

A Time for Thanksgiving

*“It is a good thing
to give thanks unto
the LORD, and to
sing praises unto
thy name, O most*

*High: To shew
forth thy loving-
kindness in the
morning, and thy
faithfulness every
night.”*

—Psalm 92:1,2

THIS YEAR ON NOVEMBER

22nd, the citizens of the United States will again observe a very special day that has been set aside for giving thanks to our Creator for his abundant blessings. Although this custom has continued for many decades, the people of God are glad for another occasion and opportunity to give special

thanks to our loving and eternal Heavenly Father. They rejoice in the knowledge of his ultimate purpose concerning his human family.

THANKS BE UNTO GOD

In our featured text, the psalmist encourages us to show forth our thankfulness to God in the morning as well as in the night. In this connection, the Apostle Paul also wrote, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (I Thess. 5:18) For us to properly

give thanks in Christ Jesus in everything that we say and do, means that each and every day will be filled with thanksgiving and praise to him. This further suggests that we should thank him not only for those blessings that have contributed to our well-being and joy, but we also trust and thank him for the trials and testings that he has permitted to come our way for our spiritual growth as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

In his letter to the brethren at Corinth, the apostle proclaimed, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15) Paul's use of the word 'unspeakable' in this scripture points to the fact that words cannot possibly convey the true meaning and value of Jesus' sacrificial life on our behalf, as well as for the sins of the whole world. The Apostle Peter also used this same word that has been translated unspeakable in his first epistle, when he wrote, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (I Pet. 1:8) Peter emphasizes the fact that, although we cannot now see our dear Lord, we yet continue to rejoice in the wonderful hope that, if faithful, we will share with him in his glory. This is indeed an 'unspeakable' blessing for which we give thanks to our all-wise and loving Heavenly Father.

God's gift of his only begotten Son to the world of mankind indicates Jesus' willingness to leave his heavenly home, come to earth and give his own perfect life in sacrifice to save mankind from their

inherited penalty of sin and death. Concerning this wonderful gift, Luke wrote, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) The Apostle John also addressed this thought when he said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) This promise will be ultimately realized during the future kingdom of our dear Lord and his faithful church, for which the whole obedient human family will offer their thanks.

THE PSALMIST'S MESSAGE

In his further exhortations of praise and thanksgiving to God in our featured text, the psalmist says, "Thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep." (Ps. 92:4,5) We behold the wondrous works of God on a continuing daily basis and are thus filled with love and thankfulness to him. All of the sustenance for our lives, both temporal and spiritual, have been made available to us by his power, love, and grace. He has truly provided for our every need and growth, not only in the physical sense, but even more importantly as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

GOD'S MAJESTIC GLORY

The psalmist David proclaims the fact that the marvelous and intricate works of God will speak for themselves. In this connection he pointed out, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day

uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” (Ps. 19:1,2) Anyone who has ever looked up at the starry sky at night can surely bear witness to the majestic works and glory of our eternal and loving Heavenly Father. He emphasizes further, “There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” (vs. 3) During the daylight hours, the sun shines to provide us with light and life and, during the night, we may behold the awesome majesty of the stars, planets, and other heavenly bodies. For this, we offer him our thanks and praise.

David continues by explaining, “Their line [their rule or direction, *Marginal Translation*] is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle of the sun. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” (vss. 4,5) God’s wonderful handiwork of Creation truly speaks for itself. We note, too, that in the psalmist’s symbolic language we are given a brief glimpse of the glorious bridegroom coming forward to meet the faithful members of his bride who have been running in the race for the High Calling that has been set before them.

The psalmist then says, “His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” (vs. 6) How thankful we all should be for the joy that has been set before us. We are glad for another opportunity to give thanks and praise to our loving Heavenly Father at this Thanksgiving season, and also at all times during the year.

JESUS GAVE THANKS TO HIS FATHER

Our precious Lord Jesus always gave thanks to his Heavenly Father. He did this on the occasion of passing the cup, and again when offering the unleavened bread to his disciples when they were invited to partake of the Last Supper. Luke records this very special event, saying, "He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves." (Luke 22:17) Afterward, we read, "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." (vs. 19) Our Lord's attitude of giving thanks to his Heavenly Father on every occasion should also be an ever present mark of character for the Lord's people on this, as well as on all other occasions.

EXPRESSING OUR THANKFULNESS

One of the more familiar ways in which we may take to express our gratitude for the many benefits we receive from God is to thank him daily for the food that he has provided for us at mealtimes. This should become a regular habit among all who are striving to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus. When we begin our day, we should thank our loving Father for all of his blessings toward us. Also, at the conclusion of our day, we should thank him, and ask his forgiveness for whatever we may have said or done that may not have been pleasing to him.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Christian parents will most likely want to teach their children to be thankful for whatever gifts and other blessings that they may receive. When they

are very young they may have to be reminded of this, but if this is instilled in them from early childhood the habit of giving thanks to God will become well established when he or she grows up. Parents are thus pleased when their children begin to show their genuine gratitude and thankfulness. So, too, is it with our Heavenly Father when his special children become well established as mature Christians. He is surely pleased whenever we may come to him with our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for all of his abundant grace and watchcare over us.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

Giving thanks to God for his many blessings thus becomes an important part of our everyday prayer life. When writing to the Colossian brethren, the Apostle Paul revealed this particular trait of his Christian growth and character development. He told them, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” (Col. 1:3) The apostle indicated that he had learned of the ecclesia’s progress in grace from his friend and fellow servant Epaphras, “Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.”—vss. 7,8

In his letter, Paul then wrote, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” (vs. 9) His prayers were surely filled with the spirit of praise and thankfulness on behalf of his brethren at Colossae. This is strongly indicated when he told them, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing

in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”—vss. 10-12

The apostle’s words of prayer and thanksgiving to God were surely a blessing to those brethren who received his letter, and they are also a blessing to us who are now living during the closing years of harvest of the present Gospel Age. All who have heard the wonderful invitation to the High Calling in Christ Jesus and have responded to it in terms of full consecration are blessed, and give thanks unto God. Paul’s wonderful testimony shows his degree of thankfulness for the Truth and God’s marvelous plans for his people.

A MARK OF CHARACTER

One of the main reasons for the apostle’s thanksgiving was his love for the brethren in Christ Jesus. He appreciated and loved them very much. Not only did he pray for them, but daily gave thanks to God for what they truly meant to him. This aspect of his Christlike character is also shown in his expression of love and thankfulness for the brethren at Philippi. When he wrote to them he said, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it [finish it, *Marginal Translation*] until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Phil. 1:3-6

A DAY OF THANKSGIVING

The apostle's sentiments are to be seen in all of the Lord's people, and should be one of the main causes for our giving thanks again on this Thanksgiving Day, 2007. We have much to be thankful for as we continue to proclaim the ministry of our dear Lord Jesus and the promises of his coming kingdom of truth and righteousness for all the families of the earth. For this wonderful hope, we truly give our thanks. ■