
brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." John 17:4. One brings God glory on earth by completing the work He has given us to do. Simple, isn't it?

This is exactly what our Pilgrim forefathers did. They brought God glory on earth by completing the great task He had given them to do. It was costly to be sure, but where would our world be today without the nation they founded? The Pilgrims viewed their lives as "stepping stones" upon which future generations might tread as they followed hard after Christ. The whole world began to recognize that America was indeed "a city set on a hill." It brilliantly displays for all the world to see that there is a God, that He has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus, and that He honors those who honor Him.

Thanksgiving, more than any other American holiday, points us directly to Christ and His providential hand in our national history. It points to the fact that this was a nation founded by Christians. It points to the fact that our governmental system was built upon biblical principles. It points to the fact that the inalienable rights of men such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were given by God and not by governments. It points to the fact that individual liberty to know God and worship Him freely must be the bedrock of good government. No other form of government has allowed common men individual liberty to pursue and complete the work God gave them to do.

Thanksgiving points to the fact that there is another King, one called Jesus! **"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." II Cor 3:17**

This is why the devil hates Thanksgiving! This is why he is busying himself revising American history in school textbooks. He is terrified that we might remember the manifold works of Christ in the establishment of America. The devil has pulled out all the stops to steal Thanksgiving from the American memory in the same way he killed those who translated the Bible into English. He must remove

those witnesses and the evidences of God's hand at work in our history lest we remember who we are and why we were brought to this continent.

The devil knows very well what will happen to him when we remember who we are and why we are here. He knows that, when our hearts are set aflame by the purposes of God, we will crush his hoary head with the Gospel of peace (**Rom 16:20**). He may bruise our head but we will crush his head. Thanksgiving, that great day of remembrance, points to God and His manifold workings on man's behalf. It reminds us that we are beholden to Him and to no other. It reminds us that He is the sovereign of the cosmos and that apart from Him we can do nothing.

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**THE THEFT OF
THANKSGIVING**

There is a holiday that is rapidly being removed from our collective memory in America. It is sandwiched between Halloween and Winter Break (dare we say Christmas?). The reason for its purposeful removal from the American memory is that Thanksgiving, more than any other American holiday, reminds us of the gracious hand of Almighty God providentially establishing our nation to be a "city set on a hill." It was God Himself who guided our Pilgrim forefathers, whose hearts were set free by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to this land. It reminds us that this was a land preserved for those to whom the Bible was an open book. Yes, Thanksgiving reminds us that America was providentially preserved for a people who were governed internally and externally by the Gospel of Christ. It was preserved for a people who would be a light into the world and proclaim that there is another King, one called Jesus.

It was not the French or the Spanish that colonized America, though they were the greatest colonizers of the time. No, God had other plans. America would be preserved for those whose hearts had been set free by His Word.

It was in tiny England in 1381 that John Wycliff, the morning star of the Reformation, translated the Bible into a language that the common man could read. The spiritual darkness and superstition that covered the earth because the Bible had become a closed book was now giving way to the glorious light of the Gospel. It was Wycliff's followers, called Lollards (derisive term meaning *idle babblers*), who taught the common man how to read the Bible that he might discover for himself the Jesus of the Scriptures.

One hundred and fifty years later, the fire kindled by Wycliff and his Lollard preacher boys was fanned into a raging blaze when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenburg, declaring *sola fide, sola Scriptura, sola gratia*. Only by faith, only by Scripture, only by grace, can a man be saved from eternal damnation. The Bible

was becoming an open book. Liberty was in the air. The devil shook.

With the advent of Guttenburg's printing press the Bible was rapidly becoming read and known by the common man. Persecution from the Church and State, however, made reading the Bible a very dangerous thing to do. The Lollards were burned at the stake for teaching people to read Scripture. Henry VIII of England ordered William Tyndale and all of his books with him to be burned at the stake in 1536. Tyndale was branded a religious heretic for translating the Bible into English. His last words before being consumed by the flames were, "O Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

God, who answers prayer in surprising ways and directs the heart of a king, closed the eyes of Henry VIII and opened the eyes of all England to the Bible. It was Tyndale's translation of the Bible that, 12 months after his death, became the official Bible in England. That's right! Henry VIII, the merciless persecutor of William Tyndale, had broken from the Church in Rome and needed an official Bible for the Church in England. Unbeknownst to him but known by God, he chose Tyndale's Bible. The Bible which Henry sought so vehemently to destroy became the Bible that caused men in England to yearn for the true liberty that sets men free from sin and tyrannical churches and kings.

By 1600, the Bible had been read by several generations of those who were called Separatists and eventually would be known to us as Pilgrims. Their hearts had been set free by Christ. They desired to pass this heritage to their children that they too would live as free men under the Gospel of Christ. King James of England (better known as "Dirty Jamie" to the common people) mercilessly harried them and ultimately drove the Pilgrims from England. They fled to Leyden, Holland, where they spent 11 years until realizing that they were losing their children to the culture in Holland.

They purposed in their hearts, to advance the Gos-

pel of Christ and save their children, to traverse the mighty Atlantic Ocean and come to a new land. There they could raise their children in the fear and admonitions of the Lord, unencumbered by the Church of England or its perverted king.

They arrived on the shores of this continent in the month of November, 1620. Half of them died that very first winter. But the providential hand of God, which brought them safely across the Atlantic, also provided for them an Indian who could speak fluent English – Squanto. Squanto had been kidnapped by the Spanish as a teen years before and was brought first to Spain as a slave and then to England. In England, Squanto learned the English language and learned about the God of the Bible. He earned his freedom and after 11 years made his way back to America. It was Squanto who, after that first horrible winter in 1620, befriended the Pilgrims and taught them how to fish, hunt, and plant corn. Without Squanto it is unlikely that any of the Pilgrims would have survived. The God of history was at work.

Squanto was a gift from Almighty God to help the Pilgrims. They knew it and gave thanks. Listen to the prayer of William Bradford, Governor of the Plymouth Plantation: **"Thank you Lord for sending Squanto to us. We know your hand has been upon him throughout all of his trials, and that You have prepared him to be our guide and friend in a time of great need. Squanto is your living answer to our tears and prayers."** The Pilgrims believed that, just as Joseph in the Bible had been sold into slavery, Squanto had been sold into slavery so that he could be used by God to save the Pilgrims from starving. What man had intended for evil, God had intended for good, saving many lives (**Gen 50:20**).

God had preserved this continent for a people who were governed both internally and externally by His Word. He provided for the Pilgrims all that they needed to bring Him glory. How does one bring glory to God? In the words of Jesus, **"I have**