

Wednesday 12th January

2 Samuel 5.1-5

5Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, "Look, we are your bone and flesh. ²For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel." ³So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. ⁴David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. ⁵At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

To understand what was going on in this passage we need to be aware of a little of the history. I will try and make things simple. The 12 tribes of Israel formed into 2 alliances; Judah in the North (2 tribes) and Israel in the South 10 tribes.

After the reign of Saul the joint confederation fell apart. David was appointed King of Judah and after 7 ½ years of dis-satisfaction in Israel David was asked to be their king to. The uniting of the nation brought a time of calm and prosperity. Sadly, for the nation, it began to fall apart after the reign of David.

The United Kingdom has not always been so and there are those around who would like it to end and for a greater independence be given to parts of the whole. On such I will make no comment.

Sadly in the history of the Church there have been frequent points of disagreement and division. Though we claim to have one leader, Jesus, we do not want to be part of the one Church.

Last Wednesday morning I was speaking to a group at Our Lady and All Saints, the Roman Catholic Church situated a few yards away from New Road Methodist Church Centre. The priest Fr. Philip had invited a number of local church leaders from different denominations to speak about our Church Life and Ecumenism. It is by growing in understanding of each other that we become more able to work together, to bear a united witness to the truth of the gospel.

My favourite Psalm is 133.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.

It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

I have put the beginning and end in bold as it holds together without the middle section. Yet the middle section speaks of oil and water, two things that are rarely mixed. Is the unity of people as rare as a natural emulsion of oil and water? Let us work to make the emulsion more prevalent by keeping things moving; mixed and shaken together (shaken and stirred) that neither part is able to settle apart.

Later this month we shall share in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The truth is we are united in Christ, what we need to do is work at living out our unity rather than pointing out our perceived "correctness".

