

## Morphing the Turkey

Last week, Vince sent out an email asking if we could cover something on Thanksgiving. In my confusion, I thought he meant for us to get together *on* Thanksgiving. Sorry Vince, my bad. I believe we did last year but didn't discuss it on the Sabbath prior to Thanksgiving. I told him we really haven't taken any requests for the Sabbath fellowship but I'd pray about it and see what God has in store for us. Well Vince, this is what was whispered to me. Don't let the title throw you off too much, morph in this case is used as a verb and according to Webster it is to "change the form or character." People associate turkey more with Thanksgiving than they do with what was the original intent of the holiday. Example, a red elf for the fictitious birth of Jesus, a bunny rabbit and eggs for His Resurrection? While the "holidays" themselves are a man-made abomination, Satan has twisted any association with them to a point of lunacy. Satan is the consummate deceiver. People slap a Jesus sticker on anything these days and think they can make something holy. "Keep Christ in Christmas" is one of the bumper stickers we'll soon see. I usually get a chuckle as keeping Our Lord in something He was never in to start with is a trick indeed. Thanksgiving just kicks off the seasonal madness of which we are no longer a part.

## Thanksgiving

Let's begin with a history and overview of Thanksgiving as it was developed here in our nation. I had quite a few articles on file we've shared in the past several years. I believe Chauncey sent one out this week titled, "Thanksgiving or Self-Indulgence" a Forerunner article by John Ritenbaugh. The following is article is one we've also shared in the past. Vince, I hope this works. It's titled, "The History and Legacy of Thanksgiving" - November 24, 2016 by Mark Alexander. While not a sermon, it contains some great history:

Thanksgiving, as introduced by European explorers and settlers in the "New World," was a time set aside specifically for the purpose of giving thanks to our Creator for His manifold blessings.

The earliest record of a thanksgiving in America is 1541 by Spanish explorer Coronado at Palo Duro Canyon in what is now Texas. French Protestant colonists at Charlesfort (now Parris Island, South Carolina) held a thanksgiving service in 1564. In 1607, the Jamestown settlers held thanksgiving at Cape Henry, Virginia, and there are many other records of such hallowed observances.

The first call for an annual Thanksgiving was at Berkeley Plantation, Virginia, in 1619, when Captain John Woodlief and 38 settlers aboard the ship Margaret,

proclaimed, “We ordain that the day of our ships arrival at the place assigned for plantation in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept *holy* as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God.”

But the contemporary celebration of Thanksgiving across our nation has its roots in the first “harvest feast” celebrated in 1621 by religious refugees, Pilgrims, who established the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts, in the year 1620. According to the fact that most history books following the War Between the States were written by Northern historians, it is that iconic event which is most directly associated with the current traditions for our National Day of Thanksgiving.

## **The Pilgrims**

Who were these “freedom men”?

They were Puritan “separatists” — Calvinist Protestants, most under the leadership of pastor John Robinson, church elder William Brewster, and William Bradford.

They rejected the institutional Church of England, believing that worshipping God must originate freely in the individual soul, without coercion.

Suffering persecution and imprisonment in England for their beliefs, these separatists fled to Holland in 1608. There, they found the spiritual liberty they sought, but amid a disjointed economy and a dissolute, degraded, corrupt culture

that tempted their children to stray from faith. Determined to protect their families from such spiritual and cultural degradation, the Pilgrims returned to Plymouth, England, where they arranged for passage to the New World.

Their long and dangerous voyage was funded by the London Company, the “merchant adventurers” (investors) whose objective was to establish a communal plantation “company” upon which the “planters” would be obligated to work for seven years in order to return the investment with premium. “The adventurers & planters do agree that every person that goeth being aged 16 years & upward ... be accounted a single share.... The persons transported & ye adventurers shall continue their joint stock & partnership together, ye space of 7 years ... during which time, all profits & benefits that are got by trade, traffic, trucking, working, fishing, or any other means of any person or persons, remain still in ye common stock.... That all such persons as are of this colony, are to have their meat, drink, apparel, and all provision out of ye common stock & goods.... That at ye end of ye 7 years, ye capital & profits, viz. the houses, lands, goods and chattels, be equally divided betwixt ye adventurers, and planters.”

On September 6th, 1620, aboard a 100-foot ship named Mayflower, 102 Pilgrims and 30 crew members departed for America, a place that offered the promise of both civil and religious liberty. Among those in command of the expedition were

Christopher Martin, designated by the Merchant Adventurers to act as Governor, and Myles Standish, who would be the colony's military leader.

After an arduous eight-week journey, on November 11 they dropped anchor at Provincetown Harbor off the coast of what is now Massachusetts.

On 11 December 1620, prior to disembarking at Plymouth Rock, they signed the Mayflower Compact, America's original document of civil government. It was the first to introduce self-government, and the foundation on which the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were built. Plymouth Colony's Governor, William Bradford, described the Compact as "a combination ... that when they came ashore, they would use their own liberty; for none had power to command them."

### **The First Harvest Thanksgiving Feast**

Upon making landfall, the Pilgrims conducted a prayer service and quickly turned to building shelters. They committed all their belongings to a "common wealth."

Under harrowing conditions, the colonists persisted through prayer and hard work, but the Winter of 1621 was devastating and only 53 of the original party survived.

William Bradford wrote, "of these one hundred persons who came over in this first

ship together, the greatest half died in the general mortality, and most of them in two- or three-months' time.”

However, with the help of the indigenous “Indians” in the region, the summer of 1621 was productive as recorded by Bradford in his diary: “They began now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fit up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength and had all things in good plenty. For as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were exercised in fishing, about cod and bass and other fish, of which they took good store, of which every family had their portion. All the summer there was no want; and now began to come in store of fowl, as winter approached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besides waterfowl there was great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many, besides venison, etc. Besides, they had about a peck a meal a week to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corn to the proportion.”

In addition to their regular expressions of reverence and thanksgiving to God, by the Autumn of 1621 the surviving 53 Pilgrims had enough produce to hold a three day “harvest feast.” That feast was described in the journal of Edward Winslow: “Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruits of our

labor. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help besides, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which we brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.”

The Pilgrims endured another harsh winter, but had put up enough stores to survive.

### **The Collectivist Plantation Plan**

Endeavoring to *improve* the production at Plymouth Plantation for its second growing season in 1622, Governor Bradford implemented a ***collectivist*** policy, and noted that to increase production, he allotted each family a plot of land, and mandated that “all profits & benefits that are got by trade, working, fishing, or any other means” must be forfeited to a common storehouse in order that “all such persons as are of this colony, are to have their meat, drink, apparel, and all provisions out of the common stock.”

In theory, their Governor thought the colony would thrive because each family would receive equal share of produce without regard to their contribution.

Unfortunately, then as always, **collectivism** only works in theory, and the new policy almost destroyed the Plymouth settlement. Indeed, collectivism is antithetical to human nature, and destined to fail, as Plato's student Aristotle observed in 350 BC: "That which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it." But to this day, many still fail to grasp the "tragedy of the commons."

After abysmal results in 1622, Bradford realized that his collectivist plan had undermined the incentive to produce. He wrote, "The failure of that experiment of communal service ... the taking away of private property, and the possession of it in community, by a commonwealth ... was found to breed much confusion and discontent; and retard much employment which would have been to the general benefit.... For the young men who were most able and fit for service objected to being forced to spend their time and strength in working for other men's wives and children, without any recompense.... The strong man or the resourceful man had no more share of food, clothes, etc., than the weak man who was not able to do a quarter the other could. This was thought injustice. The aged and graver men, who were ranked and equalized in labor, food, clothes, etc., with the humbler and younger ones, thought it some indignity and disrespect to them."



The women “who were obliged to do service for other men, such as cooking, washing their clothes, etc., they considered it a kind of slavery, and many husbands would not brook it....”

“If all were to share alike, and all were to do alike,” wrote Bradford, “then all were on an equality throughout, and one was as good as another; and so, if it did not actually abolish those very relations which God himself has set among men, it did at least greatly diminish the mutual respect that is so important should be preserved amongst them. Let none argue that this is due to human failing, rather than to this communistic plan of life in itself....” (**Communism failed and yet we see a dramatic push to instill this form of government in our Republic to this very day. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. It’s pretty apparent what our nation’s schools has done to the teaching of history in our classrooms.**)

### **The Free Enterprise Plan**

Responding to the failed economic plantation plan, the Colony leaders “began to think how they might raise as much corn as they could, and obtain a better crop than they had done, that they might not still thus languish in misery,” Bradford recorded in his journal. “At length after much debate of things, (I) (with the advice of the chiefest among them) gave way that they should set corn every man for his

own particular, and in that regard trust to themselves. And so assigned to every family a parcel of land.”

They decided to trade their collectivist plan for a free market approach, and in 1623, Bradford wrote, “This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any other means the Governor or any other could use. ... Women went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn. Instead of famine now God gave them plenty and the face of things was changed, to the rejoicing of the hearts of many. ... Any general want or famine hath not been amongst them since to this day.”

Property ownership and families freely laboring on their own behalf replaced the “common store,” but only after their ill-advised experiment with communism nearly wiped out the entire settlement.

The Colony celebrated a much greater Harvest and Thanksgiving Day in 1623 as called for by Bradford’s proclamation:

“Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as he

has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.” **(In our observance of Thanksgiving this year, did we truly thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us? Did we sing any hymns of praise? Or did we just give Him lip service so we could tear into the turkey and gravy?)**

After the Pilgrims were given liberty and incentive to be industrious, the Colony thrived, and by 1624, production was so abundant that the Colony exported corn back to England. For generations since, to the extent men have been set at perfect liberty to establish free enterprise, to produce goods and services without having profits seized for redistribution, our nation has thrived.

### **The Pilgrims' Legacy of Civil Liberty**

The Puritans seeded democratic self-government and free enterprise in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, but demonstrated much of the same religious

intolerance they had fled in England. Having broken ground for religious Liberty, at least for themselves, in the 20 years following the establishment of Plymouth Plantation, more than 25,000 men, women and children followed them to the New World, seeking first and foremost, religious Liberty. The second great immigration of Puritans came after Charles II was restored to the Crown in 1660, and Oliver Cromwell and his Puritan reformists fled for their lives. They brought with them a much more legalistic religious intolerance, and displayed bigotry for those who did not practice their particular Christian traditions and practices.

However, the promise of civil and religious Liberty drew hundreds of thousands of other seekers to east coast settlements, and they formed the bedrock of our nation. The crossroads of civil and religious Liberty was outlined in the central tenant of our Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

That eternal truth is the basis for the enumerated restrictions against government outlined in the First Amendment of our Constitution’s Bill of Rights: “Congress *shall make no law* respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of

the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” The prohibition against any “establishment of religion” appears first in order of importance, because our nation was largely founded by those seeking Liberty from oppression of the wedded church and state of England.

Though we are not a “Christian nation” as some would suggest, clearly most of our Founders understood that American Liberty has its roots in the Liberty of the Christian Gospel. The Father of our Country, George Washington, wrote, “To the distinguished Character of Patriot, it should be our highest Glory to add the more distinguished Character of Christian. The signal Instances of providential Goodness which we have experienced and which have now almost crowned our labours with complete Success, demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of Gratitude and Piety to the Supreme Author of all Good.”

### **Historic American Thanksgiving Proclamations**

During the American Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress designated days of thanksgiving each year. The First National Proclamation of Thanksgiving was made in 1777:

“FOR AS MUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their

Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success: It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for **SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE**: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance; That it may please him graciously to afford his Blessing on the Governments of these States respectively, and prosper the public Council of the whole: To inspire our Commanders, both by Land and Sea, and all under them, with that Wisdom and Fortitude which may render them fit Instruments, under the Providence of

Almighty GOD, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human Blessings, INDEPENDENCE and PEACE: That it may please him, to prosper the Trade and Manufactures of the People, and the Labor of the Husbandman, that our Land may yield its Increase: To take Schools and Seminaries of Education, so necessary for cultivating the Principles of true Liberty, Virtue and Piety, under his nurturing Hand; and to prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.”

Of that proclamation, Samuel Adams wrote to another Declaration signer, Richard Henry Lee, noting the specificity of the language that, “the good people may express the grateful feelings of their hearts and join ... their supplication that it may please God, through the merits of Jesus Christ.”

### Liberty’s Bounty

In 1789, after adopting the Bill of Rights to our Constitution, among the first official acts of Congress was approving a motion for proclamation of a national day of thanksgiving, recommending that citizens gather together and give thanks to God for their new nation’s blessings.

The first Thanksgiving Day designated by the United States of America was proclaimed by George Washington on 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 and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these 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 his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation, for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war, for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed, for the peaceable and rational manner, in which we



have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed; and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

“And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually, to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed, to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord. To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and Us, and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

“Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.”

Then-governor Thomas Jefferson followed with this 1789 proclamation in Virginia:

“[I] appoint ... a day of public Thanksgiving *to Almighty God* ... to [ask] Him that He would ... pour out His Holy Spirit on all ministers of the Gospel; that He would ... spread the light of Christian knowledge through the remotest corners of the earth; and that He would establish these United States upon the basis of religion and virtue.”

Governor John Hancock proclaimed:

“[I] appoint ... a day of public thanksgiving and praise ... to render *to God* the tribute of praise for His unmerited goodness towards us ... [by giving to] us ... the Holy Scriptures which are able to enlighten and make us wise to eternal salvation. And [to] present our supplications ... that He would forgive our manifold sins and cause the benign religion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be known, understood, and practiced among all the inhabitants of the earth.”

Thanksgiving celebrations were irregularly proclaimed in the years that followed until the War Between the States. After 1863, presidents issued annual proclamations of Thanksgiving.

In 1941, with World War II on the horizon, the Senate and House approved the fourth Thursday of November as a National Day of Thanksgiving, perpetuating the observance annually.

### **Thanksgiving and our Legacy of Liberty**

Appropriately crediting the Pilgrims for chartering the path of American Liberty through self-government, President Ronald Reagan made frequent reference to John Winthrop's "shining city upon a hill."

As Reagan explained, "The phrase comes from John Winthrop, who wrote it to describe the America he imagined. What he imagined was important because he was an early Pilgrim, an early freedom man. He journeyed here on what today we'd call a little wooden boat; and like the other Pilgrims, he was looking for a home that would be free."

Closing his farewell address in 1989, President Reagan asked, "And how stands the city on this winter night?"

Contemplating our Legacy of Liberty this Thanksgiving, more than two decades after President Reagan left office, how stands the city on our watch?

My fellow Patriots, never in the history of our country has there been such an acute, coordinated and vicious assault upon Liberty and the Rule of Law enshrined

in our Constitution. From individuals, to state governments, to federal institutions initiated at the dawn of our Constitution, nothing, absolutely nothing, is sacred to the current statist hegemony seeking to dispense with our Constitution.

But take heart, for as George Washington wrote in the darkest days of our American Revolution, “We should never despair, our Situation before has been unpromising and has changed for the better, so I trust, it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new Exertions and proportion our Efforts to the exigency of the times.”

Of such exertions, Washington wrote, “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 favors.”

Of the incredible obstacles overcome in the American Revolution to establish Liberty, Washington declared, “The hand of providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations.”

So it is that on Thanksgiving Day, we are called to pause and take respite in order to acknowledge the gift of Liberty as “endowed by our Creator,” and the Divine intervention throughout the history of this great nation; in order to recommit

ourselves to obeisance of His will; in order to express our gratitude and give Him all thanks and praise for the bounty which He has bestowed the United States of America — land of the free, home of the brave, that shining city on the hill; and in order to all the more humbly implore that He protect us and grant us much favor in our coming struggle to re-establish Rule of Law over rule of men.

In his first Thanksgiving proclamation, President Reagan wrote: “America has much for which to be thankful. The unequalled freedom enjoyed by our citizens has provided a harvest of plenty to this Nation throughout its history. In keeping with America’s heritage, one day each year is set aside for giving thanks to God for all of His blessings. ... As we celebrate Thanksgiving ... We should reflect on the full meaning of this day as we enjoy the fellowship that is so much a part of the holiday festivities. Searching our hearts, we should ask what we can do as individuals to demonstrate our gratitude to God for all He has done. Such reflection can only add to the significance of this precious day of remembrance. Let us recommit ourselves to that devotion to God and family that has played such an important role in making this a great Nation, and which will be needed as a source of strength if we are to remain a great people. This is the genuine spirit of Thanksgiving.

A great article although somewhat lengthy. It contains a lot of historical facts that have been lost or watered down over the years. “A Day of Thanksgiving and

Praise” only took 164 years from its inception to lose “and Praise” from its title.

Not surprising one bit. Satan went to work immediately when a new target appeared that would honor and glorify God.

We know that Thanksgiving is a man-made holiday and not ordained in God’s Word or commanded in Leviticus 23 as a Holy Day. It was, in its original intent a day set aside for us to reflect the blessings that God has bestowed upon us personally and as a nation.

Some writings on Thanksgiving would have us believe it is generic as our Constitution forbids the government to establish any particular religion. Nonsense! Recall the quotes from Thomas Jefferson from 1789 (pour out His Holy Spirit on all ministers of the Gospel...) and John Hancock (... that He would forgive our manifold sins and cause the benign religion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be known, understood, and practiced among all the inhabitants of the earth). Nowhere did these men mention Allah, Buddha, Krishna Mohammed or any other so-called deity. They were referring to the God of the Christian Bible and His Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. We’ve only been conditioned to think that way and accept the lie as the truth.

Do we really need to set aside a special day each year to honor, worship and praise God? Not to take away from Thanksgiving, but absolutely not! “Rejoice always!

Pray unceasingly. Give thanks in everything, for this *is the* will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”- **1 Thess. 5:16-18**. Our love and worship of God is not hardly limited to one day out of the year (**Psa. 18:49, 30:4, 12, 79:13, 106:1, 1 Thess. 1:2**). Do we truly share our Thanksgiving holiday with family and friends to honor God or has it become a chaotic gathering with more concern on a green bean casserole and crescent rolls topped off with a football game? We are to give thanks always and in all things. The established Thanksgiving holiday has degraded over the years as God gets further out of the picture and further away in our hearts and minds. Our devotion must be continually. “I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall always be in my mouth.”- **Psalm 34:1**

### **Enter Black Friday**

There are several origins listed on Black Friday but most concur it has its roots in US consumerism. Traditionally, holiday shoppers would flood the stores in search of bargains on the day after Thanksgiving. This surge in spending was enough to put retailers “in the black for the year. Therefore, the Friday following Thanksgiving was dubbed “Black Friday,” and it became the unofficial start of the holiday shopping season. There is also credit to the Philadelphia Police

Department who labeled it Black Friday due to all the traffic jams created by the downtown shoppers.

Retailers have little to no concern today with the origin of the name but have taken full advantage of its global recognition and hype as a day to make a significant portion of their yearly sales. Gimmicks are rampant with advertising and the frenzy gets worse every year. Now that God has been taken out of the Thanksgiving picture, Satan is working hard to add his twist to anything that started out as good. Black Friday is now no longer limited to the day after Thanksgiving, but sometimes starts days before. Stores that used to be closed on Thanksgiving are now open for business before the turkey and gravy are cold. The greed only fuels the fire. 2019 on-line sales alone reached 7.2 billion dollars, up 14% from 2018. Every year, the man-made junk is pushed out a little further. The Christmas trees are out before the Halloween costumes are down. They haven't hustled turkeys on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July just yet but soon.

While it may be a financial boost for retailers, Black Friday represents the depravity of how far we've degenerated as a society. Over the years, aside from idiots camping out on store sidewalks to "get in on" the best deals, hysterical crowds competing for discounted merchandise have resulted in violence and injuries, including 12 deaths. How dumb can people get? With all the Covid hype there may not be any major traffic jams (well maybe in Florida) but trust me, those



folks wearing their masks in their cars won't be deterred from their quest. But don't be concerned if you miss out on any sales, there's always "Cyber Monday" following Thanksgiving weekend...

### **What Does this Mean for Us?**

We know God's Truth. We live according to His Commandments and we keep His Holy Days. We have been called out and set apart.

"But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for Himself. The LORD will hear when I call to Him."- **Psalm 4:3**.

"Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate," says *the* Lord, "and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says *the* Lord Almighty."- **2 Cor. 6:17-18**.

"Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, Betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; Having an outward

appearance of godliness, but denying the power of *true* godliness. But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these. For from *men such as* these come those who are worming their way into houses, and are gaining control over empty-headed *gullible* women given over to *various* sins, *being* driven by all kinds of lust. *They are* always learning but *are* never able to come to *the* knowledge of *the* truth.”- **2 Timothy 3:1-7. (Isa, 5:20).**

Satan will continue to diminish, distract, destroy, pollute, profane and morph anything remotely good associated with God. He has succeeded in churches and families since the Garden of Eden. He will not cease until Our Savior returns and throws him into chains.

Thanksgiving in America has become an imitation, almost a mockery of what its original intent was. Much like what the Protestant churches have done to God’s Word, His Sabbaths and Holy Days. Every Sabbath we come together to worship God in Spirit and in truth *is* a day for Thanksgiving. While it is not one of God’s Holy Days, there is no reason why we cannot observe Thanksgiving in its original intent and purpose; to Honor and praise our God and thank Him for the gift of life, His Son, His plan for mankind and the blessed hope of eternal life in His Kingdom. Though my list is long, I can think of no greater reasons to be thankful.

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