



God is able to make all  
grace abound toward you.

—II Corinthians 9:8



Bible Lens

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving  
2016

# Thanksgiving

## from the Golden Text

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### **Psalms 107:8**

*Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

These words praising God are repeated four times in this psalm (see also verses 15, 21, and 31). Each refrain is followed by a description of God's acts on behalf of His people. To the last two are added invitations to honor His goodness. Some scholars believe this psalm was performed in parts, with a chorus singing the refrain.

## from the Responsive Reading

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### **Nehemiah 8:1**

*And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.*

At the time of this gathering, the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem had recently been completed under the supervision of Nehemiah. It was noteworthy that the call to read the Mosaic law came from the people; it was not imposed on them by their elders.

Rather than going to Nehemiah, their civil leader, their request naturally went to Ezra, their scribe and priest. The account notes that the reading was done “distinctly.” It was communicated to the people in a way that “gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading” (verse 8).

The “street that was before the water gate” was an open square located between the eastern gate of the Temple and the gate through which water was brought into the city.

## from Section 1

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### **3 | Psalms 78:25**

*Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.*

“Angels' food” refers to the manna that appeared from the heavens, called in verse 24 “the corn of heaven” and in Psalms 105:40 “the bread of heaven.” Because the Hebrew word translated *angels* here (*'ab-biyr*) means *mighty* or *valiant*, some think the phrase describes the quality of the food—that it was as rich as food great princes would eat.

## from Section 2

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### **8 | Matthew 14:14**

*And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.*

Jesus had just retreated by ship to a solitary desert place after hearing of Herod's murder of John the Baptist. Nevertheless, when the crowds followed him around the lake, he did not insist on being alone but compassionately healed them.

“Moved with compassion” is akin to another biblical phrase, “bowels of mercies” (Colossians 3:12). Both use forms of the Greek

# An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

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noun for bowels (*splagchnon*)—reflecting the ancient belief that strong feelings originated in the body. Like the use of the word *compassion* in this verse, many later English translations dropped the literal meaning, and described tender affection with relation to emotions rather than physicality. The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament has, “filled with tenderness.”

## 9 | Luke 14:12–14

*Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed.*

Jesus’ counsel does not forbid inviting friends and wealthy neighbors. But he taught that true kindness, the generosity that earns God’s blessing, is extended to those in need without thought of a return invitation or repayment.

### from Section 3

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## 11 | Philippians 4:6

*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

The charge “Be careful for nothing” has been compared with one of Jesus’ precepts, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink” (Matthew 6:25). Christ’s followers were to drop a sense of anxious care, and to look to God in prayer for all their needs. One source says, “Care

and prayer are more opposed to one another than fire and water.”

*Prayer and supplication* are often paired in New Testament language. The first word, commonly translated from the Greek term *proseuchē*, is a general term for entreaty to God. The second, from the Greek *deēsis*, implies a petition for a specific want or need.

## 12 | Matthew 5:6

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

As the wages for the average Palestinian worker of Jesus’ day were very low, a working man might be able to afford to eat meat only once a week. Hunger and thirst were very real daily issues for many people, so this passage portrays a compelling, urgent, and consistent seeking of righteousness—just as one seeks food several times a day.

### from Section 4

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## 15 | Proverbs 15:15

*He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.*

The Hebrew word for *merry* (*towb*) means good. It is translated as *good* hundreds of times in the Old Testament—including multiple times in the account of creation in Genesis 1: “And God saw that it was good [*towb*].”

### Resources quoted in this issue

**Cit. 8:** Marshall, Alfred. *The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975.

**Cit. 11:** Bengel, Johann Albrecht. *Gnomon of the New Testament*. 3rd ed. 5 vols. Translated by Andrew R. Fausset, James Bryce, and William Fletcher. Revised and edited by Andrew R. Fausset. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1857–60. Also available at [biblehub.com/commentaries](http://biblehub.com/commentaries).



## Thanksgiving

I shall no more  
gather the harvest grain  
of sin and sorrow,  
want and bitter pain.

I have come upon  
a field so rich  
in other fruits  
that all the heart's day  
cannot suffice  
for gathering.

Call all lands  
to the bounteous feast!

Today we rejoice  
and give praise  
to the Master Husbandman,  
whose grain is ripe  
for reaping.

Behold, the day  
sheds joyous light  
upon our singing.

Whole worlds dance  
to the harmony  
of our thanksgiving.

By Russell Lord, Jr.  
From the November 19, 1949, issue of the  
*Christian Science Sentinel*

## Now is the time of harvest

Lift up your head, O beloved,  
The fields are ripe with grain.  
Harvest comes to the faithful,  
Your labor is not in vain—  
Harvest of patient sowing,  
Fruitage of daily prayer,  
Courage through nights of darkness,  
Faith in His tender care.  
Gather your sheaves with thanksgiving  
Nor wait till the labor is done;  
Now is the day of salvation,  
Now is the victory won.

By Ethel Munro Goss  
From the November 1945 issue of  
*The Christian Science Journal*

## About Ezra

A greatly respected scribe of the Hebrew nation, Ezra came from a long line of priests. He lived in Babylon in the 5th century BC, and led several thousand Israelites on a four-month journey to Jerusalem in 458 BC. Shortly after arriving, he worked to stop the widespread practice of intermarriage between Jewish men and local heathen women, holding that it had caused the people to stray from their faith (see Ezra 10).

Ezra is recognized as a great teacher of “the book of the law of Moses” (see Nehemiah 8:1–8), establishing it as the basis of both worship and government. In addition to the writing of the book bearing his name and the Chronicles, Ezra is credited with gathering and restoring the entire Hebrew canon lost during the Exile.