

# GOD'S MERCY ENDURES FOREVER

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In 1 Chronicles 16:34, we first read a phrase that occurs a total of 41 times in the Old Testament: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; *for his mercy endureth for ever.*" The phrase "His mercy endureth forever" is found in each of the 26 verses of Psalm 136. It is given as one of the important reasons for worshiping and praising God (1 Chr 16:34,41; 2 Chr 5:13; 7:3,6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11; Psa 106:1; 107:1; 118:1,29). In Psalm 118:2-4, the nation of Israel, the house of Aaron, and then all "that fear the Lord" are exhorted to say that God's mercy endures forever.

## Psalm 136

In verses 1-3, it is taught that God is worthy of thanks because His mercy endures forever. He is good (verse 1), He is the God of gods (verse 2), and Lord of lords (verse 3). The enduring mercy of God is then connected to the "great wonders" that only He can do (verse 4). Those "great wonders" include the acts of the Creation (verses 5-9). God's enduring mercy is also demonstrated by the "great wonders" He did in delivering Israel from their bondage in Egypt (verses 10-16), and then by giving them victory over their enemies and the land He promised for their heritage (verses 17-22). God's mercy was shown by remembering Israel in their low estate (verse 23), redeeming them from their enemies (verse 24), and giving food to all flesh (verse 25). With all of these specific examples given of God's enduring mercy, the psalm concludes with the statement in verse 26: "*O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.*" Here is the psalm in its entirety:

- 1 O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 2 O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 4 To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 7 To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever:
- 8 The sun to rule by day: for his mercy endureth for ever:
- 9 The moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 10 To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy endureth for ever:
- 11 And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy endureth for ever:
- 12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.
- 13 To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth

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(continued)

for ever:

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

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

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

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

18 And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:

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

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

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

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

23 Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:

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

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

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

## God's enduring mercy in the New Testament

Psalm 136 recounts the physical deliverance that God gave to Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and also the physical land that He gave them for an inheritance and for the physical provisions that He had blessed Israel with. All of these were indeed great things that demonstrate God's enduring mercy. But the New Covenant is a much "better testament" (Heb 7:22), established on "better promises" (Heb 8:6). In the New Testament, there are spiritual parallels to the blessings that God gave to physical Israel. In the New Testament, the church of Christ is "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16). We are a "spiritual house" (1 Pet 2:5) and a "holy nation" (1 Pet 5:9). God's blessings for spiritual Israel are eternal in nature (2 Cor 4:18). We have been redeemed from the bondage of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ (John 8:31-36; Rom 5:6-11; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 2:14-18). Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:18-21), and through him we receive *eternal* redemption (Heb 9:12). And our promised land, Heaven (Heb 11:13-16; 13:14), is an *eternal* inheritance (Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:3-5). And our food is the word of God (Matt 4:4), which is able to make us perfect (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4; 1 John 2:5), make us overcome sin (John 8:31-36; 17:17; Eph 6:10-17; 1 John 2:1), and save our souls (Jas 1:21). What God's word does is eternal (Matt 24:35; 1 Pet 1:23-25). Not only this, but we have all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3). All of these great eternal riches in the New Testament are even greater demonstrations of what is taught in Psalm 136 and those other 15 times in the Old Testament scriptures: God's mercy endures forever.