

**June 12**

**Scriptures:** Read Psalms 135 & 136

**Key Verse:** “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”  
(Psalm 136:1)

## **Overview**

Psalm 135 was compiled by using many different portions from other psalms and other Old Testament writings. It was undoubtedly composed for us in the Temple worship. The servants of the Lord, identified as: the priests, Levites, all the children of Israel, the Gentile God-fearers and all inhabitants of Jerusalem (135:19-21), are called upon to praise and bless the Lord. Several reasons are given as to why God’s people should praise Him, with the emphasis upon God’s sovereign power in nature (135:6,7) and history (135:8-12). The first reason to praise and thank Him is because “the Lord is good” (135:3; 136:1). If we were to enumerate the goodness of God we would never finish. Each individual worshipper must interpret for himself what the goodness of God means to him.

The whole psalm illustrates God’s goodness and gives reasons why the people of the Lord are to praise Him. Firstly, because He had chosen them as His own special treasure (Deut. 7:6-8). What a privilege it is to be the elect of God! With it come many responsibilities. Believers today, who are God’s elect, have the responsibility, as did the ancient Israelites, to be lights shining in a dark world to show others the way they should go.

With a firm and unshakable belief, the psalmist affirms that “the Lord is great” and because of His greatness He is worthy to be praised. He is the sole sovereign over the world, above all the false gods who are but the work of foolish man’s hands (135:5, 15-18; 115:4-8; 95:3; 96:4,5; Deut. 10:17). The special revelation of God clearly shows His sovereignty over the world. The ultimate control over the world and the affairs of mankind is the will of God. The Israelites were to praise God for delivering them from bondage in Egypt. Believers today need to praise God for delivering them from being enslaved to sin and suffering. We, like the Israelites, must also praise God for giving us the victory over the enemy Satan, and for giving us an eternal inheritance (135:12). God is also to be praised for His righteous judgment and the compassion He shows to His people (Deut. 32:36; e.g. God’s treatment of Israel during the period of the judges). Today we must bless the Lord with equal enthusiasm for He is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

Psalm 136, although different in form, is an expansion of Psalm 135 and the two are closely related in subject matter. The former is a psalm of praise; the latter of thanksgiving. Psalm 136 is clearly a responsive hymn. The first line of each verse expresses God’s mercy, likely sung by the priest or Levitical song leader. The second line is the refrain which is the response of the congregation or choir: “For His mercy endures forever”.

The psalm begins by describing God as good, the God of gods, and Lord of lords (Deut. 10:17). Since He is the only God, He alone has creative and miracle-working powers (136:4; 72:18). Since He is the supreme Lord, he has subjected all nations and kings under Him. This was evident when He delivered Israel from Egypt and overthrew the Pharaoh. In His mercy and

faithfulness, God guided them in the wilderness, gave them the Promised Land, and rescued them over and over again. He not only sustains and preserves them, but He, in His mercy, provides food for all people and creatures (104:27, 28; 145:15,16). It is no wonder the psalmist repeats 26 times that God's mercy endures forever and concludes by calling upon all flesh to "give thanks to the God of heaven" (136:26).

## **Prayer**

We give You praise and thanksgiving this day, dear father. Your goodness and lovingkindness are boundless! Your goodness was evident in your dealings with the children of Israel as You brought them out of slavery in Egypt, and Your goodness is even more evident today as we look to Jesus, Your beloved Son whom You gave to redeem us.