

THE BIBLE VIEW

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The First Thanksgiving Proclamation

William Bradford, Governor of the First American Colony

Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as he has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.

William Bradford
Ye Governor of Ye Colony

“O praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.” Psalm 117:1

1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation

WHEREAS, It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor;

WHEREAS, Both the houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me “to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness:”

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their

becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions; to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace, and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

George Washington - *October 3, 1789*

2008 Thanksgiving Proclamation

Thanksgiving is a time for families and friends to gather together and express gratitude for all that we have been given, the freedoms we enjoy, and the loved ones who enrich our lives. We recognize that all of these blessings, and life itself, come not from the hand of man but from Almighty God.

Every Thanksgiving, we remember the story of the Pilgrims who came to America in search of religious freedom and a better life. Having arrived in the New World, these early settlers gave thanks to the Author of Life for granting them safe passage to this abundant land and protecting them through a bitter winter. Our Nation's first President, George Washington, stated in the first Thanksgiving proclamation that "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor." While in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln revived the tradition of proclaiming a day of thanksgiving, asking God to heal our wounds and restore our country.

Today, as we look back on the beginnings of our democracy, Americans recall that we live in a land of many blessings where every person has the right to live, work, and worship in freedom. Our Nation is especially thankful for the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who protect these rights while setting aside their own comfort and safety. Their courage keeps us free, their sacrifice makes us grateful, and their character makes us proud. Especially during the holidays, our whole country keeps them and their families in our thoughts and prayers.

Americans are also mindful of the need to share our gifts with others, and our Nation is moved to compassionate action. We pay tribute to all caring citizens who reach out a helping hand and serve a cause larger than themselves.

On this day, let us all give thanks to God who blessed our Nation's first days and who blesses us today. May He continue to guide and watch over our families and our country always.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 27, 2008, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all Americans to gather together in their homes and places of worship with family, friends, and loved ones to strengthen the ties that bind us and give thanks for the freedoms and many blessings we enjoy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

GEORGE W. BUSH

“Christians should have an attitude of gratitude and servitude.”

2009 Thanksgiving Proclamation

What began as a harvest celebration between European settlers and indigenous communities nearly four centuries ago has become our cherished tradition of Thanksgiving. This day's roots are intertwined with those of our Nation, and its history traces the American narrative.

Today, we recall President George Washington, who proclaimed our first national day of public thanksgiving to be observed “by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God,” and President Abraham Lincoln, who established our annual Thanksgiving Day to help mend a fractured Nation in the midst of civil war. We also recognize the contributions of Native Americans, who helped the early colonists survive their first harsh winter and continue to strengthen our Nation. From our earliest days of independence, and in times of tragedy and triumph, Americans have come together to celebrate Thanksgiving.

As Americans, we hail from every part of the world. While we observe traditions from every culture, Thanksgiving Day is a unique national tradition we all share. Its spirit binds us together as one people, each of us thankful for our common blessings.

As we gather once again among loved ones, let us also reach out to our neighbors and fellow citizens in need of a helping hand. This is a time for us to renew our bonds with one another, and we can fulfill that commitment by serving our communities and our Nation throughout the year. In doing so, we pay tribute to our country's men and women in uniform who set an example of service that inspires us all. Let us be guided by the legacy of those who have fought for the freedoms for which we give thanks, and be worthy heirs to the noble tradition of goodwill shown on this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 26, 2009, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all the people of the United States to come together, whether in our homes, places of worship, community centers, or any place where family, friends and neighbors may gather, with gratitude for all we have received in the past year; to express appreciation to those whose lives enrich our own; and to share our bounty with others. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

***Notice how the original meaning of thanking God for what He has given us is missing in more current presidential addresses.*

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” *Psalm 33:12*