

Psalm 133:1-3

- 1 How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!
 - 2 It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the
collar of his robes.
 - 3 It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the Lord ordained his blessing,
life forevermore.
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- Psalm 133 is a Psalm of David. It is one of the shortest of the Psalms with only three verses. Psalm 117 has two verses.
- Gill believes that *“David may have composed this psalm after he was unanimously crowned as king by the united tribes of Israel, or after his son Absalom's revolt was put down and the tribes hurried to show their loyalty to David.”*
- The Working Preacher writes, *“Psalm 133 is fourteenth of the fifteen ‘Songs of Ascents’ in Book Five of the Psalter. These ‘songs’ were most likely sung by pilgrims as they made their way to Jerusalem to celebrate a number of annual religious festivals, including Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles.”*
- What is a “Song of Ascent?” According to gotquestions.org, *“They are also called Pilgrim Songs. Four of these songs are attributed to King David (122, 124, 131, 133) and one to Solomon (127), while the remaining ten are anonymous. The city of Jerusalem is situated on a high hill. Jews traveling to Jerusalem for one of the three main annual Jewish festivals traditionally sang these*

songs on the “ascent” or the uphill road to the city. According to some traditions, the Jewish priests also sang some of these Songs of Ascent as they walked up the steps to the temple in Jerusalem.”

- 1 *How very good and pleasant it is
when kindred live together in unity!*
- A better translation might be *“when brothers come together in unity,”* because there is an obvious implication here that the psalmist isn’t talking about our dwellings or our neighborhoods, but about a special gathering for the specific purpose of lifting up one voice to the Lord.
 - Although many preachers (myself included) use this verse to encourage us to embrace all of God’s children, it is more properly aimed at the unity of the like-minded, or, as in this case, the coming together of all righteous Jews for temple worship and religious festivals. Nonetheless, since we are all sisters and brothers in Christ, and all children of God, certainly, it is appropriate that we broaden our understanding to include those who are not part of our inner circles.
 - In my mind, the psalmist is rejoicing as many pilgrims are coming together in worship and praise. I remember attending a Presbyterian Youth Triennium with over 5,000 young people from over 100 countries worshiping together, and the memory of that experience still stirs me. For the moment, you really do believe that anything is possible, and that the blessings of the kingdom are at hand.
 - Benson reminds us that *“...many things which are good are not pleasant, and many things which are pleasant are not good,”* but that unity in the Lord between brothers and sisters is, invariably both good and pleasant.

2 *It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the
collar of his robes.*

- Oil was a symbol of joy and festivity ([Psalm 45:7](#)), but this is special oil, *precious* oil, such as the sacred oil used by the priests to anoint, consecrate, or “coronate.” (Coronate is not actually a word, but you get the idea. The proper word would to use here would be “crown.”)
- This special, precious, sacred oil was also heavily perfumed with aromatic spices.
- According to the [Pulpit Commentary](#), these were: “*myrrh, cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia.*”
- When Aaron was consecrated as high priest, oil was poured upon his head, but ordinary priests were merely sprinkled. The psalmist, then, is likening the coming together of the righteous as something singularly pleasing to both God and humankind.
- The [Cambridge Commentary](#) explains that, when Aaron was consecrated, the oil flowed down his beard and onto his shoulders, where it then flowed onto the garment he wore which bore the names and symbols of the twelve tribes—extending the consecration to them. Imagine, then, that when we gather to worship the Lord in unity, we are consecrated, set apart, made holy, declared sacred, and given a call and a purpose!
- The true joy of the moment, then, is not mere unity, but the full unity of the covenant between God and God’s people.
- We know that the covenant was renewed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, so this anointing oil might be a beautiful symbol for Christ’s love and blessings! The anointing of Jesus as Messiah flows down his beard and onto his garment—the very garment Jesus desires to wrap around us!

3 *It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.
For there the Lord ordained his blessing,
life forevermore.*

- Mt. Hermon is on the very north boundary of Israel, and Mt. Zion is in Jerusalem, well to the south. Certainly the dew from Hermon rarely falls upon the mountains of Zion except symbolically or spiritually. There are, of course, rare exceptions depending on winds, humidity, and temperature.
- [Dr. William Kay](#) observes, “*Physically, Hermon was to Canaan what Aaron was ceremonially to Israel—its head and crown, from which the fertilizing stores of heaven descended over the land. For not only does the one great river of Palestine, the Jordan, issue from the roots of Hermon, but the giant mountain is constantly gathering and sending off clouds, which float down even to Southern Zion.*”
- I consider the dew of Mt. Hermon to be reflective of the oil in verse 2—it is a precious and select dew, which consecrates all of Israel, from north to south, with unity and purity.
- [Ellicott](#) writes, “*This choice dew, from its freshness, abundance, and its connection with life and growth, is a symbol of covenant blessings.*”
- Of all the blessings growing abundantly in God’s heavenly garden, certainly, the most precious is the gift of everlasting life:
 - > Earthly life is challenging. Even for the most fortunate, the beautiful moments are fleeting, the rewards of life transitory, and the priorities of the world shallow and hollow.
 - > The best earthly relationships yet have hostilities, fears, conflicts, brokenness, misunderstandings, insecurities, and betrayals.
 - > Everlasting life promises freedom from all earthly limitations and extends the hope of glad heavenly reunion.
 - > Everlasting life grants complete and unconditional communion with our Lord and Savior and promises relationships free from anger, suspicions, hurts, and agendas.
 - > The promise of everlasting life frees us from measuring our earthly life by years, or by possessions, or by accomplishments.