

What Is a Holiday?

The American Heritage Dictionary defines holiday as, “a day free from work that one may spend at leisure, especially a day on which custom or the law dictates a halting of general business activity to commemorate or celebrate a particular event.” The second definition is “a religious feast day, a holy day.”

The first definition describes our world. Everyone wants leisure and fun. The second definition as a holy day has been lost by most people. Older dictionaries typically list something like, “a religious festival or observance, a holy day” as the first definition for holiday. We have surely moved God to second place, or even lower.

We just observed Thanksgiving. In 1621 the Pilgrims observed the first Thanksgiving in the New World. Those who survived that first year gathered after the harvest for a time of worship and celebration. Chief Massasoit and about ninety Pokanoket warriors joined the Pilgrims and celebrated for three days.

Consider the proclamation of Governor William Bradford which he issued in 1623.

“To all the Pilgrims - Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, 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 you Pilgrims, with your wives and little ones, do gather at the meeting house, on the hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November the 29th of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty three, and the third year since the Pilgrims landed on the Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to your pastor, and render thanksgiving to the Almighty God for all His blessings.”

The Pilgrims understood. Thanksgiving is a holy time, a time to publicly acknowledge God as the giver of life and all things.

Christmas is the next holiday on our calendar. But as with Thanksgiving, most people have forgotten the purpose for which the Christmas holiday is to be observed. We do not focus on the wonder of the incarnation or the mercy, grace, and good will which God exhibited toward mankind in sending the Savior to reconcile wicked people to Himself. Instead, we have turned to parties, expensive and unnecessary gifts, twinkly lights, and lots of emotional sentimentalism as substitutes for the truth that God came into the world to save sinners.

Beloved, may we who have God’s Word and know the truth not become caught up in the substitutes which the world offers. Let us remember and celebrate what these holy days memorialize. God has providentially provided for both physical and spiritual life. That is worth celebrating and commemorating with holy days.

Roger Myers – CBC Devotional Editor

Weekly Prayer Request – Luke 2:30-32

This is the first week of traditional Christmas shopping madness. Let us pray that parents, as well as children, remember that the focus of this season is Jesus Christ and not the gifts we give or hope to receive. The acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior is the greatest gift we can receive.

In an effort to encourage and support each other, the CBC Prayer Committee encourages each member and congregation to pray for our sister congregations. Two of these will be shared each week for special prayer. This week, please pray for:

- Antioch CBC in Woodstock, VA and Pastors George Bowers and Dale Bennett
- Asher Glade in Friendsville, MD and Pastor Michael Saturday

CBC Prayer Committee