

## Being Grateful 11-18-08 AM

The history of Thanksgiving is generally thought to be an account of how it was that after surviving terrible ordeals and being aided by the natives, the Pilgrims gave thanks for the new harvest with the natives of North America. This image of Thanksgiving misses what I would call the "real" history, which begins in our country's darkest hour. During the American Civil War, our president ordered a national day of thanks to God in October 1863

*"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. ....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....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."* Abraham Lincoln

It brings to mind another nation which missed the mark on being thankful. We recall that Israel was delivered from the great enemy Egypt. However, they were sent into a wilderness; where could they be fed from? God's perfect, divine answer: a "rain" of bread from heaven, called manna (Exodus 16). Israel sustained for the entire time in the wilderness. Were they grateful? Consider the events of Numbers 11. Now remember, these things were written for our understanding (Romans 15, I Corinthians 10). What should we learn from this?

Jesus tells us the real meaning of Manna: John 6:31-58. Here Jesus used a miracle of feeding to teach that He is the TRUE manna, the bread of life. He would culminate this teaching by saying: "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life". Therefore, Jesus' words are the Bread of Life. This makes the Bible, the Word of God, our manna.

Our Bread From Heaven Is enough to preserve our lives. It is enough to meet every spiritual need (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Finally, it is all we can and should expect to receive (Jude 3). Our great danger is that we can be ungrateful for our bread. Just as Israel wanted richer meats, worldly food, and to satisfy the belly, we too can be ungrateful for our bread.

We all know how offended when someone is not grateful for the help we provide. Maybe a brother in Christ who asks for aid and then refuses to offer thanks. Maybe it is helping the "man on the street", and he is not pleased he did not receive more or better. How can we face God and not be grateful for the bread of life? We pray to God: *"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"*; so let us thank Him for the Bread of Life