

# The World's Thanksgiving Day

## *A Part Of The Ancient Pagan Harvest Festivals*

Books In The Holy Scriptures As Written In The Book Of Yahweh					
<i>If you are unfamiliar with The True Names of The Prophets and Apostles, this box will acquaint you. We also recommend Taped Sermons to help learn the correct pronunciation.</i>					
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<b>Genesis</b>	<i>Genesis</i>	<b>II Chronicles</b>	<i>II Chronicles</i>	<b>Daniyl</b>	<i>Daniel</i>
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<b>Romans</b>	<i>Romans</i>	<b>I Timothy</b>	<i>I Timothy</i>	<b>II Yahchanan</b>	<i>II John</i>
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<b>II Corinthians</b>	<i>II Corinthians</i>	<b>Titus</b>	<i>Titus</i>	<b>Yahdah</b>	<i>Jude</i>
<b>Galatians</b>	<i>Galatians</i>	<b>Philemon</b>	<i>Philemon</i>	<b>Revelation</b>	<i>Revelation</i>



# The World's Thanksgiving Day

## *A Part Of The Ancient Pagan Harvest Festivals*

**I**n the calendars of all people, certain days have been set aside for special religious or secular observances or as possessing a special character. Among these days, some have always been primarily religious in character; some were once of religious or superstitious significance but are no longer so; and some were wholly secular in origin and remain wholly secular in observance. Holy Days are possessed of some currently accepted religious significance, while holidays, the occasions for which are religious or secular, are generally observed by cessation of regular employment.

The observance of occasions of religious significance has long been of great importance in the lives of all peoples. In primitive rites to propitiate evil spirits, to enlist the aid of benevolent ones, to ensure fertility in the fields, to celebrate the harvest, and to celebrate seasonal changes, can be seen the degree to which primitive religion was concerned with the phenomena of nature.

When one studies the significance and origin of today's Christian religious observances, one then realizes that primitive pagan rites have been perpetuated in and combined with Christian traditional celebrations. All Hallows Eve—Halloween is nothing more than the modern day sacrifices of the Dead. Easter is merely the worship of the Goddess of the Dawn. The ancient pagan celebrations of modern Christmas and New Year were celebrated on the same days as they are today, even before Yahshua Messiah was born!

Modern Halloween, Christmas, and Easter are observances of the ancient fertility worship, based upon the exact days in which the sun would be in equinox or solstice. All of this information can be found in your own local library or within the pages of prominent encyclopedias.

Write for our free booklets about Halloween, Christmas and Easter. We prove our statements about these worldly holidays from the Holy Scriptures and from reference sources. You can research in your own local library to see that what we are saying is the truth.

**T**here is another holiday celebrated by nearly all people throughout the world. In the United States, this holiday is called **Thanksgiving**.

From the propaganda of public schools every American knows how Thanksgiving originated; In 1620 the small band of pilgrims

of Plymouth Colony braved the perilous North Atlantic in quest of religious freedom. They landed in November and faced winter with meager supplies of food that dwindled rapidly. Fifty-five of the original one-hundred two people who came on the Mayflower died before spring. Because the summer was blessed with rain and the autumn harvest was plentiful, the pilgrim colony, appropriately grateful, established a day of thanksgiving and invited the local Indians to share their bounty. Supposedly, this is the origin of the holiday known as Thanksgiving and it is so pure and holy that everyone can now observe this Thanksgiving day with a clear conscience, knowing that this is pleasing to Yahweh.

The truth is rather different. The Plymouth Colony was not the first English Colony to land on American shores, nor were they the first to offer thanks. The first Thanksgiving day service in what was to become the United States was the one held on August 9, 1607, by colonists en route to found the short-lived Popham Colony at what is now Phippsburg, Maine. After their two ships had reached one of the Georges Islands off the Maine coast, they gave thanks to God for their 'happy meeting and safe arrival into the country.'

The first permanent English settlement in America was founded at Jamestown, on the James River in Virginia, also in 1607. As early as December 4, 1619, the settlers set aside a day to give thanks for the survival of their small company. Their day of thanks continued to be observed on December 4 until 1622, when a conflict with Indians almost devastated the colony. *The American Book of Days*, by Jane M. Hatch, 1978, pages 1053-1054.

**W**hen they chose exile from England rather than persecution for their beliefs, the Pilgrims escaped to Holland. This was in 1608, twelve years before they sailed to the New World. They fully intended to live out their ordained lives among the Dutch. However, exile was scarcely better than persecution. They were ill-prepared to learn the Dutch language. They were essentially farmers, but now had to make an urban living. Badly paid jobs in the textile, metal, and leather trades were all that was available to them. Their future governor, William Bradford, was apprenticed to a silk weaver.

When they left England, they also took their religious difficulties with them. They divided into quarreling sects, and even found fault with the doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church. Their religious and financial problems drove them to the decision to leave Holland. As was their practice, they voted for the place they would go. Guiana (now Guyana) in South America was considered, but the financial blessings brought to the Virginia Colony in Jamestown by the new commodity tobacco, led them to select North America. The project was sponsored by a group of independent English businessmen. *Celebrations: The Comprehensive Book of American Holidays*, by Robert J. Myers, 1972, pages 272-273.

**The official historical pilgrim Thanksgiving day was not even a day completely given to thanks and praise, as the pilgrims were accustomed to doing. This day was primarily a show of military power for the Indians.**



● *Thanksgiving, An American Holiday, An American History*, by Diana Karter Applebaum, 1984, pages 7-11, tells us the true story of the pilgrims' feast in the fall of 1621.

Landing at Plymouth in December 1620, the Pilgrims faced winter without an adequate food supply, sheltered from the elements only by such dwellings as they could build quickly. Unseen, dreaded Indians lurked in the woods, their intentions unknown. Faith and prayer sustained the pious settlers—their first act upon setting foot on dry land was to kneel and pray. Records of the settlement are punctuated by notations of recurrent occasions when “solemn thanks and praise” were offered.

The first autumn, an ample harvest insured that the colony would have food for the winter months. Governor Bradford, with one eye on the divine Providence, proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to God, and with the other eye on the local political situation, extended an invitation to neighboring Indians to share in the harvest feast. In order to guarantee that the feast served to cement a peaceful relationship, the three-day long meal was punctuated by displays of the power of English muskets for the benefit of suitably impressed Indian guests.

This “first Thanksgiving” was a feast called to suit the needs of the hour, which were to celebrate the harvest, thank the Lord for His goodness, and regale and impress the Indians. We have Edward Winslow’s testimony that the feast was a success:

“Our harvest being gotten in, our Governour sent foure men fowling, so that we might after a more special manner rejoyce together, after we had gathered the fruit of our labours; they foure in one day killed as much fowle, as with a little helpe beside, served the Company almost a weeke, at which time amongst other Recreations we exercised our Armes, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest King Massasoyt, with some ninetie men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five Deere which they brought to

the Plantacion and bestowed on our Governour, and upon the Captaine, and others."

Thanksgivings were holy days of solemn prayer in the Puritan lexicon, days akin to sabbaths and feast days on which "Recreations" and "exercising of Armes" would not have been countenanced. Had the governor proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God, Edward Winslow, one of the Pilgrim Fathers, would have written about the religious services the settlers held. Thus this feast was more harvest celebration than prayerful day of thanksgiving.

Preparing a feast for 90 Indians and 50 settlers must have taxed the strength of the four Englishwomen and two teenage girls on hand to do the cooking (13 Pilgrim women had been buried during the terrible first winter). They worked with the resources at hand, and, although they successfully fed the hungry men, the feast bore little resemblance to the modern Thanksgiving dinner. Partridges, ducks, geese and turkeys could be shot along the shores of Cape Cod Bay in the fall, and it may be that those who went a-fowling brought back some of each to be roasted or stewed. Although there is no proof that turkey was eaten at Plymouth that day, it is certain that there was venison and equally certain that some items were missing. There was no apple cider, no milk, butter or cheese (no cows had been aboard the *Mayflower*), and no bread stores of flour from the ship had long since been exhausted and years would pass before significant quantities of wheat were successfully cultivated in New England.

What they did have were pumpkins and corn; these grew abundantly, and colonists ate them until they were cordially tired of both. With no flour and no molasses, there was no pumpkin pie, but there was plain, boiled pumpkin to eat. Corn was more versatile. It was boiled as "hasty pudding," kneaded into ersatz bread and fried in cakes. Cranberries may have been boiled for a sauce to accompany the meat. Perhaps there was even a little wild honey to sweeten the sour, red berries. Nine little girls and 15 boys were in the company, and they, or some of the hunters, may have gathered other wild fruits or nuts. Oysters, clams and fish rounded out the abundant, but far from epicurean, feast that the celebrators would have been more likely to call a "harvest home" than a "thanksgiving" celebration.

**The celebrators would have been more likely to call this feast a harvest home rather than a Thanksgiving!**

However satisfying it would be to point to a particular day and say, "This was the first Thanksgiving," it definitely would not be the truth. Thanksgiving was not a New England holiday, springing up full grown, completely armed with roast turkey and cranberry sauce, from the mind of a pilgrim father. This American holiday gradually grew up in the unique culture of Puritan New England, an origin more complex than the legend the public schools have nurtured for generations.

## **The Harvest Home**

**The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1980, Volume 5, tells of harvest home:**  
**Harvest Home**, also called Ingathering, traditional English harvest

festival, celebrated from antiquity and surviving to modern times in isolated regions. Participants celebrate the last day of harvest by singing, shouting, and decorating the village with boughs. The *cailleac*, or last sheaf of corn, which represents the spirit of the field, is made into a harvest doll and drenched with water as a rain charm. This sheaf is saved until spring planting.

The ancient festival also included the symbolic murder of the grain spirit, as well as rites for expelling the devil.

● ***Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, by John Brand, George Bell and Sons, 1908, pages 16-33 gives a complete description of harvest home. A few excerpts are displayed here:**

HARVEST HOME  
Alias Mell Supper, Kern or Churn Supper, or  
Feast of Ingathering

Macrobius tells us that, among the Heathens, the heads of families, when they had got in their harvest, were wont to feast with their servants who had laboured for them in tilling the ground. In exact conformity to this, it is common among Christians, when the fruits of the earth are gathered in and laid in their proper repositories, to provide a plentiful supper for the harvest-men and the servants of the family. At this entertainment all are, in the modern revolutionary idea of the word, perfectly equal. Here is no distinction of persons, but ruler and servant sit at the same table, converse freely together, and spend the remainder of the night in dancing, singing, and etc. in the most easy familiarity.

Bourne thinks the original of both these customs is Jewish, and cites Hospinian, who tells us that the heathens copied after this custom of the Jews, and at the end of the harvest offered up their first fruits to the gods. For the Jews rejoiced and feasted at the getting in of the harvest.

This festivity is undoubtedly of the most remote antiquity. That men in all nations where agriculture flourished should have expressed their joy on this occasion by some outward ceremonies has its foundation in the nature of things. Sowing is hope; reaping, fruition of the expected bounty. To the husbandman, whom the fear of wet, blights, and etc. has harassed with great anxiety, the completion of his wishes could not fail of imparting an enviable feeling of delight. Festivity is but the reflex of inward joy, and it could hardly fail of being produced on this occasion, which is a temporary suspension of every care.

The respect shown to servants at this season seems to have sprung from a grateful sense of their services. Everything depends at this juncture on their labour and despatch. *Vacina* (or *Vacuna*, so called as it is said a *vacando*, the tutelar deity, as it were, of rest and ease), among the ancients, was the name of the goddess to whom rustics sacrificed at the conclusion of harvest.

Newton, in his *Tryall of a Man's owne Selfe*, 1602, p. 54, under Breaches of the Second Commandments censure, '*the adorning with garlands or presenting unto any image of any Saint, whom thou hast made speciall choice of to be thy patron and advocate, the firstlings of thy increase, as come and graine, and other oblations.*'

Moresin tells us the popery, in imitation of this, brings home her chaplets of corn, which she suspends on poles; that offerings are made on the altars

of her tutelar gods, while thanks are returned for the collected stores, and prayers are made for future ease and rest. Images, too, of straw or stubble, he adds, are wont to be carried about on this occasion; and that in England he himself saw the rustics bringing home in a cart a figure made of corn, round which men and women were singing promiscuously, preceded by a drum or piper. In a Journey into England, by Paul Hentzner, in the year 1598, ed. 1757, p.79, speaking of Windsor, he says: 'As we were returning to our inn, we met some country people celebrating their Harvest Home: their last load of corn they crown with flowers, having besides an image richly dressed, by which perhaps they would signify Ceres: this they would keep moving about, while men and women, men and maid-servants, riding through the streets in the cart, shout as loud as they can till they arrive at the barn.'

Hutchinson, in his History of Northumberland, ii. ad finem, 17, says, 'I have seen in some places, an image apparelled in great finery, crowned with flowers, a sheaf of corn placed under her arm, and a scyde in her hand, carried out of the village in the morning of the conclusive reaping day, with music and much clamour of the reapers, into the field, where it stands fixed on a pole all day, and when the reaping is done, is brought home in like manner. This they call the Harvest Queen, and it represents the Roman Ceres.'

An old woman, who is respectable authority on a subject of this nature, at a village in Northumberland, informed it that, not half a century ago, they used everywhere to dress up something similar to the figure above described at the end of harvest, which was called a Harvest Doll, or Kern Baby. This northern word is plainly a corruption of Corn Baby, or Image, and is the Kern supper, which we shall presently consider of Corn supper. In Carew's Survey of Cornwall, f. 20 b, 'an ill-kerned or saved harvest' occurs.

At Werington, in Devonshire, the clergyman of the parish informed me that when a farmer finishes his reaping, a small quantity of the ears of the last corn are twisted or tied together into a curious kind of figure, which is brought home with great acclamations, hung up over the table and kept till the next year. The owner would think it extremely unlucky to part with this, which is called a knack.

Dr. E.D. Clarke, tells us at the Hawkie, as it is called, 'I have seen a clown dressed in women's clothes, having his face painted, his head decorated with ears of corn, and bearing about him other symbols of Ceres, carried in a waggon, with great pomp and loud shouts, through the streets, the horses being covered with white sheets; and when I inquired the meaning of the ceremony, was answered by the people, that they were drawing the Harvest Queen.'

A writer in the Gentleman's Magazine for February, 1795, p.124, on Ancient Customs in the Isle of Sky, says: 'In this hyperborean country, in every district there is to be met with a rude stone consecrated to Gruagach, or Apollo.'

In the ancient Roman Calendar, so often cited, I find the following observations on the 11th of June: (the harvests in Italy are much earlier than with us) 'The season of reapers, and their custom with rustic pomp.'

In the Statistical Account of Scotland, 1795, xix. 550, Parish of Longforan, Perth, we read: It was, till very lately, the custom to give what was called a Maid Feast, upon the finishing of the harvest; and to prepare for which, the last handful of corn reaped in the field was called the Maiden. This was generally contrived to fall into the hands of one of

the finest girls in the field, was dressed up with ribands, and brought home in triumph, with the music of fiddles and bagpipes. A fine dinner was given to the whole hand, and the evening spent in 'joviality' and dancing, while the 'fortunate' lass who took the Maiden was the *Queen of the Feast*; after which this handful of corn was dressed out, generally in the form of a 'cross,' and hung up with the date of the year in some conspicuous part of the house. This custom is now entirely done away, and in its room each shearer is given money and a loaf of bread. However, some farmers, when all their Corns are brought in, give their servants a dinner and a 'jovial' evening, by way of Harvest Home.

In the *Abbe de Marolle's Memoirs*, in the description of the state of France under Henry IV., we find the following account of Harvest Home: 'After the harvest, the peasants fixed upon some holiday to meet together and have a little regale (by them called the Harvest Gosling); to which they invited not only each other, but even their 'masters' who pleased them very much when they condescended to partake of it.'

In Cornwall, it should seem, they have Harvest Dinners. 'The Harvest Dinners,' says Carew in his Survey, f. 68, 'are held by every wealthy man, or, as wee term it, every 'good Liver' betweene Michaelmas and Candlemas, whereto he inviteth his next neighbours and kindred; and, though it beare also with them, and consume a great part of the night after in Christmas rule. Neither doth the 'good' cheere wholly expire but the end of the weeke.'

In the *Life of Eugene Aram*, 2d. edit. p. 71, there is an essay on 'the Mell-supper, and shouting the Churn,'...In this he supposes these feasts to be the relics of Pagan ceremonies, or Judaism, and to be of far high antiquity than is generally apprehended, as old as a sense of joy for the benefit of plentiful harvest...In England we hear of it under various names in different counties, as Mell-supper, Churn-supper, Harvest-supper, Harvest-home, Feast of Ingathering. To prove that the Jews celebrated the Feast of Harvest, he cites Exodus xxiii 16, and Leviticus xxiii 39, and refers to Callimachus's Hymn to Apollo to show that the heathens misapplied through ignorance the acknowledgment of this festivity, and directed it to a secondary, not the primary fountain of this benefit, i.e. Apollo, or the Sun. Bread, or cakes, he says, composed part of the Hebrew offering, as appears by Leviticus xxiii 13; and we gather from Homer, in the first book of his Iliad, that a cake thrown upon the head of the victim was also part of the Greek offering to Apollo. Apollo, continues Aram, losing his divinity on the progress of Christianity, what had been anciently offered to God the reapers as prudently eat up themselves. At last the use of the meal of new corn was neglected, and the supper, so far as meal was concerned, was made indifferently of old or new corn, as was most agreeable to the founder. He derived mell, either from meal or else from the instrument called with us a mell, wherewith corn was anciently reduced to meal in a mortar.

**The Oxford English Dictionary**, Oxford, Clarendon Press, London, England, 1933, pgs. 108-109, tells us of **harvest home** and the **harvest queen**.

**Harvest home, harvest-home.**

1. The fact, occasion, or time of bringing home the last of the harvest; the close of the harvesting.
- b. A shout or song of rejoicing on that occasion.
2. The festival or merry-making to celebrate the successful homing of the corn, called in Scotland 'the kim'. (Now rarely held.)

3. *Comb.*, as *harvest-home call, song*; harvest-home goose, one killed and eaten at the harvest-home feast; also called *harvest-goose*.

**Harvest queen.** A name given a. to *Ceres, the goddess of agriculture and crops*; b. to a young woman chosen from the reapers (or an image or doll dressed up, cf. *harvest-doll*), to whom was given a post of honour at the harvest-home.

● ***Thanksgiving, An American Holiday, An American History, Applebaum, pages 19-29, tells us the truth about the ancestors of this holiday.***

...it was in the towns of the Connecticut River valley and the farming villages of Plymouth Colony that the holiday as we know it evolved. Neither created intentionally nor copied from a paradigmatic "first Thanksgiving," the new celebration was a synthesis of four distinct and ancient traditions, elements of which united in the unique cultural milieu of Puritan New England to give birth to Thanksgiving. The newborn Thanksgiving holiday had a Puritan 'mother' from Connecticut, a Pilgrim 'father' from Plymouth and, for 'grandparents,' four traditions from the Old World.

#### Harvest Home

New Englanders came from Old England, where the Harvest Home—one of the "grandparents" of Thanksgiving—was celebrated. The Harvest Home was a holiday on which the villagers joined together to bring together the last loads of grain from the fields and share a merry feast when the work was done. English villages followed local harvest customs; some dressed a maiden in white to ride atop a loaded cart as 'Queen of the Harvest.' Others fashioned a figure from the grain itself to be robed in a white gown and set in the center of a circle of rejoicing farmers. There was sufficient taint of idol worship and evidence of licentious behavior in the old English Harvest Home for Puritans to reject the custom summarily. They recoiled from these remnants of the pagan customs that predated Christianity in England, but memories of the harvest feast lingered all the same.

The Puritans' shunning of the ancient Harvest Home left a void in the New England year that might not have been problematic had a similar attitude not been extended to other holidays. But the Puritans had disapproved so many causes for celebration that a holiday vacuum existed in the young colonies.

All saints' days had been swept off the calendar, along with Christmas and Easter, on the grounds that these mixed "popish" ritual with pagan custom. Sunday, the occasion in Europe for afternoon ball games, cockfights, plays, gambling, fishing trips and dances, became the Puritan Sabbath, a day passed in prayer, church attendance and devotional reading. Every secular pleasure was forbidden by law and custom. Remaining to New Englanders were three holidays—Muster Day, Election Day and the day of the Harvard Commencement. (Yale was not founded until 1701, whereas Harvard was founded in 1636.)

## Christmas

Like the Harvest Home, Christmas-another of the old-world 'grandparents' of Thanksgiving-was remembered but not celebrated by the Puritans. The practice of designating the day of Jesus' birth, and especially of making merry on that day, were viewed as one of the grave errors of the churches of both Rome and England and as a departure from the purity of the early church. Celebration of Christmas was so disparaged in the seventeenth-century Bay Colony that the General Court forbade laborers taking off from work on that day under penalty of a five-shilling fine. Not until the nineteenth century did New England relent in this attitude and the Congregational churches began to observe Christmas-but Massachusetts was two centuries old before that happened. In the early years, everything associated with Christmas was rejected out of hand; even the lowly mince pie, eaten in every English household at Christmas, was banished from the Puritan kitchen as being unholy food at any time of year.

The spirit of Christmas, however, was sorely missed, and during the 1600s, when Thanksgiving was becoming a popular festival, small pieces of the English Christmas crept into the celebration of the Yankee Thanksgiving. Those quintessential English Christmas dishes, plum pudding and mince pie, became as indispensable a part of the Thanksgiving menu as turkey and pumpkin pie itself.

## Civil Proclamations

Thanksgiving Day, our unique American holiday, ought not to be confused with still a third 'grandparent,' the special days of thanksgiving proclaimed by civil authorities in Europe and throughout the American colonies. When some stroke of extraordinary good fortune befell a nation, the civil authorities often declared a day of thanksgiving and prayer, marked by special services in every church. The end of an epidemic, rainfall after a drought and victory in war were common reasons for such celebrations, and declarations of this sort were familiar to the first settlers on these shores. Coronado, Popham and the settlers at Jamestown, Plymouth and Boston acted in this tradition when they held their 'first Thanksgivings.'

Settlers in both New Amsterdam and Plymouth were familiar with the Dutch custom of celebrating October 3 as a day of thanksgiving commemorating the independence of Holland from Spain. English settlers recalled that the Anglican church marked November 5, the anniversary of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, as a day on which thanks were given that the scheme to blow up Parliament had failed. Puritan New England undoubtedly drew upon the tradition of civic thanksgivings in creating the new holiday.

## Religious Proclamations

Fourth 'grandparent' to the American Thanksgiving Day was the tradition of individual Puritan congregations declaring days

of thanksgiving and prayer. The Puritans rejected all ecclesiastical hierarchy in favor of the sovereignty of the congregation. Authority equivalent to that belonging to Catholic or Anglican bishops was vested in Puritan congregations, which had sole power to ordain clergymen, admit or excommunicate members and declare days of fasting and of thanksgiving. Like the proclamations of civil authorities, congregational thanksgiving days were declared for special causes.

### **Synthesis of the Traditions**

The Thanksgiving holiday born in Puritan New England in the 1630's and 1640's was shaped by four traditions the Harvest Home, Christmas, proclamations of civic thanksgiving and congregational days of thanksgiving and prayer.

Other features of the holiday developed in Connecticut. The Connecticut River valley towns of Wethersfield, Windsor, and Hartford were settled in 1635 and 1636 by families from Massachusetts Bay who shared with their sister colony a thoroughgoing dedication to Puritanism. The church in each town followed the established, Puritan custom of holding days of public thanks or of prayer and fasting as the occasion warranted, but the leaders of the colony departed from tradition by proclaiming a day of public thanksgiving each autumn in gratitude for general well-being and for the harvest just gathered. Although records from the early years are incomplete, a proclamation of thanksgiving for September 18, 1639, survives, as do proclamations for 1644 and for every year from 1649 onward.

This was the crucial innovation. The entire Western world shares the custom of special thanksgivings for special causes and, as we have seen, individual Plymouth colony congregations sometimes held harvest thanksgivings followed by a festive meal. When Connecticut made Thanksgiving Day an annual festival for general causes, however, a new holiday was born. Thanksgiving in Connecticut was held every autumn, not for special reasons, but in gratitude for the ordinary blessings of the 'year past' and for the 'fruits of the earth.' It was held whether the harvest was abundant or meager and regardless of events that had befallen the colony since the previous Thanksgiving Day.

**Connecticut made Thanksgiving day an annual festival for the ordinary blessings of the year past and for the fruits of the earth, a new holiday was born which was based upon ancient, pagan practices. *The American Book of Days*, by Jane M. Hatch, 1978, page 1053, tells us:**

Although Thanksgiving is one of the most popular holidays in the United States, the idea of setting aside a day to express gratitude for good fortune did not originate in this country. In ancient times many peoples held special festivals in the autumn to give thanks for bountiful harvests. The Greeks honored Demeter, their goddess of agriculture, with a nine-day celebration, and in a similar fashion

the Romans paid tribute to Ceres (identified with Demeter). After the crops had been gathered, the Anglo-Saxons rejoiced at a 'harvest home,' which featured a hearty feast. In Scotland the harvest celebration was known as a kilm and included special church services and a substantial dinner.

Since biblical days, Jews have given thanks for abundant harvests with the eight-day Feast of Tabernacles, an observance that continues to the present era (see October 15). From ancient times, it also was common for people to set aside special days on which to give thanks for military victories, for deliverance from epidemics, and for other occasions of good fortune.

Thus, since most of the settlers who came to America probably had known some form of thanksgiving day in their homelands, it is not surprising that they transplanted this custom to the New World.

● ***Celebrations: The Comprehensive Book of American Holidays,***  
by Robert J. Myers, 1972, pages 271-272, tells us:

The Pilgrims, who in 1621 observed our initial Thanksgiving holiday, were not a people especially enthusiastic about the celebration of festivals. In fact, these austere and religious settlers of America would have been dismayed had they known of the long and popular history of harvest festivals, of which their Thanksgiving was only the latest. It seems that wherever man has tilled the soil and urged his crops into fruition, he has paid homage to the heavenly being who has permitted him such good fortune. And he has taken care by means of sacrifices to ensure the continued beneficence of the Supreme Power.

The harvest festival, with its attendant rites, seems to have spread out from a relatively small area of land, from Egypt and Syria and Meso-potamia. The first or the last sheaf of wheat was offered to the 'Great Mother,' or the 'Mother of the Wheat' for the earth-power was essentially a feminine force. Astarte was the Earth Mother of the ancient Semites; to the Phrygians she was Semele; under the name of Demeter she was worshiped by the Greeks at the famous Eleusinian Mysteries; Ceres, the Roman goddess of corn, presided over the October Cerelia.

The Jews celebrate two harvest festivals: Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks in the spring, and Sukkot, the Feast of Booths, which is in the fall.

In medieval times Germany, France, Holland, England, and the countries of central Europe observed the Feast of St. Martin of Tours, Martinmas, on November 11, as the time of harvest rejoicings.

In our own hemisphere, among the Aztecs of Mexico, the harvest took on a grimmer aspect. Each year a young girl, a representation of Xilonen, the goddess of the new corn, was beheaded. The Pawnees also sacrificed a girl. In a more temperate mood, the Cherokees of the American Southeast danced the Green Corn Dance and began the new year at harvest's end.

English fishermen in Newfoundland in 1578 had a Thanksgiving

Day, and along the coast of Maine, in 1607, the Popham Colony set aside a day for giving thanks. Nevertheless, our present American November Thanksgiving finds its direct origin in the Pilgrim Fathers of Plymouth, Massachusetts, who, indeed, almost did not come to America.

**Thanksgiving for the plentiful foods did not just come into the mind of Governor Bradford in the year 1621 c.e. as some imagine. On the contrary, the pagan harvest festivals can be traced to the land of Ancient Babylon and the worship of the original Great Mother. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Moody Press, page 413, tells us that **Astarte** is the Greek name for **Ashtoreth**, the Canaanite Goddess of sensual love, maternity, and fertility. Licentious worship was conducted in her honor at her shrines.**

In the Book of Judges, we read of this licentious worship to the pagan, Canaanite Gods and Goddesses:

● **Judges 9:27—**

So they went out into the fields, and gathered the grapes from their vineyards and trod them, and made merry. Then they went into the house of their god (el), and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech.

● *Our Wonderful World*, by Grolier Incorporated, New York, 1966, Volume 17, page 220, tells us of the **harvest festivals**.

**The Harvest Festivals**

We often think of Thanksgiving as an American holiday, begun by the Pilgrims in Plymouth in 1621. At that time, so the story runs, the survivors among the Mayflower passengers celebrated their first harvest in the New World. Actually a thanksgiving for the annual harvest is one of the oldest holidays known to mankind, though celebrated on different dates. In Chaldea, in ancient Egypt, and in Greece, the harvest festival was celebrated with great rejoicing. The Hindus and the Chinese observe the completed harvest with a holiday. And the Jews celebrate the gathering of the crops. From *Holidays Around the World*, by Joseph Gaer, by permission of Little, Brown & Co. Copyright, 1953, by Joseph Gaer. Revised by editor. 1959.

The Romans celebrated their Thanksgiving early in October. The holiday was dedicated to the goddess of the harvest, Ceres, and the holiday was called Cerelia. (That is where the word "cereal" comes from).

**From Rome to the New World**

The Christians took over the Roman holiday and it became well established in England, where some of the Roman customs and rituals for this day were observed long after the Roman Empire had disappeared.

In England the "harvest home" has been observed continuously for centuries. The custom was to select a harvest queen for this holiday. She was decorated with the grain of their fields and the fruit of their trees. On Thanksgiving Day she was paraded through the streets in a carriage drawn by white horses. This was a remnant of the Roman ceremonies in honor of Ceres. But the English no longer thought of

Ceres or cared much about her. They went to church on this day and sang their Thanksgiving songs.

The Pilgrims brought the "harvest in" to Massachusetts. But they gave it a slightly new meaning, since they were thankful for much more than their harvest. On that first year in Plymouth they were even more grateful for the friendship of the Indians, who might have destroyed them.

The Pilgrims also introduced the custom of eating turkey on Thanksgiving Day, for they found wild turkeys in great numbers.

#### **Holiday by Presidential Proclamation**

In the United States, Thanksgiving Day is observed in each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the territories. By a 1941 act of Congress it is observed every year on the fourth Thursday of November. Annual proclamations by the President and by state governors make it a legal holiday.

In many rural areas the holiday begins with a solemn church service, followed by a great feast at home, and ending with dances and games in some community center or a barn. If the revelry is held in a barn, the place may be decorated with autumn leaves, fox grapes, apples, and pumpkins.

When all are gathered, a harvest queen is chosen and upon her head is placed a crown of autumn flowers or of winter berries. Then the dancing goes on around her. The fiddlers fiddle; the callers chant the steps; and the dancers dance the old folk dances. They pause to eat. And they pause to sing old favorite songs. Then they return to their dancing, and the merriment goes on.

The merriment of the harvest festivals is older than recorded human history. And the merriment of the harvest holiday is likely to continue, the world over, as long as men obtain their food from the earth.

### **● Collier's Encyclopedia, 1980, Volume 13, page 309, tells us of Isis, an ancient Egyptian Goddess who absorbed the attributes of Ernutet (Thermuthis), the harvest Goddess:**

**ISIS** [ai'sis], an ancient Egyptian goddess whose name may indicate that she was originally a deification of the royal throne. In early myth she was regarded as the daughter of Geb (earth) and Nut (sky) and both sister and wife of Osiris, to whom she bore Horus. The Egyptians identified their Pharaohs with Horus; accordingly, the Pharaoh was considered the son of Isis and the legitimate heir of Osiris. Isis absorbed numerous other divinities, especially the harvest goddess Ernutet (Thermuthis), and was frequently equated with the cow-goddess Hathor. Owing to Isis' role as faithful wife of Osiris and protector of the infant Horus, she became a powerful source of magical protection, much sought by worshippers in sickness and trouble. She was especially popular in Nubia, the region south of Egypt proper, and her chief temple on the beautiful island of Philae still stands, though now submerged by the waters of the Nile behind the Aswan Dam. In the Hellenistic period her cult spread around the Mediterranean; four centuries later, the cult was active—in spite of Roman imperial efforts at suppression—in every part of the Roman Empire. By this time, however, her worship as a mystical mother

goddess bore little relationship to her original character in Egypt.  
Keith C. Seele

**Isis was identified with Hathor, the Horned Cow Goddess. *The Yearbook of English Festivals*, by Dorothy Gladys Spicer, 1954, page 145, shows that horns today.**

Most pleasing of all the decorations are four spirally woven straw cones hanging from the pulpit stand. Each cornucopia is tasseled with ears of wheat. 'Those are horns of plenty,' the old vicar explains. Each year they are loaned as harvest decorations.

They are more than harvest decorations, I thought, as I inquired for their owner. Two old farm hands had fashioned the cornucopias many years before, I learned. Once, I was told, the straw cones were slipped over the horns of oxen competing in local ploughing meets, suggesting that these "horns of plenty" may have been associated originally with fertility rites. Maybe the old countrymen unconsciously paid honor to the Corn Spirit by plaiting symbols from the last sheaf bound at the end of the harvest.



\*In British usage the word corn describes the chief cereal crop of a country. In England the word refers to wheat.

● ***The Universal World Reference Encyclopedia*, 1948, Volume 5-6, tells us of Demeter, the Greek version of the Egyptian Goddess Isis:**

**Demeter** (de-me'ter), one of the principal Grecian deities, the great mother goddess, the nourishing and fertilizing principle of nature. She was the daughter of Cronus and Rhea, and mother of Persephone.

(Proserpina). The main feature in the myth of Demeter and that which forms the fundamental idea of her worship, is the loss and recovery of her daughter, Persephone. By the Romans she was called Ceres.

● ***Collier's Encyclopedia*, Volume 8, page 74, then says:**

**DEMETER** [demi'ter], one of the chief deities in Greek cult; in mythology, the daughter of Cronus and Rhea and the sister of Zeus. She was the corn goddess, and her name has been explained as "grain-mother" or "earth-mother." The mother of Persephone by Zeus, Demeter left Olympus when her daughter was carried off to the underworld by Pluto; lighting torches from Mount Aetna, she searched for Persephone throughout the world and the earth grew barren from neglect. On her wanderings she came to Eleusis near Athens, where, in the

guise of an old woman, she was received by the family of Celeus. According to one version, she then attempted to make Triptolemus, the son of Celeus, immortal; but when prevented by the frightened mother, Demeter limited her favor to teaching the child how to use the plow and sow corn. When Persephone was restored to her for two thirds of each year, the earth again became fruitful for that period. The center of Demeter's worship was at Eleusis, where the Eleusinian Mysteries were held in honor of the two goddesses. The disappearance and return of Persephone, symbolized the death and rebirth of vegetation; later, initiates read into the ritual a promise of their own immortality. Other stories were told about Demeter: her love for Iasion, for example, to whom she bore Plutus (wealth), and her punishment of Erysichthon, who had cut down a sacred tree. The Romans identified Demeter with Ceres. See also Ceres; Eleusis; Persephone.

George E. Duckworth and H.J. Rose

● ***The Universal World Reference Encyclopedia, 1948, Volume 3-4, tells us of Ceres, the Roman version of Greek Demeter and Egyptian Isis:***

Ceres (se'rez), the daughter of Saturn and Vesta, and goddess of grain, harvests, and tillage. To Jupiter she bore a daughter, Proserpine. Ceres corresponds with the Isis of the Egyptians and the Demeter of the Greeks. She is represented with a garland of ears of grain on her head, holding in one hand a lighted torch and in the other a poppy, which was sacred to her. The Romans instituted in her honor the festivals called *Cerealia*.

**The cute story of Demeter going into the underworld to find her kidnaped daughter, Proserpina-Persephone is rehearsed through the Eleusian Mysteries—the ancient Mystery Fertility Religion. *Collier's Encyclopedia, Volume 16, pg. 349-350, tells of the Mystery Religions of The Great Mother:***

The mystery religions furnish an ancient example of a missionary movement. Originally they were magical ceremonies designed to induce bountiful crops. They dramatized the annual decay of vegetation in the autumn as the death of a divine youth over whom a goddess mourned. Later they celebrated with ecstatic joy the return of verdure in the spring as the coming to life again of the departed youth. Participating in these rites was believed to cleanse the devotee of his sins and unite him mystically with the god. They were crude and orgiastic but they had a dynamic quality which led to their expansion.

In spite of the protests of such men as Euripides and Plato the mystery religions continued to make converts because they supplied something which neither the religion of the Olympic gods nor the philosophers of Greece could offer. This was especially true of the Eleusinian mysteries which may have had their origin in Egypt. In these ceremonies, Demeter, the goddess of agriculture, was represented as weeping over her daughter Persephone, who had been carried off by Pluto, god of the nether world, to become his bride. She reappeared,

however, in the spring and spent six months (according to some accounts, eight) with her mother before returning to Pluto. By a natural development, these mysteries came to teach that, just as the vegetation was reborn in the spring, after its death in the autumn, so the initiates might be reborn after death.

Though the details of these rites are unknown, because they were secret, it is evident that the drama which the initiates saw enacted was a source of great comfort to them thereafter, attracting at Athens alone thousands of candidates who thronged to be initiated.

The Syrian mystery religion in which the goddess Astarte wept over Adonis was carried by Phoenician sailors and traders to various ports in the Mediterranean at an early date. Later, when this sea was controlled by the Ptolemies, Egyptian sailors and traders carried the mystery religion of Isis to Cyprus, Sicily, Italy, Gaul, and Spain. This religion, transformed considerably from its Egyptian prototype, had great popularity in Rome, and held its own for 500 years. It was at one time a formidable rival of Christianity.

● **Collier's, Volume 9, page 83, then tells us the significance of the Mystery Religions in the lives of those who participated in this worship of the Great Mother:**

The mysteries represented to the ancients the deepest religious experience and the only means to divest death of its terror. But the sacred drama, celebrated in the spring and autumn each year at the Lesser and Greater Eleusinia, was fundamentally a vegetation rite. The myth of Persephone, who had to spend one third of the year with her husband Pluto in the nether world and two thirds with her mother in the world of light, derived its form from the cycle of growth and decay in vegetation. In Greece, with its rainless summers, the barren period is from June to September and this was the time Persephone spent beneath the earth.

**Pagan men and women offered up sacrifices and prayers to these mysterious forces of the mystery religion, which they believed controlled the workings of nature on their behalf. Their hope in offering this worship was to ward off catastrophe, to ensure fine hunting, to obtain bountiful harvests, and to live again beyond the grave.**

The primitive mystery worship was set in the cycle of sun worship. In the spring of the year, pagan man sought fertility for himself and for his land. Bountiful crops would assure food for himself and his household. It was during this springtime of the year, at the vernal equinox, that the Goddess he worshiped was fertilized by the God he worshiped.

In the summer of the year, the hot, arid land he lived upon became brown and barren. At this summertime, directly on the summer solstice, Proserpina-Persephone went into the underworld to remain until the time for vegetation to begin growing in the fall of the year.

At the autumn of this yearly cycle the sun started dying. The days grew shorter as the nights grew longer. At the fall of the year, directly on the autumn equinox, the Goddess he worshiped began to weep for the lost (or murdered in other mythologies) Goddess (or God).

At the winter solstice the sun started to come back to life as the days started growing longer and the nights shorter. Life would be assured for another year. The Goddess who had been fertilized at the previous vernal equinox gave birth to a son at the winter solstice. The God had been reborn.

Such was the cycle of the primitive fertility religions portrayed through cute stories which effectively hid the vile, hideous meaning behind them. Thanksgiving day worship is merely the ancient fertility rites veneered with the respectability of Christianity. However, the fact still remains, that it is ancient fertility worship. The Apostle Shaul tells us of the Gods, and the sacrifices to these Gods, in:

● **I Corinthians 10:19-22**—

19 What am I saying, then? That a god (el) is anything, or what is offered to gods (elohim) is anything?

20 But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to Yahweh; and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

21 You cannot drink the cup of Yahweh and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of Yahweh's table and of the table of demons.

22 Do we provoke Yahweh to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?

**T**he Apostle Shaul has told us emphatically that the things the Gentiles sacrifice are sacrificed to the demons, and we are not to have any fellowship with this demon worship. How much plainer can we be told?

● **Romans 12:2**—

And do not be conformed to the pattern of this world; but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may be able to test and prove what is the righteous, and acceptable, and perfect will of Yahweh.

● **Yaaqob 1:27**—

Religion that is pure and undefiled before Yahweh our Father, is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

**T**he word **unspotted** in this Scripture is word #784 in *Strong's Greek Dictionary*, and means:

784. ἄσπιλος **aspilōs**, *as'-pee-los*; from *α* (as a neg. particle) and *σπίλος*; unblemished (phys. or mor.):—without spot, unspotted.

**W**ord #784 comes from word #1 as a negative participle: **not**, and from word #4695, which comes from word #4696:

1. **A a**, *al'-fah*; of Heb. or.; the first letter of the alphabet; **fig. only** (from its use as a numeral) the *first*:—Alpha. Often used (usually **άν** **am**, before a vowel) also in composition (as a contraction from *α* *α*) in the sense of *privation*; so in many words beginning with this letter; occasionally in the sense of *union* (as a contraction of *α* *ο*).

4695. **σπιλῶ** **spilōō**, *spee-lō'-o*; from *σπίλος*; to *stain or soil* (lit. or fig.):—defile, spot.

4696. **σπίλος** **spilōs**, *spee'-los*; of uncert. der.; a *stain or blemish*, i.e. (fig.) *defect, disgrace*:—spot.

**In effect, what the Apostle Yaaqob was telling us is to keep ourselves undefiled by the ways of this world.**

● **Yaaqob 4:4—**

You adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that the friendship of this world is enmity with Yahweh? Therefore, whoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of Yahweh!

● **I Yahchanan 2:15-17—**

15 Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that *is* in the world: the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passes away, with the lust that is in it; but he who does the will of Yahweh abides forever.

● **I Yahchanan 5:19—**

We know that we belong to Yahweh, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

**The Apostle Shaul tells us that we belong to whom we serve in:**

● **Romans 6:16—**

Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves as servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey—whether of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

**You** may ask, weren't our pilgrim fathers righteous? Didn't they keep many of those old Laws? I know they didn't keep Christmas. I can tell you the pilgrims only served the Father as far as they would. Definitely, the pilgrims worshiped on Sunday and they definitely did not keep the Holy Feast Days as ordained in Leviticus Chapter Twenty-three. They did not keep the Clean and Unclean Food Laws, as listed in Leviticus Chapter Eleven and Deuteronomy Chapter Fourteen.

The pilgrims studied the Bibles they had. Therefore, they would have read of Yahweh's Sabbaths, Holy Feast Days, and clean and unclean food Laws for themselves. Why did they not obey Yahweh by doing what He had Commanded in Leviticus Chapters Eleven and Twenty-three and in Deuteronomy Chapter Fourteen?

Like so many churches and denominations today, the pilgrims wanted to do it their way and not Yahweh's way. Is it any wonder then, that the pilgrims were just as deceived as the Churches and Assemblies are today?

*Collier's Encyclopedia*, 1980, Volume 19, page 62, tells us that these puritan fathers were an example of government "by the people" and "of the people" and as we also know, against Yahweh and His Government.

Like Plymouth and New Haven, both Connecticut and Rhode Island came into being without authorization from the English crown. Their example of "government of the people, by the people, for the people" later served to guide the Thirteen Colonies in 1776 when, becoming states, they instituted governments "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

**We are told in:**  
● **Yahchanan 15:19—**

If you were of the world, the world would have loved its own. But because you are not part of the world, for I have chosen you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you.

**This is an absolute fact that the world only loves worldly things. This worldly holiday called Thanksgiving was used to help cement relations between the North and the South directly after the Civil War in the United States. *The American Book of Days*, by Hatch, page 26, tells us:**

The establishment of a national Thanksgiving Day on a permanent annual basis was largely the result of the work of Sarah Josepha Hale. Beginning in 1827...Hale's editorial appeared at a significant moment. The Civil War divided the nation into two armed camps in 1863. For more than two years Northern and Southern forces had clashed, and, only weeks before the editorial appeared, hundreds of Union and Confederate soldiers had died at Gettysburg. Despite the staggering loss of human life, the battle of Gettysburg was an important victory for the North. The result produced great rejoicing throughout the North, and this general feeling of elation, together with the clamor produced by Hale's editorials, undoubtedly prompted Abraham Lincoln to issue the proclamation on October 3, 1863, setting a last Thursday in November 1863 as a national Thanksgiving Day.

**The world still loves this holiday, for it is now the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, which is so dear to merchants everywhere, and the signal for innumerable football games, so dear to fans everywhere. Continuing from *The American Book of Days*:**

Thanksgiving lost prestige in a society where the trend setters sneered at religion, farm life was derided as fit only for rubes and hayseeds and young people regarded their elders with disdain.

But the most direct blow to Thanksgiving Day came from retail merchants and advertising copywriters. After three centuries as a holiday in its own right, Thanksgiving was rudely demoted to serve as the official opening day of the Christmas shopping season. The idea of giving Christmas gifts was far from new—it had been observed even in American Protestant families since the mid-nineteenth century when descendants of the Puritans had abandoned their opposition to the celebration of Christmas. But it took Madison Avenue advertising techniques to expand the custom to epidemic proportions, and Madison Avenue saw Thanksgiving as a handy way to promote Christmas sales. In 1921, Gimbel's Department Store in Philadelphia sponsored the first Thanksgiving parade designed to kick off and promote the holiday buying season. The idea caught on, and by the end of the decade, Thanksgiving Day-Christmas parades were sponsored by department stores in cities across the country. They usually featured Santa Claus himself waving at the children from the last float. Along with Santa's workshop and displays of new toys, floats included depictions of scenes from children's literature, and nursery tales and popular cartoon characters. And, in 1938, as America prepared for another war, Uncle Sam made his debut as a giant balloon in the Macy's parade in New York. There were also

turkeys, Indians, replicas of the *Mayflower* and depictions of the first Thanksgiving; but such gestures to Thanksgiving traditions failed to appease critics of the parades.

In 1926, the Allied Patriotic Societies objected to the parade on the grounds that it would interfere with church attendance and was an undesirable commercialization of an important American holiday. The charge of commercialization could not be rebutted. Macy's responded to the claim of interference with churchgoing by scheduling the parade for 1:00 P.M. that year, but it was soon back in its morning time slot. The afternoon schedule would conflict with Thanksgiving football games and by the 1920s, that was the more serious conflict for many families. Football, played by college and high school teams before local fans, gripped the nation more firmly than ever. The dinner hour, once set to coincide with the return of the faithful from morning church services, was now scheduled to avoid conflict with the football game.

**So, when any one, or any book, tries to tell you that Thanksgiving day is really in honor of Yahweh, you will know differently. *The Book of Festival Holidays*, by Marquerite Ickis, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1964, page 138, says:**

### **THANKSGIVING—A HARVEST FESTIVAL**

In harvest time, harvest folke, servants and all,  
Should make all together, good cheer in the hall;  
And fill one the black bowl, so blithe to the song,  
And let them be merry all harvest time long.

~~Text~~

Harvest festivals, traditionally, were not only a scene of merriment and hospitality but a time for a temporary suspension of equality between master and servant. In many places, indeed, this manner of freedom existed during the whole period of getting in the harvest. After the harvest is home, it is the most natural thing in the world for people to laugh and sing after their barns are full and their work in the hot summer is over. Hence a Harvest Festival. It is a wonderful way to express joy and give thanks for something that has happened.

● ***All About American Holidays*, by Maymie R. Krythe, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1962, pages 232-233, tells us:**

The idea of such a day was not a new one with the Pilgrims; in fact it is claimed that the Chinese observed such rites thousands of years ago. Thanksgiving can be traced back to the ancient Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted eight days; also to a nine-day celebration, the Greek feast for Demeter, goddess of agriculture; and to the Roman Cerealia, honoring Ceres. Both the Greek and Roman festivals featured sacrifices to the deities; and these ceremonies were combined with music and feasting.

Following a traditional autumn feast of the Druids, the Anglo-Saxons held their "harvest home" celebration, the high point of the year in rural districts. As the last cartload of grain was being brought in from the fields, reapers and other workers followed the wagon, singing:

Harvest Home, harvest home,  
We have plowed and we have sowed

We have reaped, we have mowed,  
We have brought home every load,  
Hip, Hip, Hip, Harvest Home!

After the ingathering there was a hearty supper—sometimes served in the barn—for all farm workers. There were “substantial viands,” abundance of ale, with the master and mistress presiding over the festivities. Toasts were drunk to the pair: one began

Here’s a health to our master,  
The lord of the feast,  
God bless his endeavours  
And send him increase.

In Scotland, such a gathering was called a ‘kern;’ often after a special service at the church, which was decorated with autumn flowers, fruits, and vegetables, a harvest feast was served to all attendants.

● ***The Book of Holidays*, by J. Walker McSpadden, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1958, pages 171-172, says:**

It is the most natural thing in the world for people to laugh and sing when they have their barns filled and when their work in the hot summer sun is over—when the harvest is home. No words could describe the reason for a holiday of thanksgiving more accurately than the words of the old English song ‘Harvest Home.’ The jubilant people sang the simplest kind of song—but it tells the story.

Harvest home! harvest home!  
We’ve ploughed, we’ve sowed,  
We’ve reaped, we’ve mowed,  
We’ve brought home every load.

No wonder they dressed themselves up in grain sheaves, had fantastic parades in honor of the last wagon in from the fields, and contended in all kinds of rustic sports much as had the Romans before them when their barns were full. Indeed, as far back as history reaches, ‘harvest home’ has called for merrymaking and for honoring the gods who foster crops. In Rome the goddess was Ceres and her day, October 4, was the ‘Cerelia’ (which shows us where our word, cereal, originated). In ancient Greece the goddess was Demeter, responsible for the soil and all that grew therein. Athens was wonderfully gay on those three days in November when Demeter was presented with a cow and a sow, as well as honey, poppies, corn, and fruit.

**Do you realize that the pilgrims held exactly a three day feast in the fall of 1621? This was the customary time span for the ancient pagan celebrations. *Thanksgiving*, by Robert Haven Schauffler, Dodd-Mead, 1957, pages xii-xiii says:**

The harvest festival of ancient Greece, called the Thesmophoria was akin to the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. It was the feast of Demeter, the foundress of agriculture and goddess of harvests,

and was celebrated in Athens, in November, by married women only. Two wealthy and distinguished ladies were chosen to perform the sacred function in the name of the others, and to prepare the sacred meal, which corresponded to our Thanksgiving dinner. On the first day of the feast, amid great mirth and rejoicing, the women went in procession to the promontory of Colias and celebrated their Thanksgiving for three days in the temple of Demeter. On their return a festival occurred for three days in Athens, sad at first but gradually growing into an orgy of mirth and dancing. Here a cow and a sow were offered to Demeter, besides fruit and honeycombs. The symbols of the fruitful goddess were poppies and ears of corn, a basket of fruit and a little pig.

The Romans worshipped this harvest deity under the name of Ceres. Her festival, which occurred yearly on October 4th, was called the Cerelia. It began with a fast among the common people who offered her a sow and the first cuttings of the harvest. There were processions in the fields with music and rustic sports and the ceremonies ended with the inevitable feast of thanksgiving.

● ***Thanksgiving*, by Applebaum, page 8, tells us:**

A target shoot designed to demonstrate the power of English muskets was a major feature of the three-day-long harvest celebration held in Plymouth in the fall of 1621.

**Yahweh has given us, through His Holy Scriptures, His Holy Feast Days. The Feast of Tabernacles is the Feast of Ingathering for the people of Yahweh. Yahweh tells His people to keep His Feasts in Leviticus Chapter Twenty-three. Yahweh's people do not defile themselves with the holidays of this world.**