

# Ezra 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

## Analysis

---

The responsive singing 'because he is good' echoes Psalm 136 and numerous other passages celebrating God's hesed (steadfast, covenant love). This wasn't innovative worship but rooted in Scripture, demonstrating that biblical praise transcends circumstances. The phrase 'mercy endureth for ever' translates le'olam chasdo, emphasizing God's unchanging faithfulness despite Israel's unfaithfulness that led to exile. The people's great shout accompanied the foundation laying, not the completed temple, showing faith in God's promises before seeing fulfillment. This illustrates the biblical pattern of praising God for what He will do based on His character and past faithfulness. The communal nature—'all the people shouted'—shows genuine, widespread joy in restoration.

## Historical Context

---

Temple foundations required massive stone blocks, some weighing several tons, carefully positioned to support the superstructure. Ancient Near Eastern foundation ceremonies often involved pagan rituals and foundation deposits (objects buried beneath cornerstones). Israel's foundation ceremony was distinctively focused on Yahweh worship and biblical praise. The responsive singing pattern (one group singing, another responding) characterized Levitical

worship from David's time (1 Chronicles 16:34). This musical tradition, maintained through seventy years of exile without temple, demonstrates oral preservation of worship forms and Scripture memorization that characterized exilic Judaism.

## Related Passages

---

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

---

1. What does praising God at the foundation-laying rather than completion teach about faith and biblical worship?
2. How does grounding praise in God's unchanging character ('his mercy endureth forever') provide stability amid changing circumstances?
3. In what ways can modern worship balance emotional expression with theological content rooted in Scripture?

## Interlinear Text

---

וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ And they sang together by course H6030	בְּהִלֵּל in praising H1984	וּבְהוֹדֹת and giving thanks H3034	יְהוָה: of the LORD H3068	כִּי H3588
טוֹב because he is good H2896	כִּי H3588	לְעוֹלָם endureth for ever H5769	חֲסֵדוֹ for his mercy H2617	עַל H5921
יִשְׂרָאֵל toward Israel H3478	יְהוָה: of the LORD H3068	בְּהִלֵּל in praising H1984	גְּדוֹלָתָהּ with a great H1419	תְּרוּעָהּ shout H8643
הָעָם And all the people H5971	הִרְיֵעוּ shouted H7321	בְּהִלֵּל in praising H1984	יְהוָה: of the LORD H3068	בֵּית of the house H1004
לְ H5921	הוֹסֵד because the foundation H3245	בֵּית of the house H1004	יְהוָה: of the LORD H3068	

## Additional Cross-References

---

**1 Chronicles 16:34** (Grace): O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

**Psalms 106:1** (Grace): Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

**Psalms 107:1** (Grace): O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

**Psalms 103:17** (Grace): But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

**Jeremiah 33:11** (Grace): The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the LORD of hosts: for the LORD is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the LORD.

**Psalms 135:3** (Resurrection): Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.

**Psalms 118:1** (Grace): O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.

**Nehemiah 12:24** (Resurrection): And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward.

**2 Chronicles 7:3** (Grace): And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

**Isaiah 12:6** (References Israel): Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

