

## **Giving Thanks To God According to Psalm 136**

### **Versus 1 - 3**

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 2 Oh, give thanks to the God of gods! For His mercy endures forever. 3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords! For His mercy endures forever:

Give thanks to the Lord for his great mercy, for all the times he has forgiven us, and all his gifts.

Sometimes we might want to pray to the Lord, but we can't think of anything to pray for. At such times it is a good idea to use another prayer as a template to remind you what to pray for. Today is a day of thanksgiving and again in our sinfulness we forget how much we have to thank him for. We will use psalm 136 as a reminder.

"for his mercy endures forever." It is now three thousand years since this psalm was written. The psalm remains. We remain. The earth remains. This is all a testament to the fact that indeed His mercy endures forever.

Think of an example of the Lord's mercy in your own life for which to give thanks.

### **Versus 4 – 9**

4 To Him who alone does great wonders, For His mercy endures forever; 5 To Him who by wisdom made the heavens, For His mercy endures forever; 6 To Him who laid out the earth above the waters, For His mercy endures forever; 7 To Him who made great lights, For His mercy endures forever -- 8 The sun to rule by day, For His mercy endures forever; 9 The moon and stars to rule by night, For His mercy endures forever.

Give thanks for the earth, and the seasons, for beauty and food.

He is the only one who truly does great wonders. The advanced technology of a super computer, the skill of the world's top neurosurgeon, the power of a spaceship or a nuclear bomb, the beauty of the greatest artist, these things pale and are nothing in comparison to the works of the Lord. We might stand in awe of another person's abilities but they are nothing in comparison to the Lord. The vastness of space, the artistry of nature, the precision and abilities of our own bodies, what works of man can compare to these things?

These are the large and obvious great wonders, but great wonders can be small as well, a word of comfort when we need it most, a helping hand when we didn't think we could get it done. What great wonders can you think of the Lord doing for you for which to give thanks?

### **Versus 10 – 15**

10 To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn, For His mercy endures forever; 11 And brought out Israel from among them, For His mercy endures forever; 12 With a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, For His mercy endures forever; 13 To Him who divided the Red Sea in two, For His mercy endures forever; 14 And made Israel pass through the midst of it, For His mercy endures forever; 15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea, For His mercy endures forever;

God showed his strength, He destroyed His enemies and delivered His people.

The children are learning in Sunday school the stories of the judges, how time and time again the Lord delivered his people from the hands of their enemies. This was true then. It was true of the early church. It was true of the reformation. It is true now.

Satan is mounting his attacks against the church, but the Lord knows how to deliver His people.

Indeed He has delivered us from the devil, the world, and our own flesh. When we sin, it is the Lord mercy that he shows us that sin through His law so that we do not become slaves, but through repentance are forgiven and delivered.

What are some of the ways God has shown his strength to you in the past year? To deliver you from His enemies? Perhaps a sin, perhaps some doubts?

### **Versus 16 – 22**

16 To Him who led His people through the wilderness, For His mercy endures forever; 17 To Him who struck down great kings, For His mercy endures forever; 18 And slew famous kings, For His mercy endures forever -- 19 Sihon king of the Amorites, For His mercy endures forever; 20 And Og king of Bashan, For His mercy endures forever -- 21 And gave their land as a heritage, For His mercy endures forever; 22 A heritage to Israel His servant, For His mercy endures forever.

The Lord not only delivered the Israelites but gave them a land and a heritage.

We are in such a favored time and place that we often forget how lucky we are to be free to worship the Lord in truth. We forget how our fathers fought again and again for the truth of God's Word, sometimes only with words but often also with blood and sword. First against other false religions, but then later against political ideologies that are not only contrary but extremely hostile to God's truth, like fascism and communism. The Lord not only delivered them but brought them to this land, where they and we are free to worship and free to live. Truly a land flowing with milk and honey

What are some of the ways the Lord has given you even more than you could have thought to ask for? Maybe you asked for one thing and the Lord gave you something greater, or maybe you didn't ask at all not even realizing you needed it, and there it was.

**Versus 23 – 26**

23 Who remembered us in our lowly state, For His mercy endures forever; 24 And rescued us from our enemies, For His mercy endures forever; 25 Who gives food to all flesh, For His mercy endures forever. 26 Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever.

The Lord gave all these things even when they deserved nothing.

What thing can you point to in your life to say for this reason the Lord remembers me? Truly we are all sinners, truly the only reason the Lord has given anything to us is His mercy. As John reminds us, "We have all received grace for grace"

What things remind you that you deserve nothing? What things has the Lord has given you even when He maybe should have given you nothing?

**Finally just write, "Jesus died for my sins!"**

**Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven! For His mercy endures forever.**

**Amen**