

GOODNEWS LETTER

Number 244 November 26, 3008

THANKSGIVING

Benjamin Franklin thought the Turkey was a better choice for America's national symbol than the Bald Eagle. He referred to the Eagle as lazy, robbing other birds of their catch, and as cowards, fleeing from the sparrow-sized King Bird.

Noting that it was *"a bit silly and vain,"* Ben Franklin wrote that the Turkey was also a true native of America and a bird of courage, saying that the Turkey *"would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red coat on."*

Benjamin Franklin may have had something; if we think spiritually. The Turkey, certainly, represents America's claim of honoring God with their lives better than the Bald Eagle. From a Christian perspective, the Turkey makes a much better symbol for this **"one nation under God."**

Rather than soaring high in the sky, like so many heavenly minded believers who perch their heart and mind only on some **"pie in the sky"** kind-of-hope, the Turkey is close to home with feet on the ground and profitable for earthly work, taking care of business on the farm.

It is the Turkey, not the Bald Eagle, that birdsonifies Romans 12:1. **"... present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."** Today, we are **"living sacrifices"** of Christ's finished work; which, began when Jesus ratified the New Covenant and established His representative of the truth, the New Covenant Church.

The Turkey - just like God, is around, always. God does not show up at the dinner table a couple times a year. Proximity of the Turkey - unlike that of the Eagle, builds a more profitable and usable symbol in one's mind.

The Turkey is touchable by man. It can be seen among us when we sit down and when we rise up. Its not somewhere way off perched high atop a tree branch. The Turkey is practical, offering a clearer symbolic-match for New Covenant believers.

If we look at just the pageantry, then the Eagle might be a better symbol; for the Old Testament revelation view; that is - **theoretically aloof, always alone, shrouding truth in mystery; but, beautiful.**

Yep, Ben Franklin knew what he was talking about when it comes to symbolism. But, when we come to the New Covenant, symbolism, for the most part, doesn't exist; depending on how you define the word of God.

Believers cannot and never did (even in the Old) please God by symbols of types or figures, which represented the true. While, there were many symbols in the O. T., it was God's word that Israel followed and obeyed by faith. Yet, Old Covenant believers had limited understanding about the "**regulation of divine worship the earthly sanctuary**" (He 9:1). The Old Covenant operated within shadows that shrouded spiritual meaning. But, they had faith, according to Hebrew 11.

Symbols or figures, we are told, never gave life. The holy Tabernacle, itself "**... was a figure for the time then present**" but, "**... could not make him that did the service perfect in conscience**" (Heb 9:9).

The many symbols of the Old - washings, regulations, food and drink were necessary "**until a time of reformation;**" or, until Jesus established a "**greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this world,**" Hebrews 9:11.

Praise the Lord! We live in the New Covenant and in the work of Jesus, the Christ. His accomplishments are so powerful and authoritative that it can never cease. His truthful representative, the local church body, was baptized by the Holy Spirit and, since then, all the shadows are gone. We serve God in spirit and in truth.

In the words of Jesus, having built His Church "**upon this Rock,**" Matthew 16:18, the gospel message, clear and alive, has been carried to all parts of the earth. We will not only live again, we live presently because He lives. Jesus remains head of the church, executing the laws of the New Covenant within the body, as well as within the world. Church Number is irrelevant. Even with a congregation of two or three, Jesus says, "**there I am in their midst,**" Mt 18:20.

Therefore, we should think in terms of ordinances which the New Covenant provides; not symbols. We do expect to be raised and glorified in the resurrection. Yet, His provisions allow us to live for that day by living for this day. Like the Turkey, our profitability and commission is for the here and now. We must be seen and, we must be around for service; not, off on our high horse, robbing others of their catch. In fact, we are to catch men, ourselves.

Therefore, when we think of the present spiritual service, we are thinking primarily of trusting God in the here and now. We look is up and eye level to people; not high in the sky, overlooking or, looking down on all things earthly. Yes! God has much for us to do at this time of the year. Let us come down from our lofty heights to serve and to be served. It's **THANKGIVING TIME!**