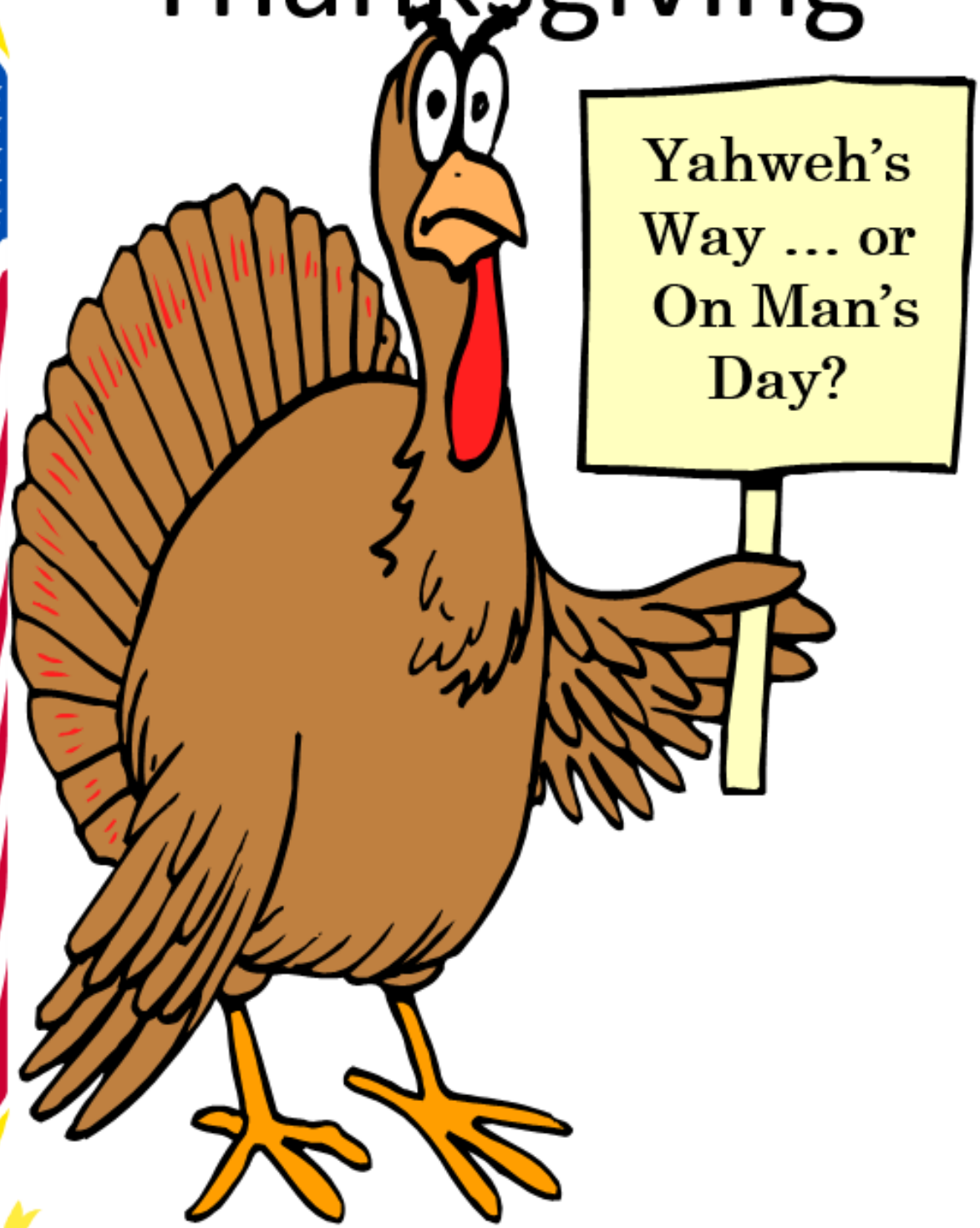
Thanksgiving



by Larry and June Acheson

Thanksgiving: Yahweh's Way or On Man's Day?

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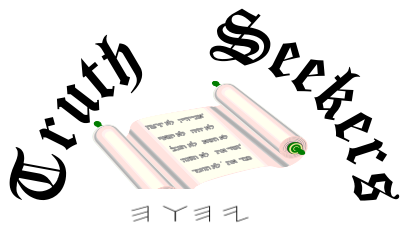

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Thanksgiving: Yahweh's Way or On Man's Day?

Does the United States' holiday known as "Thanksgiving" have the blessing of Yahweh or is something about this holiday hiding under a veneer of righteousness?

When I explain to various individuals our rationale for not observing Halloween, they for the most part understand our reasons and do not typically offer any protests or challenges to my reasoning. Virtually no one denies the deeply-rooted pagan customs associated with Halloween, yet this does not prevent the majority of people from celebrating the holiday.[1] However, as the following month unravels, another very popular holiday looms on the horizon, and a now familiar question surfaces: "*What are you doing for Thanksgiving?*" And after the fourth Thursday of November passes, it's "*Did y'all have a happy Thanksgiving?*"

Now that's a toughie for us to answer. You see, our family does not observe the American holiday known as "Thanksgiving." We have to be careful how we answer that question because sometimes people get the wrong impression when we don't think before we speak! "***What***?" they exclaim. "You don't observe ***Thanksgiving***? You don't think we should set aside a day to give thanks for our blessings?!"

Yes, this is a common reaction from people who learn that we don't observe Thanksgiving. Disbelief. Shock. Bewilderment. But above all, it is a reaction of ***misunderstanding***. Certainly anyone who worships the Creator of the universe should recognize the importance of expressing thanks to Him for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us. Anyone willfully electing to shun this holiday must not ***really*** be a sincere, devout believer … or so it is reasoned! Or maybe this person is just simply not very well-versed and grounded in the truth of the Bible! Yes, we have encountered these responses upon informing various individuals of our position regarding the celebration of Thanksgiving. How can we respond to these questions? Can there be a logical, Scripturally-based response that will demonstrate how our position has the support of the Bible, or are we ***really*** missing some marbles? Before forming your own conclusion, before you decide that the United States' version of Thanksgiving is without a doubt a celebration that has the full-fledged support of our Heavenly Father, we invite you to consider the reasons we have for believing as we do.

As most of us learned in school, the United States' custom of observing Thanksgiving traces its origin to the early Pilgrims, who in October, 1621, set aside time to give thanks for their blessings, and yes, even their ***survival*** from the previous year's bitter, deadly winter. Those men and women struggled against the odds, and in the end not only survived, but reaped a bountiful harvest. And to whom did they give the credit for overcoming the odds and providing them with such an abundant harvest? They gave it all to our Heavenly Father! To commemorate their deliverance from what appeared to be certain death for all who had ventured to America, they chose to annually hold a festive meal in remembrance of that deliverance and in honor of the One Who saw them through those dreadful times.

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[1] I invite you to request our study "Our Halloween Treat" for an in-depth study on why we do not believe our Heavenly Father desires for His people to observe Halloween.

It is wonderful to want to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the blessings He has given us, a point that we have already established. This is a cause that is truly commendable, and Scriptural as well. In I Thessalonians 5:18, for example, we are told, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of Yahweh[2] in Messiah Yeshua[3] concerning you." Indeed, we could easily devote this entire study to demonstrating how each of us should pause to consider the many blessings we have been given, and give thanks to our Heavenly Father for those blessings. For the sake of brevity, however, we will simply make it known here that we are not opposed to giving thanks to our Creator for the blessings He has given us!

So What's the Problem?

If we are not opposed to giving thanks to our Heavenly Father, then why are we opposed to celebrating the United States' holiday called *Thanksgiving*? As we begin to answer this question, it might be wise to start by pointing out that perhaps it is not so much that we are opposed to this holiday being celebrated as it is that we are opposed to certain holidays that are ***not*** being celebrated. What holidays are we referring to? Quite simply, the holidays that are spoken of and commanded in Scripture.

In His Word to us, Yahweh commanded His people to celebrate and observe seven days throughout the year as being holy (set apart) days. Those days are: the first and last days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, and the first and last days of the Feast of Tabernacles (*c.f.,* Leviticus 23). Many people believe the Messiah "did away" with those days. However, Yeshua plainly stated in Matthew 5:17-19 that we aren't even to ***think*** He came to do such a thing. For those who believe the Apostle Paul taught the abolition of the law, one need only observe that in Acts 25, a passage describing Paul's final days of his ministry, Paul himself made it clear that he had not broken *any* of Yahweh's laws. In verse eight he affirmed, "*Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all*."

We do not wish to label the Apostle Paul a liar, yet if he indeed *did* teach the abolition of any of Yahweh's laws, such as the Sabbath or holy days, then quite frankly, he ***lied*** in stating what he did in Acts 25:8. If he taught the believers that the fourth commandment is no longer binding, then he most certainly would have ceased sanctifying that day himself. One does not teach others one thing and then do *another*! In short, Paul would not have on the one hand taught the abrogation of the Sabbath law

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[2] In the original manuscripts of the Bible, the authors did not refer to the Creator as "God." In fact, it can be demonstrated that *God* is originally the name of a pagan deity worshipped by those who forsake Yahweh (Isaiah 65:11, see the Hebrew text). As such, June and I do not worship *God*: we worship *Yahweh*. We are persuaded that *God* was not a proper choice for the translators to employ in their English translations, and we invite you to read our studies titled "Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, But Names Will Never Hurt Me!" and "God's Name According to Ancient Hebrew Scholars" for more details on why we believe as we do. We have chosen to employ the names of Yahweh and Yeshua in this study out of our desire to refer to our Heavenly Father and His Son by Their given names. Since names do not translate, and since Scripture reveals that it is important for us to know these names, we choose to use them.

[3] As with our Heavenly Father's name, so it is with the name of His Son. June and I choose to refer to the Messiah by the name He was given at birth, which is pronounced *Yeshua*. The commonly recognized form *Jesus* can be shown to be a poor transliteration of yet *another* poor transliteration, *Iesous*. While I do not believe salvation hinges on the precise enunciation of either the Messiah's name or that of His Father, I nevertheless do not believe this in any way justifies altering the original pronunciation of either name if it can be avoided. I invite you to read our study titled "Name of the Messiah: יהושע? ישוע?", which I humbly believe is the one of the most comprehensive and impartial examinations ever done on the Messiah's name.

while simultaneously observing it faithfully each week![4] Many other verses in the New Testament demonstrate that the early believers observed Yahweh's laws, but it is not our purpose to address this particular issue in this brief study. If you wish to pursue this issue, we would suggest that you begin by requesting our study titled "Did the Apostle Paul Admonish the Galatian Believers for Observing the Sabbath and Holy Days?"

Once we establish the fact that the early believers faithfully observed Yahweh's laws, we can at once grasp that they observed His holy days as well, those days mentioned earlier, such as Pass-over/Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. These festivals were, of course, a time of rejoicing before Yahweh. According to Deuteronomy 14:26, "... thou shalt eat there before Yahweh thy Almighty, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household." In addition to rejoicing, however, these times were also used to give thanks to our Heavenly Father for the blessings He bestows. Although it is not specifically mentioned in Scripture that the feasts were set aside for the giving of thanks, it certainly follows that the believers would not have rejoiced before Yahweh without simultaneously expressing thanks to Him for the blessings He had provided them! How could we truly rejoice before Yahweh without expressing thankfulness for what He has done, and what He has promised to those who are faithful to Him?

We do not wish to label the Apostle Paul a liar, yet if he indeed did teach the abolition of any of Yahweh's laws, such as the Sabbath or holy days, then quite frankly, he ***lied*** in stating what he did in Acts 25:8.

History Records Expressing Thanks at Tabernacles

While it may be true that ***Scripture*** is silent with regard to the early believers' expressing thanks while at the festivals, ***history*** is not silent. It was customary, for example, to sing the 118th Psalm during the Feast of Tabernacles, a psalm renowned for its expressions of thankfulness towards Yahweh. The psalm opens and closes with the words, "O give thanks unto Yahweh; for He is good: because His mercy endureth for ever!" Note what *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* has to say with regard to this psalm. The following comes from the article "Festivals," section "Booths (or Tabernacles), Feast of":

> As soon as the altar was decorated with the willow branches the morning sacrifice was offered, followed by the special festive sacrifices. While these sacrifices were being offered, the Levites chanted the Great Hallel, as at the Passover and Pentecost. When the choir came to the words 'Give thanks to [Yahweh]' (Ps. 118:1), again when they sang, 'O [Yahweh], do save, we beseech Thee' (118:25), and once more at the close, 'Give thanks to [Yahweh]' (118:29), all the worshipers shook their *lulabs* (palms) toward the altar. The chant finished, the priests marched around the altar, exclaiming 'Hosanna, O [Yahweh]; give us help, O [Yahweh], give prosperity' (cf. 118:25). The benediction was then pronounced, and the people dispersed, amid the repeated exclamation 'How beautiful art

[4] Furthermore, the Greek word translated "offended" in Acts 25:8 (ἥμαρτον, *hēmarton*) means "to sin." Therefore, Paul told his listening audience that he had not *sinned* against the law of the Jews.

> thou, O altar!' or 'To [Yahweh] and thee, O altar, we give thanks!' This prayer for succor was applied to [Messiah] when the multitude greeted [Yeshua] on His entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:8,9, John 12:12-13).[5]

As an additional witness testifying to the fact that this psalm is traditionally identified with the Feast of Tabernacles, we display the following summary of Psalm 118:25 as taken from *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*:

> **25.** *Save now, I beseech thee.* These words were sung by the Jews on the Feast of Tabernacles, when carrying green branches in their hands; and from the *hoshiah nna*, we have the word *hosanna*. This was sung by the Jewish children when Christ made His public entry into Jerusalem. See Matt. xxi.9.[6]

The giving of thanks, of course, was not and is not limited to the times of Yahweh's festivals. Thanksgiving is indeed mentioned in Scripture apart from Yahweh's festivals. When King David had the ark of the covenant brought up to Jerusalem (cf. I Chronicles 15 and 16), it was done with much celebration and fanfare. In I Chronicles 16:4, we read,

> And he appointed *certain* of the Levites to minister before the ark of Yahweh, and to record, and to thank and praise Yahweh Almighty of Israel.

In verse eight of this same chapter, David said, "*Give thanks unto Yahweh, call upon His name, make known His deeds among the people!*" Certainly, then, the giving of thanks to our Creator is not restricted to specific time frames, even though it played a large role in the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles.

In Leviticus chapter seven we read of "sacrifices of thanksgiving," which are associated with the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings. Displayed below is Leviticus 7:11-15:

> 11 And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he [the priest] shall offer unto Yahweh.
> 12 If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried.
> 13 Besides the cakes, he shall offer *for* his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings.
> 14 And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation *for* an heave offering unto Yahweh, *and* it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings.
> 15 And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.

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[5] From *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, article "Festivals," section "Booths (or Tabernacles), Feast of," by Merrill F. Unger, Moody Press, Chicago, 1988, (originally published in 1957), pp. 419-420. Note: I took the liberty of restoring the names *Yahweh* and *Yeshua* in the quote from this commentary.

[6] Cf., *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, by Adam Clarke, Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, Missouri, 1985, (originally published in 1826), p. 522.

At the time of Judah's return from the Babylonian captivity, there was occasion for great thanksgiving to Yahweh! Nehemiah records this monumental event in the 12th chapter of his book, and describes how, at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they kept the dedication "with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps" (Nehemiah 12:27). Not only this, but in verses 31-43, Nehemiah describes how he appointed two processions of choirs for the specific purpose of giving thanks to Yahweh. Yes, thanksgiving is one of the many threads interwoven into the whole of Yahweh's Word, and without it much of the significance of Yahweh's plan of salvation would be lost. We can only echo the heart-felt sentiments expressed by King David in Psalms 69:30-31:

> 30 I will praise the name of the Almighty with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving!
> 31 This also shall please Yahweh better than an ox *or* bullock that hath horns and hoofs!

We have established two major elements as we attempt to give a definitive answer to those who question why we do not observe the traditional American celebration of Thanksgiving. First, the early believers did not observe the same holidays observed by believers in today's time period, as the early believers only observed festivals that were commanded by Yahweh. Secondly, the holidays observed by the early believers were punctuated by the giving of thanks to *Yahweh*. In fact, the very worship of Yahweh, every day of the year, included offering Him sacrifices of thanksgiving. The act of giving thanks, then, cannot be confined to a day. It is a part of the believer's *lifestyle*.

Do these elements prove that it is wrong to participate in the celebration of Thanksgiving? No, they do not. In fact, one might argue that there are examples in Scripture of occasions that believers memorialized to commemorate certain events. Remember the story behind the Feast of Purim? It is recorded in the book of Esther. This is the touching story of a Jewess and her cousin Mordecai, and of how they saved the Jews from extermination by the wicked Haman. It was decreed in Esther 9:21 that all Jews should memorialize this deliverance by keeping the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar (twelfth month of the year). The festival of Hanukkah (Dedication) is yet another example of how men have chosen to commemorate a great deliverance to the honor of the Heavenly Father. Beginning on the 25th of the month Chisleu (ninth month of the year), this festival lasts eight days, commemorating the Jews' victory over Syria's King Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 BCE. This wicked king determined to forcefully impose his pagan practices upon the Jews upon penalty of death, and he even erected an idol of Zeus in the Temple. However, with Yahweh's help, a small, outnumbered army of men led by Judas Maccabees, defeated the Syrians and rededicated the Temple to the worship of Yahweh, hence the name of the festival: Hanukkah, or "dedication." This festival is mentioned in John 10:22, and Yeshua's presence at the Temple certainly implies that He recognized and observed this festival.[7]

One might argue, saying, "Hey, if those people added celebrations to commemorate great events, and it was done to the honor of the Creator, and especially since these festivals (Purim and Hanukkah) were ordained by *men* and not commanded by Yahweh, then what is wrong with men appointing a day of Thanksgiving to commemorate the great celebration of survival instituted by those pilgrims back in

[7] For more information regarding the Hanukkah festival, we invite you to read our study titled, "Should Believers Observe Hanukkah?"

1621?" The quick answer to this question is, "Nothing," but before we let that be our final answer, let us consider some other points that we need to factor into our decision.

Should We Appoint Festivals WITHOUT Yahweh's Approval?

In the book of I Kings 11 we read of the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite prophesying to Jeroboam that he would be given a kingdom consisting of ten tribes of the nation of Israel. Ahijah concluded his prophecy by counseling Jeroboam that if he would walk in the ways of Yahweh, doing that which is right in Yahweh's sight, to keep His statutes and His commandments as David had done, that He would be with him and build him a "sure house" (I Kings 11:38). Of course, the prophecy came to pass, and Jeroboam became king of Israel, over what is known as the "northern kingdom." Did he then walk in the ways of Yahweh, doing that which is right in His sight? No, he did not. Instead of walking faithfully in the ways of Yahweh, he completely ***abandoned*** Yahweh and made golden calves for the people to worship!

Not only this, but note what King Jeroboam ***also*** did. In I Kings 12:32-33, we read of how he ordained a festival on days of his own choosing, days which did ***not*** have the blessing of Yahweh!

> 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, **like unto the feast that *is* in Judah**, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.
> 33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

Here we have record of a festival (holiday) added by a man that ***did not*** have the approval of Yahweh. What could be the reason for this? Well, first of all, this festival was not dedicated to the worship of Yahweh. Instead, it was dedicated to the worship of ***idols***, the golden calves of which Jeroboam said, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt!" Jeroboam did not give the credit for deliverance from Egypt to ***Yahweh***, but rather to a couple of golden calves! This most certainly was ***not*** a festival that could have been recognized by Yahweh, since it wasn't even a festival ***dedicated*** to Him!

Secondly, it is important that we recognize that this festival was designed to be "like unto the feast that is in Judah." It was held exactly one month later than Yahweh's ordained Feast of Tabernacles, and its purpose was to ***mimic*** that feast, and hence to ***replace it***! In other words, instead of obeying the command to observe the feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month, Jeroboam took it upon himself to say (in so many words), "No, let's observe this festival in the ***eighth month***, not the seventh month! Never mind what *Yahweh* commanded, we will do away with His commands and do it in the month that **I** choose!"

Can We Compare Jeroboam's Feast With "Thanksgiving"?

Surely we cannot draw any parallels between the feast ordained by Jeroboam and the American holiday known as "Thanksgiving," can we? Well, yes we can, and here are a few:

- "Thanksgiving" was ordained by man, not by Yahweh.
- "Thanksgiving" is not / was not celebrated by those who ordained it ***in addition to*** the festivals of Yahweh. Rather, it is more accurately done ***instead of*** one or more of the festivals of Yahweh.
- Jeroboam's feast was held one month after Yahweh's Feast of Tabernacles. "Thanksgiving" often occurs a month or so after Yahweh's Feast of Tabernacles. Curiously, the pilgrims' original Thanks-giving feast occurred during the month of ***October***, the same month during which Tabernacles is usually observed.

Thanksgiving, on the surface, seems to have an honorable background, with pilgrims setting aside time to thank the Father for blessing them and seeing them through that year after the previous bitter, harsh winter. This act of giving thanks, in and of itself, was very noble. Indeed, we have established that we see nothing wrong with setting aside time to give thanks to the Almighty, especially to give Him thanks for getting us through a difficult situation. Yet, with regard to designating an *official observance*, as has previously been demonstrated, Yahweh has *already* designated harvest festivals in which to rejoice and give thanks. If man chooses to add another such day to the calendar in commemoration of yet *another* great deliverance, then so much the better! This can be no worse than what the Jews did when they incorporated the festivals of Purim and Hanukkah! *But note the crucial difference!* Ancient Judaism did not abandon Yahweh's festivals in order to ordain festivals of their own. Can the same be said for the American holiday known as "Thanksgiving"?

Sadly, the answer is "no." The celebration of this holiday was not only initiated by men who did not recognize the festivals commanded by Yahweh, but it continues to be observed in the same manner by the vast majority of people even to this day. Our family is confronted with a choice: Do we observe Yahweh's festivals while simultaneously acquiescing to those who invite us to join in their own independent celebration of Thanksgiving, knowing that these people have no intentions of recognizing the permanence of the laws of Yahweh, *or* do we humbly protest the decision to ignore Yahweh's laws by refusing to take part in the customs perpetrated by these well-meaning, yet disobedient people? Upon considering our options, we have chosen to only go along with holidays that we feel are reasonably set aside by people who are *already* observing the laws of Yahweh. Regrettably, Thanksgiving does not fit into this category. We are told in II Corinthians 6:17 to be a *separate* people. We are not to join in the customs of those whose hearts are not fully intent on obeying our Heavenly Father.

We have been told by some that Thanksgiving is not even a "religious holiday," that it's actually a *secular* observance. However, history records otherwise, as President George Washington, in proclaiming November 26th as a day of Thanksgiving, declared, "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 . . . 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. . . ."[8]

The United States' version of Thanksgiving, from its *inception*, was a religious observance. It is true that it is even celebrated by those who do not believe in a Creator, but this does not detract from its religious roots. Many resources readily acknowledge that Thanksgiving has its equivalent holidays in other cultures, and that one of those equivalents is the Feast of Tabernacles. In other words, instead of observing Thanksgiving, the Jews observe Tabernacles. The following information comes from the book *The American Book of Days*, by Jane M. Hatch:

> Although Thanksgiving is one of the most popular holidays in the United States, the idea of setting aside a day to express gratitude for good fortune did not originate in this country. In ancient times many peoples held special festivals in the autumn to give thanks for bountiful harvests. The Greeks honored Demeter, their goddess of agriculture, with a nine-day cele-bration, and in a similar fashion the Romans paid tribute to Ceres (identified with Demeter). After the crops had been gathered, the Anglo-Saxons rejoiced at a 'harvest home,' which featured a hearty feast. In Scotland the harvest celebration was known as a *kirn* and included special church services and a sub-stantial dinner. Since biblical days, Jews have given thanks for abundant harvests with the eight-day Feast of Tabernacles, an observance that continues to the present era (see October 15). From ancient times, it also was common for people to set aside special days on which to give thanks for military victories, for deliverance from epidemics, and for other occasions of good fortune.
>
> Thus, since most of the settlers who came to America probably had known some form of thanksgiving day in their homelands, it is not surprising that they transplanted this custom to the New World.[9]

As explained in Hatch's book, not only is the United States' version of Thanksgiving generally observed as a religious celebration by a people intent on ***not observing*** the days our Heavenly Father commanded us to observe, but it is quite possible that the roots of this particular *Thanksgiving* reach down to pagan observances instituted as substitutes for the *real thing*: The Feast of Tabernacles. We choose not to gamble on this possibility. One cannot go wrong by doing what the Word says to do. If we observe days sanctioned by His Word, then we will reap the blessings of obedience. If we choose to add days of special recognition to our Heavenly Father to *further* commemorate His power and deliverance, then this is still not outside of His will. But when we *set aside* the days He commands us to observe in favor of *other days*, as Jeroboam did, this is where we draw the line. The United States' version of Thanksgiving, then, can at best only be regarded as a substitution or equivalent to Yahweh's Feast of Tabernacles, the greatest Thanksgiving festival of all.

Equipped with the understanding that the United States' version of Thanksgiving is a *substitution*—a replacement—for the "real thing" (the Feast of Tabernacles), we have personally

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[8] From *The New Book of Knowledge* encyclopedia, article "Thanksgiving," Vol. 18, Grolier Inc., New York, 1972.
[9] From *The American Book of Days*, by Jane M. Hatch, H. W. Wilson Co., New York, 1978, pp. 1053.

chosen to not recognize that day as being any more special than any of the six work days of the week. We have chosen to allow our Heavenly Father to determine which holidays (*holy days*) we observe, not man. It is therefore with great pleasure that when people ask us about our plans for Thanksgiving, we confidently reply, "We have ***already*** observed Thanksgiving! The Feast of Tabernacles ***is*** our Thanksgiving." We thank you for taking the time to read our perspective on this traditional American holiday.

Conclusion

I have shown that Thanksgiving was ordained by man (President George Washington) as a day to be grateful for *God's* benefits, and to humbly implore his protection and favor. However, for those who are willing to accept facts, *God* is not the Creator's name (or title); rather, it's the name of a pagan idol whose worship is and was condemned by the true Creator, *Yahweh*. So the name *God* doesn't identify the Creator of the universe; in fact, ancient believers understood the opposite—that *God* is the name of "the devil."[10] *It's a pagan name!* The true Creator—*Yahweh*—commands His people to have *nothing* to do with the customs of those who do not worship Him (*i.e.*, heathens):

> 29 When Yahweh thy Elohim shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;
> 30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their elohim, saying how did these nations serve their elohim? even so will I do likewise.

Let's face it: The men who ordained the American version of Thanksgiving as a holiday did not worship Yahweh. Albeit ignorantly, they worshipped the Almighty under the name of an idol—*God*—and spurned the Almighty's commandments, including Sabbathkeeping, the clean/unclean food laws, and His ordained festivals. While they certainly had a reverence for the Almighty, their faith was misguided and misplaced, having veered off the path of righteousness. Had they worshipped Yahweh and honored Him by following the precepts found in His Torah, they would have celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in its season along with the other ordained festivals. There would have been no need to ordain a new one.

If our nation's founding fathers had based their beliefs and worship on *Yahweh*, calling on *His* name, they likewise would have been keeping *His* commandments and recognizing *His* festivals as *eternal* rather than "done away." However, since they had no regard for Yahweh's name *or* His commandments, they had no problem with ordaining a day of their own choosing as a festival of Thanksgiving.

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[10] The 1st century BCE Hebrew scholars who translated Isaiah 65:11 into Greek plainly regarded the idol named דג (pronounced *gawd*) as the devil. Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton, in his English translation of the Septuagint, translated Isaiah 65:11 as follows:

> 11¶ But ye are they that have left Me, and forget My holy mountain, and prepare a table for the devil, and fill up the drink-offering to Fortune.

The Greek word translated "devil" is δαιμονίω (pronounced *daimonio*), and it represents how the ancient Hebrew scholars translated the Hebrew *God* (דג). Thus, those ancient Hebrew scholars understood that *God* is the name of *the devil*, the polar opposite of *Yahweh*.

No earnest believer will deny that we should give thanks to our Heavenly Father each and every day, so *on the surface*, it seems incomprehensible that anyone would reject celebrating a day of Thanksgiving. The only thing is, it was ordained by *men* who spurn Yahweh's already-ordained days of Thanksgiving—days that continue for *eight* days—in favor of a one-day festival ordained by *men*. If those same men had ordained a secular festival *in addition to* Yahweh's ordained feasts, *and* if it was done in *Yahweh's* honor instead of *God's*, we would be glad to join them in the spirit of commemorating the Pilgrims' gratitude after having survived the previous year's adversity. As it is, we should certainly be disheartened that man has rejected the worship of *Yahweh* in favor of *God*, but to then ordain any festivals *in place of* festivals ordained by Yahweh should injure our very souls. Yet, that is what has transpired, and rather than *reject* the celebration of the American version of Thanksgiving, many believers, even among those who worship Yahweh, *embrace* it.

We express our belief/concern with all due respect to those who disagree, especially including members of our own family. We condemn no one, as that is not our role in life (John 5:22).