

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Thanksgiving

Jerry Fite

The first President of the United States of America, George Washington, proclaimed a national day of “thanksgiving” on October 3, 1789. In his proclamation from New York, he stated the following:

“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.

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 which we experienced 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 hath been pleased to confer upon us.”

George Washington believed in the glorious Almighty God. He placed the newly founded United States of America in the beneficent hands of God’s providence. God had blessed the present citizenry before they became a nation, and now the nation, present and future, should pray for continued protection, and give grateful thanks to “the beneficent Author” of all “good.”

In the Old Testament, God instructed His people to give thanks to God for His “merciful loving kindness.” Jehovah, who is “good” and “faithful to all generations” should create in people “worshipful,” “joyous,” and “thankful” hearts (*Psalms 100:4-5*). Giving thanks to the “God of gods” is commanded of Israel (*Psalms 136:1-2*). Twenty-six times in twenty-six verses God’s “enduring loving kindness” stands above the door of thankfulness. From the creation of the heavens and the earth unto God giving His people land as their heritage serves as bookends as God delivering His people from Egyptian bondage, sustaining them in the wilderness wanderings, and providentially leading them to victory over kings fill in specific reasons for thanksgiving.

In the New Testament, we are exhorted to not only “pray without ceasing,” but “be thankful in all things” (*I Thessalonians 5:17-18*). Giving thanks for our food and for our salvation from sin are book ends filled in between with all the specific physical and spiritual blessings we enjoy in Christ (*cf. I Tim. 4:4-5; Col. 1:12-14*). Being thankful to God should characterize our lives, not just one specific day in November.