

## Meditation #4: God's Love in Action

*What does it say?* –

STUDY: Psalm 136

GOLDEN TEXT: Psalm 136:3-5 = *O give thanks to the LORD of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever, who alone does great wonders, for his steadfast love endures forever; who by understanding made the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever.*

*What does it mean?*

Our Christmas HOPE is based upon the love of God in action—past, present and future. The steadfast love of the LORD was shown to us especially in the birth of Jesus Christ—as well as in his life, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension. That steadfast love of our Creator is shown in so many ways in each of our lives—including 26 ways articulated in this splendid Psalm 136.

1. How does the birth of the Lord Jesus also demonstrate God's steadfast love? How does it show that the Creator's love endures forever?
2. How is the Creator the "LORD of lords"? Has he ever stopped being in charge of his world? The apostle John reveals Jesus as the Lord of lords (Rev. 17:14 and 19:16), and Paul states that everyone should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2:11). Does the Lord's birth give us HOPE? If so, in what ways?
3. When there are environmental problems, should the Lord Jesus just fix them himself? Why would he want us humans to be part of his solution? How does being part of his solution give us HOPE? What gives us more HOPE?
4. What kinds of wonders do you think the writer of Psalm 136 has in mind? How does the birth of the Lord Jesus rank as a great wonder? What gives you HOPE?

*What are we going to do about it?*

5. Many religions claim that their gods are the bosses of parts of the creation, or lords of spirituality. However, when we say that Jesus is "Lord of lords," how is that belief demonstrated in our behavior? Does it impact how we treat his creation?
6. What "great wonders" have you seen or experienced? Take time today to write a 1- to 2-page description of at least one of the Creator's wonders—whether an "ordinary" or an "exceptional" wonder. Does that divine wonder help give you HOPE? In what ways?
7. Borrow an astronomy book from the library. As you read it and examine the pictures, can you hum or sing *The Hallelujah Chorus*? On a clear evening take field glasses, opera glasses or a telescope to help you look into the heavens. Bring others to share in the experience. How does the greatness of the Lord and his creation strengthen your HOPE?

*Truth To Celebrate:* *Of all the wonders in creation, the most amazing is the fact that God was in Christ reconciling the world—including you and me—to himself.*

*Advent-Action:* *Take a walk down the street, or through a park or field, with others or by yourself. As you see and hear the everyday wonders of God's world, softly sing or hum a familiar Christmas carol—even repeat verses from Psalm 136, loudly or softly—and pray specific thanks for each created thing you see. Take some time. Let yourself (1) feel the splendor of God's presence, (2) express the joy of honoring and praising our Creator in the midst of his wonder-filled creation, and (3) let your heart grow in love of him and his world. [And if you are self-conscious about humming, singing, praying or quoting Scripture while you walk when others may be watching, just hold a cell phone to your ear!—but keep it turned off.]*

