. No one cares for my soul.

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Verse 4

There was no man, that would know me - This has been applied to the time in which our Lord was deserted by his disciples. As to the case of David in the cave of En-gedi, he had no refuge: for what were the handful of men that were with him to Saul and his army?

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PSALM 142: 5 I cried to you, LORD. I said, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."

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Verse 5

Thou art my refuge - Even in these most disastrous circumstances, I will put my trust in thee.

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PSALM 142: 6 Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need.

deliver me from my persecutors, For they are stronger than me.

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Verse 6

I am brought very low - Never was I so near total ruin before.

Deliver me from my persecutors - They are now in full possession of the only means of my escape.

They are stronger than I - What am I and my men against this well-appointed armed multitude, with their king at their head.

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PSALM 142: 7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name. The righteous will surround me, for you will be good to me.

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Verse 7

Bring my soul out of prison - Bring נפשי naphshi, my life, out of this cave in which it is now imprisoned; Saul and his men being in possession of the entrance.

The righteous shall compass me about - יכתרו yachtiru, they shall crown me; perhaps meaning that the pious Jews, on the death of Saul, would cheerfully join together to make him king, being convinced that God, by his bountiful dealings with him, intended that it should be so. The old Psalter, which is imperfect from the twenty-first verse of Psalm 119 to the end of Psa 141:1-10, concludes this Psalm thus: "Lede my saule oute of corruption of my body; that corrupcion is bodely pyne, in whilk my saule is anguyst; after that in Godes house, Sal al be louyng (praising) of the."