

Psalm 133 – Study Guide¹

Psalm 133:1 has a clear opening thesis that the remainder of the psalm will spend itself developing and unpacking, and though it is a notably short psalm it is magnificently robust in its treatment of a paramount subject – unity. Given this subject matter it is a kind providence in its timing as we as a church and culture enter into what is regarded as the “holiday season” where there is a greater intentionality for families, friends, loved ones, and neighbors alike to come together in celebration and care. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year’s Day each provide varied opportunities for gatherings that ideally provide a sense of genuine unity, though they are also ripe to demonstrate the fragility of unity among various groups when their unity lacks the necessary foundations articulated in this psalm.

Well known in many circles and cultural contexts Psalm 133:1 has been cited for its magnificent truth and perhaps as an esteemed ideal. However, it is 133:2-3 that cast a brilliant light on this diamond and thereby allow it to properly glow and sparkle. It is indeed good and pleasant when brothers dwell in unity... but it is good and pleasant in no small part on account this unity’s means: The LORD who has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

Structure and Outlines

David Crowe

- 133:1 The blessing of unity.
- 133:2 The refreshing anointing of Aaron.
- 133:3 The refreshing anointing of Mount Zion.
- 133:3 The blessing of life forevermore.

Willem VanGemeran²

- A Blessing (v.1)
- B Comparison with Oil (v.2a)
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- B’ Comparison with Dew (v.3a)
- A’ Blessing (v.3b)

Steven Lawson³

- 133:1 The Praise of Unity
- 133:2-3a The Pictures of Unity
- 133:3b The Power of Unity

John MacArthur⁴

- I. Praise of Unity (133:1)
- II. Pictures of Unity (133:2,3)
 - A. Oil on Aaron’s head (133:2)
 - B. Dew on Mt. Zion (133:3)

¹ Prepared by David Crowe for Pray’s Mill Baptist Church Adult Sunday School

ALL Scripture Quotations are from the ESV Bible unless the Scripture reference is in a quote from another author – their original translation was kept.

² The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Edition: Psalms, Volume 5. Willem A. VanGemeran. Zondervan, 2008 (Hereafter: VanGemeran), Pg.935

³ Holman Old Testament Commentary: Psalms 76-150, Volume 12. Steven J. Lawson. B&H Publishing Group, 2006 (Hereafter: Lawson), Pgs.308-309

⁴ The MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV. Word Bibles, 1997. (Hereafter: MacArthur), Pg.861

J. Stephen Yuille⁵

133:1	The Nature of Unity
133:2-3	The Origin of Unity
133:3	The Blessing of Unity

Structure

In one regard it could be argued that Psalm 133 could be paired down to 133:1 and 133:3b.

Behold (securing attention), how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! For/because in Zion The LORD has commanded the blessing, everlasting life.

However, while these elements do not lose their quality and unified truthfulness they would be forfeiting their magnificent clarity and in more ways than the illustrative elements of 133:2-133:3a. These “in-between” portions are not just a means, but themselves are qualitative elements informing the unified truths of blessing in Psalm 133.

Header

As we observed with Psalm 127, Psalm 133 is one of the fifteen songs of ascent (Psalms 120-134). Of the songs of ascent, four are credited to David, one to Solomon, and the other ten have an unknown author. Generally speaking, the songs of ascent are psalms that were likely sung or recited in procession to Jerusalem, the beloved city of God, and a city on a hill. This, like much liturgy, is a structured form of worship where truth was recited first to The LORD and also to one another.

David's authorship is not a surprise given his dominating presence throughout the Psalms, but it is nevertheless intriguing given the measure of struggle that he endured in the area of unity on both the level of his countrymen and his home. However, he also had the high privilege of seeing magnificent unity that had not been experienced since the time of the Israel's great deliverance, wondering, and conquest. He was effectively the first leader within the established promised land to experience a sense of national unity. David also has another very consequential relationship to Psalm 133 as he, like its featured illustration, Aaron, was anointed by God; David as King (who also served at times as a prophet) and Aaron as High Priest.

Historical Context

A strong possibility for the historical context was when Israel was finally united under David's rule. This national unification was an extremely poignant and consequential moment for King David. Further, as the narrative continues this was also the time that David secured the city of Jerusalem which would become the national and spiritual capital of the nation of Israel.

"Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, 'You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off'—thinking, 'David cannot come in here.' Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. And David said on that day, 'Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack 'the lame and the blind,' who are hated by David's soul.' Therefore it is said, 'The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.' And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him." 2 Samuel 5:1-10

⁵ Longing for Home: A Journey Through the Psalms of Ascent. J. Stephen Yuille. Shepherd Press, 2015. (Hereafter: Yuille), Pgs.137-138

133:1 The blessing of unity.

David begins Psalm 133 by drawing attention with the use of "behold" – he is beckoning his readers to give attention to this matter of consequence. Look! See! Behold! Give attention to how precious is unity among brothers! He goes on to express this high value, stating that this unity is good and pleasant.

Unity among brothers is *good* as it is proper, profitable, best, and pleasing to God.

Unity among brothers is *pleasant* as it is satisfying, lovely, favorable, and enjoyable to the soul.

Now the immediate context in which David is speaking is not some universal unity, but unity among brothers dwelling together. However, there is a breadth to the precision here too as Israel was not a nation consisting of a variety of peoples, but primarily a nation of tribes and family tied to the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁶ By their constitution Israel was a nation of brothers. So, while brothers does have its primary application to biological siblings and more broadly to one's kinsmen, it could be applied more generously too, such as demonstrated by Jacob when making a polite affirmation of a peaceful relationship: "Jacob said to them, 'My *brothers*, where do you come from?' They said, 'We are from Haran.'" Genesis 29:4 We also see the national identity of brotherhood in various places of the Old Testament, but one of the more delightful ones for this context is the historical context referenced in the background portion above when David unifies the kingdom under his leadership. Note that this was *all* Israel and not just the tribe of Judah – *all* Israel identified themselves with David as his bone and flesh.

"Then all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron and said, 'Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, even when Saul was king, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over my people Israel.' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel."

1 Chronicles 11:1-3

So, what is this magnificent blessing of unity? What does it look like and what does it require to be achieved? What is this good and pleasant condition of dwelling together in unity?

An examination of the word's usage throughout the Old Testament demonstrates a pattern of being able to dwell together, to be in close proximity, to be in unison in a combined action/effort, and to be bound together. Interestingly in the English Standard Version translation of this word's 142 uses, Psalm 133:1 is the only time "unity" is how this word is translated – all other references are among the pattern cited. However, though there is a breadth of ways that this term has been primarily translated, there still appears to be the core elements of the principles of unity. While there are certainly word choices that are made in the discipline of translation, the term "unity" appears to be a fit choice here.

Fundamentally this unity among brothers dwelling together was to commonly reside in a peaceful context and maintain a spirit of overall peaceful like-mindedness. This does not inherently demand agreement on all matters, but to have common conclusion and sacrificial willingness to come together on matters of consequence. When necessary it is a willingness to operate together amidst differences. It is effectively an exercise in love.

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Keil and Delitzsch capture the essence of the unity expressed in Psalm 133, a unity among the people of Israel, "...the uniting of the people of all parts of the land for the purpose of divine worship in the one place of the sanctuary..."⁷ The fit is quite plain in the psalm's short but potent content: contextually it is among the psalms of ascents which would have been sung in procession to the Temple, it is composed by the most worship focused King of Israel, it is using language of anointing, it unambiguously references Israel's first high priest and his anointing, and the place of blessing is

⁶ MacArthur, Pg.861

⁷ C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch; Keil & Delitzsch: Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 5 – Psalms. Hendrickson Publishers, 2001. (Hereafter: Keil & Delitzsch), Pg.788

Mount Zion where worship of The LORD would be carried out. So, there is a magnificent “therefore” quality to the psalm, that it is in the context and beauty of worshiping The LORD that the blessing of unity among brethren can be experienced and enjoyed. This, as we will continue to observe, is the heart of Israel’s unity: worshiping The LORD, who is also their means of unity.

“During the pilgrimages, the Israelites enjoyed an ecumenical experience on their way toward and in Jerusalem. The pilgrims came from many different walks of life, regions, and tribes as they gathered for one purpose: the worship of the Lord in Jerusalem.”⁸

David and Unity

Reflecting on the authorship of Psalm 133 we have concluded that the historical context is likely sometime around David’s coronation. However, being that it is of Davidic authorship we are also reminded that David knew the pain of not only Israel’s corporate history when the brothers of Israel failed to dwell in unity (Jacob & Esau, Jacob & Laban, Joseph & his ten older brothers, Aaron & Moses, Moses & Israel, etc.), but more precisely his own experiences with the nation splintered before he fully assumed the throne and later with his own children (Absalom & Ammon, Solomon & Adonijah).⁹ These elements of history are a sobering reminder of the fragility of unity and its high value.

133:2 The refreshing anointing of Aaron.

Psalm 133:2 follows the magnificent opening thesis of the psalm and immediately begins to unpack the means and beauty of this unity using the first of Psalm 133’s two metaphors for this brotherly unity.

133:2, It is like... oil running down the beard... oil running down the robe....

133:3, It is like... dew running down the mountains....

Old Testament Oil

Regarding this oil, David describes it as the, “precious oil on the head,” and oil was indeed a consequential element of life in Israel and was used in a variety of contexts.

Old Testament Oil, General Applications

Oil was used for lamps, cooking, and sacrifices. In at least one instance oil (cleansing of lepers) was put upon one’s head who is offering sacrifice (Leviticus 14:18,29) - this was no more than could be poured into one hand after it was minimally applied in other ways too, not a full anointing and certainly nowhere near as generous as the image in Psalm 133:2.

In articulating judgment, what would be the normative is expressed as lacking, including having olive trees throughout the land and yet *not* anointing oneself with oil. Deuteronomy 28:40, “You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives shall drop off.”

One is also directed to feign mourning by, among other things, not anointing themselves with oil. 2 Samuel 14:2, “And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, ‘Pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning garments. Do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead.’”

When Hezekiah was showing off his welfare and treasures among the items listed is the precious/good oil. 2 Kings 20:13, “And Hezekiah welcomed them, and he showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.”

⁸ VanGemenen, Pgs.935-936

⁹ 2 Samuel 13:28-33 and 1 Kings 1:5-53

Oil was used in the distinguished beautification process for the prospective queen selection for King Ahasuerus. Esther 2:12, "Now when the turn came for each young woman to go in to King Ahasuerus, after being twelve months under the regulations for the women, since this was the regular period of their beautifying, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and ointments for women...."

David speaks of The LORD anointing his head with oil - in a gracious provisional manner, not necessarily a royal anointing. Psalm 23:5, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."

An apparent refreshment from oil being poured over one. Psalm 92:10, "But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil."

Oil as a refreshment - making one's face shine. Psalm 104:15, "...and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart."

Oil on the head as a welcomed refreshment/blessing. Psalm 141:5, "Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it."

Oil as a valued commodity. Proverbs 27:9, "Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel."

Old Testament Oil, Anointing

Oil was the physical component to the anointing process for both people and objects. For people the oil's most weighty anointing application would be The LORD anointing or setting apart those who would serve as Priests, Prophets, and Kings. It is this application that would be the intended image of David here, and the preciousness or the goodness of this oil would have been its distinction as an oil custom blended for the anointing of priests and for its application of *The LORD* setting aside his priest, and in particular the *High Priest* of Israel.

As stated, there was a precise oil mixture for anointing and it is referenced several times in the Torah.

Exodus 25:6,30:25,35:8,28,37:29

The anointing oil was mixed with special spices.

Exodus 29:7, Leviticus 8:12

The anointing oil was to be poured upon Aaron's head in the process of anointing him as the High Priest.

"You shall take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him." Exodus 29:7

"And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him." Leviticus 8:12

This is the very image referenced in Psalm 133:2

Exodus 29:21, Leviticus 8:30

The anointing oil along with some of the blood from the prescribed sacrifice was to be sprinkled on Aaron and his sons who served as priests – thereby anointing them and their garments.

Exodus 30:31,31:11,35:15,39:38, Leviticus 8:2,10,10:7,21:12

The LORD set apart this special anointing oil for use in Israel (as prescribed by and for the priests).

Exodus 40:9

The anointing oil was also used to anoint the Tabernacle and its contents.

1 Samuel 10:1

Samuel anointed Saul king of Israel by pouring a flask of oil on his head.

1 Samuel 16:13

Samuel anointed David king of Israel using a horn of oil - presumably pouring it on his head.

1 Kings 1:39

Zadok anointed Solomon king of Israel using a horn of oil - presumably pouring it on his head.

2 Kings 9:6

An unnamed prophet under Elisha's instruction anointed Jehu king of the northern kingdom of Israel by pouring a flask of oil on his head.

This first metaphor in Psalm 133:2 has two parts to it and begins a pattern that carries over to the second metaphor in 133:3. This pattern is the image of running down, specifically here the anointing oil running down Aarons' beard and then his garments.

The primary element that help us come to the conclusion that this is an anointing oil and not just an oil of refreshment (which could have wonderfully communicated the refreshing nature of union) is that it is an image of Aaron's priestly anointing as both prescribed and described above.

Now to understand how fine a point David is driving here and its further development in this psalm note the following: David too was also anointed with oil, anointed with oil as King, yet here he chooses to highlight the anointing of the original High Priest of Israel.

David never personally knew Aaron and there were numerous other potential examples between himself and Aaron, and yet under divine inspiration David chose to reference the universally known first High Priest of Israel, Aaron. Therefore, David is laying the foundation for unpacking and explaining the very means for unity here, namely the worship of The LORD, and he is doing this by drawing from an iconic image that directs our attention this way. He then magnificently builds on this image as this first metaphor is further developed.

Willem VanGemeren argues here that part of the advantage to referencing Aaron specifically is that it takes Israel back to their roots and union known as they prepared to enter the promised land.¹⁰ The identification of tribal elements and national unity was rather poignant during this season of history. The tribes operated in very clear units that constituted a whole. However, while this may be an element to Aaron's reference it appears to be much more. Note the copious amount of oil that is being imaged here, oil that is poured on the head and running down the beard and from the beard to his priestly robes, down the collar and arguably to the very lower hems. It is here that a greater continuity of both image and psalm appear to come together.

Keil and Delitzsch make a most valuable observation that the hem or edge of the garments here expressed are not the commonly referenced collar of the neck, but the very bottom of the robe. This is in keeping with the parallel illustration which also covers a substantial distance as we will note in 133:3. The argument therefore is that this is a poignant demonstration of unity within the nation – distance is not issue (here the image effectively being from head to toe), but their being bound together by the central element of worship.¹¹

So, to be clear regarding the magnificence of this image: This is the priestly anointing of Aaron at which time the sacred oil was poured upon his head. The oil as described here has run from the top of his head, down his beard, to the bottom of his robe. This would be a substantial distance for an anointing of the head with oil. Now, what this image is driving to is the worshipful distinction of the people of Israel and its binding of them together even over great distances and elements. The conclusion being that it is The LORD who provides Israel their good and pleasant unity through the means of their faithfully worshiping him. This image will be further affirmed in the second metaphor in 133:3.

Clarity is sometimes sharpened by way of a counterexample. A tragic demonstration of this very point is that whereas the worship at Zion by all the people of Israel brought unity to this national family, the undermining of worship at Zion by a portion of the people would also secure their disunity. This was the very strategy employed by Jeroboam and it worked.

¹⁰ VanGemeren, Pg.936

¹¹ Keil & Delitzsch, Pg.789

He employed a counterfeit worship system from its god, its location(s), its elements, and its priests, and in doing so secured the disunity of the full nation which was not secured again until their return from exile at which time central worship of The LORD was again secured.

"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.' So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, 'You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.' And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings." 1 Kings 12:25-33

133:3 The refreshing anointing of Mount Zion.

Psalm 133:3 continues to unpack the means and beauty of this unity using the second of Psalm 133's two metaphors for brotherly unity.

133:2, It is like... oil running down the beard... oil running down the robe....

133:3, It is like... dew running down the mountains....

Mount Hermon is referenced relatively few times in the Scriptures and it primarily serves as a definitive point of geographical reference. However, there are other details that are known about this great peak for the region, including its strength of fertile land and water.

Mount Hermon in the Scriptures

Israel defeated Og king of Bashan and took territory from the Valley of the Arnon to *Mount Hermon* (also known as Sirion and Senir) Deuteronomy 3:8-9, 4:48.

Mount Hermon was a definitive landmark for the promised land and the conquest (Joshua 11:3,17, 12:1,5, 13:5,11).

Mount Hermon was located North of Bashan (Northeast of Kedesh, which is well North of the Sea of Galilee).

Mount Hermon, Geographical Facts and Distinctions

Mount Hermon is approximately 9,200 feet high at its peak and it provided substantially, if not the majority of, the Jordan River's water.^A

Mount Hermon was known for its abundant and vibrant vegetation, including during the harsher summer season when it was sustained by a generous dew.^B

Mount Hermon had snow effectively year round and in abundance, making it a magnificent source of pure water in the form of condensation that has been argued as possibly having the capacity to travel all the way to the mountains of Zion,^C not unlike the precious oil running to the very lower hem of Aaron's garment.

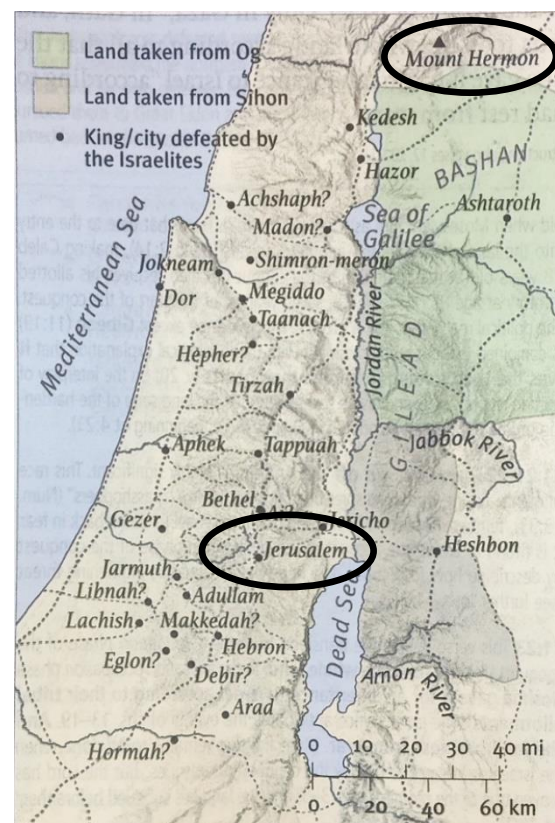


Image Secured from ESV SB, Pg.414

When examining this second metaphor one must remember that it is both distinct from the first metaphor and it is in parallel with it too. Therefore, one must discern not how the nourishment of dew is like the anointing oil, but in what ways are they communicating a like truth or principle.

Dew as Distinct from Anointing Oil

Dew, while not a major element in the discourse of Scripture, is an important element as it both refreshes and participates in the strength of life for a region. Its presence may soon be overlooked, but its absence is not quickly forgotten.

Genesis 27:8

Jacob was blessed with the *dew* of heaven.

2 Samuel 1:21

David effectively curses Mount Gilboa (where Saul and Jonathan were killed) stating, "You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no *dew* or rain upon you, nor fields of offerings!"

1 Kings 17:1

Under the judgment expressed by Elijah there would be neither rain or *dew* (which itself was a sustaining replenisher of the earth).

Proverbs 19:12

Speaks to the refreshment of *dew* on the grass.

Hosea 14:5

Speaks to the robust substantive advantage/service of the *dew* to the earth and its fruits.

Dew in Parallel with Anointing Oil

Running down on the beard, Running down on the collar, and now Running down on the mountains.

Now while some contend that there are geographical elements as well as weather related nuances that possibly could result in condensation traveling from Mount Hermon to the mountains of Zion that is not likely the point in Psalm 133:3. Rather, the emphasis appears to be an overt highlighting of the great distance that blessing from a source of abundance would come to satisfy this image (an element of unity spanning distances, regions, and topography). Further, while the image could have been even more pronounced by extending the dew's reach from Mount Hermon to Hebron or beyond, there is a second and more pronounced parallel that would be lost, namely the magnificent connection to the central place of worship for Israel, Jerusalem and The LORD's Tabernacle.

This emphasis cannot be overstated and perhaps an alternative parallel could help clarify this further. David could have provided the image of an unnamed man enjoying the anointing illustrated in 133:2 and by such expressed the magnificent refreshment that this anointing served. This anointing could have beautifully expressed the refreshing blessing of brotherly unity and then the parallel in 133:3 could have simply been the dew on Mount Hermon itself and its great rushing tributaries to the Jordan River, also demonstrating a downward refreshment. However, it was not an unnamed man, but Aaron who was being anointed, and it was not only Mount Hermon or some ambiguous mountains enjoying distant dew, but the mountains of Zion, God's holy hill. So, the parallel is quite clear. The blessing descends great distances (demonstrating continuity of a nation) and its overt emphasis is on worshiping The LORD, who also is genuine unity's source. This is further affirmed in the final sentence of Psalm 133:3.

¹² On account of formatting complications this footnote was moved. It's contents correspond to the immediately preceding material.

A: MacArthur, Pg.862

B: ESV SB, Pg.1110

C: Keil & Delitzsch, Pg.790

During this study it was observed that some concluded that the use of “running down” that is three times applied within the two metaphors of 133:2,3 intends to communicate a descending blessing. An image of blessing that has a higher point of origin and continues down to their fullest application thereby communicating that such is how it is with unity. It is a blessing that has its origins from above, from God, who is the sole source of genuine unity.¹³

I wholly concur with the conclusion, but I see a more substantive version of it coming through the developed images of worship from High Priest to Sanctuary.

133:3 The blessing of life forevermore.

The final sentence of Psalm 133 appears to qualify the second metaphor, it is like the dew of Hermon because on the mountains of Zion The LORD has commanded the blessing of life forevermore.

It is at Zion that The LORD had chosen to establish his name in a unique way and where he desired to be worshiped among his people Israel, and it is at Zion that he has commanded the blessing of life forevermore. This overt emphasis removes any ambiguity regarding the parallels of Aaron's anointing and Mount Hermon's dew blanketing the holy city – it is a parallel demanding that if one would understand the good and pleasant unity of brothers one must recognize its holy roots.

The Blessing of Life Forevermore

When examining the phrase “life forevermore” an extremely compelling case can be made for “eternal life,” and this is where my own study was tracking at one time. However, to be fair, whereas there are several references that make a strong case for eternal life being in view here, one must still answer why the reference here does not submit to the same word's multiple possible applications of a more temporal dynamic. This is the tension that arises during both translation and exposition. A word's semantic range can have theological ramifications and one's theological conclusion can sway a word's translation. The only resolution appears to be in examining the context of the passage.

Therefore, it appears that the life expressed here is a life fully fulfilled or life with fullness of joy, a conclusion that finds strength and a natural presence in a context of unity¹⁴ (that is centered on worshipping The LORD). It is the abundant or fulfilled life – rooted in unity.¹⁵

Conclusion I of II

David, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote this short and most magnificent psalm with a view to prepare the hearts of the people as they ascended the hill of Zion to worship The LORD. It was intended to be sung with whatever company among Israel one might have found themselves in as they were on their way to engage that binding element of worship of The LORD as brothers. This unity provided by God and centered on his worship was indeed good and pleasant.

Conclusion II of II

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.” John 17:20-23

¹³ Yuille, Pg.138

¹⁴ VanGemeran, Pg.937

¹⁵ Lawson, Pg.309