

Elder Bobby Willis



The History of Thanksgiving??

You will notice there are two question marks at the end of the title of this writing. It was not a mistake, but rather on purpose. Not everyone celebrates as the USA does, and then, not every American will celebrate Thanksgiving. True, the Plymouth colonists and the Wampanoag Indians met together peaceably in 1621 in what many recognize as the first of many thanksgiving feast celebrated in the United States.

However, it wasn't until 1863, well over two hundred years later, that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of recognition (Thanksgiving) which was to be held in November of each year. George Washington, John Adams, and James Madison had each proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving but did not make it a recurring national day. Lincoln set the day for the fourth Thursday in November. He did so after being prompted, persistently, for some 36 years by one Sarah Josepha Hale. She is most widely known as the author of the nursery rhyme "*Mary Had a Little Lamb.*" Lincoln's proclamation of making Thanksgiving a national holiday came at the height of the Civil War. He entreated all Americans to ask God to "*commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife*" and to "*heal the wounds of the nation.*"

While many will gather on "Thanksgiving Day" to enjoy a great feast (usually eat way too much), visit with family, and enjoy a day off from work or school, all Christians should realize that every day is a day of Thanksgiving.

The first mention in the Bible of the word "Thanksgiving" is found in Leviticus 7:12, speaking of offering up "**the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.**" Verse 13 says it was to be offered along with "**the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.**" You may want to notice the wording found in Nehemiah 11:17, "**And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of**

Asaph, was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer...” Prayer of thanksgiving was offered during the daily sacrifice in recognition of the blessings God had granted or would grant for that day.

There are far too many references in God’s word to mention them all here. Giving thanks however, did not start with the first usage of the English word of Thanksgiving. Surely Adam gave thanks for the bountiful riches of the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-9) and for his **“help meet”** Eve which God had so lovingly made for him (Genesis 2:18).

Now, while you eat what ever meal you may partake of on “Thanksgiving Day”, do so with true, humble thanksgiving in your heart for all the blessings which God has granted. Be reminded also that we should even be thankful for the chastising the Lord administers as it is because He loves us with an everlasting love. And, don’t forget to pray! Our nation needs it, our churches need it, our families need it, and we all need it. True Thanksgiving is in recognition of the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us on the cross of Calvary.

Wherever you may be and whatever you may do on Thanksgiving Day (truly every day of the year), present yourself as a living sacrifice unto to God, which is but our reasonable service (Romans 12:1). May God bless is our prayer, and Happy Thanksgiving!