

Psalms 136:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endure...—Led through wilderness - 40 years faithful guidance. **For his mercy endureth for ever** (וְכִי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ, ki le-olam chasdo). This refrain, repeated 26 times, transforms history into worship. Each event becomes evidence of God's eternal chesed (steadfast covenant love). The psalm teaches that recounting salvation history should evoke gratitude, showing God's character remains unchanging.

Historical Context

Psalm 136, the Great Hallel, recounts salvation from creation through providence. Sung at Passover and festivals with antiphonal structure (cantor and congregation), it trained Israel to see history through the lens of God's enduring mercy. Every generation learned their identity through this recitation.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does repeatedly saying "his mercy endures forever" after each historical event transform your perspective?
2. What events in your life can you recount with the refrain "for his mercy endures forever"?
3. How does this psalm challenge viewing history as random versus providentially unfolding divine faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

לְמוֹלַיִךְ	עַמּוֹ	בַּמִּדְבָּר	כִּי	לְעוֹלָם
H1980	his people	through the wilderness	H3588	endureth for ever
	H5971	H4057		H5769

חַסְדֶּיךָ:
for his mercy
H2617

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 8:15 (Parallel theme): Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

Exodus 15:22 (Parallel theme): So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

Exodus 13:18 (Parallel theme): But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt.

Psalms 77:20 (Parallel theme): Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Deuteronomy 8:2 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

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