

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

The **grand subject** of this psalm is the **exhortation** to Give Thanks to the LORD for his goodness & mercy which are perpetual & endure forever (Pierce, 519).

So important is this it's repeated 26x. **None like it.**

How worthy our God is of our...

- ➔ continued devotion
- ➔ constant attention
- ➔ captivating affection
- ➔ confident expectation
- ➔ Christ-centered recollection
- ➔ celestial adoration

No less than 26x we're told God's **love is everlasting!**

Background to Psalm 136

- **Anonymous**; but the theme is remembering *God's goodness & covenant-love*.
 - If there's anything emphatic here, it's the repeated, key, identical phrase: **FOR HIS LOVE IS FOREVER!!!**
 - Thomas Watson says: "God never repents of His electing love"
- This song recites the constant phrase & expounds the covenant-love of God!
- "This love of God toward his saints is higher, deeper, wider, and longer than anyone can comprehend. Throughout all the ages to come, God's covenant-love for His people, like a mighty river, will be flowing as strong in eternity future as when it first began in eternity past (Lawson, 320).
 - ***You can experience it now! You can swim in God's love now! And for endless eternities to come you can adore His saving love!***

Key phrase: for his lovingkindness is everlasting [NASB] -- 26x

His steadfast love endures forever (ESV/NIV)

His mercy endureth forever (KJV)

His loyal love endures (NET)

▶ **CAUSE** = for...

▶ **COVENANT-LOVE** = his lovingkindness...

▶ **CONSTANCE** = is...

▶ **CONTINUANCE** = everlasting...

▶ The same covenant-love that God has for His son He displayed toward His people Israel & he has shown toward us as His NT people, the church (one body of Jew/Gentile).

▶ This covenant-love cannot...

- ▶ fade away
- ▶ rust away
- ▶ drift away
- ▶ change away

▶tire away (cf. Rom 8.35ff)

THESIS — heap up reasons for us to thank God & see His eternal, covenant-love displayed...

LET US THANK GOD FOR HIS...

1. Character (1-3)
2. Creation (4-9)
3. Conquests (10-22)
4. Compassion (23-26)

I. CHARACTER (1-3)

The main object/action/actor of this psalm: "LORD (v.1), God of gods (v.2), Lord of lords (v.3)

Every other verse is 'he' or 'who...' or 'to him...'

It's all about **GOD's** character, **God's** conduct, **God's** compassion

It's about God's attributes, God's actions, God's accessibility

A. Self-existing covenant-keeper (1)

1. Give thanks - [תודה] the hebrew verb means to confess/acknowledge = we should give THOUGHTFUL, grateful worship!

2. To this Yahweh - *because he's good* [כי טוב]

B. Supreme God (2)

C. Sovereign Lord (3)

This always is the bedrock foundation: God's character!

II. CREATION (4-9)

A. V.4 - WONDERS /wonderful acts = v.5-9 spells it out

B. V.5-9 - follows the Genesis 1 account

1. v.5 - Gen 1.1

2. v.6 - Gen 1.2

3. v.7 - Gen 1.14-18

4. v.8 - Gen 1.16

5. v.9 - Gen 1.16

- > the historicity of Genesis
- > the reality of Genesis
- > the miracle of Genesis
- > the understandability of Genesis
- > the importance of Genesis
- > the God of Genesis!

a)let us not forget that this birthing of creation (Gen 1) is a picture of the new-birth that God gives to us (John 3)

b)the God creating LIGHT in darkness (Gen 1) is a picture of God speaking spiritual light in dark hearts (2 Cor 4)

What a God who creates! Who forms! Who speaks!!

III. CONQUESTS! (10-22)

These verses put the spotlight on God's deliverance & guidance & protection of His people! Egypt, Wilderness, Conquest, Canaan (Ex-Josh)

A. Egypt (10-15)

1. GOD's work in Egypt -- and his providing for His people ISRAEL>>>

2. v.10 - Ex 12.29

Not just history -- but reminder that God judges ALL enemies. God struck firstborn b/c they didn't hear & heed the prophet's Word -- they had NO blood of the sacrificial Lamb covering them (so, as a result, the angel of Death passed over & destroyed them) !

3. v.11 - Ex 12.51

4. v.12 - Ex 13.9

a) Spurgeon: “God made a road across the sea-bottom causing the divided waters to stand like walls on other side” (Spurgeon, 208).

5. v.13 - Ex 14.21

6. v.14 - Ex 14.22

7. v.15 - Ex 14.27

- > the historicity of the Exodus
- > the miracle of the Exodus
- > the importance of the Exodus
- > the gospel of the Exodus

B. Wilderness (16-22)

1. WILDERNESS WANDERINGS/God's deliverance of His people

2. v.16 - Ex 13.18; 15.22

a) God goes [לְמִוְלַיִךְ] with his people. *Walks/goes.*

3. v.17 - Ps 135.10-12

a) Struck down great kings = God's power!

4. v.18 - Deut 29.7

5. v.19 - Num 21.21-24

6. v.20 - Num 21.33-35

7. v.21 - Josh 12.1

8. v.22 - Ps 105.6

a) What a God who gives *us* an eternal inheritance in Christ (**Col 3.24** - the reward of our inheritance; **1 Pet 1.4** - an inheritance undefiled reserved in heaven for us)!

b) Remember: God led them into it & therefore he pledged himself to guide them/lead them though it!

• ****POLEMICAL ARGUMENTS****

- see how Psalm 136 totally obliterates evolution & all evolutionary-like theories.
 - Creation is wholly & absolutely by divine fiat/command (divine, spoken Word)
- see how Psalm 136 totally smashes a small/puny/wimpy god of today's pop-culture
 - The Bible reveals God as powerful, sovereign, victorious, triumphant & holy.

IV. COMPASSION! (23-26)

A. V.23 - praise God He remembered us in our *lowly* estate!

1. What a condescending, compassionate, humbling God!

B. V.24 - he redeemed us/rescued us.

C. V.25 - God provides!

D. V.26 - ends where began: *call to all to thank!*

I suppose we could add a 5th “C” to our outline:

V. CHRIST (24)

A. v.24 - God delivered us -- וַיַּצִּילֵנוּ in Hebrew; lutrow in LXX

1. *This is the eminent/ultimate/climactic reason for giving thanks!*

B. REDEEMED US...

C. Ultimately, we as NT believers CAN & MUST give thanks to God for

HE has redeemed us from our adversaries = for his love endures forever

1. *The monergistic nature of redemption (God alone did it)*

2. *The desperate need for redemption (redeemed us from slavery)*

3. *The particular elect who receive the redemption ('us')*

4. *The absolute power of redemption (from... ; away from; liberated; set free from bondage)*

5. *The overwhelming tyrants to be redeemed from (our adversaries...)*

6. *The sovereign love in redemption (his love...)*

7. *The everlasting duration of redemption (endures forever...)*

Sin is our enemy & we are redeemed from it by the atoning blood of Christ!

LET US REMEMBER TO GIVE THANKS:

1. **communion** (1 Cor 11)

2. **thankful prayer** (1 Thess 5.17)

3. **exhortations to one another** (Col 1 & Col 3)

4. **preaching the Word**

5. **gospel of grace** (Rom 8.28-30)

He **FOREKNEW** (29)

He **PREDESTINED** (29)

He **CALLED** (30)

He **JUSTIFIED** (30)

He **GLORIFIED** (30)

*We could add:

He **REGENERATED**

He **ADOPTS**

He **SANCTIFIES**

He **PRESERVES**

He **PROMISES**

AMEN.