

Psalm 136:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:....—Slew mighty kings - defeating powerful enemies. **For his mercy endureth for ever** (כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד, 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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

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

מִסְדָּר: לְעוֹלָם אָדוֹן יְמִינָה מֶלֶךְ יְמִינָה אָדוֹן כִּי
And slew kings famous endureth for ever for his mercy
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