

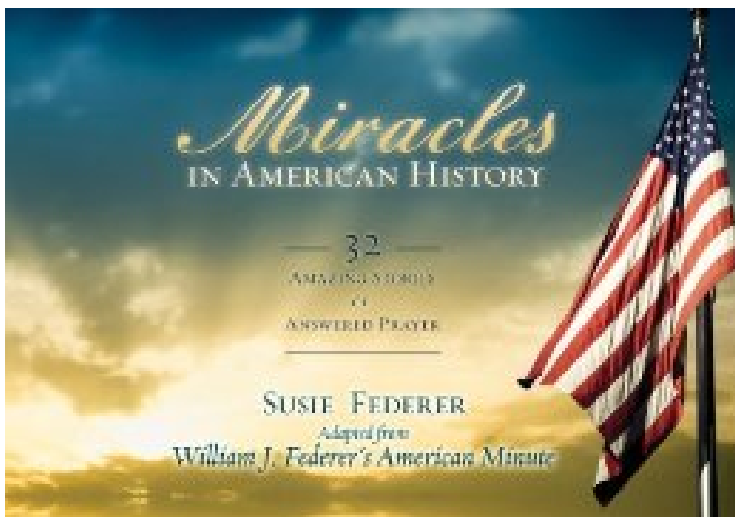
American Minute with Bill Federer Thanksgiving Proclamations: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, Roosevelt, & more

During the days of America's founding, colonies would declare:

- **days of prayer** when times were bad;
- **days of fasting** when times were real bad; and
- **days of thanksgiving** when things turned around.



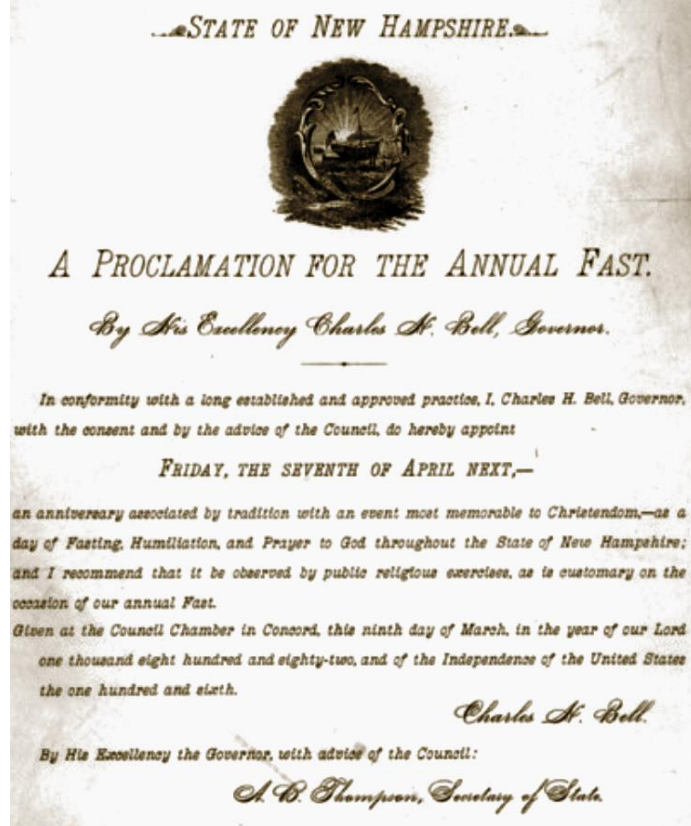
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[Miracles in American History- 32 Amazing Stories of Answered Prayers](#)

This developed into many colonies, like New Hampshire and Massachusetts, having **annual days of fasting**, often on

Good Friday.



This is evidence that **colonists were not deists**, who believed **God** set the laws of nature in place and then let the world run on its own.

America's founders believed in a living relationship with **God**, where:

- if people sinned, **He** would call them to repent;
- if they did not repent, **He** would let judgement come; and



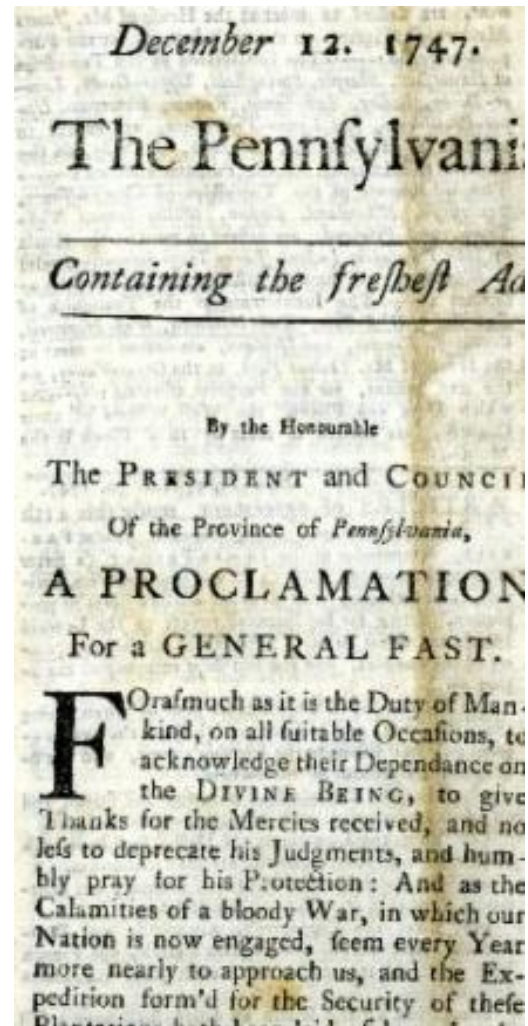
- then when they repented, **He** would send deliverance.

During a threaten war, **Ben Franklin** published a proclamation of a **General Fast** in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 12, 1747:



"The **calamities of a bloody war** ... seem every year more nearly to approach us ... and there is just reason to fear that **unless we humble ourselves** before the Lord and **amend our ways**, we may be chastized with yet **heavier judgments**.

We have ... thought fit ... to appoint ... **a Day of Fasting** ... to join with one accord in the most **humble & fervent supplications** that **Almighty God** would mercifully interpose and still the rage of war among the nations & **put a stop to the effusion of Christian blood.**"





Jefferson drafted a **Day of Fasting for Virginia** in 1774 to be observed on the day British ships blockaded Boston's harbor.

"With

apprehension ... from the **hostile invasion of the city** of Boston ... whose commerce and **harbor** are ... to be **stopped by an armed force**, deem it highly necessary that the said first day of June be set apart, by the members of this House, as a **Day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, devoutly to implore the Divine interposition.**"

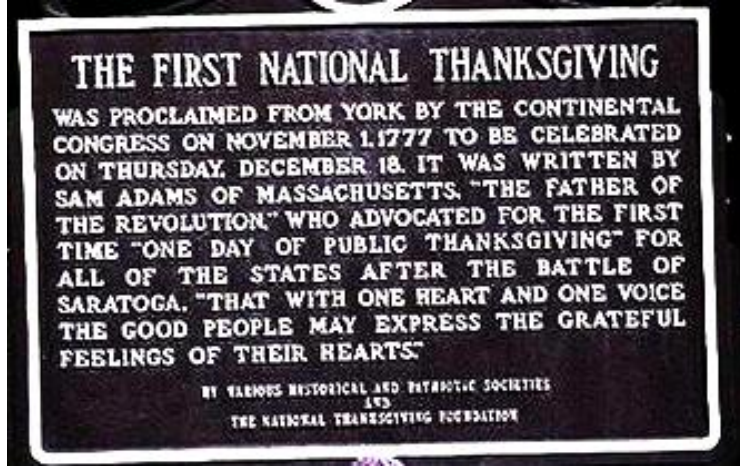


After the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed July 4, 1776, the **first "National" Day of Thanksgiving** was declared by the Continental Congress on November 1,

1777, to celebrate **victory over British General Burgoyne at the Battle of Saratoga:**

"The grateful feeling of their hearts ... join the penitent **confession of their manifold sins** ...

that it may please **God**, through the **merits of Jesus Christ**, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of remembrance ...



and ... under the providence of **Almighty God** ... secure for these United States the greatest of all human blessings, independence and peace."

After **John Paul Jones**, commanding the *Bonhomme Richard*, captured the British ship *HMS Serapis* on September 23, 1779, the Continental Congress declared a **Day of Thanksgiving**, recommending that the states do likewise.

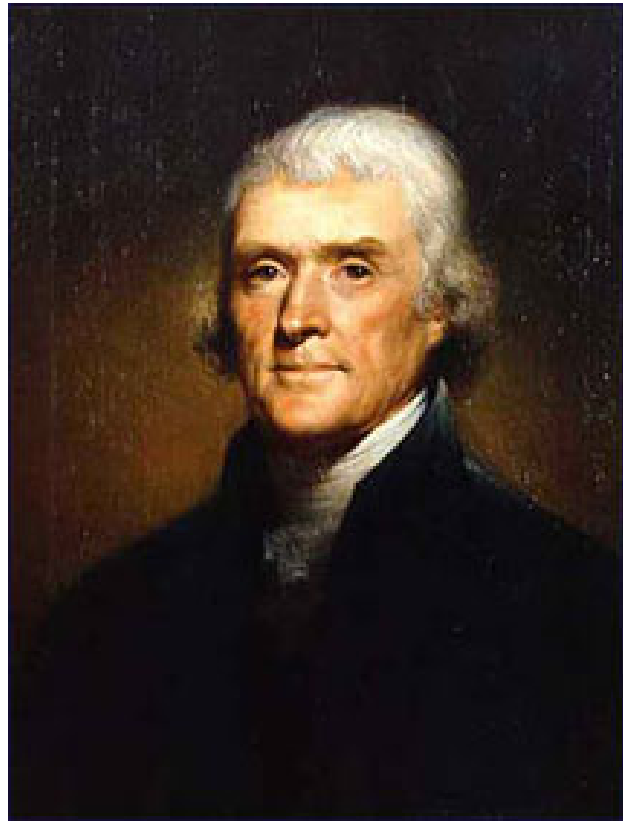


In accordance with this, **Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson** proclaimed for Virginia, November 11, 1779:

"Congress ... hath thought proper ... to recommend to the several States ... **a day of public and solemn Thanksgiving to Almighty God**, for his mercies, and of **Prayer**, for the continuance of his favour ... That He would go forth with our hosts and **crown our arms with victory**;



... That He would grant to **His church**, the plentiful effusions of **Divine Grace**, and **pour out His Holy Spirit on all Ministers of the Gospel**;



That **He** would bless and prosper the means of education, and **spread the light of Christian knowledge through the remotest corners of the earth ...**

I do therefore ... issue this proclamation ... appointing ... **a day of public and solemn Thanksgiving and Prayer to Almighty God ...**

Given under by hand ... this 11th day of November, in **the year of our Lord, 1779 ... Thomas Jefferson."**

After traitor
Benedict



Arnold's plot to betray West Point was thwarted, the Continental Congress proclaimed a **Day of Thanksgiving, October 18, 1780:**

"In the late remarkable interposition of **His watchful providence**,

in the **rescuing the person of our Commander-in-Chief** and the army from imminent dangers, at the moment when **treason was ripened for execution ...**



... it is therefore recommended ... a **Day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer ...** to confess our unworthiness ... and to offer fervent supplications to the **God** of all grace ... **to cause the knowledge of Christianity to spread over all the earth."**





After **British General Cornwallis** surrendered at **Yorktown**, Congress proclaimed a **Day of Thanksgiving**, October 11, 1782:

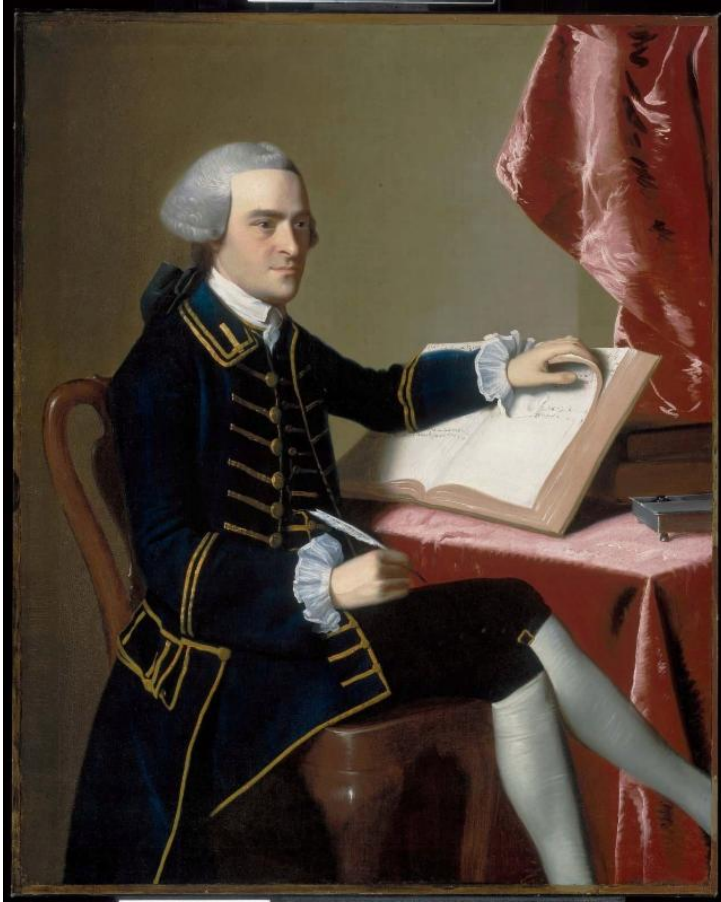
"It being the indispensable duty of all nations ... to offer up their supplications to **Almighty God** ...

the United States in Congress assembled ... do hereby recommend it to the inhabitants of these states in general, to observe ... the last Thursday ... of November next, as a **Day of Solemn Thanksgiving to God** for all his mercies."

After the **Treaty of Paris** ended the **Revolutionary War**, Congress recommended that the States declare a **Day of Thanksgiving**.



Massachusetts Governor John Hancock, who was a former President of the Continental



Congress,
proclaimed a **Day
of Thanksgiving**,
November 8, 1783:

"The Citizens of
these United
States have every
Reason for Praise
and Gratitude to
the **God of their
salvation ...**

I do ... appoint ...
the 11th day of
December next
(the day
recommended by

the Congress to all the States) to be religiously
observed as a **Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer**,

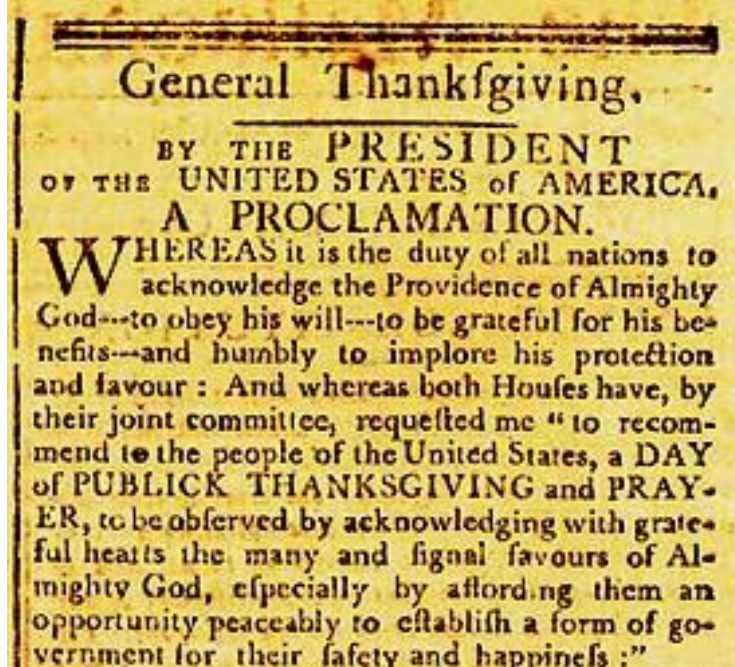
that all the people may then assemble to celebrate ... that
he hath been pleased to continue to us **the Light of the
Blessed Gospel ...**

That we also offer up fervent supplications ... to cause
pure **Religion** and **Virtue** to flourish ... and to fill the
world with **His glory."**

After passing the
Bill of Rights,
which included the
First Amendment,
Congress
requested
**President George
Washington** issue
a **National Day of
Thanksgiving**,

which he did,
October 3, 1789:

"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--

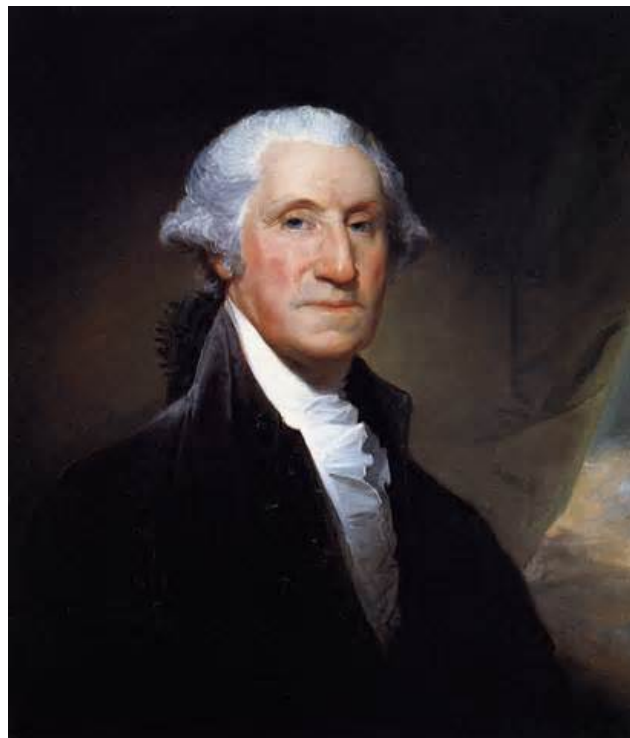


and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me

'to recommend to the People of the United States a **Day of Public Thanksgiving and Prayer** to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of **Almighty God**, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness;'

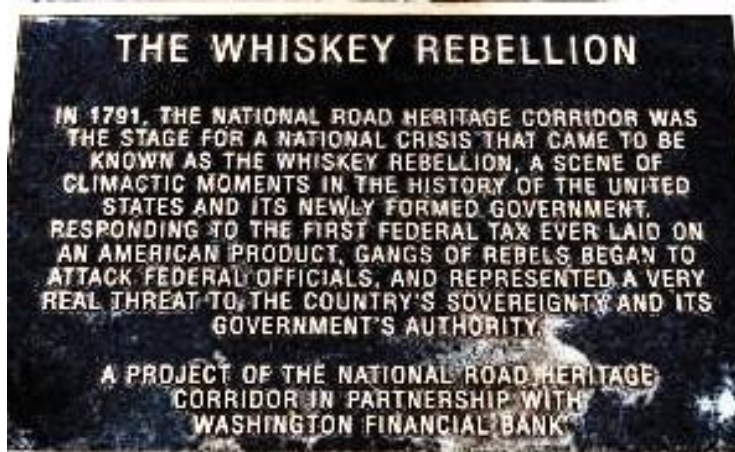
... Now, therefore, I do recommend ...
Thursday, the 26TH
DAY of NOVEMBER ...

to be devoted by the People of these United 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 the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to **establish constitutions of government ...**

particularly **the national one now lately instituted**, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed ... **to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue."**



A **Whiskey Rebellion** in western Pennsylvania almost caused the new American Republic to fall into chaos.

When it was peacefully resolved, **President George Washington** proclaimed a **National Day of Thanksgiving**, September 25, 1794:

"Resolved, in perfect reliance on that **gracious Providence** which so signally displays its goodness towards this country to reduce the refractory to a due subordination to the law ...

To call to mind that, as the people of the United States have



been permitted, under **Divine favor**, in perfect freedom, after solemn deliberation, and in an enlightened age, to elect their own government,

so will their gratitude for this inestimable blessing be best distinguished by firm exertions to maintain the Constitution and the laws."



On January 1, 1795, **President George Washington** proclaimed a **National Day of Thanksgiving:**

"When we review the calamities, which afflict so many other nations ... the great degree of internal tranquility

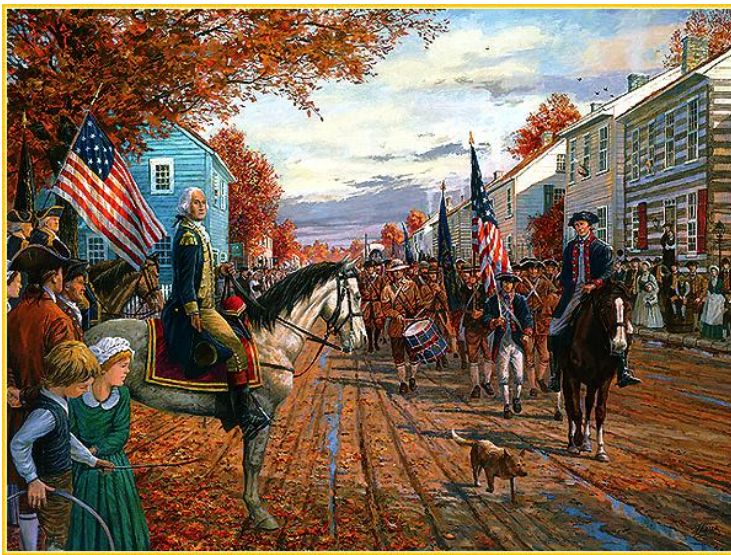
we have enjoyed -

the recent confirmation of that tranquility by the **suppression of an insurrection** which so wantonly threatened it - the happy course of public affairs in general -

the unexampled prosperity of all classes of our citizens; are circumstances which peculiarly mark our situation with indications of the **Divine beneficence** towards us.

In such a state of things it is, in an especial manner, our duty as 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 experience ...

... I, **George Washington, President of the United States**, do recommend to **all religious societies and denominations**, and to **all persons** whomsoever, within the United States,



to set apart ... **a Day of public Thanksgiving and Prayer**: and on that day to meet together and render their sincere and **hearty thanks to the great Ruler of Nations.**"

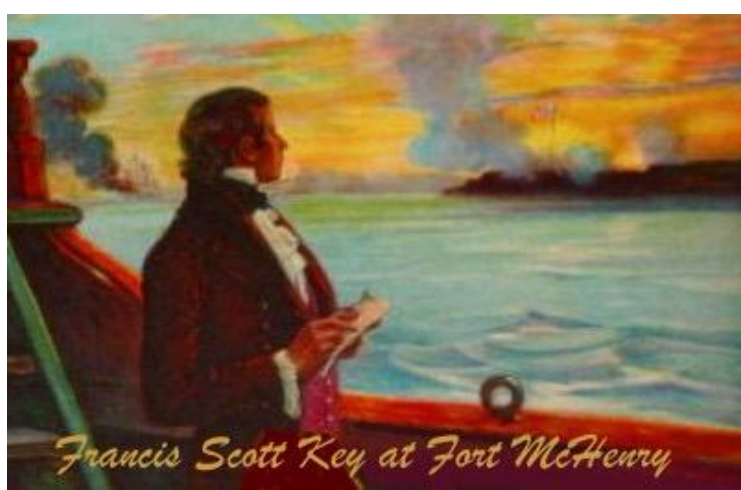


After the **War of 1812** was ended with the **Treaty of Ghent**, **President James Madison** proclaimed a **National Day of Thanksgiving**, **March 4, 1815**:

"The Senate and House of Representatives ... signified their desire that a day may ... be observed by the people of the United States with **religious solemnity as a Day of Thanksgiving and of devout acknowledgments to Almighty God** for His great goodness manifested in restoring to them the blessing of peace.

No people ought to feel greater obligations to celebrate the goodness of **the Great Disposer of Events and of the Destiny of Nations** than the people of the United States.

... **His kind Providence** originally conducted them to one of the best portions of the dwelling place allotted for **the great family of the human race.**



He protected ... them under all the difficulties and trials to which they were exposed in their early days ...

In the arduous struggle ... they were distinguished by multiplied tokens of **His benign interposition** ...

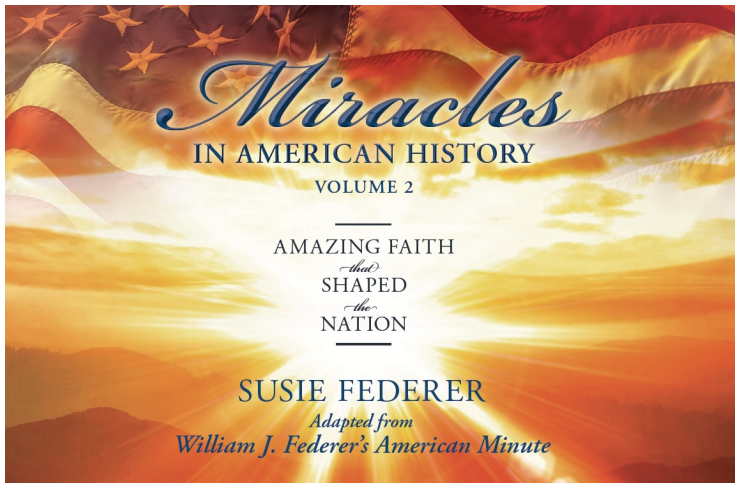
He ... enabled them to assert their national rights and to enhance their national character in another arduous conflict, which is now so happily terminated by **a peace and reconciliation** with those who have been our enemies.

And to the same **Divine Author of Every Good and Perfect Gift** we are indebted for all those privileges and advantages, **religious as well as civil**, which are so richly enjoyed in this favored land ...

... I now recommend ... a Day on which the people of **every religious denomination** may in their solemn assemblies unite their hearts and their voices in **a freewill offering to their Heavenly Benefactor of their homage of Thanksgiving and of**

their songs of praise.

Given ... in the year of
our Lord one thousand
eight hundred and fifteen
... **James Madison.**"

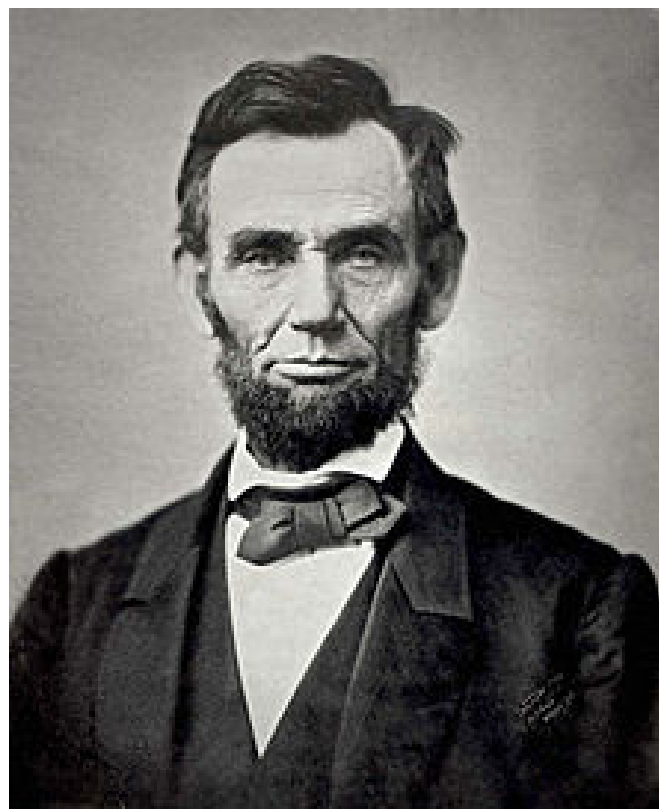


[Miracles in
American History-
Vol. TWO:
Amazing Faith that
Shaped the Nation](#)

Abraham Lincoln
proclaimed the **first**
"Annual" National
Day of Thanksgiving,
Washington, D.C.,
October 3, 1863:

"In the midst of a civil
war of unequalled
magnitude and
severity ...

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 ... 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, tranquillity and Union.



In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the **year of our Lord one** thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the Eighty-eighth.

By the President: **Abraham Lincoln**, William H. Seward, Secretary of State."

America was spared a global cholera pandemic, as referenced in



**President Grover
Cleveland's
National Day of
Thanksgiving and
Prayer
Proclamation,
November 1, 1888:**

"On that day let all our people suspend their ordinary work and occupations, and in their accustomed places of **worship, with prayer and songs of praise,** render **thanks** to

God for all **His mercies ...**

And mindful of the **afflictive dispensations** with which a portion of our land has been visited, let us, while we humble ourselves before the power of **God**, acknowledge **His mercy** in **setting bounds to the deadly march of pestilence**, and let our hearts be chastened by sympathy with our fellow-countrymen who have suffered and who mourn.

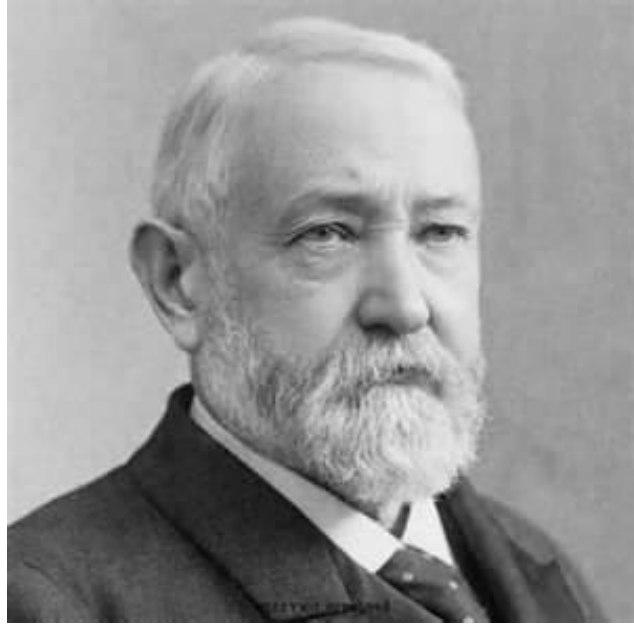
And as we return thanks for all the blessings which we have received from the hand of **our Heavenly Father**, let us not forget that **He** has enjoined upon us charity;

and on this **day of thanksgiving** let us generously remember the poor and needy, so that our tribute of praise and gratitude may be **acceptable in the sight of the Lord.**"

On the 100th anniversary of Washington's

Inauguration, **President Benjamin Harrison** issued a **National Day of Prayers and Thanksgiving**, April 4, 1889:

"George Washington took the oath of office as Chief Magistrate of the new-born Republic.



This impressive act was preceded at 9 o'clock in the morning **in all the churches** of the city by **prayer** for **God's blessing** on the Government and its first President ...

In order that the joy of the occasion may be associated with **a deep thankfulness** in the minds of the people **for all our blessings** in the past and **a devout supplication to God** for their gracious continuance in the future,

the representatives of the religious creeds, **both Christian and Hebrew**, have memorialized the Government to designate **an hour for prayer and thanksgiving on that day.**"

In his National Day of Thanksgiving Proclamation, October 29, 1900, **President William McKinley** acknowledged the **charitable help** given to the **city of Galveston** after **a hurricane**:

"The works of **religion** and **charity** have everywhere been manifest ...



We have been generally exempt from pestilence and other great calamities; and even the tragic visitation which overwhelmed **the city of Galveston** made evident the sentiments of sympathy and **Christian charity** by **virtue** of which we are one united people.

Now, therefore, I, **William McKinley**, President of the United States, do hereby appoint and set apart Thursday, the 29th of November next, to be observed by all the people of the United States, at home or abroad, as **a day of thanksgiving and praise to Him who holds the nations in the hollow of His hand ...**

and that they **humbly pray for the continuance of His Divine favor**, for concord and amity with other nations, and for righteousness and peace in all our ways."

President Theodore Roosevelt acknowledged how rare America is in his **National Day of Praise and Thanksgiving Proclamation**, October 24, 1903:

"During the last year **the Lord** has dealt bountifully with us ...

It behooves us not only to rejoice greatly because of what has been given us, but



to accept it with a solemn sense of responsibility, realizing that **under Heaven** it rests with us ourselves to show that we are worthy to use aright what has thus been entrusted to our care.

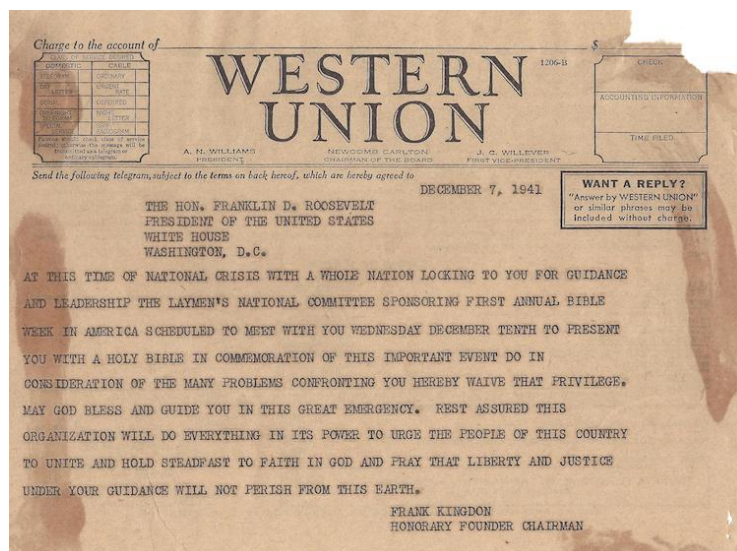
... In no other place and at no other time has the experiment of government of the people, by the people, for the people, been tried on so vast a scale as here in our own country in the opening years of the 20th Century.

Failure would not only be a dreadful thing for us, but a dreadful thing for all mankind, because it would mean loss of hope for all who believe in the power and the righteousness of liberty.



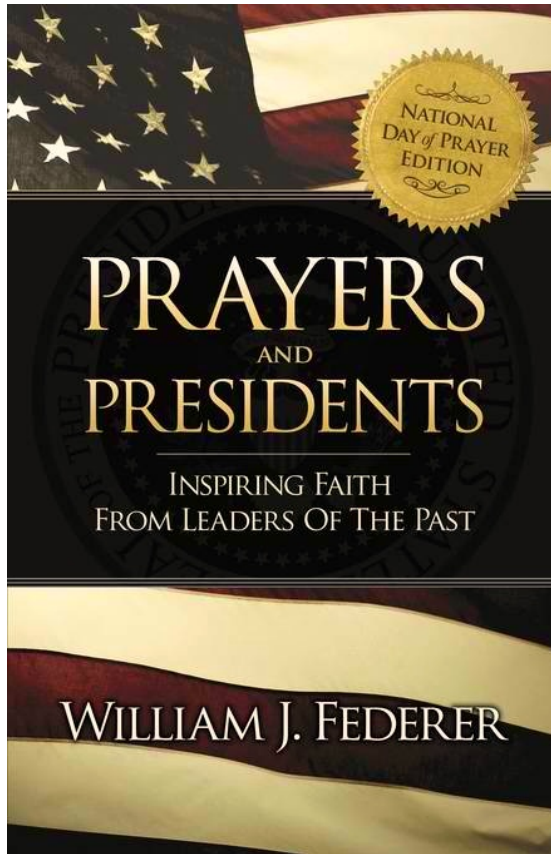
Therefore, in **thanking God** for the mercies extended to us in the past, we beseech **Him** that **He** may not withhold them in the future."

President Franklin Roosevelt had proclaimed the **first National Bible Week** in 1941. Since then, every session of Congress has designated **Thanksgiving week** as **National Bible Week**.



Rep. Mike Johnson stated in a Special session of the U.S. House (CSPAN):

"Recognizing the 77th **annual National Bible Week** in America ... This is a declaration first made by **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** just weeks before the start of World War II."



Through the decades, **Presidents declared National Days of Thanksgiving**, many of which are contained in the book [*Prayers and Presidents - Inspiring Faith from Leaders of the Past.*](#)

Continuing this tradition, **President Donald J. Trump** wrote in his **Thanksgiving Proclamation**, November 23, 2017:



"On **Thanksgiving Day**, as we have for nearly four centuries, Americans give thanks to **Almighty God** for our abundant blessings.

We gather with the people we love to show gratitude for our freedom, for our friends and families, and for the

prosperous Nation we call home.

... In July 1620, more than 100 Pilgrims boarded the **Mayflower**, fleeing religious persecution and seeking freedom and opportunity in a new and unfamiliar place.



These dauntless souls arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in the freezing cold of December 1620.

They were greeted by sickness and severe weather, and quickly lost 46 of their fellow travelers.

... Those who endured the **incredible hardship** of their first year in America, however, had many reasons for **gratitude**.



They had survived. They were free. And, with the help of the Wampanoag tribe, and a **bountiful harvest**, they were regaining their health and strength.

... In **thanks to God** for these blessings, the new governor of the Plymouth Colony,

William Bradford, proclaimed a **day of thanksgiving** and gathered with the Wampanoag tribe for **three days of celebration.**



For the next two centuries, many individual colonies and states, primarily in the Northeast, carried on the tradition of fall **Thanksgiving festivities ...**

We can see, in the courageous **Pilgrims** who stood on Plymouth Rock in new land, the intrepidity that lies at the core of our American spirit.

Just as the **Pilgrims** did, today Americans stand strong, willing to fight for their families and their futures, to uphold our values, and to confront any challenge ...

... As one people, we seek **God's protection, guidance, and wisdom**, as we stand humbled by the abundance of our great Nation and the **blessings of freedom, family, and faith.**



NOW, THEREFORE, I, **DONALD J. TRUMP**, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 23, 2017, as a **National Day of Thanksgiving.**

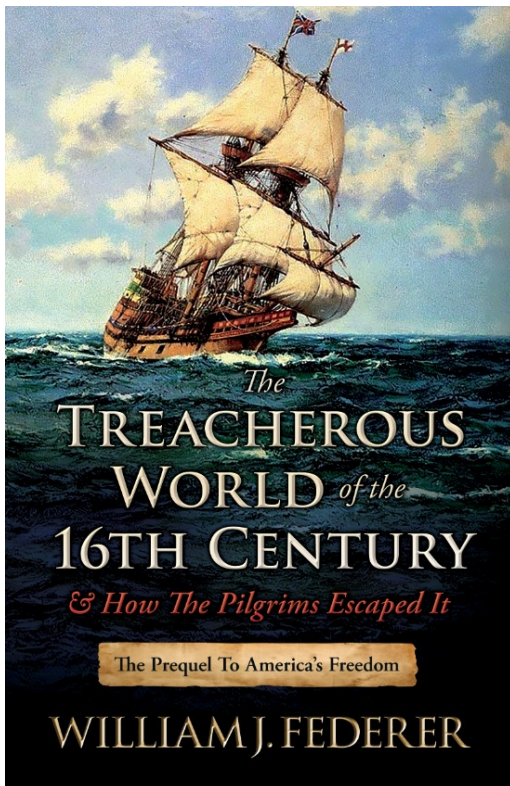
I encourage all Americans to gather, in homes and places of worship, **to offer a prayer of thanks to God for our many blessings.**"

--

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