

WHY WE CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING DAY

by Inez Comparet

Taken From *Your Heritage*

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Plus Critical Notes

The United States is the only country in the world that sets aside one day a year as a day of thanksgiving to Yahweh. Have you ever thought **why we celebrate this day?** While Thanksgiving Day as a religious ceremony it is not celebrated elsewhere as it is here, it didn't have its beginnings among the New England colonists. It originated with our ancient ancestors, the Israelites.

In Israel's early history, offerings for thanksgiving were a regular feature of worship among them. Certain feast days were set aside each year in which to give thanks, this was a national celebration. They brought the firstfruits of their harvest unto Yahweh and gave thanks for His blessings. In the fall Israel celebrated the feast of tabernacles, where much emphasis was put on rejoicing.

Deuteronomy 16:13-15 instructs us, "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after thou hast gathered in the corn and thy wine. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast ... because Yahweh shall bless thee in all thine increase and in every work of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice."

A call to thanksgiving followed their great achievements, acknowledging that Yahweh was with them. One example is given in I Chronicles 16:8-9, 12-13, 15-17 where it tells of the return of the ark of the covenant to the city of David. The ark had been captured by the Philistines and its safe return was a source of rejoicing. The Israelites offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. David gave every Israelite a loaf of bread, a piece of fish and a flagon of wine.

David wrote the following poem especially for the occasion and it is just as appropriate for today as it was then. "Give thanks unto Yahweh, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people, Sing unto Him ... Remember His marvelous works that He hath done, His wonders, and judgments of His mouth; O ye seed of Israel, His servant, ye children of Jacob, His chosen ones ... **Be ye mindful always of His covenant; the word which He commanded to a thousand generations;** Even of the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath unto Isaac; And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." It is obvious Yahweh has fulfilled this to us, for which we should give thanks.

Nehemiah tells of a great day of thanksgiving at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem. It was celebrated with thanksgiving, with singing and with harps. Nehemiah 12:43 says, "Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for Yahweh had

made them rejoice with great joy; the wives also and the children rejoiced; so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.” There are many scriptures that tell us to give thanks, for example Psalm 100:1-4. “Make a joyful noise unto Yahweh, all ye lands. Serve Yahweh with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that Yahweh is God: it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” Psalm 50:14-15 tells us, “Offer unto Yahweh thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

The command is given to give thanks in the New Testament also. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 commands us, “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of Yahweh in Yahshua concerning you.”

There is a description of our own nation in Jeremiah 30:17. It tells of the time when the captivities would be past and says, “For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds.” Then it tells of a people who would be governed by elected representatives. Representatives that would be chosen from among the people, and who would not have a king. Jeremiah 30:21 states, “And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them ... saith Yahweh.”

Centuries of history has proven there is such thing as a racial mind. This has shown itself in the consistent development of races according to their pattern, according to their own ancestry. When these same Israel people came to America, what do we find, they all have the same inborn desire to give thanks to their God, Yahweh.

The first American thanksgiving was celebrated by the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1626, after the reaping of their first harvest. This followed a winter of great starvation and privation. Governor Bradford proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to thank Yahweh for their preservation, and the food to sustain them. The feast was shared by the colonists and the neighboring Indians. Other days of thanksgiving were called, but on no particular date.

The Massachusetts Bay colony held its first thanksgiving in 1621. In 1644 the Dutch of New Netherlands set a day to give thanks and set one occasionally thereafter.

In a proclamation for a day of thanksgiving in Charleston in 1676, they called themselves, “God’s own covenant people in this wilderness.” Another of our early writers speaks of the vine which God has here planted, casting out the heathen, and preparing a room before it, and causing it to take deep root, and fill the land.

Congress recommended days of thanksgiving annually during the revolution and in 1784 for a return of peace. George Washington set aside Thursday November 26, 1789 for the general benefits and welfare of the nation.

Many states celebrated thanksgiving days but it wasn’t until 1815 that it was celebrated nationally again. President James Madison urged the people to offer thanks on a day set apart by proclamation. This came at the end of the war of 1812, when they had much to be thankful for.

We have a woman to thank for our **yearly observation** of this special day. For 17 years Mrs. Sarah J. Hale campaigned for a national thanksgiving day, she was the editor of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. She ran many editorials and created favorable sentiment. A number of the states adopted a day of thanksgiving, but not the same day.

Mrs. Hale began her campaign in 1847, petitioning six presidents, beginning with James Polk.

She finally got a sympathetic hearing from Abraham Lincoln. After the victory at Gettysburg, Lincoln proclaimed Thursday August 6, 1883, as a day of thanksgiving to God for the victory at Gettysburg. Mrs. Hale called President Lincoln's attention to the need of a national thanksgiving festival on an established day of the year. That same year 1883, Lincoln issued the proclamation naming the last Thursday in November as the first annual thanksgiving day saying, "it has seemed to me fit and proper to do this."

Since that time each president has issued such a proclamation, using the last Thursday in November, until President Franklin Roosevelt changed the day in 1939 to the third Thursday in November. He did this for three years and then it was taken out of the president's hands. On December 26, 1941, a joint congressional resolution designated the fourth Thursday of November in each year as Thanksgiving Day, making that day a legal holiday each year after the year 1941. Not many things arise spontaneously out of some occasion, without having roots in the past. Our national day of thanksgiving so consistently follows the ancient pattern that it is another of the many marks which identify us as Yahweh's people Israel. Yahweh prophesied this when in [Isaiah 43:21](#) He said of us, "This people have I formed for Myself; **they shall shew forth My praise.**"

Our ancient ancestors recognized this divine pattern in our lives. As it is recorded in [Psalm 79:13](#), "So we Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture, will give Thee thanks forever. We will shew forth Thy praise to all generations."

Our ancestors, who built this great nation in the wilderness, recognized the ancient racial pattern for they quoted the scriptural authority commanding it. Today, we too should know our racial identity and the customs which Yahweh founded for us. We should give thanks to Yahweh, not only for our blessings of health, peace and prosperity, but for the supreme blessing of all, that we are His people, His children.

We say with David in [Psalm 79:13](#), "So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever. We will show forth Thy praise to all generations."

Critical note by Clifton A. Emahsier: We should note here, by the passages of Scripture which Inez Comporet quoted, our Thanksgiving Day Celebration is not for the other races, but we alone. Like so many other things, our celebration of this day has become a controversy within Israel Identity. There are many within our group who claim that Thanksgiving Day is a pagan holiday rather than an Israelite festival. Well, if it is a pagan holiday, let them name the pagan god it honors. They can't! There isn't any! And as for the Indians who were invited to the first Thanksgiving, many of the so-called Indians in North America were actually White people who arrived here long before the time of Christopher Columbus. And if they weren't White, our forefathers made a mistake for inviting them, just as we cater to the nonwhite races today.

There are those who argue that our Thanksgiving can't be the fall festival of Tabernacles, as it is kept too late in the year. We should take note, though, that all of the Israel's festivals occurred at significant times such as the crucifixion of Christ at Passover and the Advent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. One Israelite festival that has yet to fulfilled with a significant event is Tabernacles. Is it possible that Christ's Second

Advent will happen at such a time, for no other important event has yet to be linked with Tabernacles?