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## Psalm 136

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Bible  
at Home

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Psalm 136.

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### Topics.

- Give thanks to the God of gods for His steadfast love endures forever.
- Give thanks to God for His deliverance and triumphant victories.
- Give thanks to God who remembered us in our low estate.
- God gives food to all flesh.
- The Commonwealth of Israel and the glory of Christ's spiritual temple.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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### INTRODUCTION

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Psalms are songs and prayers offered to God by the nation Israel, they cover the range of human emotion, expressing praise, faith, victory, sorrow, despair, depression, frustration and the troubled heart of a mourner. They contrast the righteous with the wicked, and include the wisdom and the treasure of God's word. Psalms were written at the beginning of the 15th century BC and probably collected in their final form in the 3rd century.

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### BOOK FIVE (PSALM 107-150)

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### PSALM 136:1-9

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#### Give thanks to the God of gods for His Steadfast Love Endures.

- **Psalm 136:1-9:** Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. <sup>2</sup>Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever. <sup>3</sup>Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>4</sup>to him who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>5</sup>to him who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>6</sup>to him who spread out the earth above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>7</sup>to him who made the great lights, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>8</sup>the sun to rule over the day, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>9</sup>the moon and stars to rule over the night, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Everyone who believe in God naturally praises and thanks Him when something good has happened to them, but here the Psalmist calls all who love the LORD to praise him:

- For His enduring and steadfast love, His faithfulness, mercy and grace.
- Because He is the God of gods.
- For the great wonders He has done and still does for His people
- Because He made the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon and the stars (this of course embraces all creation).

Verses nearer the end of the Psalm show that we should also give thanks and praise the LORD:

- For the way He works in a nation and a person's life and the victories and triumphs he gives nations and believers who are faithful.
- For the food and water that we eat and drink.

**God's steadfast love endures forever:** (v2) this is mentioned twenty-six times in this Psalm it is one of the most common expressions throughout the Psalms. Some Bibles say, "God's steadfast mercy endures forever," while others say, "God's love endures forever. The word mercy comes from the Hebrew word (*cheched*) and means to show, kind favour, to show merciful kindness, to be kind, to show one-self merciful and to pity which embraces such things as compassion, sympathy, empathy, comfort and forgiveness showing that love and mercy are bound together. The apostle Paul wrote,

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans. 13:10).
- Love is patient and kind. (1 Cor. 13:4).

And John wrote:

- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8).
- God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

The word mercy embraces all of the following, compassion, pity, kindness, sympathy, grace and forgiveness which means love and mercy cannot be separated, love without mercy is not love and mercy without love is not mercy, which also means that Bibles that state, "God's mercy endures forever," and Bibles that say, "God's love endures forever," are both correct in their interpretations.

**NOTE:** love is not a part of God's character; God is love wherever love is God is present by His Spirit. This does not mean that wherever love is the people are saved to eternal life, it simply means God by His love is in that love.

**Give thanks to the God of gods:** (v2) the Bible clearly teaches that there is only one God that created all things, yet this statement implies that there are other gods. Asaph in his Psalm said, "Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?" (Psalm 77:13) and the apostle Paul in his letter wrote, "Although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth as indeed there are many gods" (1 Cor. 8:5). Both Asaph and Paul support the writer of this Psalm implication that there are many gods in the world, yet the Scriptures leave no-doubt that there is no other god like the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob so who are these other gods? All other gods are a figment of man's imagination, established in the mind by the power of misguided belief. They are created in the mind by a strong belief in them. The human nervous system does not have a mind of its own and therefore automatically responds to whatever is pictured on the imagination whether it is real or false.

The stronger the belief the greater effect the mental image on the imagination of the mind will have on the human nervous system. This is why deception is so deceptive. It matters not if the god people believe in is real or not the nervous system responds accordingly. If the god a person believes in is a wrathful, vengeful and judgmental god they will feel emotions of guilt and fear in contrast to this if the god a person believes in is a god of love and compassion, they will feel emotions of love and comfort. The imaginary, but real images of the mind creates a real entity that affects the emotions and feelings through the human nervous system. These feelings convince those that believe in idols that there are evil gods and spirits, but in reality, they do not actually exist, they are an entity created by a false belief of the mind, but to the person believing in idols and false gods they are very real entities. This is why faith should

be based upon the Scriptures of the Bible and never upon on emotions. This does not mean emotions should be denied, God gave them to us to enjoy (especially in worship and praise) it just means that they should not be the foundation of our faith and what we believe. It is through reading the Bible that we learn who the one and only immortal, invisible, eternal God is and His eternal will, plans and purposes for the world, the earth and for eternity. Clearly not one of these gods of the imagination have any power to create the earth, the mountains the seas there is only one God who has such awesome power and He is the Holy Almighty God of all creation and the source of all life the great I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For further information concerning gods of the imaginations see:

- Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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## PSALM 136:10-22

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### Give thanks to God for His Deliverance and Triumphant Victories.

- **Psalm 136:10-22:** to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>11</sup>and brought Israel out from among them, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>12</sup>with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>13</sup>to him who divided the Red Sea in two, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>14</sup>and made Israel pass through the midst of it, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>15</sup>but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>16</sup>to him who led his people through the wilderness, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>17</sup>to him who struck down great kings, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>18</sup>and killed mighty kings, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>19</sup>Sihon, king of the Amorites, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>20</sup>and Og, king of Bashan, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>21</sup>and gave their land as a heritage, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>22</sup>a heritage to Israel his servant, for his steadfast love endures forever.

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In these few verses alone the expression, "God's steadfast love," is used thirteen times. The Psalmist calls all Israel to give thanks to God who struck down the firstborn of Egypt and brought them out from their bondage. Who divided the Red Sea in two and made Israel pass through the midst of it on dry ground, then drowned Pharaoh and his armies in the Red Sea. Who led His people through the wilderness, who struck down many great kings and killed, Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, two mighty kings and gave their land as a heritage, to Israel and who remembered Israel in their low estate, and rescued them from their foes.

**King Sihon and King Bashan:** the land of king Sihon and king Bashan is part of the Promised Land on the wilderness side of the Jordan River (the east side) it was allotted to the tribes of Gad and Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh, while the land of Canaan was allotted to the remaining ten and a half tribes.

**For us today:** this means thank and praise God for all good things that come into our lives, do not take them for granted or think they happened by chance or luck, give God the praise for whatever good thing comes into our lives and our home.

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## PSALM 136:23-26

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### Give Thanks to God Who Remembered Us in Our Low Estate.

- **Psalm 136:23-26:** It is he who remembered us in our low estate, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>24</sup>and rescued us from our foes, for his steadfast love endures forever; <sup>25</sup>he who gives food to all flesh, for his steadfast love endures forever. <sup>26</sup>Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his steadfast love endures forever.

**It is he who remembered us in our low estate:** (v23) this expression shines a brilliant spotlight upon the depth, breadth, width and endurance of God's steadfast love. Israel entered into gross wickedness and turn to other gods many times, yet each time they saw the foolishness of their ways, humbled themselves and repented God forgave them and accepted them back as though they had never sinned. The Old Testament prophet Zechariah in his future prophecy tells us even though Israel's religious leaders plotted the murder of their Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God the Lord Jesus Christ and the majority of the nation rejected him a day will come when:

- The Lord will return to protect the inhabitants of Jerusalem to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>"And will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. <sup>11</sup>On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great the priests will mourn by themselves and each family will morn by themselves (Zech. 12:9-14).

There is no other nation on earth that has history with their God as Israel does. Their history with the LORD their God goes back to the beginning of time no other nation or religion can claim such miracles and wonders or history no matter what god they may believe in. Israel's love for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob cannot be doubted even though it is true they never recognised their Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ when he came. But the prophet Zechariah shines a light upon the truth that even this is in the sovereign will of God until that glorious day when their Messiah the Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to protect God's Holy city Jerusalem, gather the faithful to himself and establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth. The following verses show that the United Kingdom of Israel has always been God's special and unique nation unlike any other nation. God said:

- Israel was his son who he called out of Egypt and he loved them when they were a child (Hosea 11:1).
- He gave birth to Israel and carried them from the womb even to their old age. (Isaiah 46:3-4).
- Israel is his allotted heritage (Deut. 32:9) and the apple of his eye (Deuteronomy 32:10).
- Israel is a people holy to him (Deut. 7:6) and his treasured possession (Deuteronomy 14:2).

The LORD has not spoken this way with any other nation, but God has not only spoken of Israel differently, but always dealt with them differently to any other nation:

- To Israel God gave the Ten Commandments and showed his great power. (Exodus 20:1-17).
- To Israel God declared his word, statutes and his rules. (Rom. 9:4)
- To Israel God gave the prophets, the worship and the promises. (Romans 3:4)
- To Israel belonged the covenant, the adoption, the patriarchs and the glory. (Romans 3:5)
- To Israel the oracles of God were entrusted. (Rom. 3:2)
- The people of Israel are the offspring of Abraham the father of faith. (Romans 9:7)
- From Israel's race came the Christ the Saviour of the world. (Rom. 9:5)

Added to these God said:

- Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine (Exod. 19:5).
- The LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments (Deut. 26:18).

The Psalmist wrote:

- God declared his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules. Praise the LORD! (Psalm 147:19-20).

The LORD has not given any other nations such great privileges. These are the many reasons the Jews (especially the religious leaders of Jesus generation) considered themselves to be the holy race with God and the Gentile nations to be the unclean race without God.

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## THE THERMOMETER OF GOD'S PROPHECY

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It is true that Israel has been and still is a special nation to God, but since Christ death and resurrection salvation for both Jews and Gentiles is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Israel remains a clear sign of where we are in prophecy concerning Christ's return. It could be said that they are the thermometer of God's prophecy much like the mercury on a natural thermometer measures the heat of the day and moves up the vertical red line warning us of impending danger when the heat of the sun is reaching temperatures that are dangerous for the good health of the skin and our well-being. Likewise Israel can be seen as the mercury of Bible prophecy in the sense that world events that come upon the nation of Israel (especially Jerusalem) are signs that give us some insight as to how close we are to that glorious breathtaking and world changing day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory. But God's focus during our present age for eternal salvation is upon creating a new nation in Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles. This new nation is also called a new creation in Christ, the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, the church and the Kingdom of God. For further information concerning this new nation God is building in Christ see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel," at the end of this chapter.

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## HE WHO GIVES FOOD TO ALL FLESH

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The expression, "He who gives food to all flesh," (v25) does not just refer to mankind, but to every living creature that dwells on earth, fly's in the skies and swims in the oceans. Some feel because they labour under the hot sun digging up a field and throwing seed in the soil, then cultivate and water the seed for a season until it is fully grown. Then harvest it and afterward take it home, prepare a meal and feed the family, why should they thank God since they have done all the work? The simple answer is, if God had not made the sun, the soil, and the rain and created the seeds we would not be able to grow a thing and our family would starve. Though this is true there are some who upon seeing the enormous famines and the millions of innocent men, women and children in third world countries suffering extreme hunger (i.e., global statistics state, "someone somewhere in the world dies of starvation every three and a half seconds," (mostly children) (2011) find it difficult to believe the statement, "God gives food to all flesh." It is certainly true that He at this present time is not supernaturally producing food as His Son Jesus did to feed the five thousand, but the following is also true if mankind looked after the planet, we live on it would produce food for all. Consider the following statistics:

- It cost \$80,000 to send one kilo of food to the space station (imagine what it costs to keep the entire station in space).

- Australia spent 40 billion dollars over ten years training the armies of Iraq and they deserted Mosul in two days when Isis armies attacked their city. (2014) and America spent two billion dollars a week on the war in Afghanistan (2011). Imagine what other countries spend on weapons of mass destruction and war.
- The equivalent of thirty-six football fields of rainforest is being cut down every minute of every day. (2011).

The secular world refers to the planet we live on as, "Mother Earth," this is a very appropriate title since the Bible personifies the earth as a pregnant mother longing to give birth to the sons of God (referring the resurrection of the faithful). It also likens natural disasters and troubles upon earth to the labour pains of a pregnant woman. In the same way that the labour pains of a pregnant woman increase and become more rapid as the time of the birth draws closer likewise troubles and disasters will increase in power and rapidness as we nearer the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. If anyone of us treated our mothers and abused them in the same way mankind treats and abuses the earth we would not only be cast out of our mothers home, but also be standing in a court of law accused of grossly abusing our mother in every way possible and no doubt condemned by the judge of the courtroom for the harm and abuse we have caused our mother.

**NOTE:** all of God's Ten Commands concerning mankind protects the innocent from harm and hurt which means that God's law is underpinned by love. Added to this His Son calls all to, "Love their neighbours as themselves," (Mark 12:31). Next to loving God with all our heart, mind and strength the command to love your neighbours as yourself is not only the greatest commandment in the entire Bible and under sun, the moon, the stars and all the heavenly hosts, but also the greatest commandment before God and the Lord Jesus Christ. To love your neighbour as yourself, (Matt. 22:39) means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself.

Paul in his letter to the Romans wrote:

- Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 13:10).

And John wrote:

- Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. . (1 John 4:8).
- God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

This means, if mankind is going to live contrary to God's laws of love, not only will the globe of the earth suffer, but so too will we as a collective whole, because we all live on the same suffering planet.

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## THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL.

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It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ. This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God). The Apostle Paul said:



- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). <sup>17</sup>And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). <sup>18</sup>For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone <sup>21</sup>in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

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The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states:

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

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### **THE GLORY OF THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE GOD IS BUILDING IN CHRIST.**

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Jews and Gentiles are being united together as one body in Christ to be a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Believing Jews and Gentiles are being prepared by the prophets and apostles' teachings and by the influence of Christ and the Holy Spirit to become a majestic and glorious sacred temple in which God dwells for all eternity. When this majestic building is completed there will be nothing so worthy of reverence since God dwells in it; so ancient since the patriarchs and prophets laboured in building it; so solid since love cements it together; so closely united and indivisible since Christ is the corner stone; so exalted since it reaches as high as heaven and to God himself; so full of wisdom since its specifications are the word of God; so full of light since the Holy Spirit dispels every dark corner; so spacious since it is spread over the whole earth; so invincible and indestructible since it is being built by God, by Christ, by the Holy



Spirit and by the influence of God's eternal word; so divine since it is a living, vibrant, dynamic temple inhabited by the Holy Spirit, and so universal since all its unique stones though spread throughout the world are compacted together in Christ. God is the master builder of this majestic and glorious temple; Christ is the corner stone; faithful believers are the proper materials; the prophets and apostles are its foundation and the Gospel and love its pillars. Christ is the door and faith is the entrance into it. It is a spiritual building and through, faith and grace this living building is growing into an eternal house fit for the most Holy God to dwell in. It's beauty and radiance will surpass all temples that have ever gone before it since it will be adorned with a vast variety of rich colour made up of Jews and Gentiles of every age, country, sex, and condition: the mightiest of kings, the most renowned lawgivers, the most profound philosophers, the most eminent scholars and all those of whom the world was not worthy have formed this building, (taken from the beautiful writings of a faithful, but unknown brother in Christ).

Peter wrote:

- Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (1 Pet. 2:6).

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ are represented as living stones that God is using to build this spiritual, majestic temple of eternal glory which will be manifested in splendour for all to see when:

- The Lord himself descends from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ are raised then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-18).

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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