

# **Thanksgiving Day**

**“The Truth As We Know It”**

**11/22/15**

As I prepare this Broadcast, we are approaching Thanksgiving Day. This is one of the good holidays celebrated in the US. I want to give a brief history of how we came to celebrate Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of November. I believe this holiday is a direct following of the biblical example of the Feast of Tabernacles which came at the end of the harvest year and the summers crops had been gotten in. They were told to celebrate with their families, neighbors, the poor and the priests for eight days with lots of food, song and dancing. This holy feast is to be celebrated throughout all time by all believers.

Here is a brief statement from the period of how we came to have an annual Thanksgiving Day. "The Pilgrims left Plymouth, England, on September 6, 1620. Their destination? The New World. Although filled with uncertainty and peril, it offered both civil and religious liberty.

For over two months, the 102 passengers braved the harsh elements of a vast storm-tossed sea. Finally, with firm purpose and a reliance on Divine Providence, the cry of "Land!" was heard.

Arriving in Massachusetts in late November, the Pilgrims sought a suitable landing place. On December 11, just before disembarking at Plymouth Rock, they signed the "Mayflower Compact" - America's first document of civil government and the first to introduce self-government.

After a prayer service, the Pilgrims began building hasty shelters. However, unprepared for the starvation and sickness of a harsh New England winter, nearly half died before spring. Yet, persevering in prayer, and assisted by helpful Indians, they reaped a bountiful harvest the following summer.

The grateful Pilgrims then declared a three-day feast, starting on December 13, 1621, to thank God and to celebrate with their Indian friends. While this was not the first Thanksgiving in America (thanksgiving services were held in Virginia as early as 1607), it was America's first Thanksgiving Festival.

Pilgrim Edward Winslow described the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving in these words: "Our harvest being gotten in, our Governor sent four men on fowling [turkey hunting] so that we might, after a special manner, rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as... served the company almost a week... Many of the Indians [came] amongst us and... their greatest King, Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted; and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought... And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet BY THE GOODNESS OF GOD WE ARE... FAR FROM WANT."

Much of the credit for the adoption of a later ANNUAL national Thanksgiving Day may be attributed to Mrs. Sarah Joseph Hale, the editor of Godey's Lady's Book. For thirty years, she promoted the idea of a national Thanksgiving Day, contacting President after President until President Abraham Lincoln responded in 1863 by setting aside the last Thursday of November as a national Day of Thanksgiving. Over the next seventy-five years, Presidents followed Lincoln's precedent, annually declaring a national Thanksgiving Day. Then, in 1941, Congress *permanently* established the fourth Thursday of each November as a national holiday.

It is very good that we have a Day set aside to remind us to be thankful. We are to begin every prayer with thanksgiving. In Psalms 100:4 we read, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."

Jesus did it! In John 11:41-42 we read, "Then they took away the stone from the place where Lazarus was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hear me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

All the angels do it! In Rev 7:11-12 we read, "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."

The Elders around the throne do it! In Rev 11:16-17 we are told, "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which are, and were, and are to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."

It is commanded of us to do it as we read in Psalms 50:14, "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:" We are to do it in the name of Jesus as told in Eph 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" And in Heb 13:15, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."

The prophet Daniel did it at the risk of his life, though he was facing the hungry lions! As is shown in Dan 6:10 where we read, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he knelt upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before."

God asks us to give thanks in public as is shown in Psalms 35:18, "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people." We are to give thanks in every thing which is often difficult to do. Paul tells us in 1 Thess 5:18, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." And in Eph 5:20, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"

We are to give thanks before your meals. Jesus and Apostles did so as is shown in John 6:11, "And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would." and in Acts 27:35, "And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat."

We should always thank him for deliverance from Sin. Rom 7:23-25 we read, "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

We are to give thanks for fellow Christians as is shown in Rom 1:8 where we read, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

When we pray for our needs, we need to Thank God before every request as is shown in Phil 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

So gather your family and friends around you and prepare a good meal and eat well with whatever you enjoy! This is a good holiday that honors God so we need to celebrate and give thanks to God for the many, many blessings He bestows upon each of us daily.

Listen again next week.

This we do know, The Bible is God's Word, God's word is true, Jesus Christ is God's son, Jesus died to save us from our sin, Without Jesus we are eternally lost. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we might be saved. Atheism is a temporary condition, for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus stands ready to save you now, Will you call on Him today?

Until next week, God bless.