

## 2025-11-29 Biblical History of Giving Thanks

I hope you all had a good Thanksgiving

& are still thankful, I'm thankful we are free to be thankful

Meaning of the word Thanksgiving is giving of thanks

Thanksgiving – an American holiday to give thanks

Thanks to whom? Thanks to God

How do people in our culture celebrate Thanksgiving?

Most gather with extended family to have a turkey feast

Good in that it helps keep extended families connected

Some have an extended time of saying grace, or take turns thanking God

Seems inadequate for a day dedicated by our government to give thanks

Why be thankful? We used to sing a song with a very true line

“a thankful heart prepares a way for you, Oh God”

Gratitude invites the presence of God into your heart

He has given us so much He expects our gratitude

Things in Tenakh were written for our instruction

So let's see what we can learn about giving thanks from Tenakh

After the incredible trial of hundreds of days afloat on the flood

Tossed by the waves, in the dark, cooped up in the Ark, eating stored food

Noah & his family & their animals set foot safely on dry ground

God had chosen them as the only humans on Earth who didn't drown

Imagine how thankful they would've been for their lives

What was the first thing Noah did? He built an altar

Altars are built to make sacrifices

& Noah sacrificed as a burnt offering clean animals that God told him to bring

Most people think all animal sacrifices in Tenakh were for forgiveness of sin

But, many of them were sacrifices of thanksgiving

Called shalom or fellowship offerings in Leviticus 3

But just described as offerings in Genesis & Exodus

Noah's sacrifice was not for sin, but how he gave thanks to God

*Genesis 8:21 When Adonai (God) smelled the soothing aroma...*

What was the connection between a burnt offering & thanking God?

Smoke of the sacrifice from the burnt offering ascending toward heaven

Where God dwelt

It was a visual picture of the offering being given directly to God  
& God receiving it

Then Noah received a promise from the Lord

*21... Adonai said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, even though the inclination of the heart of humankind is evil from youth. Nor will I ever again smite all living creatures, as I have done.*

So God removed the curse on ground He had declared in Genesis 3:17

& He promised there would be no more universal floods

More for Noah & us to be thankful for

Moving ahead to Avram in Genesis 12 God called him to journey to his PL

& promised Him blessing & protection

That his descendants would become a great nation

& bless the other nations & the land of Israel

Avram he arrived in his Promised Land & God appeared to him

After hearing such amazing promises from God & receiving God's direction

What was the first thing Avram did?

*Genesis 12:7...So there he built an altar to Adonai, who had appeared to him.*

Why? To offer sacrifices of thanksgiving for those amazing promises

& his safe arrival in his Promised Land

Spiritual principle here - when God gives you promises &/or protection

An appropriate response is to give thanks to Him

By giving Him something of value in return

For Avram that meant a burnt offering from his livestock

Amazingly, 3500 years later God is still keeping His promise to Avram

*12:8... There he built an altar to Adonai and called on the Name of Adonai.*

This was another altar Avram built so he could give sacrifices to God

But also, he called on name of the Lord there for the first time

Meaning he prayed, sought God's direction, His help, protection

This was the 1<sup>st</sup> time Avram took the initiative to connect with God

Spiritual principle - when you give to God it is an appropriate time

To call on the name of the Lord for help

So far all offerings have been free will, up to the offerer what was given

As long as it was clean animals

But, then there is a new instruction on giving

Avram's nephew Lot was taken captive in a battle & Avram went to rescue him  
 After a miraculous victory & taking great spoils from Lot's captors  
 Avram gave a thanksgiving gift to God in a **very different** way  
 He was met by Melchi Tzedek a priest of El Elyon, Most High God  
*Genesis 14:19 He (Melchi Tzedek) blessed him and said, "Blessed be Avram by El Elyon (God Most High), Creator of heaven and earth, 20 and blessed be El Elyon, Who gave over your enemies Into your hand."*  
*Then Avram gave him a tenth of everything.*  
 Rather than give a burnt offering to God  
 Avram gave spoils/material things, weapons, shields, horses, food, jewelry  
 & he gave a specific amount, a **tithe, tenth** of the spoils to God  
 This was a new way of relating to God by giving Him thanks  
 For an increase in wealth by giving Him material things  
 We still practice this today & give thanks by giving a tithe/tenth  
 Of our increase to God  
 In our culture that increase is your paycheck  
 SS check, retirement check, business profit, inheritance  
 We can fall into the habit of giving our tithes automatically, at least I can  
 Rather than thanking God for the increase we are tithing on  
 That's why we encourage everyone to celebrate  
 When we receive tithes & offerings  
 Another difference revealed in this incident  
 Avram gave God thanks by giving a tenth to Melchi-Tzedek  
 A priest of El Elyon, Most High God  
 Who are priests?  
 In Tenakh, cohanim are those working to establish & grow Kingdom of God  
 So we learn you can give thanks to God  
 By giving to people and/or organizations working for Him  
 Establishing His Kingdom including congregations, ministries  
 In Genesis 17 God changed Avram's name to Abraham father of many nations  
 Genesis 22 God commanded Abraham to build another altar on Mt. Moriah  
 & sacrifice his son Yitzakh on it  
 When Abraham was about to go through with it God stopped him

He Himself provided a ram for the sacrifice  
 There was a prophetic revelation in this offering that someday  
 God would provide Himself a sacrifice  
 He Himself would be the sacrifice  
 That altar was on the mountain where Yeshua was sacrificed for our atonement  
 Since Yeshua, the Lamb of God was God Himself come as a human being  
 His sacrifice was in fulfillment of God Himself providing the Lamb  
 He Himself was the sacrificed lamb  
 Move ahead 400 years to the time of Moses  
 Israelites were slaves in Egypt & God sent Moses to deliver them  
 God brought 9 terrible plagues on the land of Egypt & then told  
 Moses He was about to bring a 10<sup>th</sup> plague death of every 1<sup>st</sup> born son  
 Then God commanded each Israelite to make a very special offering  
 Of a lamb to protect themselves from the 10<sup>th</sup> plague  
 Each Israelite had to make this offering in faith that it would protect them  
 It was a thanksgiving offering made in faith that there would be a miracle  
 Based on God's promise of protection  
 & destruction of their Egyptian slave masters  
 This was a prophetic picture revealing someday an offering would be made  
 To protect God's people from the plague of eternal death  
 That offering would be made by God Himself come as a man  
 God Himself would be the Lamb of God for that sacrifice  
 On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Nisan  
 The head of every household was commanded to select a lamb  
*Exodus 12:6 You must watch over it until the fourteenth day of the same month.*  
*Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to slaughter it at twilight.*  
 Lamb was watched over for 4 days for blemishes  
 This reveals an important spiritual principle - that to be acceptable to God  
 Our thanksgiving offerings must be unblemished, perfect  
 In the case of God's offering, without sin  
 After leaving Egypt the Egyptian army followed & cornered the Israelites  
 On the shore of the Sea of Reeds  
 God saved them by parting the waters to allow the Israelites to cross

& then returning the waters to destroy the Egyptian army

*Exodus 15:20 Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing,*

*21 as Miriam sang to them: Sing to Adonai, for He is highly exalted! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!*

Amazingly this is the first reference to singing & dancing to give thanks

Many more references especially in the Psalms

But singing, dancing have become the principle ways we give thanks today

*Exodus 24:4 So Moses wrote down all the words of Adonai, then rose up early in the morning, and built an altar below the mountain, along with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.*

*5 He then sent out young men of Bnei-Yisrael, who sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings of oxen to Adonai.*

Here we see an offering to God was given when the Mosaic covenant was cut

So, when **you** entered into the BH with the Lord did you give an offering?

You should have - your offering was **your life**

So far all the offerings have been animals except Avrams' tithe

Giving valuable objects to God also happened in Exodus

God commanded Moses to build a Tabernacle as a place to make offerings

*Exodus 35:5 Take from among you an offering for Adonai. Whoever has a willing heart, let him bring Adonai's offering: gold, silver and bronze;*

Offering of objects, to be used in construction of Tabernacle

It's furnishings & priestly garments

Today that would include money to buy things of use to Kingdom of God

*29 Every man and woman whose heart made them willing gave toward all the work that Adonai had commanded to be done by Moses' hand. So Bnei-Yisrael brought it as a freewill offering to Adonai.*

So much came in they had to tell the people to stop giving

Another spiritual principle - offerings must be made from your heart

& willingly

Moses went into great detail on instructions for offerings in Leviticus

**Leviticus 1** – offerings could only be made on the altar of burnt offering

In the Tabernacle courtyard

This had an immense effect on Judaism after Temple was destroyed

In 70 CE burnt offerings could no longer be made

Offerer himself was to slaughter the animal – this made every offering personal  
Leviticus 3 instructions for shalom, peace or fellowship offerings

Reinforcing that not all offerings were for sin

Only sins for which restitution could be made, adding a fifth to make restitution  
Moses instructed offerings for things other than thanksgiving in Tenakh

Leviticus 4 details for offerings for unintentional sin

Leviticus 5 trespass offerings for certain intentional sins

Offerings were required for Nazarite vows, purification after childbirth

*Proverb 19:17 One who is kind to the poor lends to Adonai, and Adonai will reward him for his good deed.*

The poor

Most Moadim offerings were all for thanks giving

Firstfruits, Shavuot, Sukkot – thanksgivings for the harvest

Because of Moses' writings in Torah offerings became central to life in Israel

How do you relate to these things today, we don't sacrifice animals to God?

What does Brit Hadashah teach us about giving thanks to God?

Heard people say believers don't need to make sacrifices any more

Because Yeshua's sacrifice was once & for ever

That's true concerning the burnt offerings made as sacrifices for sin, but praise the Lord

Brit Hadashah instructs us a lot to give to God in thanksgiving, to the poor & to tithe

To sing & dance in giving thanks

& to give something more valuable than any of these things

Which we'll get to in a few minutes

The apostles were describing the Body of Messiah in Jerusalem to Rabbi Sha'ul  
*Acts 21:20 ... they also said to him, "You see, brother, how many tens of thousands of believers there are among the Judeans, and they are all zealots for the Torah.*

Early Messianic Jews were zealous for Torah

So, they would have been giving offerings, lamb on Pesakh

Thanks offerings on Firstfruits, Shavuot & Sukkot & more  
 All the Temple offerings stopped in 70 when Temple was destroyed  
 Council of Yavneh Biblical Judaism was transformed to Rabbinic Judaism  
 Messianic Jews also changed in 70  
 Messianic Jew's saw Yeshua's sacrifice as the fulfillment of the offerings for sin

& thanksgiving & other offerings could no longer be made  
 Rabbi Sha'ul wrote about the apostles request to him  
*Galatians 2:10 Their only request was that we should remember the poor - which very thing I have spared no pains to do.*

So, we are to give to the poor

*2 Corinthians 9:7 Each should give according to what he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

We should give cheerfully – meaning joyfully

*2 Corinthians 9:11 You will be enriched in every way, so that you can be generous in everything. And through us your generosity will cause people to thank God,*

We should give to the work of the ministry to cause people to thank God

You thank God by giving 3 things

1<sup>st</sup> objects, meaning money or valuable things

To build the Kingdom of God, like objects were offered to build the Tabernacle

*Psalms 108:4 I will give thanks to You, Adonai , among the peoples, I will sing praises to You among the nations.*

2<sup>nd</sup> You thank God by giving Him praise in word, song, dance

God set us an example of something much more valuable than He gave to us

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only and unique Son, so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life, instead of being utterly destroyed.*

Here's that most surprising & most valuable thing you can give to the Lord

*Romans 12:1 I exhort you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer yourselves as a sacrifice, living and set apart for God. This will please him; it is the logical "Temple worship" for you.*

You are to offer yourself as a living sacrifice, set apart for God

This is what will please Him  
 You are to offer yourself as a **living** sacrifice, it's not about killing yourself  
 Is this sacrifice a sin offering? No, Yeshua made the final sin offering  
 You can't offer yourself as a sacrifice for your sins  
 Because your sins have made you blemished  
 & God won't receive blemished offerings  
 Only Yeshua could make that sacrifice because He never sinned  
 So, what kind of offering is this living & set apart sacrifice  
 It is to be made "in view of God's mercies"  
 His mercies that brought you forgiveness for your sins  
 Made you His child, filled you with Ruach Ha Kodesh, promised you  
 eternal life  
 So, your living sacrifice is a thanksgiving offering  
 This certainly means sacrificing yourself by serving God  
 Rather than working to enrich yourself or make yourself famous  
 Most would think this means to dedicate all your time & energy to serving God  
 Even to the point of giving up worldly pleasures  
 This is why people took vows of poverty, became monks  
 But next verse gives a very unexpected meaning to being a living sacrifice  
 Set apart for God

*2 In other words,...*

Verse 2 starts with "in other words" meaning the words that follow  
 Are equivalent to & explain the words that preceded the "in other words"  
 Which are – offer yourselves as a sacrifice living & set apart for God  
 2...(In other words) *do not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of the*  
*'olam hazeh (this world)...*

So, here's what you are not to do

To offer yourself as a living sacrifice set apart for God  
 Don't live by this world's standards  
 What are this world's standards? Worlds standards are its iniquities  
 Its ungodly morals, values, riches, fame, knowledge  
 Praises of other people, control, power, revenge, bitterness, lust  
 Seeking the things this world seeks after

*2...Instead, keep letting yourselves be transformed...*



Here's what you **are to** do – **keep** letting yourself be transformed  
 Why **keep** letting yourself be transformed rather than just be transformed?

Because being transformed is not something you do just once

It's a long slow process to be transformed

Why "letting yourself" be transformed rather than keep transforming yourself

Because it's not something you can do yourself

Only Ruach Ha Kodesh can transform you, how?

*2... by the renewing of your minds;..*

What does it mean to have a renewed mind?

To stop thinking like the world thinks & start thinking like God thinks

This is what Rabbi Sha'ul describes in

*Romans 8:29 because those whom he knew in advance, he also determined in advance would be conformed to the pattern of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers;*

Being made like Yeshua in character

*Romans 12:2... so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed.*

A renewed mind is a mind that knows what God thinks, what He wants

Can follow Ruach Ha Kodesh & agrees what God wants is

Good, fulfilling & able to be accomplished

How does God think?

*Isaiah 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways." It is a declaration of Adonai.*

*9 "For as the heavens are higher than earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*

So, God thinks differently from you and I

How does Ruach Ha Kodesh renew your mind? Rabbi Sha'ul gives us a radical revelation

On how our minds are renewed

*1 Corinthians 2:15 (16)... we have the mind of the Messiah!*

You, who are born again already have Yeshua's mind

Because Ruach Ha Kodesh dwells in you, your mind is capable of knowing

What Ruach Ha Kodesh in you is thinking, Ruach Ha Kodesh can communicate with your mind

Sha'ul says you have to keep letting your mind be transformed

By keeping on seeking His mind, His will, rather than your own desires

This is what Yeshua meant when He said

*Luke 9:23 Then to everyone he said, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him say 'No' to himself, take up his execution-stake daily and keep following me.*

What does Ruach Ha Kodesh use to accomplish this renewal?

*(TLV) Ephesians 5:25...Messiah also loved His community and gave Himself up for her*

*26 to make her holy, having cleansed her by immersion in the word.*

Ruach Ha Kodesh keeps cleansing your mind from thinking like this world

& keeps renewing it to think like God

By immersion in the word, the Bible

Bible is our guide to how God thinks

The more you study it, meditate on it

The more Ruach Ha Kodesh will keep transforming you mind

So you think like God

Here's an example of not being conformed to this world's standards

But being transformed to think like God

*1 Thessalonians 5:18 In **everything** give thanks, for this is what God wants from you who are united with the Messiah Yeshua.*

Certainly give thanks for miracles, favor, blessing, answered prayer, promises

But **everything** means there are some more things to give thanks for

Trials – because they cause you to grow

How about yet to be fulfilled promises, like Yeshua's return, heaven?

How about yet to be answered prayers?

Like prayers for your loved ones salvation

How can you be thankful when they are not save yet?

Do you believe God hears you when you pray?

Have you prayed for your loved ones salvation?

Yet, do you sometimes pray again asking Him to hear you

He knows your every thought, why doubt that He has heard you?

It actually demonstrates a lack of faith that God hears you

Why is that a problem?

*Mark 11:23 Yes! I tell you that whoever does not doubt in his heart but trusts that what he says will happen can say to this mountain, 'Go and throw yourself into the sea!' and it will be done for him.*

*24 Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, trust that you are receiving it, and it will be yours.*

Asking again demonstrates you do not believe He has heard you  
& will answer your prayer

What should you do? In everything give thanks, including unanswered prayers  
Thank you Lord that You have heard

& are moving invisibly in the spirit world to answer my prayer

His moves to answer so many of our prayers are invisible

Until the full manifestation

Ex: praying for a loved one's salvation

God will move in that person's life to reveal Himself

Often through a trial causing them to see their need for help from God

Then He answers their prayer & reveals Himself

But, you can't see any of that going on while it is happening

So, pray once, then thank the Lord He has heard & is moving in answer

Then you are demonstrating *trust that you are receiving it,*  
*and it will be yours.*

That's in line with Mark 11:23-24

What about where Yeshua says in His parable about the judge who gave in

To a widow's pleas because she repeatedly pled her case before him?

*Luke 18:7 Now won't God grant justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Is he delaying long over them?*

*8 I tell you that he will judge in their favor, and quickly! But when the Son of Man comes, will he find this trust on the earth at all?"*

Yeshua was saying God will respond positively to persistence in prayer

More quickly than the judge

But, of course only to prayers that are in line with His will

Inspired by Ruach Ha Kodesh

Question is which is more persistent asking over & over

Or thanking God that He has heard you & is moving in invisible ways

I believe that's true persistence

Prayer

Thanks for Thanksgiving, for the freedom to openly express our thanks to you

Give us thankful hearts so our hearts are prepared for your presence

May our offerings be a sweet aroma to you like the smoke of a burnt offering

Thank you for your amazing promises

Those already fulfilled & those You will fulfill in the future

Thank you for being faithful to Your promises to the Patriarchs & to each of us

Thank you for instructing us to tithe, keep 90% of what you enable us to earn

& give you 10%

Thank you that You Yourself provided a ram for Avraham on Mt. Moriah

& on that same mountain You provided Your Lamb for our atonement

Thank You that Your atoning sacrifice protects us from eternal death in hell

Thank You for coming as Messiah and being without sin

So You could be a fitting unblemished offering

Thank you that even though the Temple is gone we can still offer thanks to you

By word, singing & dancing, gifts to the poor

Help us to give thanks willingly & from our hearts

We renew our covenant with You

Reminding ourselves that our covenant offering was our lives

We offer ourselves as sacrifices, living & set apart for God

Help us to not be conformed to this world's values

Morals, values, riches, fame, knowledge

Praises of other people, control, power, revenge, bitterness, lust

Seeking the things this world seeks after

Keep transforming us by Ruach Ha Kodesh & Your Word

Conforming us to the image of Yeshua

Help us offer ourselves by transforming our thinking to be like Your thinking

Thank you that we have the mind of Messiah

Help us to give thanks for everything

Help us to believe that You hear all our prayers when we first pray them

& will answer those that are in accord with Your will in Your timing

Give us faith to thank You for answering our prayers

Even when we don't see any results