

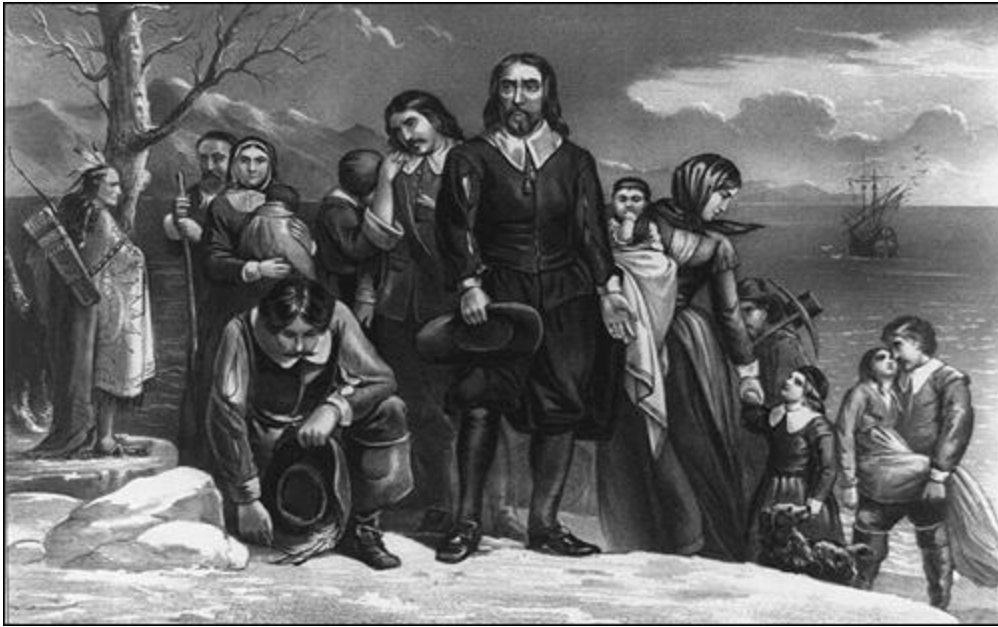


Operation Nehemiah

HELPING REBUILD THE NEW SUDAN

A message for Thanksgiving 2010, a tribute to the New England's Pilgrims, November 1620.
By William Levi, President and Founder, Operation Nehemiah Missions.





Shalom! We pray and hope that you had a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving celebration yesterday. Now after 17 years of ministering through Operation Nehemiah Missions, I have been reflecting on the importance of Thanksgiving as a national holiday in the USA. Why is it so important to Americans of all walks of life? The answer lies in the fact we are certain about what motivated the Pilgrims to initiate a feast of Thanksgiving. It was because of their faith in the God of the Bible and the Savior Jesus Christ. They were Christians. They wanted to live entirely for the Glory of God. Amidst persecution in England under Queen Elizabeth the 1st, in God's providence, they fled to North America and arrived here in 1620. They established a Christian testimony in New England and for the next 50 years they lived in peace with the American natives and shared the Good News with them.

In 1630, on the ship of Arbela, Gov. John Winthrop penned down this inspiring and visionary message for America in the making titled "a City upon a Hill". He wrote: "The Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, as his owned people and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of his wisdom, power, goodness, and truth than formerly we have been acquainted with. We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when He shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England: for we must Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by word through the world, and we shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the way of our God."

Seeing themselves as new Israelites in a new "promised land," the Pilgrims found inspiration in the 23rd chapter of the Book of Leviticus in which God commands the ancient Israelites to observe the Feast of Booths--in Hebrew, Sukkoth, "to rejoice before Adonai your God" at the time of the fall harvest .

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths to the LORD. On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. For seven days you shall present food offerings to the LORD On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the LORD. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work. "These are the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the LORD food offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day.” Leviticus 23:33-37

In Hebrew tradition, the Festival of Sukkoth is a joyous occasion to give thanks and praise to the Source of Creation for the bounty we enjoy. In fact, we are told that during Sukkoth, "you shall have nothing but joy." [Lev. 16:15] Jews erect a Sukkoth, a harvest booth, in which they eat their meals, and sometimes sleep, during the festival. It is a reminder of the booths in which their ancestors are said to have dwelled during their forty-year in wilderness.

Such was a similar case for our Puritan Forefathers, who often contended with illness, meager rations, disappointed hopes, and death. During that very hard winter before the first "Thanksgiving," it is recorded that food became so scarce in some settlements that the daily ration of food per person per day was five kernels of corn. After the harvest crops were gathered in November 1623, Governor William Bradford of the 1620 Pilgrim Colony, proclaimed: "All ye Pilgrims with your wives and little ones, do gather at the Meeting House, on the hill... there to listen to the pastor, and render Thanksgiving to the Almighty God for all His blessings." Then again, on January 1, 1795, the first United States President, George Washington, wrote his famed National Thanksgiving Proclamation, in which he said that it is... "... our duty as a people, with devout reverence and affectionate gratitude, to acknowledge our many and great obligations to Almighty God, and to implore Him to continue and confirm the blessings we experienced..."

Thursday, the 19th day of February, 1795 was thus set aside by George Washington as a National Day of Thanksgiving.

Many years later, on October 3, 1863, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed, by Act of Congress, an annual National Day of Thanksgiving "on the last Thursday of November, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwells in the heavens." In this Thanksgiving proclamation, our 16th President said that it is...

"...announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are blessed whose God is the Lord... But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, by the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own."

It is well fitting for us to reflect deeply on this Thanksgiving of 2010 on our spiritual heritage, the value of persecution and suffering, and the danger of forgetting to reverence God in the midst of prosperity of which America has become. God gave the feast of Succoth to His people Israel as a tangible way of acknowledging our utter frailty and total vulnerability in this world. Like the ancient Israelites sleeping under shelters of twigs in the wilderness, and the Pilgrims arriving helpless on the freezing shores of Massachusetts,

we today's Christians are as dependant on God's provision and protection as they were. We must draw our joy from God alone, and not the things of this world, which

are perishing.

I grew up in the war stricken country of the Sudan. I spent three quarter of my life in exile but even in that I rejoice and see Romans 8: 28. Life in exile helps me understand God's word that we are pilgrim in this world. This is not our world. We are passing through. We are on eternal journey. I came to the Lord at My grandfather's Church at tender age in 1977. By God's grace, I never looked back. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Romans 5: 1-3

I lived through Islamic persecution. My Father died for his faith at the hands of Islamic persecutors. My mother died in a refugee camp in Uganda. I was separated from my family and country for more than 20 years. After crossing through 3 continents, God brought me to the USA. In August, 1988, I arrived in the USA alone, with nothing in my hands except my Bible. It was through these sufferings that I learned how to forgive and give thanks to God in all things. As some of you read in my book, the Bible or the Axe, Jesus taught me how to forgive my enemy so that I can also be forgiven of my own sins, without compromising the truth of the Gospel. The Bible is the only weapon of God to expose deception and for rooting out evil from the heart of man. There is no equal. This is the one reason why I'm teaching and warning the Church here in America about the deception of Islam and the Koran and to help you prepare how to share the Good News with Muslims. Muslims are not our enemies. They are only deceived. They are not saved. It is the Koranic deception, evil force behind Islam that we must expose. Thank God for Jesus. He is our example. He has overcome the world and reconciled men to God. Truth Christians, don't have human enemies.

As I said before, Persecution and trials of life brings me closer and closer to God. Now, after all these years, God has blessed me far and beyond whatever I could have imagined. He has given me a godly and beautiful wife in Hannah. . Hannah is a true daughter of New England and part of this heritage in which I'm also grafted. But most importantly, she is a born again Christian, a wife and a mother. A virtuous woman who can find? Hannah is such a woman. I thank God for her. Hannah takes Biblical truth seriously and applies them in her daily walk without wavering. Whether is it about mutual decision to procreate and bring a new life into this world, home schooling, to be a fulltime mother, modesty, hospitality, or going to Africa, she is ready. Even if that will mean endangering her own life or it means standing alone. We are about to welcome our sixth child into our home.. We want to thank God for our six precious children. They are the most precious gifts from God to us. I want to thank God for establishing the institution of family and marriage. It is priceless to be a father or a mother. I thank God tonight for the life He has given us as a family, the ministry of Operation Nehemiah and the precious body of Christ and the churches that support our mission in the Sudan. I want to thank the Lord for our local pastors notably, Pastor Doug Foss, Pastor Wes Ross, Mike Turtle of Hope Church, and Pastor Jonathan Cahn of Beth Israel, and their families, who faithfully shepherd the flock of Christ. They are standing on the word of God without wavering. What we need is a Church built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and pastors who can teach the solid word of God without comprise no matter what. We

want to thank God for every husband, father, wife and mother in this Congregation. There is a lot of love here.

Back in the Sudan, I thank God for All my surviving brothers and sisters who are now back in the country rebuilding their families and the church after 25 years in exile.. They are also walking in Christ and involved with the Mission of Operation Nehemiah in advancing the Great Commission. In the words of Joshua, “ I say, as for me and my household, we shall serve the Lord and as Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. I want to thank God for his enduring love, his mercy and His salvation for all of us who are in the household of faith in Christ Jesus.

Now we have the challenge before us..

How can this generation keep up the vision of the Thanksgiving and the spirit of the pilgrims? The Lord mercifully imparted a multi-generation vision to the pilgrims before and after they entered into America. They came to understand that it is God’s will according to Hebrew Scriptures for the Gospel to be passed down and preserved through the faithfulness of the next generations and that His word contains all that is needed to equip them for this most excellent work. God used his Word in the scriptures which convict the pilgrims of their carnal lifestyle and worldliness which brought them to a place of true repentance, before He blessed them with this Great nation. We in this generation must do the same here in New England.

In order to restore original vision of thank Giving and restore the Biblical New England, let us first be on our knees in prayers and fasting before God Almighty to raise up tens of thousands of godly men like our dear pastors here at Hope Church to take over dead congregational churches across New England that are currently being defiled and desecrated by self imposed feminist and godless pastors.

In the spirit of Thank giving and in obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ and on behalf of those who have kept the faith, we too must preserve the faith. We must preserve the family and raise up our children for God and impart to them the vision of the pilgrims. They will do exploits for God. It all starts in the godly homes. God does not entrust the raising of children to the institutions of the state, but to the family. Therefore it is incumbent upon us, the fathers to train our children for the work of the Great Commission as we wait for the return of the Messiah. How could we rest and be comfortable in our spiritual state when we see the church of Christ and the families in New England and across this country lying in utter destruction. ?

How could we rest when Pastor Jonathan Edward’s Church right here in Stockbridge is being defiled and desecrated by open and affirming apostate pastors?

Nehemiah was man of vision. He saw the desolation and defilement of Jerusalem. He took action amidst opposition and restored the law of Moses, rebuilds the wall of Jerusalem and rooted out the enemy of God from the house of God.

Jesus came to the temple and found out that His house has been turned into the house of robbers. He drove them out of the temple. We must do the same. Our callings as Christians are only biblically effective, when we have completely surrendered to Biblical authority under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I want to encourage all of us here to live our lives as completely unto the Lord, always giving thanks, as we see trials and persecution on the horizon. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May He be gracious to you and make his countenance shine upon you and give you Shalom, Peace. Have a blessed Thanksgiving.

In His grace

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