

The Decline of a Nation

As Shown by the Thanksgiving Proclamations of 1777 and 2005

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”
Psalm 33:12

“Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD.”
Psalm 144:15

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”
Psalm 9:17

The First Thanksgiving Proclamation

By the Continental Congress of the United States

1777

FORASMUCH 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." And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.

NOTE: The capitalized words are those of the Continental Congress.

The Current Thanksgiving Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America

2005

Thanksgiving Day is a time to remember our many blessings and to celebrate the opportunities that freedom affords. Explorers and settlers arriving in this land often gave thanks for the extraordinary plenty they found. And today, we remain grateful to live in a country of liberty and abundance. We give thanks for the love of family and friends, and we ask God to continue to watch over America.

This Thanksgiving, we pray and express thanks for the men and women who work to keep America safe and secure. Members of our Armed Forces, State and local law enforcement, and first responders embody our Nation's highest ideals of courage and devotion to duty. Our country is grateful for their service and for the support and sacrifice of their families. We ask God's special blessings on those who have lost loved ones in the line of duty.

We also remember those affected by the destruction of natural disasters. Their tremendous determination to recover their lives exemplifies the American spirit, and we are grateful for those across our Nation who answered the cries of their neighbors in need and provided them with food, shelter, and a helping hand. We ask for continued strength and perseverance as we work to rebuild these communities and return hope to our citizens.

We give thanks to live in a country where freedom reigns, justice prevails, and hope prospers. We recognize that America is a better place when we answer the universal call to love a neighbor and help those in need. May God bless and guide the United States of America as we move forward.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 24, 2005, as a National Day of Thanksgiving. I encourage all Americans to gather together in their homes and places of worship with family, friends, and loved ones to reinforce the ties that bind us and give thanks for the freedoms and many blessings we enjoy.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

A Few Questions to Provoke Your Thinking

1. Which proclamation refers to God as “Almighty God,” not just once, but twice?
2. Which proclamation does not thank God a single time in light of past blessings?
3. Which proclamation names Jesus Christ, proving America had a Christian government?
4. Which proclamation mentions the penitent confession of manifold sins?
5. Which proclamation thanks firemen and ambulance drivers instead of God?
6. Which proclamation refers to the merits of Jesus Christ as the means for forgiveness of sins?
7. Which proclamation sought the enlargement of the kingdom of God in the earth?
8. Which proclamation asks the nation to omit unbecoming innocent recreation?
9. Which proclamation is at the third grade level and avoids definitive mention of religion?
10. Which proclamation mentions the mercy of God in the blessings on the nation?
11. Which proclamation uses the verb “adore” in relation to Almighty God and His providence?
12. Which proclamation mentions and refers to the Holy Ghost?
13. Which proclamation formally quotes part of Romans 14:17 from the Bible?
14. Which proclamation praised the American spirit rather than the Holy Spirit?
15. Which proclamation mentions solemn “praise” along with thanksgiving?
16. Which proclamation admitted military success came from the providence of Almighty God?
17. Which proclamation left no room for Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism as religions?

A Few Links to Further Your Study

[All the Continental Congress Proclamations from 1777 to 1784](#)

[All the Presidential Proclamations from 1789 to 2005](#)