

The Psalms
(Lesson 15)

Introduction:

1. Fifteen of the psalms (120-134) are called "Songs of Degrees."
2. The Jews recited these psalms as they traveled to Jerusalem to worship.
3. Meditating upon the messages taught in these psalms would help the Israelites to be prepared for worship when they arrived in Jerusalem.
4. In this lesson we are concentrating on the information revealed in Psalm 133.
5. This psalm shows how special "brethren dwelling together in unity" is.
6. Since "unity" is such a special subject, we are also examining a number of additional verses that relate to it.

Discussion:

I. PSALM 133

- A. Vs. 1 states that "brethren dwelling together in unity" is both "*good*" and "*pleasant*."
 1. "Dwelling together in unity" means that people are in a state of being one and that a condition of harmony exists.
 2. Just because people are together does not necessarily mean that they are united.
 3. True unity includes harmony.
- B. (vs.2-3) To illustrate how "*good*" and "*pleasant*" "brethren dwelling together in unity" is, it is compared to:
 1. "*the precious ointment*" poured on Aaron (Exodus 30:22-33)
 2. the dew that descends from above to refresh the earth.
- C. To fully appreciate the value of unity, we must understand that God has strong contempt for those who sow discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19).

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES CHRISTIANS TO BE UNITED

- A. (John 17) Jesus prayed that His followers would be united.
 1. He made this request on behalf of His apostles (vs.11).
 2. He also made this request on behalf of all His followers (vs.20-21).
- B. The New Testament letters emphasize unity.
 1. Romans 15:5-6
 2. Philippians 1:27
- C. The Lord wants His followers to be united in:
 1. "doctrine" (Ephesians 4:13-14)
 - a. To be the Lord's disciples we must "*continue*" [abide] in His Word (John 8:31-32).
 - b. To achieve doctrinal unity we must "rightly divide" the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15).
 2. "matters of judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10).
 - a. To accomplish this we must follow the instructions given in Romans 12:16; 14:19.
 - b. We must also comply with the teaching found in Ephesians 4:1-3.
- D. Hindrances to unity must be overcome.
 1. "Exalting people over Christ" is a hindrance to unity.
 - a. The Corinthians did this (1 Corinthians 1:11-12), and it led to strife and division (3:3-4).
 - b. We learn how to overcome this problem in 1 Corinthians 4:6.
 2. "Murmuring" is a hindrance to unity.
 - a. "Murmuring" divided the Israelites, and many were destroyed (1 Corinthians 10:10).
 - b. The key to overcoming "murmuring" is revealed in Philippians 2:14.
 3. "Loving to have the preeminence" is a hindrance to unity.
 - a. This problem is mentioned in 3 John 9-10.
 - b. We must remember that Christ has all preeminence in the church (Colossians 1:18).
 - c. Helpful instructions that relate to this problem are presented in Philippians 2:3-4.