

Notes: November 19, 2016

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tovv
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Jeri - Drash
8. Praise and Worship Songs
9. Message
10. Aaronic Blessing
11. Kiddush
12. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: Thanksgiving, Its Origin

We have just finished celebrating Thanksgiving. Some of you may still be experiencing leftover hangover, for which today's oneg will only add to your current state.

This time prompted me to look back at its origins.

My mission was to find a Scriptural origin as to the beginning of this day and its intent. In other words I created my destination and was working back to see if I could find my point of origin.

We commonly think of and are taught that the first Thanksgiving was by Americans is commonly traced back to the Thanksgiving holiday of 1621 at the [Plymouth Plantation](#), where the settlers held a harvest feast after a successful growing season. Autumn or early winter feasts continued sporadically in later years, first as an impromptu religious observance, and later as a civil tradition.

Yet, there is documentation of Thanksgiving holidays that predate 1621:

The first documented thanksgiving services in territory currently belonging to the United States were conducted by Spaniards^{[10][11]} and the French^[12] in the 16th century.

Thanksgiving services were routine in what became the [Commonwealth of Virginia](#) as early as 1607,^[13] with the first permanent settlement of [Jamestown, Virginia](#) holding a thanksgiving in 1610.^[10]

In 1619, 38 English settlers arrived at [Berkeley Hundred](#) in Charles City County, Virginia. The group's charter specifically required "that the day of our ships arrival at the place assigned... in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to [Almighty God.](#)"^[14]

At the time of this Thanksgiving in 1621, a composition of Pilgrims.

The Pilgrims, most of whom were Separatists ([English Dissenters](#)), are not to be confused with [Puritans](#), who established their own [Massachusetts Bay Colony](#) on the [Shawmut Peninsula](#) (current day [Boston](#)) in 1630.[\[19\]\[20\]](#)

Both groups were strict [Calvinists](#), but differed in their views regarding the [Church of England](#). Puritans wished to remain in the [Anglican Church](#) and reform it, while the Pilgrims wanted complete separation from the church.

The Pilgrims held a true thanksgiving celebration in 1623[\[24\]\[25\]](#) following a fast,[\[26\]](#) and a refreshing 14-day rain[\[27\]](#) which resulted in a larger harvest.

William DeLoss Love calculates that this thanksgiving was made on Wednesday, July 30, 1623, a day before the arrival of a supply ship with more colonists,[\[26\]](#) but before the fall harvest. In Love's opinion this 1623 thanksgiving was significant because the order to recognize the event was from civil authority[\[28\]](#) (Governor Bradford), and not from the church, making it likely the first civil recognition of Thanksgiving in [New England](#).[\[26\]](#)

Referring to the 1623 harvest after the nearly catastrophic [drought](#), William Bradford, English Separatist and Governor of Plymouth Colony wrote:

“And afterwards the Lord sent them such seasonable showers, with interchange of fair warm weather as, through His blessing, caused a fruitful and liberal harvest, to their no small comfort and rejoicing. For which mercy, in time convenient, they also set apart a day of thanksgiving... By this time harvest was come, and instead of famine now God gave them plenty ... for which they blessed God. And the effect of their particular planting was well seen, for all had ... pretty well ... so as any general want or famine had not been amongst them since to this day.”[\[29\]](#)

During the [American Revolutionary War](#) the Continental Congress appointed one or more thanksgiving days each year, each time recommending to the executives of the various states the observance of these days in their states.

The First National Proclamation of Thanksgiving was given by the Continental Congress in 1777 from its temporary location in [York, Pennsylvania](#), while the British occupied the national capital at Philadelphia. Delegate [Samuel Adams](#) created the first draft. Congress then adapted the final version:

“For as much as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:”

The [Continental-Confederation Congress](#), the legislative body that governed the United States from 1774 to 1789, issued several "national days of prayer, humiliation, and thanksgiving",[\[30\]](#) a practice that was continued by Presidents Washington and Adams under the Constitution,

This proclamation was published in *The Independent Gazetteer; or, the Chronicle of Freedom* on November 5, 1782, the first being observed on November 28, 1782:

By the United States in Congress assembled, PROCLAMATION.

It being the indispensable duty of all nations, not only to offer up their supplications to Almighty God, the giver of all good, for His gracious assistance in a time of distress, but also in a solemn and public manner, to give Him praise for His goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of His Providence in their behalf; therefore, the United States in Congress assembled, taking into their consideration the many instances of Divine goodness to these States in the course of the important conflict, in which they have been so long engaged, – the present happy and

promising state of public affairs, and the events of the war in the course of the year now drawing to a close; particularly the harmony of the public Councils which is so necessary to the success of the public cause, – the perfect union and good understanding which has hitherto subsisted between them and their allies, notwithstanding the artful and unwearied attempts of the common enemy to divide them, – the success of the arms of the United States and those of their allies, – and the acknowledgment of their Independence by another European power, whose friendship and commerce must be of great and lasting advantage to these States; Do hereby recommend it to the inhabitants of these States in general, to observe and request the several states to interpose their authority, in appointing and commanding the observation of THURSDAY the TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY OF NOVEMBER next as a day of SOLEMN THANKSGIVING to GOD for all His mercies; and they do further recommend to all ranks to testify their gratitude to God for His goodness by a cheerful obedience to His laws and by promoting, each in his station, and by his influence, the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.

As President, on October 3, 1789, George Washington made the following proclamation and created the first Thanksgiving Day designated by the national government of the United States of America:

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, and whereas both 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 signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

In the middle of the [American Civil War](#), President [Abraham Lincoln](#), prompted by a series of editorials written by [Sarah Josepha Hale](#),^[3] proclaimed a national Thanksgiving Day, to be celebrated on the final Thursday in November 1863. The document, written by Secretary of State [William H. Seward](#), reads as follows:

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe had enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years, with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and voice by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up

the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States the eighty-eighth."

Proclamation of President Abraham Lincoln, October 3, 1863. [3]

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanksgiving_(United_States))

Throughout our nation's history, the early aspects of a Thanksgiving incorporated if not centered around God and His provision and providence.

Yet, what I see, is the people making a proclamation to honor God, we see that they were influenced or even inspired by His Word...

Psa 50:14 Offer thanksgiving as your sacrifice to God, pay your vows to the Most High,
Psa 50:15 and call on me when you are in trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

Psa 50:23 "Whoever offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me; and to him who goes the right way I will show the salvation of God."

Then there is Psalm 100

Psa 100:1 *[A psalm of thanksgiving:]* Shout for joy to Adonai, all the earth!

Psa 100:2 Serve Adonai with gladness. Enter his presence with joyful songs.

Psa 100:3 Be aware that Adonai is God; it is he who made us; and we are his, his people, the flock in his pasture.

Psa 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, enter his courtyards with praise; give thanks to him, and bless his name.

Psa 100:5 For Adonai is good, his grace continues forever, and his faithfulness lasts through all generations.

And Psalm 67:

Psa 67:1 *[For the leader. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song:]* God, be gracious to us, and bless us. May he make his face shine toward us, (Selah)

Psa 67:2 so that your way may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

Psa 67:3 Let the peoples give thanks to you, God; let the peoples give thanks to you, all of them.

Psa 67:4 Let the nations be glad and shout for joy, for you will judge the peoples fairly and guide the nations on earth. (Selah)

Psa 67:5 Let the peoples give thanks to you, God; let the peoples give thanks to you, all of them.

Psa 67:6 The earth has yielded its harvest; may God, our God, bless us.

Psa 67:7 May God continue to bless us, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Could the Word of Adonai been influential?

As Pilgrims and Puritans, both were members of the church of England.

Both groups were strict [Calvinists](#), but differed in their views regarding the [Church of England](#). Puritans wished to remain in the [Anglican Church](#) and reform it, while the Pilgrims wanted complete separation from the church.

As Calvinists, reformed theologians believe that God communicates knowledge of himself to people through the Word of God. People are not able to know anything about God except through this self-revelation. Speculation about anything which God has not revealed through his Word is not warranted. The knowledge people have of God is different from that which they have of anything else because God is [infinite](#), and finite people are incapable of comprehending an infinite being. While the knowledge revealed by God to people is never incorrect, it is also never comprehensive.[\[20\]](#)

Therefore, it is extremely likely they were not only influenced by the Word of God, but likely inspired by it.

Yet, when we look at Israel's thanksgivings, they were not **proclamations** by the people but are a proclamation by Adonai...

Definition – A public or official announcement, especially one dealing with a matter of great importance.

Deu 16:16 "Three times a year all your men are to appear in the presence of Adonai your God in the place which he will choose - at the festival of matzah, at the festival of Shavu`ot and at the festival of Sukkot. They are not to show up before Adonai empty-handed,

Deu 16:17 but every man is to give what he can, in accordance with the blessing Adonai your God has given you.

Moshe recounts to a new generation the three feasts that He has proclaimed and are to be celebrated every year, at their appointed times.

On Passover you are to remember that we left Egypt in hastes with Adonai delivering His people from slavery through many signs and wonders.

On Shavuot, you are to remember that you were slaves in Egypt, but now you are free and in doing so, Adonai has caused you to prosper. Due to His provision and our remembrance, we should be inspired to follow His laws, rather than being bound by the laws of our former oppressor.

On Sukkot, you are to rejoice for 7 days, after all the hard work of bringing in the crops is complete.

Deu 16:15 Seven days you are to keep the festival for Adonai your God in the place Adonai your God will choose, because Adonai your God will bless you in all your crops and in all your work, so you are to be full of joy!

Three times a year of thanksgiving, when all the people are to gather at a place where Adonai designates.

In other words, you have been invited to a celebration at the home of your God. You are not to come empty handed to the house of your host, but are to bring something that honors them.

What I was looking for, I ultimately did not find. Sometimes you don't always find what you are looking for. Keeping in mind I was trying to connect us back to God, rather than God connecting Himself to us.

What I didn't find was some piece of information that would have linked our Thanksgiving back specifically to Adonai's feasts.

The best I could find were the Scriptures I had provided earlier regarding thanksgiving. Know that there are other verses I didn't mention, but from an historical account, I was unable to find a direct link to Sukkot, that being the final feast held in the fall.

Sukkot may in some way shape or form have inspired our Thanksgiving, but direct credit is absent.

But still Sha'ul says to Timothy,

1Th 5:18 In everything give thanks, for this is what God wants from you who are united with the Messiah Yeshua.

We may establish a day to give thanks, Adonai establishes moadim to honor Him, yet we are not restricted by these times to Honor Him in everything. Yet, during His moadim, let our thanksgiving be elevated because they are His appointed times.