

The obvious and overwhelming theme of this psalm is the beautiful truth that YHWH's mercy endures forever; it will never run out. God's mercy is His lovingkindness and pity for His people. The psalmist recites many examples of God's mercy, especially on behalf of the Jewish people.

EBC Abridged: "This is the last of the Great Hallel psalms or, according to some Jewish authorities, the only Hallel psalm. It was associated with the Feast of Passover."

Jewish Study Bible: "This psalm is known in Jewish liturgy as the Great Hallel and has been incorporated into the Passover Seder. Like 135, it is part of the introductory prayers to the morning service on Sabbath and festivals. The psalm is probably written to be chanted responsively, with the assembly chanting the refrain after each line."

**Psalms 136:1 ¶ O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.***

**Psalms 136:2 O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth for ever.***

**Psalms 136:3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy *endureth for ever.***

The point of these three verses is that YHWH is God Almighty. He has no equal. I love the verses in Isaiah where he quotes that very truth from the mouth of God.

*Isaiah 43:10 "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."*

*Isaiah 44:6 "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."*

*Isaiah 45:5 "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:"*

*Isaiah 45:21 "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me."*

Not only is God almighty in power and authority, He is good. He alone is truly good and the source of all goodness.

*Mark 10:18 "And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."*

*James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*

**Psalms 136:4 To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

**Psalms 136:5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

**Psalms 136:6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

In these verses the psalmist begins by affirming the greatness of God as displayed throughout creation. He is our Creator, the One who made the heavens and earth.

*Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."*

A simple statement with a powerful truth that cannot be denied despite all the attempts of man to do so.

It's interesting to note that the psalmist credits God's wisdom in creation. This is a reference to His amazing "skill, intelligence and caprice" (all from the Hebrew) on display throughout creation. One has only to consider the amazing function of the human body, let alone the forces on display in the heavens, in testimony of His skill and intelligence. I thought it was interesting that it included the thought of "caprice," a reference to whim, fancy or sense of humor; and that is certainly on display in some of the animals He chose to create.

Great quote from Spurgeon on verse 4: "The mercy of the wonder is the wonder of the mercy; and the enduring nature of that mercy is the central wonder of that wonder."

Spurgeon: "Mercy is far reaching, long enduring, all encompassing. Nothing is too high for its reach, as nothing is beneath its stoop."

**Psalms 136:7 To him that made great lights: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:**

**Psalms 136:8 The sun to rule by day: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:**

**Psalms 136:9 The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

It is YHWH who made the great lights in the sky—the sun, moon and stars. The sun gives us light during the day and the moon and stars at night. He doesn't allow the darkness to overwhelm us.

I think that speaks to the truth that no matter how dark this world seems to get under the rule of “the god of this world,” He will provide a light to guide us and give us hope until the LORD Jesus returns to set up His kingdom and remove him from power.

*2 Corinthians 4:4 “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

*Revelation 20:2–3 “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”*

*Revelation 20:7–10 “And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

I can’t help but think of the words of David in conjunction with these verses.

*Psalms 19:1–3 “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.”*

**Psalms 136:10** ¶ **To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:11** **And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:12** **With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

**Psalms 136:13** **To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:14** **And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:15** **But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

**Psalms 136:16 To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

In this set of verses the psalmist recounts God's mercy in delivering the people of Israel from bondage in Egypt. The miracle that finally got the Pharaoh to let the people go was the death of the firstborn on the night of the first Passover. He notes how God brought them out with a great display of His power when He parted the Red Sea so that His people could pass through to the other side. When the armies of Pharaoh foolishly tried to follow, He dropped the waters on top of them, sending them all to their death. He also displayed His authority over His creation during their wanderings in the wilderness by guiding and protecting them with a great cloud of His presence, by giving them water from a rock, by feeding them with manna from heaven, to name a few.

**Psalms 136:17 To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:18 And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:19 Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:20 And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:21 And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:22 Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

When the time came for them to take possession of the Promised Land, the LORD went before them to kill the mighty kings of the people that were living in the land. This included Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, the land of the giants.

*Deuteronomy 3:11 "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man."*

We know from the words of Rahab, that the people of the land knew it was YHWH that empowered the people of Israel to gain the victory.

*Joshua 2:10-11 "For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."*

**Psalms 136:23 ¶ Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:**

**Psalms 136:24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

The psalmist notes that it was only because God “remembered” them and delivered them from slavery in Egypt (great acts of mercy) that they existed as a nation.

We know that God never forgot. The timing was all according to His plan as revealed to Abraham.

*Genesis 15:13–16 “And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”*

**Psalms 136:25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

As he closes, the psalmist notes how YHWH supplies food for all living creatures.

**Psalms 136:26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.**

Though the focus has been upon God’s mercy toward Israel, the truth is that God’s mercy is on display at all times for all people. We should all be full of gratitude to “the God of heaven” for His great mercy toward us.