

Psalm 133

Psalm 133:1–3

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Aaron	

Introduction: I originally chose to place Psalm 133 after 1Sam. 16:11. The situation is, Samuel has come to the household of Jesse to anoint one of his sons king over Israel. He looks over Jesse's boys, and none of them are really God's men. Jesse is quite fond of these boys, but finally, he is forced to admit that he has one more son and that son is out with the sheep. Had Samuel not pressed the issue, Jesse would never have presented David. However, the idea is, David is out with the sheep, but he, like any other idealistic young man, envisions the time when he is together with his brothers. This can be further extended to include all of believing Israel.

I should mention that, even though Jesse did not think of David at all when it came to leading Israel, and even though his eldest brother spoke to him without thinking (1Sam. 17:28), this does not mean that David's family situation was anything like Joseph's. Because of Jacob's two wives, their rivalry, and their maids, their household would be rife with sibling rivalry. Jacob's clear favoritism exacerbated the situation. My point is, David may have, at the time that he wrote this psalm, looked up to his older brothers, which is not uncommon, and wanted to hang with them.

At this time, I am unsure where I will eventually place the writing of this psalm. Therefore, I will present some of the theories below:

Theories as to When and Why David Wrote this Psalm	
Exegete	Time Period
Clarke	<i>There are different opinions concerning this Psalm; the most probable is, that it represents the priests and Levites returned from captivity, and united in the service of God in the sanctuary. This, the preceding, and the following, appear to make one subject. In the one hundred and thirty-second, the Lord is entreated to enter his temple, and pour out his benediction; in the one hundred and thirty-third, the beautiful order and harmony of the temple service is pointed out, and in the one hundred and thirty-fourth, all are exhorted to diligence and watchfulness in the performance of their duty. It is attributed to David by the Hebrew, the Syriac, and the Vulgate; but no name is prefixed in the Septuagint, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Anglo-Saxon.¹ The problem is that we do find David's name in 3 sets of extremely important manuscripts (more important than the sets named as lacking David's name), as well as in the Alexandrian Septuagint. Clarke's theory only works if David's name is not attached. However, we do not find David's name in the surrounding psalms (except for Psalm 122 124 131).</i>
Barnes	<i>This psalm is entitled "A Song of Degrees of David." It is one of the four in this collection ascribed to him, and there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the inscription. As to the occasion on which the psalm was composed, however, we have no information. Perhaps there was nothing special in the occasion which called it forth, since it may have been written at any time to set forth the beauty and the power of brotherly love. It may have been composed either for the service of the people when gathered in their annual festivals, or in view of the harmony - the beauty and order - evinced when they were thus gathered together.² This psalm could be applied to the gathering of a family, of a church or of friends. Having three brothers whose company I enjoy tremendously, this seems to me to be an apropos application.</i>
Gill	Gill actually makes two suggestions: after David consolidated his power into one kingdom (2Sam. 5:1) or as Zodhiates suggests below.
Gill	Although Gill does not adhere to any of these theories, he also mentions that there are some who actually place this psalm during the time of the early church when Christians were of one heart and soul (Acts 4:32). The problem is, this did not last very long (see the first letter to the Corinthians) and this psalm would have been found in the Septuagint, translated from the Hebrew into the Greek 100-200 years prior to the time frame that they theorize it was written.
Hengstenberg and Keil and Delitzsch	<i>In this Psalm, says Hengstenberg, "David brings to the consciousness of the church the glory of the fellowship of the saints, that had so long been wanting, the restoration of which had begun with the setting up of the Ark in Zion." The Psalm, in fact, does not speak of the termination of the dispersion, but of the uniting of the people of all parts of the land for the purpose of divine worship in the one place of the sanctuary.³ They see Psalm 122 as being the counterpart to Psalm 133.</i>

¹ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133 introduction.

² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133 introduction.

³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 133:1.

Theories as to When and Why David Wrote this Psalm	
Exegete	Time Period
Henry	<i>David had many sons by many wives; probably he penned this psalm for their instruction, to engage them to love another, and, if they had done this, much of the mischief that arose in his family would have been happily prevented. The tribes of Israel had long had separate interests during the government of the Judges, and it was often of bad consequence; but now that they were united under one common head he would have them sensible how much it was likely to be for their advantage, especially since now the ark was fixed, and with it the place of their rendezvous for public worship and the centre of their unity. Now let them live in love.</i> ⁴ Immediately, I thought to myself, David is <i>not</i> exhorting his sons to try to get along; however, what David is doing is saying how good and how pleasant it is <i>when</i> brothers live together in unity. So Matthew Henry's proposition does have some validity.
Kimchi and Ben Melech	These two separately suggest that this psalm is a prediction of the peace and concord between the King Messiah and the priest, of which Zerubbabel and Joshua were types (Zech. 6:13). ⁵ This does not really tell us when David wrote the psalm, however.
Kukis	I originally placed this psalm right after 1Sam. 16:11, as something David wrote while in the woods, watching the sheep, missing his brothers. Two factors which mitigate against this placement are a relative particle in this psalm which is usually found in the late Hebrew writings or in the norther Palestinian writings (see v. 2) and the mention of Zion, which may more properly place this psalm <i>after</i> David conquered Zion as king.
Kukis	David could have written this psalm in anticipation of the celebration of a Temple to God, where Israel would be gathered. It was in David's heart to build such a Temple for Jehovah, but he was not to be the one to build it (2Sam. 7). By the way, it appears as though David never united the Ark of God with the Tabernacle of God (2Chron. 1:3-4).
Spurgeon	Although Spurgeon does not deprive David of the authorship of this psalm, he suggests that this refers to the believing Jews who return to Zion from their captivity. It might been a psalm they would have sung on route back to Jerusalem.
Theodoret	Theodoret supposes it to be prophetic, and to have respect to the union of the tribes after the Babylon captivity, who had been disunited in the times of Rehoboam, but now were no more two nations and kingdoms, but one; see Ezek. 37:16. ⁶ The idea is, David looks forward to the time of great unity. The problem here is, Israel was more or less united under David, as well as under Saul and Solomon (yes, there was some tension). However, David did not look forward to a time that Israel would be divided (which would have surprised him) and then, from that perspective, look forward to be united. This does not make any sense, unless written by someone other than David, which would be contrary to the first few words of this psalm.

⁴ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133:1.

⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133 introduction.

⁶ Almost quoted verbatim from Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133 introduction. Gill's other theories come from this same source.

Theories as to When and Why David Wrote this Psalm

Exegete	Time Period
Zodhiates	Zodhiates places this psalm after David regained his throne following Absalom's rebellion and cites 2Sam. 5:1 19:14 1Chron. 12:38–40. ⁷ Gill adds 2Sam. 19:9. The idea is, the various tribes of Israel wanted to show David solidarity after the Absalom rebellion. The union between brothers is really about Israelites in general, and not about David's familial brothers in specific. None of the verses given really tie this psalm to that era; however, his opinion here is every bit as valid as mine. The weakness I see in the suggestions of Gill or Zodhiates is there is less mention of David's brothers in this time period (although, David could certainly be waxing nostalgic); and, as I mentioned, this could refer to David and his brothers in Israel, rather than to his literal brothers.

It should be obvious that there is no definitive time period that we can assign this psalm to. That it may have wide application, rather than be simply assigned to just one event, is not something that we should be concerned about.

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There is one thing I must point out as my initial reaction to this psalm—it seems like a very weird thing to write about: holy oil dripping down Aaron's beard and onto his clothing; the dew of Mount Hermon? You must understand that when I first begin exegeting this or that section of the Bible, I generally have very few preconceived notions about it, unless, of course, I have heard it exegeted word by word. However, my studies have been confined to the Old Testament, whereas Bob Thieme Jr. concentrated primarily on the New Testament when it came to word by word exegesis (he did certainly cover many Old Testament books; but at a much faster rate than I do). So, now and again, I come across and psalm like this, and the first thing that hits me is, *why did the psalmist write about this? Why is this in the canon of Scripture?* You see, if there is a book which essentially adds nothing to our understanding of God's plan or God's character, then I wonder, *why is this book (or psalm) here? Why does God the Holy Spirit include it in the canon of Scripture?* Now, what I do expect to find is something which *backs up* this important doctrine or that important doctrine. Even though Bob Thieme used to make the statement, "If something is found once in the Bible, then it is true" is essentially a correct statement, many cults take this one statement out of context and apply it in some way to support some weird doctrine that they have. This does not in any way negate what Bob said; however, if you build some important doctrine from the words of one verse, then you may want to rethink your *discovery* if there is no supporting Biblical evidence for this doctrine you have come up with. My point is, sometimes a book or psalm may not add anything to our understanding, but it sometimes confirms or supports a doctrine found elsewhere, and sometimes narrows our application of that doctrine. So, as we go through this psalm—and as you examine any book of the Bible—you may want to keep these thoughts in the back of your mind.

Now, on the other hand, this does not mean that every word in the Bible was written for you and for your application. Do not become egocentric when studying God's Word. Many things do have application to your life; however, many things may not have direct application to your life. We are dealing with at least four different dispensations and these dispensations can all be broken up into sections (for instance, in the Age of Israel, we have the time of the Patriarchs, the Nation Israel, and the Tribulation). Even when Israel was a nation, there was some flux, as it was a theocracy, then a theocracy with a monarchy attached, then a split nation, and then an territory which was no longer sovereign. We should expect some flux here, some at least minor differences, from one period of time to the next. My point being is, there may be doctrines in a passage which is particularly important for believers in the Tribulation to know, but which have little application to us. So, definitely ask the question, *why is this book (or psalm) in the canon of Scripture?* Do not ask, *why did God the Holy Spirit place this verse here for me?* There should be a legitimate answer to the first question; the answer to the second question is always, *get over yourself.*

⁷ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 1557.

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Psalm 133 Inscription

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

[A Song of Ascents. For David.](#)Psalm
133 inscription[A Song of Ascents. For \[or, by\] David.](#)[A Song of Ascents by David.](#)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Dead Sea Scrolls	A song of Ascents. Of David.
Syriac Verison	It is said of Moses and of Aaron, who dwelt in the tabernacle, in the house of the Lord; and there is an intimation in it of the perfect people,...
Alexandrian Septuagint	A Song of Degrees for David
Septuagint	A Song of Degrees

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	(A song for worship.)
NLT	A song for the ascent fo Jerusalem. A psalm of David.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> TM	A song by David for going up to worship.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

HCSB	A Davidic song of ascents.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	A Song of the Ascents, by David.

What is the gist of this verse? David wrote this psalm and it is a *song of ascents* (or, *degrees*).

Psalm 133 inscription a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shîyr (שִׁיר) [pronounced <i>sheer</i>]	<i>song, singing</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #7892 BDB #1010
ma'ălâh (מַעְלָה) [pronounced <i>mah-ġuh-LAW</i>]	<i>what comes up; steps, stair, stories, ascent; degrees; an upper room</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4609 BDB #752

Translation: [A Song of Ascents](#). Psalms 120–134 are all entitled a *song of ascents* (or, *degrees*). Psalms 122–124, 131–133 are attributed to David; Psalm 124 is attributed to Solomon; the others do not name an author.

The Hebrew word for *ascents* is the feminine plural noun *ma'ālâh* (מַעְלָה) [pronounced *mah-ġuh-LAW*], which means *what comes up; steps, stair, stories, ascent; degrees; an upper room*. Barnes tells us this means: *ascend in the mind, Ezek. 11:5. Then it means a "step," by which one ascends, 1Kings 10:19; Ezek. 40:26, 31, 34. Then it means a degree of a dial, or a dial as divided into degrees, where there is an "ascent" on the dial, 2Kings 20:9-11.* No matter how you slice it, this word has something to do with *going up, ascending*. The cities in the ancient world tended to be build upon hills, often surrounded by a city wall for protection. The Tabernacle of God was often located in a high place (as were many of the heathen worship areas) as well; and the Temple of God was located in Jerusalem, upon a hill. Since Jerusalem was upon a hill and the section Zion was even above that, it is conjectured that people moved eventually upward toward Jerusalem, toward the Tabernacle of God or toward the Temple of God, singing these various psalms. In fact, this is one of many theories about the meaning of this and the other psalms with this title.

First of all, we should examine....

A Summary of the Similarities and Differences of the *Song of Ascent* Psalms

1. Psalms 120–134 are all titled *Song of Ascents* (or, *steps*).
2. Several of these psalms have allusions to Zion (Psalms 125 126 128 129 132 133 134).
 - a. Overall, 20% of all the psalms mention Zion.
 - b. Nearly 50% of the Ascent psalms mention Zion.
 - i. Several of these psalms have allusions to Jerusalem (Psalm 122 125 128).
 - c. Overall, 7% of all the psalms mention Jerusalem.
 - d. 20% of these psalms mention Jerusalem (which is not statistically too different).
 - e. Less than 25% of the psalms mention Zion or Jerusalem. However, of the Songs of Ascent, over half of them mention Zion or Jerusalem.
 - f. This may explain why some theorize that these psalms were related to the gathering of the Israelites to Jerusalem for the three religious festivals held there each years.
 - 1) Since I am dealing with statistics here, every Psalm of Ascent mentions Jehovah. Only eight psalms in the entire book of Psalms lack the name *Jehovah* (5%—statistically irrelevant).
 - 2) David wrote four of these psalms; Solomon one; the other authors are unknown.
 - 3) General themes:
 - g. The psalmist cries out to God for help in Psalms 120 121 130.
 - h. The psalmist asks God for grace in Psalms 123.
 - i. The psalmist speaks of going up to Jerusalem and praying for Jerusalem in Psalm 122.
 - j. The psalmist praises God for deliverance in Psalm 124; for being brought back to Jerusalem after the exile in Psalm 126.
 - k. The psalmist thanks God for protection in Psalm 125a.
 - l. The psalmist asks for people to get their due in Psalm 125b.
 - m. Psalm 126 appears to be about the captives of Israel.
 - n. The psalmist (Solomon) speaks of the blessings of having children in Psalm 127. The psalmist speaks of the blessings of fearing God and walking in His ways in Psalm 128. The psalmist speaks of blessing the Lord in the short Psalm 134.
 - o. The psalmist speaks of being persecuted in Psalm 129.
 - p. David is introspective in the very short Psalm 131. David writes of personal blessing in the very short Psalm 133 as well.
 - q. Psalm 132 sounds like a dedication of the Temple, as an eventual result of David's desire to have it built.
 - r. My point here is, there are no real consistent themes in these psalms. 15 other psalms chosen at random could reasonably result in a similar set of themes.
 - i) Because of the inordinate number of times that Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned, and because Psalm 122 speaks of going to Jerusalem, and because Psalm 119 is the death march out of

A Summary of the Similarities and Differences of the *Song of Ascent* Psalms

Judah, many have therefore postulated that this group of psalms were sung either when marching to Jerusalem for the three religious festivals, or as a celebration of returning to Jerusalem from the exile.

Since we will deal with the meaning and interpretation of these psalms, I feel we should cover this material first.

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There are a few theories about what these first few words of the title mean. We find them applied to Psalms 120–134 exclusively.

Theories on the Significance of the Title “Song of Ascents”

Source	Theory
Barnes ⁸	<i>Others have supposed that the title refers to some uniqueness of structure in the psalms - a gradation or elevation of thought - approaching to a climax.</i> Barnes offers this as one explanation of many. It is unlikely, as these psalms were composed at different times by different authors for a variety of purposes.
Barnes ⁹	Some have suggested that these psalms were for the exiles to sing when they returned from Persia. Barnes says that this understanding makes little sense, as three of the psalms of Davidic and another written by Solomon—both long before either the northern or southern kingdom’s were removed from the land. Furthermore, only Psalm 122 and 126 have any possible references to having been exiled (and, to my reading, only Psalm 126 could be possibly classified in that way).
Barnes ¹⁰	<i>The remaining supposition seems to have much more plausibility than anyone here suggested. It is that the term is a musical expression; that there was something special in the “scale” of the music to which these psalms were sung, though that is now lost to us...It is impossible, however, now to ascertain “what” there is that would make this appellation especially appropriate to these psalms. All that can be known is, that there was some reason why these psalms were, so to speak, bound up together, and designated by a common title. This does not prevent a special title being prefixed to some of them in regard to their author and design.</i> Barnes also points out that this is similar to the opinions of John D. Michaelis (Notes on Lowth’s Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, xxv., p. 512); Asseman (Biblioth. Orient., t. i., p. 62), and by Castell (Lex. Syr.)
Matthew Henry ¹¹	Suggests that this group of psalms received their designation not from the various authors but from the publisher. He suggests these because these psalms are authored at different times by different authors and the subject matter is diverse.
Jewish Rabbins ¹²	Some Jewish Rabbins believe these are the psalms sung as the people ascend the 15 steps of Ezekiel’s Temple (Ezek. 40:22, 37). The idea is one psalm per step. This makes little sense, as this is the Temple in the Millennium (Ezekiel saw this in a vision).

⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm introduction.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 120 introduction.

¹² Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 120 introduction.

Theories on the Significance of the Title “Song of Ascents”	
Source	Theory
Kukis	This group of psalms (Psalms 120–134) could have received their name, <i>A Song of Ascents</i> , after the fact—that is, they were written whenever they were written, and then gathered together and given that name at a later date. Since many assign these particular psalms to being recited or sung when the Jews returned to Israel after their exile, it is possible that this group of psalms were so used and therefore so classified. My view is not significantly different from Henry’s.
Kukis	Now, don’t quote me on this approach, but, perhaps these psalms taken together result in a spiritual ascension or growth as one studies from Psalm 120 through Psalm 134. I am only thinking out loud here. Superficially, I do not actually see a spiritual progression in these psalms.
Michaelis ¹³	Michaelis supposes that the title is a musical term, and that the reference is to something special in the rhythm, or what is called by us, “feet” of the psalm, but which in the East would be called “steps” or “ascents.”
NIV Study Bible ¹⁴	<p>This refers to the steps of the Temple, so it is a song related to ascending the steps of the Temple. These were possibly the psalms read aloud at the Feast of Tabernacles. The problem with this is, several of these psalms are attributed to David, who spoke of building a Temple, but never did—his son Solomon did.</p> <p>One might suggest that these psalms were collected to be used for this purpose. Therefore, they could have been written at any time.</p>
NIV Study Bible ¹⁵	<p>Most associated these psalms with the religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14–17 Deut. 16:16 Psalm 84:5–7 Micah 4:2 Zech. 14:16—these latter two citations refer to men of Gentile nations coming to Zion to worship). The worshipers would sing these psalms on their way to Zion (see Isa. 30:29). This does not mean that these psalms were not also used in Temple worship services.</p> <p>Apparently, the reason for this theory is, Psalm 122 begins with “Let us go to the house of Jehovah.” In fact, this particular psalm is all about going to the house of Jehovah, which could refer to the Tabernacle or to the Temple. Barnes¹⁶ comments: <i>It seems to me equally improbable that they were called “Songs of Degrees or Ascents,” because they were used by the people when “going up” to Jerusalem to attend on the great festivals. As in the previous specification, it may be remarked that the psalms here referred to had no special applicability to such a use; that there is no evidence that any such practice prevailed; that it is wholly improbable that there would be any such set and fixed arrangement, or that the people in going up to Jerusalem on those occasions would move along to measured music.</i> I don’t find Barnes’ argument here as compelling as his other critical remarks.</p>
Scotfield ¹⁷	These are psalms possibly chanted by the people as they walked up toward Jerusalem during the feasts where Israel was to gather. This would suggest that the titles, <i>A Song of Ascents</i> , was added sometime after the psalms were written.

¹³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 120 introduction. I quoted Barnes who is quoting from a source, but I don’t know which one. He parenthetically lists *Notes on Lowth’s Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*, xxv., p. 512; but at the bottom of the paragraph Barnes writes See DeWette, *Einleitung*, p. 35. Perhaps all of the things he suggested came from the latter reference.

¹⁴ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 914.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 120 introduction.

¹⁷ C. I. Scotfield, *Scotfield Notes from the Scofield King James’ Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133:1.

NIV Study Bible tells us that these titles were probably applied during post-exilic times in Judah and that these psalms became a literary unit around that time as well. Along with Psalm 135–136, this group of psalms became known as the *Great Hallel* (which is to be distinguished from the *Egyptian Hallel*—Psalms 113–118).¹⁸

At least one of these psalms was written after the exile, as it begins [When Jehovah brought back the captive ones of Zion](#) (Psalm 126:1a).

The problem with these theories are that they are simply theories. Some are simply not reasonable; however, others are possibly true.

Barnes concludes with: *In this variety of conjecture - for it can be regarded as little more than conjecture - it is impossible now to determine with any degree of certainty what is the true meaning of the title, or why it was given to these psalms. It is evident that, from some cause, there was such a unity in them, either from the nature of the composition, or from the occasion on which they were used, that they could properly have a general title given to them, as indicating what would be well understood among the Hebrews in regard to their design...It is impossible, however, now to ascertain "what" there is that would make this appellation especially appropriate to these psalms. All that can be known is, that there was some reason why these psalms were, so to speak, bound up together, and designated by a common title. This does not prevent a special title being prefixed to some of them in regard to their author and design.*¹⁹ So, in any case, there is nothing of spiritual value that I can see in the title of this and the other ascent psalms. I realize, that is a long way to Tipperary.

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3.

As an aside, I should mention that in the 11th cave of Qumran, a remarkably complete collection of the ascent psalms was found; however, Psalm 133 is placed between Psalms 141 and 144. It is still entitled *a song of ascents*.

Psalm 133 inscription b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^h]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	directional preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

Translation: [For \[or, by\] David](#). Originally, I, like almost every other expositor, allow for the lâmed preposition to mean *by*. It made sense, as almost all of the Davidic psalms have the lâmed preposition and David's name. Furthermore, several of them mention specific events in David's life. That David is the author, there is no doubt; however, the meaning here is probably more that, what David writes about is just as much for David as it is for us. That is, David recognizes the doctrines of these psalms are as much for him as they are for us; therefore, this psalm is *for* David.

Now, I want you to know I pursue some statistical analysis which does not lead anywhere. I am including a little of that here so you don't waste your time. I was thinking *psalms by David and Zion*; how often in the psalms which mention Zion do we find that David is the author?

¹⁸ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 914.

¹⁹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 120 introduction.

Authors of Psalms which Mention Zion

Author	Psalm
No Author	97, 99, 102, 125, 126, 128, 129, 132, 135, 137, 146, 147, 149 (13 psalms)
Asaph	50, 74, 76, 78 (4 psalms)
David	2, 9, 14, 20, 51, 53, 65, 69, 110, 133 (10 psalms)
Sons of Korah	48, 84, 87 (3 psalms)

As you can see, there is nothing which indicates that if a psalm mentions Zion that David will be the author.

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The Blessings of Fellowship

Slavishly literal:

**Behold: what good and what pleasant
a dwelling of brothers even together.**

Moderately literal:

Psalm
133:1

**Listen: how good and how delightful
[when] brothers live even together.**

**Listen; it is great and delightful
when brothers can live together.**

Here is how others have handled this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

See now! What is so good or what so pleasant, as for brothers to dwell together?

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

It is truly wonderful when relatives live together in peace.

The Message

How wonderful, how beautiful, when brothers and sisters get along!

NAB

How good it is, how pleasant,
where the people dwell as one!

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

*God's Word*TM

See how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in harmony!

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

ESV

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

LTHB

.

Young's Updated LT

Lo, how good and how pleasant The dwelling of brothers--even together!

What is the gist of this verse? David say how good it is for brothers to live together.

Psalm 133:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hinnêh (תִּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
mâh (מַה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why; what [thing]; anything, something, whatever</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle; indefinite pronoun; relative pronoun	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced <i>toh^bv</i>]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâh (מַה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why; what [thing]; anything, something, whatever</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle; indefinite pronoun; relative pronoun	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
nâ'îym (נְעִימ) [pronounced <i>naw-GEEM</i>]	<i>pleasant, agreeable, delightful; pleasures; generous</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5273 BDB #653

Barnes: And how **pleasant** - The word used here means lovely, charming, attractive; that which fills the mind with delight, spoken of one beloved, SOS. 7:6; of a friend, 2Sam. 1:26; of a place, Gen. 49:15; of words, Prov. 15:26; of beauty or glory, as of Yahweh, Psalm 27:4. It is descriptive of the pleasure which we derive from a picture, from a landscape, from sweet sounds and gentle voices, or from love.²⁰

Translation: Listen: [how good and how delightful...](#) David, herein, describes a situation which is wonderful to him; good, pleasant and delightful. By itself, this phrase is an incomplete thought. In this case, the idea is first, divine good. Secondly, what will be found below will be pleasant, agreeable and delightful—probably to the participants.

Psalm 133:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shebeth (שֶׁבֶת) [pronounced <i>SHĒ^B-veth</i>]	<i>seat, dwelling place; same place</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #7675 BDB #443
or...			
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH^BV</i>]	<i>to remain, to stay, to inhabit, to sit, to dwell</i>	Qal infinitive	Strong's #3427 BDB #442

²⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133:1.

Psalm 133:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>Both Zodhiates and E-Sword list the verb, <i>yâshab</i> (יָשַׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH^BV</i>], here. The New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament lists this as the Qal infinitive of that verb. Strong lists this as a separate noun, although it is properly the Qal infinitive of the verb. By the way, Strong's #7674 (<i>cessation, rest, interruption, loss of time</i>) is spelled identically.</p>			
<p>Properly, a prefixed preposition brings out the temporal quality, which is how I translated this. It may be more properly rendered <i>to dwell</i> rather than <i>when...dwell</i>.</p>			
<p>ʾâch (אָח) [pronounced <i>awhk</i>]</p>	<p><i>brother, kinsman or close relative</i></p>	<p>masculine plural noun</p>	<p>Strong's #251 BDB #26</p>
<p>gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]</p>	<p><i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i></p>	<p>adverb</p>	<p>Strong's #1571 BDB #168</p>
<p>yachad (יָחַד) [pronounced <i>YAH-khahd</i>]</p>	<p><i>together, alike, all together; union, junction</i></p>	<p>adverb</p>	<p>Strong's #3162 BDB #403</p>

Translation: ...[when] brothers live even together. This is more properly rendered as an English gerund:²¹ ...brothers even living together. The sense is not too terribly different. What David may have been referring to, in his own mind, is for he and his brothers to live together in the same household. I can picture David tending the sheep, under the stars, and thinking this. Or, he may be spending his first few weeks with Saul, entertaining crazy King Saul with his guitar; and feeling homesick.

With many young siblings, they look up their younger brothers. No doubt that David felt this way, as he was the youngest in his family. So he had several older brothers, any one of which may have seemed to have been one to look up to. Now, even though his father had him watching sheep outside the house, does not mean that David had a poor relationship with all his brothers (save his oldest brother who did get pretty pissy in 1Sam. 17:28).

For the application; although certainly, this is true of brothers living together, and that David may even have had this thought running through his head, it is unlikely that he meant this psalm to be so narrowly interpreted. The Jews themselves saw each other as brothers (something which is true of many groups and organizations); so the Jews in David's time would more likely see this as being applied to the Jews themselves. This psalm is better applied in our time to fellow believers. Now, the next time you are in church, I want you to look around and ask yourself, "Do I want to live with these people?" You're going to find that there are some people that you don't really want to spend that much time with—the few hours a week that you spend in church with them is often 3 or 4 hours more than you would prefer. Given that, how do we interpret this? Let me give it to you from my perspective: despite the fact that I was a lousy older brother and not one who left much for my younger brothers to emulate, they all turned out quite well, a testimony to my parents' influence rather than mine. I greatly enjoy spending time with them, either altogether or individually. It is one of the things which I look forward to when I visit home. There will be a time when all believing Jews are a part of this sort of family; a time when all believers are a part of this sort of family. There will be a time when we are gathered together with other believers during the Millennium and then throughout eternity that we will enjoy immensely, much like my enjoyment of the company of my own brothers. So, even though we may first look at this as a psalm about the gathering of a close and warm family, ultimately, this is looking at the family of God all living together in eternity in peace and enjoyment, just like a family.

²¹ *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; pp. 2277, 2282. This was discussed briefly in the exegesis. A temporal sense is often indicated by a prefixed preposition.

For those of you who come from a family which is estranged, or with whom there are raucous arguments each time you get together, the analogy will certainly be lost on you. Don't think that the Bible is unaware of these other situations; we have the example of Abram and Lot—Abram was willing to risk his life and all that he had to deliver Lot (Gen. 19); still, they were unable to live in the same area together (Gen. 13). We have the jealousy of Joseph's brothers because Joseph was the favorite of their father (which is not his fault!). My point in this is, the Bible does not sugar-coat anything. In the right circumstances, with the right family, there is nothing more wonderful than brothers living together, and enjoying one another's company. However, it is clear that this is not always the case. However, God will effect perfect unity among regenerate Jews and among believers from the Church Age. I can think of four people right off the top of my head, who are possibly believers in Jesus Christ, and with whom I desire no contact whatsoever. If we knew more about those in our church, we might feel that way about more people. However, God will effect a change in our hearts, a excising of the old sin nature, so that we are able to live with one another and it will be divine good and it will be pleasant.

Perhaps a few summary points might be in order...

Believers as Members of a Family Who Will be Gathered Together

1. All believers are members of the same family—the family of God. We who have been redeemed by Christ are all brothers in Jesus Christ and fellow heirs to the same inheritance. Matt. 23:8 Gal. 1:1–2 Eph. 1:5 Col. 1:1
2. There are families who actually enjoy one another's company and enjoy getting together for family gatherings. I say this, as I realize there are some who might read this and scoff at the idea.
3. Our relationship with fellow believers, even though we may not feel this now, will become greater and closer than even our relationship to our own brothers, in eternity.
4. I personally can think of believers who, if they are in northern heaven, then I will prefer to live in southern heaven. However, in eternity, we will not feel like that. Interestingly enough, we will actually enjoy and look forward to one another's company, without even one word to, "Yeah, well, on earth, you were such a lousy human being—you were wrong in so many ways."
5. This gathering together in eternity is good and it is pleasant and enjoyable. The fact that we will be gathered together forever in eternity is a part of God's plan, which is divine good. However, insofar as we are concerned, despite how we feel today, this gathering will be pleasant and enjoyable.
6. Ideally speaking, our unity is powerful on this earth. You may not realize this, but some churches have a great impact in this world, and that can be attributed to the unity of that church. Let me see if I can explain that:
 - a. Believers of widely different backgrounds gather together in a local church.
 - b. Even though there may be hundreds of reasons why they should not get along, they manage to spend time together in an auditorium for several hours a week learning doctrine.
 - c. They develop poise and tolerance and they learn God's Word.
 - d. They function as a unit to perform certain acts which are divine good. The church may have a mission or sponsor a mission or a soup kitchen (I am sure it is not called that anymore); they may send out missionaries to other countries to teach the gospel and to teach God's Word. All of this requires some sort of teamwork. That is, Charlie and Lucy Brown might take their family to a mission field, but they do not have the means themselves to actually put themselves there. This requires the financial support of the church. The church I attend and give money to sends out missionaries, supports various missionary organizations (if I recall right), sends out tapes and CD's all over the world, educates our young people with Bible doctrine, and helped to support at least one other church for a long time which lacked our financial resources. None of these things happened by one or two people. Even when a relatively small subset of our church did this or that, it would not be possible without the prayer support and financial support of hundreds of others.
 - e. Therefore, an early unity can be a tool for good and a dynamic witness in the devil's world.
7. All this may help to explain why there is such a call for unity of the church in Scripture.
 - a. We have positional unity in Christ. We are in the same body; we have the same Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:4, 7–8, 11–13). The book of Corinthians, by the way, is an excellent place to go for information on unity of the body of Christ, because the church had disintegrated into so many factions.

Believers as Members of a Family Who Will be Gathered Together

- This provides the backdrop for the first 14 chapters of that book.
- b. We should therefore demonstrate unity in behavior and actions.
 - i. This would mean that believers should not sue one another (1Cor. 6:1–7).
 - ii. This is why we are not necessarily to flaunt our liberty at the expense of other believers (1Cor. 8)
 - iii. This is why we should not have factions within a church (1Cor. 11:18–19).
 - iv. This is why our gifts should function so as to unify and edify the church. Your gift should edify the church, not yourself. This is why each and every gift is necessary and important. 1Cor. 12
 - v. A church service should be orderly and dignified. Someone should not wander into your church and think it is a 3-ring circus (1Cor. 14:23, 29–33). I have been in many holy roller churches and, even though many of the members can quote Paul, “I thank my God that I speak in tongues [foreign languages] more than all of you;” (1Cor. 14:18) still they attend a church where everyone babbles nonsensically at once. This, by the way, is an outstanding example of *proof texting*, where a verse is pulled completely away from its context in order to make a point; yet the actual teaching of the context from whence that verse is pulled is ignored.
 8. Finally, we are mandated on earth to love the brothers (1Cor. 1:10 Heb. 13:1 1Peter 3:8 1John 3:14-19). This means we are mandated to love fellow believers in Jesus Christ, including the four who came to my mind who do not evoke feelings in me of sunshine and butterflies. But love is a mental attitude—I should not be jealous of these four, I should not hate them, I should not be angry with them, I should not have any sort of negative thoughts about them. Furthermore, there are behaviors I should or should not exhibit: I should not berate them (you do not know who they are), I should not gossip about them (you do not know why I feel as I do), and I should take no action against them (fighting, suing or killing them). In eternity, God will take the mental attitude love (and sometimes hate) between fellow believers and He will make it thoroughly genuine.

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Finally, even though I have concluded this verse with points about Christian unity in a local church today, prior to this I emphasized the meaning of this verse with regards to eternity. You may wonder how can I make an interpretive jump from David speaking about his natural brothers to life in eternity? It is because of the final verse, which ends with the words *life forever*.

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The Blessings of God the Holy Spirit

**As the oil the good upon the head,
descending upon the beard,
a beard of Aaron that is descending upon a
mouth of his garments;...**

Psalm
133:2

**Just as the precious oil upon the head
descends upon the beard,
Aaron's beard which descends over the collar
[lit., *mouth; extremity*] of his garments;...**

**Just as the precious oil that is poured upon Aaron's head, and descends through his beard lying
against his garments.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Septuagint

As ointment on the head, that ran down to the beard, the beard of Aaron; that ran down to the fringe of his clothing,...

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	It is as beautiful as olive oil poured on Aaron's head and running down his beard and the collar of his robe.
NLT	For harmony is as precious as the fragrant anointing oil that was poured over Aaron's head, that ran down over his beard and onto the border of his robe.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	It is like fine, scented oil on the head, running down the beard-down Aaron's beard-running over the collar of his robes.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	It is like the precious ointment poured on the head, that ran down on the beard, even the beard of Aaron [the first high priest], that came down upon the collar <i>and</i> skirts of his garments [consecrating the whole body];... [Exod. 30:25, 30.]
Updated Emphasized Bible	Like the precious oil upon the head Descending upon the beard; The beard of Aaron, — Which descended unto the opening of his robe;...
ESV	It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes.
WEB	It is like the precious oil on the head, That ran down on the beard, Even Aaron's beard; That came down on the edge of his robes;...
Young's Updated LT	As the good oil on the head, Coming down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, That comes down on the skirt of his robes,...

What is the gist of this verse? This is like the oil being poured on the head of Aaron to consecrate him; the oil pours down Aaron's head, into his beard, and into his collar (it may be his beard which is on his collar).

Psalm 99:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
shemen (שֶׁמֶן) [pronounced SHEH-men]	<i>fat, oil</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #8081 BDB #1032
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced toh ^b v]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better</i>	masculine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

Psalm 99:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rô'sh (רֹאשׁ) [pronounced rohsh]	head, top, chief, front, choicest	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7218 BDB #910

Translation: [Just as the precious oil upon the head...](#) Oil is used in anointing, which means a public recognition of one's service to God in a particular office. A priest or a king is often anointed in this way. The oil itself speaks of God the Holy Spirit, often, and His empowering ministry. We find a parallel to this when Aaron is anointed in Lev 8:12.

We have an analogy here which begins in this verse (at v. 2b) and is concluding in v. 3.

Psalm 133:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	to descend, to go down	Qal active participle	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
zâqân (זָקַן) [pronounced zaw-KAWN]	chin, beard	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2206 BDB #278

Translation: [...descends upon the beard,...](#) When the oil is poured upon the head of a believer, one being recognized to function in this or that office, the oil will flow down from the hair on his head into his beard. In the Old Testament, only a handful of believers were used by God in His service. These men were anointed with the Holy Spirit, represented by the oil which is used to anoint Aaron (who is named in v. 2c). One thing we should be able to agree upon is, Aaron was nowhere the man that Moses was—and certainly not the leader that Moses was. He was easily manipulated, always willing to follow someone else's lead. However, God still chose Aaron to head the office of priesthood—to be the father of all priests and of every High Priest (apart from Samuel, who is never really called a priest and who is probably better classified as the last of the judges and the first of the prophets—but I digress).

Hugh MacMillan tells us: *Of the Hebrew perfumes an immense quantity was annually manufactured and consumed, of which we have a very significant indication in the fact that the holy anointing oil of the tabernacle and temple was never made in smaller quantities than 750 ounces-of solids compounded with five quarts of oil, and was so profusely employed that when applied to Aaron's head it flowed down over his beard and breast, to the very skirts of his garments.*²² Don't misunderstand this: MacMillan is not telling us that several gallons of oil would be poured upon Aaron. We know here that it was more than just a splash, however. There was enough to run down his head into his beard and onto his garments (not soaking him by any means, but to the portion of the garment about Aaron's neck). By the way, we find the mixture in Ex. 30:22–30.

²² Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 133:2, quoting Hugh MacMillan, in "The Ministry of Nature," 1871.

Psalm 133:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zâqân (זָקָן) [pronounced zaw-KAWN]	<i>chin, beard</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2206 BDB #278
ʿahārôn (אַהֲרֹן) [pronounced ah-huh-ROHN]	transliterated Aaron	masculine proper noun	Strong's #175 BDB #14
she- (שֶׁ) [pronounced sheh],	<i>who, which, that</i>	relative particle:	Strong's #834? BDB #979
This appears to be a form of or a synonym of the relative pronoun ʿăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER], which means <i>that, which, when, who</i> or <i>how</i> . Strong's #834 BDB #81. Its usage appears to be confined to later Hebrew and passages with a northern Palestine coloring. ²³			
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
middâh (מִדָּה) [pronounced mind-DAW]	<i>extension, length; stature, size; a large, tall, high [whatever]; measure, measurement; garment; tribute [Chaldean]</i>	feminine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4060 BDB #551

Although the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament and Strong agree that this is Strong's #4060 here, this is the only time that this word is translated *garments*. There are several very similar nouns which do mean garment (e.g., Strong's #4055 or #4063) which vary by a letter or a vowel point, and I think that is what should be found here. The actual difference between #4060 and the other two, is the noun here is feminine; and the two similar nouns are masculine. It is possible that this lone usage is simply a feminine form of one of the two masculine nouns.

After examining this, and making these statements, I find that in the Dead Sea Scrolls, this is a masculine noun in the two scrolls which came from cave 11 (which is the cave from which we got most of the psalms and which psalms are nearly complete). This is a feminine noun in the MT and the LXX.²⁴

Translation: ...Aaron's beard which descends over the collar [lit., *mouth, extremity*] of his garments;... Now we are speaking of Aaron, and Aaron's beard and/or the oil. Aaron is the father of the High Priesthood, the first High Priest to God, and from whom all priests and High Priests are descended. We find Aaron's anointing in Ex. 29:7 Lev. 8:12, 30.

²³ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 979.

²⁴ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. 578.

Although it is difficult to be sure, it might be that the relative pronoun here refers back to Aaron's beard, which descends down the collar of his garment (however, see below). However, it is more likely that we are referring to the oil which is descending from Aaron's head to his beard to his collar (well, whatever is their version of a collar; compare Ex. 28:32). Even if the beard is the one which is spoken of as descending down from Aaron's collar, the anointing oil is running down his beard, and therefore on his collar as well. Furthermore, given that the dew of Mount Hermon will be mentioned in the next verse, the analogy is more apt if this refers to the oil flowing down.

Now, although I have interpreted the *mouth of the garment* to refer to the collar; the Hebrew word for *mouth*—*peh* (פֶּה) [pronounced *peh*]²⁵—can also mean *edge, extremity*. Therefore, we could be speaking of the hem of the garment as well (compare Ex. 26:4 where this word is used for the *edge* of a curtain). Keil and Delitzsch, in fact, spend quite a bit of time discussing the various translations and interpretations here²⁵, which, at first, made me think that they were as anal-retentive as me. However, what they were interested in is, to where is this oil flowing—simply to the collar of Aaron or all the way to his hem. This discussion results in them saying that it must be the oil which descends onto his clothing rather than his beard and that the oil traveled a fair distance to reach the hem of his garment, which is more in line with the mention of Mount Hermon and the mountains of Zion in the next verse.

In any case, the oil speaks of God the Holy Spirit empowering Aaron for his priestly ministry. The idea is, the oil consecrated the whole man. Men in particular are good at compartmentalizing—that is, they have their work persona, their marriage persona, their hanging out with friends persona. They also have specific behaviors, friends, acquaintances, and specific expected behaviors from these people in that environment. As believers in Jesus Christ, we don't really have the luxury. You don't get to have a church persona; a church environment, church friends—and then have a completely different thing going on elsewhere. This does not mean that you don't run your life that way; but you should not. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not just for Sundays; and it affects the entire person all week long—you don't get to take time off. Quite obviously, you may take time off when you quench or grieve the Holy Spirit; but that does not remove you from the Christian life—you're just under discipline (or potential discipline) instead.

It would be good for us to glance over the anointing of the priesthood as we find it in the Torah (the first five books of Moses):

Anointing in the Torah

- I. Anointing in Genesis:
 1. Jacob has a dream where God promises to give to him and to his descendants the land where he was (Gen. 28:10–16).
 2. When Jacob awoke, he set up the stone where his head had lain as a pillar, and then he poured oil on that pillar, and called the place Bethel, of *house of God*. Jacob made a vow to give a tenth of his income to God as long as God would be with him on his journey and provide him with food and clothing (Gen. 28:18–22).
 3. This is anointing, and with spiritual implication, but not necessarily the same as we find in the Mosaic Law (which is more properly Exodus–Deuteronomy). Gen. 31:13
 4. *Anointing* can refer to the simple act of pouring something on something else. Here, Jacob was not equipping the rock for spiritual duty, but simply making a pact with God as a result of his dream.
 5. God revealed Himself to Jacob again in Gen. 35:9–12, reiterating His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jacob again sets up a pillar and pours oil upon that pillar. This is all very similar to the first anointing.
 6. Remember the what Jacob knew was limited; I do believe that he had access to a portion of the book of Genesis and that he added to this book—for instance, Gen. 29:20 sound as if they were written by the man who experienced that love, which would be Jacob.
 7. Since Jacob might be able to distinguish between God the Father and God the Son (by Gen. 1), it is not necessarily likely that he understand the communication ministry of God the Holy Spirit at this time

²⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 133:1–3.

Anointing in the Torah

(or, ever, in his lifetime). Therefore, from Jacob's point of view, the oil was not necessarily a reference to God the Holy Spirit. However, God had just communicated with Jacob in both of these instances, so, from the God-ward point of view, the oil—apparently chosen from Jacob's free will—represents the Holy Spirit, Who reveals spiritual information to us.

- II. Anointing as we know it is more properly found in the Mosaic Law. It was properly set up to consecrate Aaron and his sons for the priesthood.*
 1. One of the first institutions which God set up was the Aaronic priesthood in Ex. 28–29. In Ex. 28:41, God tells Moses that the priest garments would be put on the priests (Aaron and his sons) and then they would be anointed, ordained and consecrated. That is, oil would be poured on them to indicate the power of the Holy Spirit; they would be proclaimed priests of God; and they would be set aside specially for the office of priesthood.
 2. When someone or something was anointed, it was set aside for service to God. In Lev. 7:35, the NASB reads: "This is that which is consecrated to Aaron and that which is consecrated to his sons from the offerings by fire to the LORD, in that day when he presented them to serve as priests to the LORD." However, what this verse literally says is: "This is the anointing of Aaron and the anointing of his sons from the offerings made by fire to Yahweh on the day that they were brought near to serve as priests to Yahweh." Those who were anointed were consecrated for service to God. The word which were the NASB rendered *that which is consecrated* is rendered *anointing* elsewhere (and is usually found in conjunction with the word *oil*).
 3. Because Aaron's family had been consecrated with the anointing oil of God, they were set aside for His service. When his two eldest sons violated this responsibility, they were executed. Lev. 10:1–7
 4. Their responsibility in relationship to the anointing is mentioned in again in Num. 18:8.
 - (1) The word *anointing* might be hidden in your translation and rendered something like *a portion* (the NASB). The verse should read: **And then Y^ehowah said to Aaron, "And I, even I, have given to you the responsibility of My contributions, of all the separated things of the sons of Israel—to you, I have given them for the anointing, and to your sons, by a perpetual decree [or, a statute forever]."**
 5. Part of the ceremony that consecrated Aaron and his sons as priests involved unleavened wafers which were spread (or, *anointed*) with oil. Ex. 29:2.
 6. Oil was poured on the head of Aaron during the consecration ceremony. Ex. 29:7 30:30 Lev. 8:12 21:10, 12
 7. Aaron and his sons were anointed with oil and their clothing was anointed with oil on the day that the Tent of God was erected (Ex. 40:1–16).
 8. Although the Scripture does not specifically tell us, apparently no one took a jar of olive oil and poured it out over Aaron's head during this ceremony. There was apparently a container which allowed a drop out at a time. Lev. 8:12
 9. Aaron's priestly garments were to be sprinkled with both oil and the blood of the sacrifices (Ex. 29:21 Lev. 8:23, 30). The oil, again, represents the Holy Spirit, and the blood represents the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Aaron represented our Lord as a type. He was both associated with blood and with the Holy Spirit as the first High Priest to Israel and as a type of our Great High Priest To Come. **Now the main point in what has been said is: we have such a High Priests, Who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true Sacred Tent, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this High Priest have something also to offer. Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law, who serve as a copy and a shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned when he was about the erect the Sacred Tent, for, "See," He says, "That you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." But now He has obtains a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises (Heb. 8:1–6 Ex. 25:40).**
 10. There was a grain offering associated with the anointing of the priests. Lev. 6:20–23
 11. The anointing oil which was used in the Sacred Tent in association with various religious ceremonies

Anointing in the Torah

was to be kept separate from secular use. In a very rare reference to the cost of individual items, God told Moses which spices should be used and their cost. In any case, the resulting oil was a very pleasantly aromatic oil.

12. Each day, after a bull was offered as a sin offering, the altar was consecrated with oil, setting it aside for holy service. Ex. 29:36
 13. Part of what was offered by the Israelites was to be given to the priests in Lev. 7. The anointing of the priests is mentioned in Lev. 7:36
 14. The Tent of God was also anointed. When this was done, the High Priest Aaron was anointed as well. Lev. 8:10–12
 15. There was a great offering of the various leaders of the Israelites when the Tent and altar were anointed in Num. 7 (see Num. 7:1, 10, 84, 88).
 16. The anointed High Priest was the one who performed the ceremonial duties on that great Day of Atonement. Lev. 16:29–34
 17. The anointed priests are named in Num. 3:1–4.
- III. Surprisingly enough (at least, to me), there are as many references in the Law to the *anointing oil* (which is the Hebrew word *mish'châh* (מִשְׁחָה) [pronounced *mish-KHAW*]; Strong's #4888 BDB #603) as there are to the verb *to anoint*.
1. I've got to admit that when I think of anointing with oil, I think of someone taking a bottle of salad oil and pouring it over the head of someone else. However, the oil is olive oil, it comes out in a couple of drops, and Ex. 25:6 tells us that spices were among the things collected for the sanctuary. The spices were to be used in the anointing oils. Spices for the anointing oil was among the items that the Israelites brought to Moses for the building of the Sacred Tent (Ex. 35:8). See also Ex. 30:25, 31, which indicate that such a scented oil would be God's holy anointing oil throughout the generations of Israel.
 2. God reminds Moses once again that the things that would be made should be as per His specifications, including the anointing oil. Ex. 31:11
 3. The anointing oil is included in the naming of the articles of furniture built for the Sacred Tent (Ex. 37:29–39:38).
 4. The anointing oil was to be used to anoint the Tent of God and all of the furniture. Ex. 40:9 Lev. 8:10
 5. The anointing oil was just as important as anything else in the ceremony of the consecration of Aaron and his sons. It is mentioned among the items which were to be assembled in Lev. 8:2–3. Its use in this ceremony is mentioned three more times: Lev. 8:10, 12, 30.
 6. Part of Eleazar's responsibilities was tending to the anointing oil (Num. 4:16).
 7. Other passages where this anointing oil is mentioned: Ex. 35:15, 28

* These points were taken directly from the **Doctrine of Anointing** (from 1Sam. 10:1).

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We should not cover *anointing* without making reference to what *anointing* is a shadow of. The person who was anointed was someone whom God had set aside for a specific task or tasks or office. However, these ones who are so set aside are shadows of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Anointed One = The Messiah*

- I. Most importantly, anointing is a reference to Jesus Christ.
 1. The transliteration of the word *anointed* is *messiah*. The word is the masculine substantive *mâshîyach* (מָשִׁיחַ) [pronounced *maw--SHEE-ahkh*]. In the Septuagint, the corresponding Greek word is *christos* (χριστός) [pronounced *krees-TOSS*], which means *anointed one, Messiah, Christ*. The transliteration of *christos* is, of course, *Christ*. (Strong's Greek #5547). Strong's #4899 BDB #603.
 2. The Anointed One to Come is mentioned in Psalm 45:7
- II. One of the most important words related to *anointing* is the masculine substantive cognate is *mâshîyach*

The Anointed One = The Messiah*

(מָשִׁיחַ) [pronounced *maw--SHEE-ahkh*], which means *anointed, anointed one, Messiah, Christ*. Obviously, this is the basis for our English word *messiah*. What is surprising is, this word is found mostly in Samuel and Psalms. We find it four times in Leviticus and nowhere else in the Law, Joshua or Judges. It will be found twice in Chronicles and four different prophets will use this word five times. Strong's #4899 BDB #603.

1. We first find this word associated with the anointed priests, their personal sin or sins, bringing guilt upon the whole people, and the appropriate sacrifice. Adam, by his personal sin, brought guilt upon all mankind. Jesus, the second Adam, by His blood sacrifice, took it away. It is difficult to put together a perfect analogy, as the High Priest would undoubtedly sin, and actual provision should be made for that. However, the High priests are simply men, and men sin. They represent the Messiah to come. So their sin (as men) brings guilt upon all of Israel; the sacrifice they offer, representing Jesus, takes away this sin. Lev. 4:1–12
2. The mixture of actuality and analogy is continued in this same chapter. If the entire congregation of Israel commits sin (which, obviously, they have to, being human), then one anointed priest makes an offering for all of Israel. We do not have a plurality of priests in this function. One priest offers the sacrifice and that priest goes through all the rituals to atone for the sin of the entire congregation. Lev. 4:13–21
3. The first person to use this term *mâshîyach* after Moses is Hannah at the birth of Samuel. What is amazing is that she is the first person in Scripture to use this word in reference to the Messiah to come (1Sam. 2:10). However, the key is, Samuel was a type of Christ; he was brought up as a priest, but he was not related to the priests (this is discussed more in detail in my exegesis of 1Sam. 1).
4. In 1Sam. 2:36, God differentiates between His faithful priest, whom He will raise up, and His Anointed One. *“But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always.”* (1Sam. 2:35). The interpretation of this passage requires about a full page. Therefore, I will leave you with the understanding that the prophecy of the priest is fulfilled several times, by Samuel, by Zadok, by the line of Zadok and by Christ; God's anointed would be, respectively, Saul, David, Jesus Christ and believers of the Church Age.
5. Samuel gives his testimony before Israel, and asks Israel to witness before Jehovah and His anointed (which could be interpreted as Saul; but it could also be interpreted as God's Son) that he has not personally defrauded anyone. Even though Samuel was not perfect, this furthers the analogy that he represents Jesus Christ. 1Sam. 12:1–5
6. Soon, the king of Israel became associated with this term. However, this only applied to Saul and David.
 - (1) When Samuel was going to Jesse's home to show that David was Israel's new king, the first son who walked before Samuel was Eliab, and Samuel thought to himself, *surely this is Jehovah's anointed one*. 1Sam. 16:6
 - (2) David called Saul *Jehovah's anointed* in 1Sam. 24:6, 10 26:9, 11, 16, 23 2Sam. 1:14, 16.
 - (3) David is called *Jehovah's anointed* in 2Sam. 19:21.
 - (4) David and his descendants are referred to as *Jehovah's anointed* in 2Sam. 22:51.
 - (5) David refers to himself as *Jehovah's anointed* in 2Sam. 23:1.
 - (6) When Solomon dedicates the Temple, he says to God, *“O Jehovah God, do not turn away the face of Your anointed; remember grace to [Your] servant David.”* (2Chron. 6:42). I would assume that Solomon is referring to himself here.
 - (7) David, of course, is a type of Christ.
7. Asaph's psalm of thanksgiving includes the line: *“Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm.”* (1 Chron. 16:22). The anointed ones are the ones whom God has chosen, anointed and consecrated or His work. This would, in this context, refer to the believers of Israel.

* These points were also taken from the **Doctrine of Anointing** (1Sam. 10:1).

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It is in the psalms where it is clear that *Jehovah's Anointed One* or *His Messiah* refers to the Messiah Who would come. This brings us to...

Messiah in the Psalms*

1. Psalm 2 is taken as a Messianic psalm by Jews and Christians alike. **The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His Anointed** (Psalm 2:2). When Peter (or John) quote this verse, they replace *His Anointed* with *His Christ*. Acts 4:26 reads: **"The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ."**
2. David refers to the Lord's Anointed as a reference to Jesus to come. Psalm 18 is nearly identical to 2Sam. 22. The final verse reads: **He gives a great deliverance to His king and show grace to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever** (Psalm 18:50).
3. David has faith that God will answer his call in the day of calamity, and believes that this applies to all those who belong to Him. **Now I know that Jehovah saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand** (Psalm 6:6). The *anointed* here refers to believers. We have a psalm with a similar theme and a similar line: **Jehovah is their strength and He is a saving defense to His anointed. Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd as well, and carry them forever** (Psalm 28:8–9).
4. The sons of Korah also ask God for protection and deliverance: **O Jehovah God of the armies, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Behold our shield, O God, and look upon the face of You anointed** (Psalm 84:9–10).
5. In the Davidic covenant of Psalm 89, *anointed*, in v. 38, appears to refer to David and to his seed. However, at the end of the psalm, it appears to refer to the Messiah to come. **Your enemies insulted [me]. They insulted your Messiah every step he took** (Psalm 89:51; God's Word™).
6. Psalm 105:15, when one is warned not to touch the Lord's anointed, the *anointed* refers to those chosen for His work.
7. Psalm 132 refers to the line of David, and, therefore, ultimately to Jesus the Messiah, David's greater Son, Who would sit on the throne of David forever. Therefore, vv. 10 and 17 are references to both David's sons and to Jesus.

* These points were also taken from the **Doctrine of Anointing** (1Sam. 10:1).

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I believe the idea is, God's blessing flowed to Aaron, but that that blessing continued to flow to all those with whom Aaron had contact. Aaron's major mistakes notwithstanding, Aaron did present the gospel day after day after day when he slain the innocent animals as sacrifices; so the blessing of salvation flowed from him to all those who observed him.

As a leader, certainly Aaron left a lot to be desired; however, as a priest, he was essentially responsible for the evangelization of each Jew, as they would observe him killing one animal after another in order to atone for their sins. As he did this, God the Holy Spirit would speak to the hearts of these Jews and they would believe in Jesus Christ.

I must admit to being surprised as to how often we find Aaron mentioned in the psalms. In life, insofar as we know, Aaron appears to be the consummate failure—at least, as a leader. He could be pushed around or manipulated by those over whom he had authority; he could be led in directions which are clearly, unmistakably wrong. Still, Aaron's name is found again and again; therefore, we need to examine **The Doctrine of Aaron**.

I think one of the themes of this short psalm is *unity*, first of the brothers (which can be wonderful, but often is not), as well as the unifying factor of the oil flowing from Aaron's head to his beard to his garment (possibly to the end

of his garment). The oil unites a very imperfect Aaron with the garments that he wore, which symbolized his priestly office, which foretells of our Lord Jesus Christ. The oil which unites the brothers; the oil which unites Aaron with his office is God the Holy Spirit.

We have several factors at work in this short psalm: we have the anointing of Aaron combined with the brothers getting together and enjoying their company combined with that which is eternal. Essentially, this psalm speaks of the Millennial rule of Jesus Christ, the Anointed One, when all Jews live on this earth as brothers.

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The Blessings of God's Provisions

**...as a mist of Hermon which descends upon mountains of Zion,
for there has commissioned Y^ehowah the blessing lives until forever.
[Peace be upon Israel!]**

Psalm
133:3

**...as the mist of Hermon descends upon the mountain of Zion [or, upon the dry, parched mountains];
for there Y^ehowah has mandated blessings: life forever [or, eternal life].
[Let] peace [and prosperity] be upon Israel!**

**...just as the morning mist from Mount Hermon also descends upon Mount Zion,
for Jehovah was mandated blessings there forever.
“Let there be peace upon Israel!”**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Early translations:

The Dead Sea Scrolls	It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls down upon <i>the mountain</i> [11QPs ^a MT ^{mss} ; <i>the mountains</i> in MT LXX] of Zion! For <i>to this place</i> [11QPs ^a ; <i>there</i> MT LXX] the LORD has bestowed <i>the blessing</i> [11QPs ^a ; <i>the blessing, life</i> in 11QPs ^b MT LXX] forevermore. <i>Peace be upon Israel!</i> [11QPs ^a 11QPs ^b ; Not found in MT LXX]
The Peshitta	Like the dew of Hermon that falls upon the mount of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life, for evermore.
The Septuagint	As the dew of Aeron, that comes down on the mountains of Sion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, <i>even</i> life for ever.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	It is like the dew from Mount Hermon, falling on Zion's mountains, where the LORD has promised to bless his people with life forevermore.
The Message	It's like the dew on Mount Hermon flowing down the slopes of Zion. Yes, that's where GOD commands the blessing, ordains eternal life.
NLT	Harmony is as refreshing as the dew from Mount Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion. And the LORD has pronounced his blessing, even life forevermore.
REB	It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on the mountains of Zion. There the LORD bestows his blessing, life for evermore.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ It is like dew on Mount Hermon, dew which comes down on Zion's mountains. That is where the LORD promised the blessing of eternal life.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- The Amplified Bible* Like the dew of [lofty] Mount Hermon, and the dew that comes on the hills of Zion; for there the Lord has commanded the blessing, even life for evermore [upon the high and the lowly].
- ESV It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.
- HCSB It is like the dew of Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD has appointed the blessing--life forevermore.
- KJV Like the dew of Hermon, *and like the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.
- MKJV like the dew of Hermon that came down on the mountains of Zion; for there Jehovah commanded the blessing, life forevermore.
- Young's Updated LT* As dew of Hermon—That comes down on hills of Zion, For there Jehovah commanded the blessing—Life unto the age!

What is the gist of this verse? David draws an analogy between God's blessings to Aaron, the father of the priesthood, and of His blessings to Israel.

Psalm 133:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
ṭal (טל) [pronounced tahl]	<i>night mist, mist, dew</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2919 BDB #378
cher ^e mōwn (חרמון) [pronounced Hermon]	<i>sacred [mountain]; and is transliterated Hermon</i>	proper noun mountain	Strong's #2768 BDB #356

Translation: ...as the mist of Hermon... The kaph preposition draws an analogy between the other verse and this verse. In the previous verse, the anointing oil ran down Aaron's head into his beard and, eventually, to the extremity of his garment (possibly the collar). Here we are dealing with the morning mist of Hermon. Now, Mount Hermon is an odd mountain to refer to, as it is not necessarily a part of Israel. It is to the north of Israel, at the southern portion of the anti-Lebanon mountains. However, this mountain towers above all else in this region. It is over 9000 feet high, whereas the tallest mountains of that region tend to be about half that (Mount Bashan, Mount Seir) or considerably less (Mount Nebo, Mount Naphtali, Mount Gilboa, Mount Tabor, Mount Carmel).²⁶ Because it is so tall, Mount Hermon can be seen by as far away as the Dead Sea. Mount Hermon essentially marked the northernmost border of Israel, taken when Moses and the Israelites defeated Bashan (Deut. 3:8–9 4:47–48). The snow from Mount Hermon is what provides most of the water for the Jordan River.

²⁶ Source: *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3rd Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; p. p. 8.

Psalm 133:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
she- (שֶׁ) [pronounced sheh],	<i>who, which, that</i>	relative particle:	Strong's #834? BDB #979
This appears to be a form of or a synonym of the relative pronoun <i>ʾăsher</i> (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>], which means <i>that, which, when, who</i> or <i>how</i> . Strong's #834 BDB #81. Its usage appears to be confined to later Hebrew and passages with a northern Palestine coloring. ²⁷			
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ʿahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
har (הַר) [pronounced har]	<i>hill, mountain, hill-country</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249

One of the Dead Sea Scrolls and a few Massoretic manuscripts have this as a *mountain of*.²⁸ Now, there is only one *Mount Zion*, which is actually why this is a difficult call. It would make more sense that someone would have changed this from the plural to the singular, *because* there is only one Mount Zion. Hence, we would expect to find the singular in a couple of manuscripts, which is what we find. However, I am going to translate this as a singular because there is but one Mount Zion, despite the fact that Biblical criticism would point toward this being a plural (Biblical criticism will generally choose as the original text the least likely word or form of a word). I have obviously straddled the fence on this one, choosing the plural for my most literal translation, and the singular for my near-literal translation.

Tsîyyôwn (צִיּוֹן) [pronounced tzee-YOHN]	<i>dry, parched ground; and is transliterated Zion</i>	proper noun location	Strong's #6726 BDB #851
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Clarke tells us that this is *Sion*, which is a part of the Hermon mountain range (as in Deut. 4:48) and not *Zion*; however, in the Hebrew, it is *Zion*. *Sion*, by the way, is *Sîy`ôn* (צִיּוֹן) [pronounced see-OHN], which sounds similar to *Zion*, but is not equivalent to *Zion*. In the Hebrew, only the 2nd and 4th letters are the same. Strong's #7865 BDB #673.

Let me offer an alternate rendering...

tsâyôwn (צִיּוֹן) [pronounced tzaw-YOHN]	<i>dry, parched ground; and is transliterated Zion</i>	proper noun location	Strong's #6726 BDB #851
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You will note, the only difference we find is in the vowel points, which vowel points were not found in the Hebrew manuscripts until after our Lord's incarnation, 1000 years after this was first written. This interpretation would actually solve the problem of *mountain* being in the plural. This also makes a great deal of sense, for the dew, which represents refreshment, which represents the Holy Spirit (as it is in parallel with oil) to go to where it is needed; where the mountains are parched and wanting of water. On the negative side, we only find this noun in one other place: Isa. 25:5 (however, its meaning is well-established by the more often used feminine form).

²⁷ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 979.

²⁸ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. 578.

Translation: ...as the [morning] mist of Hermon descends upon the mountain of Zion [or, upon the dry, parched mountains];... Oil is poured upon the head of the High Priest and this oil flows down even to his beard, even to the extremities of his clothing, just like the morning mist upon Mount Hermon which then descends upon Mount Zion. Now, the mist which falls upon Mount Hermon really does not descend upon Mount Zion, as they are over 100 miles away from each other. In fact, the translators of the KJV were so concerned at this point that they inserted *and as the dew* before the word *descends*. However, what we have is an analogy (note the kaph preposition); just as the oil runs from Aaron's head to his clothing, so the morning mist of Hermon descends upon the mountains of Zion. The blessings from God flow a long distance—in fact, far greater than even implied here by the psalmist.

It is possible that at this point in time, in history, the water supplied by the snow on Mount Hermon is used, in part, to provide water from Jerusalem. However, what we are speaking of is a flowing of blessing which extends a great distance from here to there.

As to whether this should read *mountains of Zion* or *Mount Zion*, this is fully discussed within the exegesis of the Hebrew above. Good Biblical criticism would side with this being in the plural, which is how most translators render this. The Message took a middle route by rendering this *the slopes of Zion*, maintaining the plural and allowing for Zion to be one mountain. I cannot fault them in this rendering as the idea of the dew coming down the *slopes* very accurately parallels the oil coming down as far as the extremities of Aaron's garment.

The oil represents the Holy Spirit and how it flows to all parts of the High Priest, even as the morning mist from Mount Hermon flows all the way to Mount Zion. It saturates the beard, as the morning dew saturates the land, just as the blessing of God the Holy Spirit travels such a long ways as well. The blessing extends a very long distance is my point, and the point of this psalm.

If you read through the Hebrew exegesis, then you also aware that this could be translated ...*upon the dry, parched mountains*;... This understanding actually makes more sense. Mount Hermon is chosen as it is the highest mountain in that region (nearly 2 miles high). It is right outside Israel, making it analogous to God the Father, who blesses from on high, Whose blessings flow upon all in the wide periphery of Mount Hermon—to the dry, parched places which are in want of refreshment. It is surprising that no translation that I am aware of offers this as an alternate rendering, despite the fact that it requires the least amount of explanation (e.g., why do we find *mountains* here instead of *mountain*?). What we find in Israel today is a withholding of this blessing. The descriptions of the Land of Promise back in Numbers (when the spies went into the land) are in stark contrast with any description of this place today. What the Jews have done today with that horribly dry place is nothing short of amazing; but it still seems to fall far short of the oldest descriptions that we have of this land.

What we may find here is the water cycle as well. The snow falls upon Mount Hermon. The water melts and fills the Jordan Rivers; and the water evaporates and comes down as dew (and rain) over all of Israel. It is actually a splendid picture of God's grace—it is run through of focal point, Jesus Christ (analogous to Mount Hermon), and from Him, blessings rain upon all of us in this dry, parched land in which we live. According to the *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*, some have experienced this dew which is in the area of Mount Hermon, and they liken it to their tent being rained upon.²⁹

Keil and Delitzsch remark: *As I sat at the foot of Hermon, I understood how the water-drops which rose from its forest-mantled heights, and out of the highest ravines, which are filled the whole year round with snow, after the sun's rays have attenuated them and moistened the atmosphere with them, descend at evening-time as a heavy dew upon the lower mountains which lie round about as its spurs. One ought to have seen Hermon with its white-golden crown glistening aloft in the blue sky, in order to be able rightly to understand the figure. Nowhere in the whole country is so heavy a dew perceptible as in the districts near to Hermon." To this dew the poet likens brotherly love. This is as the dew of Hermon: of such pristine freshness and thus refreshing, possessing such pristine power and thus quickening, thus born from above (Psalm 110:3), and in fact like the dew of Hermon which comes down upon the mountains*

²⁹ Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott (and others), *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; about 1880 (with an introduction by R. A. Torrey; from e-Sword; Psalm 133:3.

of Zion - a feature in the picture which is taken from the natural reality; for an abundant dew, when warm days have preceded, might very well be diverted to Jerusalem by the operation of the cold current of air sweeping down from the north over Hermon. We know, indeed, from our own experience how far off a cold air coming from the Alps is perceptible and produces its effects. The figure of the poet is therefore as true to nature as it is beautiful. When brethren bound together in love also meet together in one place, and in fact when brethren out of the north unite with brethren in the south in Jerusalem, the city which is the mother of all, at the great Feasts, it is as when the dew of Mount Hermon, which is covered with deep, almost eternal snow.³⁰

Another, briefer description from Henry Baker Tristram (1867): *Unlike most other mountains which gradually rise from lofty table-lands and often at a distance from the sea, Hermon starts at once to the height of nearly ten thousand feet, from a platform scarcely above the sea level. This platform, too - the upper Jordan valley, and marshes of Merom - is for the most part an impenetrable swamp of unknown depth, whence the seething vapour, under the rays of an almost tropical sun, is constantly ascending into the upper atmosphere during the day. The vapour, coming in contact with the snowy sides of the mountain, is rapidly congealed, and is precipitated in the evening in the form of a dew, the most copious we ever experienced. It penetrated everywhere, and saturated everything. The floor of our tent was soaked, our bed was covered with it, our guns were dripping, and dewdrops hung about everywhere. No wonder that the foot of Hermon is clad with orchards and gardens of such marvelous fertility in this land of droughts.³¹*

Now, when it comes to what does this have to do with the brothers? The fellowship of the saints comes from above, as does the dew. I have already admitted that I can name four believers (at least, I think that they are believers) with whom I have no interest in personal fellowship. However, if we found ourselves in the same room, I would not gossip about them, I would not hate them, and I would not have a desire to see them die slow, painful deaths. I would prefer not to sit next to them; but in eternity, even that will change. The fact that we would even be able to talk without rancor would be because God the Holy Spirit. The idea is, God the Holy Spirit makes our fellowship possible.

There are also several guidelines that we should follow, many of which are outlined in the book of 1Corinthians. The Corinthian church had broken up into a myriad of factions, and they were participating in behavior which was designed to irritate one another. Some would eat meat sacrificed to idols, knowing that this irritated others in the congregation. One family not only committed incest, but apparently bragged about it to the congregation. Some members of the church sued other members of the church. It might be important to recognize that, getting along with the brethren is not natural. What happened in the Corinthian church was natural—all of this infighting and discord. In the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul both tells the Corinthians to knock if off and to bring them to the realization that they needed to be filled with God the Holy Spirit (the means is mentioned in 1Cor. 11:31 and the importance of being filled with God the Holy Spirit is emphasized in 1Cor. 13³²). The key here is, a church needs Bible doctrine and the filling of the Holy Spirit, both of which are from above, in order to get along. It is only because of God the Holy Spirit and a little doctrine that keeps fist fights from breaking out in every church. **Finally, brothers [and sisters], be rejoicing; be striving for perfection; continue being comforted, be thinking the same [thing] [fig., be in agreement], be living at peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you** (2Cor. 13:11; Analytical-literal translation).

Gill might wax a little corny in what follows, but the sentiments are in essence accurate: *The mountains of Zion were those that were near to Zion, and not the mountain itself, those that were round about Jerusalem, on which the dew also fell in great plenty; and to which unity among brethren is here compared, because it comes from God in heaven, as the dew does. Saints are taught of God to love one another; contentions and quarrels come from lusts within, but this comes from above, from the Father of lights; and, because of its gentle nature, this makes men pure, and peaceable, and gentle, and easy*

³⁰ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Psalm 133:1–3.

³¹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm 133 introduction.

³² You may not recognize that is what these passages are all about.

to be entreated; as the dew falls gently in a temperate and moderate air, not in stormy and blustering weather: and because of its cooling nature; it allays the heats and animosities in the minds of men; and because it makes the saints fruitful, and to grow and increase in good works.³³ The key is, lusts and quarrels come from within, but brotherly love (love among the saints) comes from above, as does the dew.

Spurgeon speaks of brotherly love as proceeding from the higher to the lower,³⁴ referring to difference stages of spiritual growth. To be more precise, it proceeds from Jesus Christ to those with doctrine to those without doctrine. The idea is that, when practiced in the filling of the Spirit, such brotherly love fills the church. Now, this does not mean that we gush over one another and think of ten nice things we can say about Charlie Brown—that same Charlie Brown who spent that last 3 years suing us—but that we can be in the same room with him without having to resort to mental attitude sins or to verbal sins directed against him.

Psalm 133:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i>]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
11QPsa. Has <i>[this] place</i> . ³⁵			
tsâvâh (צַוָּה) [pronounced <i>tsaw-VAW</i>]	<i>to commission, to mandate, to lay charge upon, to give charge to, charge, command, order</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #6680 BDB #845
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b ^e râkâh (בְּרָכָה) [pronounced <i>b^eraw-KAW</i>]	<i> blessing, benediction, invocation of good; extremely fortunate and happy; a gift, a present; peace, prosperity</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1293 BDB #139
chayyîym (חַיִּים) [pronounced <i>khay-YEEM</i>]	<i> life, lives, living, being alive, having life, immortality, a long life, sustenance, sustaining life; refreshment; being vigorous; prosperity, welfare, happiness, living prosperously</i>	masculine plural substantive	Strong's #2416 BDB #313

³³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 133:3.

³⁴ Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Treasury of David*; e-Sword, Psalm Psalm 133:1–3.

³⁵ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. 578.

Psalm 133:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
11QPs ^a does not have the word <i>life</i> in it. ³⁶			
ʿad (עד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʿôwlâm (עולם) [pronounced <i>gô-LAWM</i>]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761
Together, they mean <i>and from everlasting to everlasting, from eternity past to eternity future or from antiquity to everlasting, forever.</i>			

Translation: ...for there Y^ehowah has mandated blessings: life forever [or, eternal life]. There are so many churches and so many seminaries which seek to merge Israel and the Church into one metamorphosed body. Some how, Israel morphed into the church. However, the Old Testament never suggests such a thing. In the Old Testament, God's blessings to Israel are unique and eternal. Even when Paul speaks of setting Israel aside for a time (Rom. 9), this should in no way be construed to mean that Israel somehow became the Church, even though many early believers were Jewish. God has mandated blessings on Mount Zion forever; God has mandated true brotherly fellowship as well. We are given the name of a specific place here: Mount Zion; a specific time frame: forever; and in case we are unsure *where*, the psalmist emphasizes with the word *there*.

What we find here are basically three sources of blessing in Israel: (1) we have the blessing of the brotherhood, which simply means the gathering and fellowship of all of the Jewish believers; (2) the spiritual blessings provided by God, and the cleansing power of God the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the oil dripping down Aaron's beard; and (3) God's support of the plants and wildlife of Israel, as seen by His provision of the evening mist. This psalm taken as a whole is a description of the Millennium, confirmed by this final line, **For there, Jehovah has mandated blessings: eternal life.**

Do you remember at the beginning of the psalm how I went on and on about each book of the Bible (or, even each chapter) and each psalm should have some meaning. There should be some reason why it is here in the canon of Scripture. I do believe that we have come across this reason in the words *life eternal, life forever more*. This is not something we find in too many places in the Old Testament; Daniel 12:2 mentions life eternal (and everlasting condemnation). We do not find these two words (*life eternal*) together anywhere else in the Old Testament. When it comes to a doctrine as important as eternal life, I am going to want to find this in more than just one passage. Certainly, this is spoken of by our Lord man times, but the times that we find this phrase in the Old Testament is limited to just these two passages. This psalm is somewhat of an appetizer, but Daniel 12 is going to be the main course. This does not mean that we do not find references to eternal life in the Old Testament; it simply means that they are a little less straightforward, e.g.: **You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore** (Psalm 16:11); and more straightforward, as in: **He asked life of you; you gave it to him, length of days forever and ever** (Psalm 21:4). But, again, only Psalm 133:3 and Dan. 12:2 actually use the phrase *eternal life*. Apart from these two passages, one might even be tempted to *explain away* the two references given in the psalms. Of course, the New Testament abounds with such references: John 4:14 5:24 6:50, 51, 68 11:25, 26 Rom. 5:21 6:23; 1John 2:25 5:11 Rev. 1:18.

³⁶ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. 578.

11QPs^a and 11QPs^{b*} both add the line *Peace be upon Israel!*³⁷ This is not found in the Massoretic text or in the Septuagint.

* 11Q means these manuscripts came from the 11th cave in Qumran; Ps^a means this is from the first Psalms manuscript.

Translation: [Let] peace [and prosperity] be upon Israel! We are unsure about this final line of this psalm. It is the tag line of psalms 125 and 128. It could have been lost from Psalm 133, and it could have been added by mistake. The truth of the sentiment is confirmed in the other psalms.

Again, God associates eternal blessings with nation Israel. Even in the New Testament, we cannot find Israel being completely discarded or morphed into something else. There are a boatload of prophecies dealing with Israel in the end times which are yet to be fulfilled (from the New and Old Testaments). Therefore, we would be foolish to think that God has completely cast the Jew aside, if not anti-Semitic.

I must admit that I never expected to write 31 pages on this brief psalm. In fact, at first, I even wondered, what is this psalm doing in the canon of Scripture. However, as with much of the Word of God, it takes a little study to bring out the meat which is found here.

³⁷ *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. 578.