

A Spiritual Harvest

Psalm 85 ❖ James 1:16-18

"I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be - that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks ..."

(President George Washington's Proclamation, October 3, 1789)

Who was James?

The author of the New Testament book of James was a **recipient** of a spiritual harvest of God's grace.

James was the **brother** of Jesus.

The biographies of Jesus reveal that before His **crucifixion**, James and His other siblings didn't believe He was the Son of **God**.

What changed James' mind (1 Corinthians 15:7)?

James was transformed by the personal knowledge that God had **raised** his brother from the **dead**!

According to Acts and Galatians, James was the **leader** of the early Church in Jerusalem until the Jewish High Priest had him **stoned** to death in 62 A.D.

Who is God?

It was James who described God as "The **Giver**" when he wrote: "Every good and perfect **gift** is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not **change** like shifting shadows" (James 1:17).

When he was martyred, James had spent almost 30 years reiterating his brother Jesus' teaching that the Creator always gives **good** things to His children. Jesus said, "If your son asks for bread, which of you fathers would give him a stone? How much **more** will your Father in heaven give good **gifts** to those who ask Him?" (Matthew 7:9, 11)

Though the lights in the heavens may change, the One who **made** them **never** changes. The **moon** may wax and wane, the **sun** appears brighter at noon than at dawn, the **stars** may twinkle brighter some nights, **eclipses** may cast shadows on the earth, but there is never a shadow to obscure God's **goodness**.

"The **light** (of Jesus) shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

George Washington referred to God as "the beneficent Author of all the good that **was**, that **is**, or that **will be**."

"On that first Thanksgiving, the Pilgrims knew they had worked hard, but they also knew that **only** God could transform seeds into a crop, send the rain, enrich the soil, strengthen the **sun**, and create animals for food." ("Bring Jesus to Your Table," Janet Denison)

"The Lord will indeed **give** what is good, and our **land** will yield its harvest" (Psalm 85:12).

Who are we?

All Christians are **recipients** of a spiritual harvest of God's grace. Why? Because of Jesus' **resurrection**. "God chose to **give** us **birth** through the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created" (James 1:18).

As a Christian, are you being transformed by the personal knowledge that God raised Jesus from the dead and promises to do the same for you?!

American Christians, in particular, are **recipients** of a spiritual harvest of God's grace. Why? Because "God has **forgiven** the iniquity of His people and covered all their sins" (Psalm 85:2).

Washington included in his proclamation: "And also that we may then unite in most **humbly** offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech Him to pardon our **national** and other transgressions."

As an American Christian, are you pleading with God to "**revive** us again" (Psalm 85:6)?

