

Psalms 136:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever:

Analysis

To him that made great lights: for his mercy endureth for ever: The creation account continues with celestial luminaries, sun and moon, serving humanity. **"Made great lights"** (לַעֲשֶׂה אֲוִרִים גְּדֹלִים/le'oseh orim gedolim) celebrates God's formation of sun and moon (Genesis 1:14-18). These "great lights" (אֲוִרִים גְּדֹלִים/orim gedolim) governed day and night, regulated seasons, and enabled life on earth.

In ancient Near Eastern cultures, sun and moon were deified—Egyptian Ra, Mesopotamian Shamash and Sin. Israel's neighbors worshiped these luminaries as gods. Against this idolatry, the psalmist declares: Yahweh **"made"** (אָשָׂא/asah) them. They aren't deities but created objects, tools fashioned by the true God for humanity's benefit. Genesis 1:16 similarly de-divinizes sun and moon, calling them "lights" rather than by name, refusing to honor pagan designations.

The refrain **"for his mercy endureth for ever"** connects even celestial mechanics to covenant love. Sun rising daily, moon cycling monthly—these reliable patterns reflect God's unwavering chesed. Jeremiah 31:35-36 uses sun and moon's faithfulness as guarantee of God's covenant loyalty to Israel. As long as sun gives light by day, God's promises stand firm.

Historical Context

Solar and lunar worship pervaded ancient Near Eastern religion. Temples oriented toward sunrise, festivals timed to solstices and equinoxes, and priests calculated

calendars by celestial movements. Israel, surrounded by these practices, constantly faced temptation toward astral worship (2 Kings 23:5, Jeremiah 8:2). Psalm 136's assertion that Yahweh made the great lights combated this idolatry, reminding Israel that creation serves Creator's purposes. The lights that pagans worshiped are merely lamps God hung to illuminate His world and regulate time for His people.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What modern 'great lights'—created things that people worship or prioritize above God—might you need to dethrone in your life?
2. How does the regularity of sun and moon (daily sunrise, lunar cycles) witness to God's enduring mercy and faithfulness?
3. In what ways can observing the natural order cultivate gratitude for God's provision and awareness of His sustaining love?

Interlinear Text

לְ עֲשֵׂה	אֹרֹתַיִם	גְּדֹלֹתַיִם	כִּי	לְעוֹלָם	חַסְדּוֹ:
To him that made	lights	great	H3588	endureth for ever	for his mercy
H6213	H216	H1419		H5769	H2617
