

Psalms 136:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Analysis

"O give thanks unto the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever." The title Adonei ha'adonim (Lord of lords) parallels verse 2's "God of gods," asserting YHWH's sovereignty over all earthly rulers. Adon means master, lord, sovereign—referring to human rulers or divine beings. Adonei ha'adonim declares Him supreme sovereign over all authorities. This connects to Deuteronomy 10:17 ("the great God, the mighty, and the terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward") and anticipates Revelation 17:14 and 19:16 (Christ as "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS"). The repeated refrain ki le'olam chasdo grounds sovereignty in mercy—God's absolute power serves His steadfast lovingkindness toward His people. This corrects false notions of divine tyranny; the all-powerful Lord is merciful.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings claimed divine status or divine appointment, demanding absolute loyalty. Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian emperors, Babylonian rulers, Persian kings all asserted supremacy. Israel confessed YHWH as ultimate sovereign, relativizing all human authority. When earthly lords oppressed Israel (Egyptian slavery, Assyrian invasion, Babylonian exile, Persian subjugation), this confession provided hope—the Lord of lords would vindicate His people. Daniel demonstrated this: refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image or cease praying to YHWH despite royal decrees (Daniel 3, 6). The New Testament church similarly

confessed "Jesus is Lord," relativizing Caesar's authority (Acts 17:7, Philippians 2:11).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does confessing God as "Lord of lords" affect your response to human authorities (governmental, workplace, church)?
2. In what ways are you tempted to grant ultimate lordship to human powers or institutions?
3. How does the combination of absolute sovereignty ("Lord of lords") with steadfast mercy change your view of divine power?

Interlinear Text

ה וְדוּ	יְהוָה יְיָ	יְהוָה יְיָ	פ' י	לְעוֹלָם	חַסְדּוֹ
O give thanks	of lords	of lords	H3588	endureth for ever	for his mercy
H3034	H113	H113		H5769	H2617

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 17:14 (References Lord): These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

1 Timothy 6:15 (References Lord): Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;