

Jesus said, “Think not . . . peace . . . but a sword” (Matt 10.34-36). His unity is not of the world but only of His chosen people, the church, in our perpetual conflict with the world until He returns. And He has given that wonderful unity to us (Psa 133).

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*The church enjoys spiritual unity from the LORD.*  
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“Unity” (Lat. “one”), the state of being one, either a simple substance (e.g., God without parts) or one body composed of parts in a pleasing whole. Connotations of concord, agreement, oneness of sentiment, affection, or behavior (Webster 1828 Dictionary).

I. Sweetness of Unity (1). “Behold,” lo!, look, see, observe, → OE compound “to hold + thoroughly.” 1) It is real. You cannot “behold” a nothing. The true church already enjoys a spiritual unity in answer to Jesus’ prayer (e.g., Jn 17.21). 2) It is “a wonder to behold,” not our work, not manmade, but God’s. We cannot produce it, but only “endeavor to keep” it (Eph 4.3). “Unity is the essence of the body of Christ” (R. B. Kuiper). “Unity in Christ is not something to be achieved: it is something to be recognized” (A. W. Tozer).

A. Its sweet attributes (1a). “Good” and “pleasant” (of course, as it is from God). Nearly the same sense (desirable, having positive qualities, delightful, inducing happiness, etc.); doubled for emphasis. “How good!” etc., an emphatic statement. The goodness/pleasantness of unity is God’s own goodness/delightfulness on display in us together.

B. Its sweet substance (1b). 1) “Brethren,” lit., kin, fig., countryman conceived of as a brother, emphasizing close relationship. True Christians are adopted by God; therefore, spiritual siblings (Eph 1.5), members of one and the same family (Eph 4.4-6). Nicene Creed: “I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church,” *one*—unity; *holy*—set apart by and to God; *catholic*—universal; *apostolic*—communing with them. 2) “Dwell together,” of the church’s many members and settled fellowship. Tangible now esp. in faithful, loving congregations; realized fully in the new creation (2 Pet 3.13).

TRANSITION: Psa 133 first directs us to note and savor this unity. Do you? Next it uses earthly comparisons to help us understand it better.

II. Similes of Unity (2, 3a). “Similes” use “like” (2a) or “as” (3a).

A. Holy oil running down (2). Of the very sacred OT ritual of consecrating priests with a specially-made aromatic oil only for this use with severe threat against any other use (Exod 30.22-33). Mentioned here to induce awe, remind of its beautiful fragrance, and its richness. It is “precious ointment.” Emphasis on direction: it was first poured upon “the head,” then “ran down upon the

beard,” then it “went down” further “over the collar [lit., edge] of his robe” (alt.), and perhaps even the bottom edge of his robe. That this downward direction is not incidental, but spiritually significant, becomes even more apparent in the next simile.

Anointed OT prophets, priests, kings foreshadow NT Christ (“Anointed One”) in His threefold office—God’s only begotten Son. He “came down from heaven” (Jn 3.13). In Him is the Church—loved and chosen from the foundation of the world (Jn 17.24; Eph 1.4).

B. Refreshing dew descending (3a). “Hermon” is “the tallest mountain in ancient Israel. At 9230 feet, [it] towers over its neighboring peaks. [It has] abundant moisture [and] is covered in snow for much of the year. David likens people living in genuine community to the dew of Mount Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion (Jerusalem)” (LBD). Again, note well the directional language: “descended upon the mountains of Zion.”

TRANSITION 1: Biblically, height (heaven, Job 22.12) symbolic of God the Lord with His authority, power, blessedness.

TRANSITION 2: Oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit (= God) in particular (1 Sam 16.13; Isa 61.1); so is dew (water; Jn 7.37-39). As Christ is given freely, graciously to us by the Father (Jn 3.16), so the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father (Acts 1.4; 2.17, 38) and the Son (Jn 20.22), is also given freely, graciously, imparting joy/gladness (oil) and life/refreshment (dew)—in fellowship with God and one another.

TRANSITION 3: Now note God *explicitly* credited as the Source of unity.

III. Source of Unity (3bc). Jas 1.17 (gift, from above, comes down).

A. The LORD who commands it (3b). “There” (where unity is). “The blessing” (i.e., the good/pleasant unity, v. 1). “Commanded” is the irresistible fiat. “There the LORD ordained blessing” (alt.). “LORD” all-power, sovereignty. For the LORD, to decree is to do. No division of purpose and act.

B. The LORD who is our life (3c). The “blessing” is “everlasting life” (alt.) which is, essentially, “the relations between Father, Son and Spirit which constitute God’s eternal life in himself, the spring of his relations with the creatures whom he elects as his companions in the covenant of grace, and whom he saves and perfects through Christ and the Spirit” (John Webster, “God Without Measure,” 152).

CONCLUSION: As our sin and God’s curse disrupted the original unity in Paradise (man with God, Adam and Eve with each other), so the Triune God saves us by the Father sending His Son and His Spirit as His gift of grace to redeem and restore us sinners. His saving work recreates a new humanity in fellowship with the Triune God and with one another. See 1 Jn 1.1-3; cf. Jn 17.3, “and this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” And now, BEHOLD this: *The church enjoys spiritual unity from the LORD! Amen. Ω*