

Psalm 136: For His Mercy Endures Forever.

This is similar to Psalm 135, except that it has a refrain which stresses the theme. The theme is "praise the LORD who performed great wonders," and the chorus is "For His mercy endures forever." The structure suggests that one part of the congregation making a statement and the other part responding with a chorus.

The LORD's mercy mentioned in each of the 26 verses, is His covenant faithfulness to His Chosen People whom He loves. This Psalm is often referred to as "the Great Hallel".

1-3: The psalmist called the congregation to thank the LORD, who is **the God of gods and the Lord of lords**. Between each expression here and throughout the Psalm the reason for the praise is expressed: His loyal **love endures forever**.

Why we should praise the LORD: 4-25.

First, His wonders are in Creation. He **made the heavens**, stretched out the earth, and **made the great lights** (the **sun the moon**, and the stars).

Second, God's marvelous works was His salvation to Israel and in bringing Israel with a mighty **hand and outstretched arm** across **the Red Sea**; **led His people through the wilderness** and triumphed over the **kings** of the land (including Sihon and Og, to establish His people in the land safely. In all this God worked on behalf of His people who had been enslaved, freeing them from their **enemies**.

The third demonstration of His enduring love was feeding **every creature**.

As the psalmist concluded this psalm, he again called for **thanks** to be given **to the God of heaven** because of **His enduring love**.

Psalm 137: By The Rivers Of Babylon.

1-4: The exiles in **Babylon sat down and wept** over the destruction of Zion (Jerusalem). **The rivers** refer to the Euphrates. So great was the exiles' grief that even the singers were silent. The exiles hung their harps on poplar trees for they could not sing their **songs** about their homeland when their oppressors taunted them to sing of glorious **Zion**, as the Israelites were in a hostile **foreign land**.

5-6: He vowed to retain Jerusalem in his memory. He wished that his **right hand would forget its skill** and that he would become mute if he failed to **remember... Jerusalem**, his **highest** joy.

7-9: This is a plea for God to **remember the Edomites** who had "rejoiced while the city of **Jerusalem** was being destroyed and encouraged the destroyers.

The Babylonians should note that the Lord would destroy them measure for measure, that is, their little ones would be dashed **against the rocks** for the Babylonians apparently had done this to the Jerusalemites. To the exiles, those who had ravaged the Holy Land deserved no better.

The exiled psalmist mourned the plight of those who wept in a strange land and could not sing their songs of Zion. Opposite to his intense love for Zion was his hatred for the destroyers of Zion; so he turned to voice imprecations against Edom and Babylon who had destroyed the city of God.

Reflecting the exilic period, this psalm may have been written toward the end of the Babylonian Captivity. Perhaps the psalmist felt that the Persians' kind treatment of the Babylonians was an insufficient judgment on those who devastated Israel.

Psalm 138: Answered Prayer.

1-3: David vowed to **praise** the LORD wholeheartedly **because** God had **answered** his prayer, thus strengthening his faith.

4-5: David prayed that all **the kings** would acknowledge and **praise** God **when they** heard of His Word and His great glory.

6-8: David explained that **the LORD** should be praised because He does not judge by human standards. Though He is on high, He looks to **the lowly**, not to **the proud**.

David expressed confidence that the LORD would deliver him from his foes by His **right hand** and according to His loyal love. Even though David was confident in the LORD, he asked that God not let him down.

David vowed to praise the Lord's loyal love and goodness for answering his prayer. He made known his wish that all kings would acknowledge the Lord's favor to the lowly, and then expressed his confidence that the Lord would also deliver him by His loyal love.

Isaiah 55:10-11 - *“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

John 8:31 - *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*