

Thanksgiving Day and the Goat

The fall harvest festival of Thanksgiving is a time to get together with friends and family, to enjoy a nice meal, and to give thanks to God. What could possibly be wrong with celebrating the Thanksgiving holiday? We cannot just make the assumption that God approves of it. What is the origin of Thanksgiving? What does the goat have to do with it?

People have celebrated harvest festivals for millennia to give thanks to their various gods for their harvests. Among the many harvest gods are the following: Autumnus, Roman god of harvest; Banbha, Celtic goddess and earth mother; Ceres, Roman goddess of harvest, grain and fertility; Demeter, Greek goddess of harvest and agriculture; Isis, Egyptian goddess of harvest; Lugh, Celtic goddess of harvest; and there are many others, including the gods of the Indians of the Americas.

Those who came to this country, including those on the Mayflower and the Puritans, brought with them their traditions of holidays, including days of fasting and celebrations of feasting to thank God for their harvests. These days were not necessarily on fixed dates because the timing of the harvest can vary from year to year. The harvest festivals were often religious in nature. An example is the Harvest Home festival from Europe.

“**Harvest Home**, also called **Ingathering**, traditional English harvest festival, celebrated from antiquity and surviving to modern times in isolated regions. Participants celebrate the last day of harvest in late September by singing, shouting, and decorating the village with boughs. The *cailleac*, or last sheaf of corn (grain), which represents the spirit of the field, is made into a harvest doll and drenched with water as a rain charm. This sheaf is saved until spring planting.

“The ancient festival also included the symbolic murder of the grain spirit, as well as rites for expelling the devil. A similar festival was traditionally held in parts of Ireland, Scotland, and northern Europe.”¹

Note that Harvest Home is also called Ingathering. God’s Feast of Tabernacles is called “the feast of **ingathering**, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field” (Exodus 23:16). They are both at the end of the harvest season, but Harvest Home is obviously pagan. It would be natural for the people arriving over here from Europe to bring their traditions, including holidays, pagan or otherwise, with them.

Holiday is literally “holy day, a religious festival” (*Webster’s*). However, only God can make something holy. “These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their seasons” (Leviticus 23:4). There are no other annual holy convocations than the seven which God has commanded us to observe. Those seven, along with the Sabbath day, are Biblical

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Harvest-Home>

holy days that followers of Jesus Christ, i.e. Christians, are commanded to observe. Pseudo Christianity has rejected God's holy days and has adopted the pagan holidays of the heathen.

Our holiday of Thanksgiving was made an official national holiday by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, due to the efforts of Sarah J. Hale, whom we quote below.

"What could do more to arouse and preserve the fraternal feelings which should exist, especially among the nations of Christendom, than the establishment and universal observance of one general Christian Festival of Thanksgiving, *on the same day of the year*, throughout those nations? All sects and creeds who take the Bible as their rule of faith and morals could unite in such a festival. The Jews, also, who find the direct command for a feast at the **ingathering of harvest** [emphasis mine], would gladly join in this Thanksgiving ... a universal holiday on the LAST THURSDAY OF NOVEMBER.

"The enjoyment of it would be heightened in every land by the knowledge that in all other lands where the Bible was the BOOK of faith, in all places throughout the globe where Christians of any nation or creed could meet together, this happy, hallowed festival was and forever would be kept on ***the last Thursday of November***. "... There is something so cheering and delightful in the idea of a DAY OF UNIVERSAL THANKSGIVING, set apart among all the branches of the Christian family." (Sarah Hale, *Godey's Lady's Book*, 1861).

"It is the peculiar happiness of Thanksgiving Day that nothing political mingles in its observance. It is in its very nature a **religious and domestic holiday** [emphasis mine]." (Sarah Hale, *Godey's Lady's Book*, 1864).

It is clear that the Thanksgiving holiday was intended to be a "Christian" day of thanksgiving to God. Sounds good; however, God has given us three annual harvest festivals, which pseudo-Christianity refuses to keep. "You shall keep the feast of unleavened bread [*barley harvest*]...And the feast of harvest [*Shavuot/Pentecost*], the firstfruits of thy labors [*wheat harvest*], which you have sown in the field: and the feast of **ingathering** [*Feast of Tabernacles*], which is in the end of the year, when you have gathered in thy labors out of the field" (Exodus 23:15, 16).

With three annual harvest festivals to celebrate, why do we need another one? Any religious days that are added to what God has given His people are counterfeit days of worship, as in the following examples: Good Friday, Easter, Whitsunday, All Saints Day, X-mas, and New Year's Day. Not one of those days is found in the Bible as days we are to observe. Each of those celebrations is a counterfeit of God's Holy Days, and is therefore a perversion of the truth.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him **must worship Him in spirit and in truth**" (John 4:24). What is truth? "Sanctify [37, *cleanse, purify, consecrate, separate*] them through your truth: **Your word is truth**" (John 17:17). Therefore, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Furthermore, "Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images" (Exodus 23:24). We

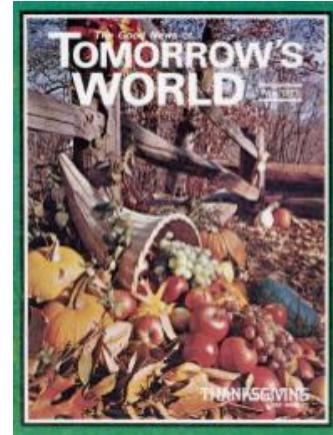
do not literally break down their images, but we overthrow the pagan practices by no longer observing them ourselves. We need to understand that the god of pseudo-Christianity is not the God of the Bible.

Who is the god of Thanksgiving Day?

What pagan symbol is associated with Thanksgiving? It is the cornucopia, which is also known as the horn of plenty. The horn of plenty is the horn of the goat nurse of Zeus that was accidentally broken off by Zeus, and it began to emit a constant supply of food. There are other similar variations of the story.

As used today, the cornucopia is generally a wicker basket in the shape of a horn that is filled with fruits, vegetables, flowers, etc., that represents a bountiful harvest. The bountiful harvest in this scenario is not provided by God, but by the pagan symbol of the goat.

An example of this pagan symbol is shown on the cover of an edition of *Tomorrows World*, a publication of the Worldwide Church of God. The Worldwide Church of God died from the disease worldliness and paganism back in the 1990's. The offspring of WCG are still carrying, and spreading the deadly disease.



Who is the goat? In Scripture the goat is a symbol of sin. The children of Israel were warned "...they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto **devils** [8163, *a faun -- devil, goat, hairy, kid, rough, satyr*], after whom they have gone a whoring..." Leviticus 17:7).

On the Day of Atonement two identical goats were used. Aaron "shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two **kids** [8163, *a faun -- devil, goat, hairy, kid, rough, satyr*] of the goats **for a sin offering**, and one ram for a burnt offering And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; **one lot for the LORD**, and **the other lot for Azazel** [5799, *goat of departure*]" (Leviticus 16:5, 8). Who does the goat of departure represent?

Strong's #5799 is from #5795, *a she goat*, and #235, *to go away, to disappear*. #5795 is from #5810, *to be stout, harden, impudent, prevail*. Impudent means: "*marked by contemptuous boldness or disregard of others*" (*Webster's*). Who does that sound like?

The goat on which the LORD'S lot fell was to be offered "for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the **scapegoat** [5799, *goat of departure*], shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an **atonement** [3722, *appease, pacify, cover over, make propitiation*] with him, *and to let him go for a scapegoat* [5799] into the wilderness" (vv. 9-10).

The two goats represent two different beings. They do not, as some suppose, both represent Jesus Christ. The goat used for the sin offering represented Jesus Christ who took on our sins and died for us about two thousand years ago. That was the beginning of Christianity.

Appease means: "*to cause to subside, to bring to a state of peace or quiet.*" Pacify means: *to allay anger or agitation in, to settle, subdue.*" "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death:

but a wise man will pacify [3722] it” (Proverbs 16:14). The live goat was not to be killed; therefore this goat was not for the covering over of sins, for “without shedding of blood is **no remission** [859, *forgiveness, pardon*]” (Hebrews 9:22).

What is the fate of the live goat? “Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the **live goat** [8163, *a faun -- devil, goat, hairy, kid, rough, satyr*], confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and **shall send it away into the wilderness** by the hand of a suitable man” (Leviticus 16:21).

When Jesus, our High Priest, returns, Azazel, i.e. Satan, is sent away from the people into the wilderness, i.e. the bottomless pit for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3). That will be the New Testament fulfillment of the fate of the Azazel goat.

The second part of the Day of Atonement ceremony has not yet been fulfilled. Azazel has remained free all this time to continue deceiving. It is “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives [4105, *to cause to wander*] the whole world ...” (Revelation 12:9).

Satan, like a serpent, is sly. He can make things sound and look good, and he gets away with it because “...Satan himself is transformed into an angel [32, *messenger*] of light [5457, *light, a source of light, radiance*]” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Jesus Christ is the true messenger of light, but Satan has pawned himself off as the Messiah.

Thanksgiving Day is one of Satan’s counterfeits, and he has pawned himself off as the provider in the place of God. Interestingly, Thanksgiving occurs about a month before X-mas, which is a counterfeit of the Feast of Tabernacles. Thanksgiving is connected to X-mas because it is the beginning of the X-mas shopping season and the preparations for X-mas. The Day of Atonement, which is a day of fasting, comes before the Feast of Tabernacles, and it pictures the preparations for it. Thanksgiving, a day of binging, is just the opposite of the Day of Atonement. Satan’s way is always the opposite of God’s way, but he is very good at making garbage look pretty.

God’s festivals are about spiritual harvests. They are not about physical indulgences as Satan’s counterfeits are. Let us rejoice in God’s festivals and not get entangled in counterfeits. A little leaven will eventually leaven the whole lump.