

Psalms 136:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:...—Smote great kings - conquest victories. **For his mercy endureth for ever** (כִּי 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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

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

לְ מַכָּה	מְלָכִים	גָּדֹל	יָּ	לְעוֹלָם	חַסְדּוֹ:
To him which smote	kings	great	H3588	endureth for ever	for his mercy
H5221	H4428	H1419		H5769	H2617

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