
Thanksgiving...
Turning a holiday into a lifestyle
Psalm 100:4–5

Thanksgiving officially became an American holiday when the House of Representatives passed a bill on October 6, 1941, which President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law the following December.

This law solidified the last Thursday of November as the Thanksgiving holiday, following years of Presidential proclamations asking Americans to observe a “day of thanksgiving.”

https://www.dayspringchristian.com/blog/the-true-history-of-thanksgiving/

What Happened at the First Thanksgiving in 1621?

- The first thanksgiving was documented by Edward Winslow and William Bradford, two Protestant Christian leaders who had endured a long, harrowing voyage across the Atlantic and a long winter of sickness, starvation, and desolation in the unsettled New World.
- In his writing of *Mourt's Relation*, Edward Winslow penned: *"Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day, killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king, Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty."*

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George Washington's 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation





Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor…That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks…for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence… 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…to render our national government a blessing to all the people, by constantly being a Government of wise, just, and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed…

- President George Washington, 1789

Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Thanksgiving Proclamation





The year that is drawing towards its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God… No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States…to observe the last Thursday of November as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. - President Abraham Lincoln, 1863

Psalm 100

How does Psalm 100 begin?

Introductory phrase in Hebrew…

מִזְמ֗וֹר לְתוֹדָ֫ה *mizmor l'todah*

Translated "A Psalm for Thanksgiving"

What should thankful believers do?

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing.
Psalm 100:1-2

Know that (1) the Lord [Yahweh יְהוָה] Himself is God [Elohim אֱלֹהִים] ; (2) it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; (3) we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Psalm 100:3

As followers of Yeshua, we KNOW that Yahweh Elohim is our:

- Creator
- Owner
- Shepherd

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. Psalm 100:4

- Notice the action verbs
- Thanksgiving should be filled with action not just emotion

Why be active at Thanksgiving?

For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations. Psalm 100:5

Psalm 136

Grateful people know their history

Bible scholars typically divide Psalm 136 into four main movements:

- Give Thanks for Who God Is (Verses 1–3).
- Give Thanks for God's Work in Creation (Verses 4–9).
- Give Thanks for God's Work in Redemption (Verses 10–22).
- Give Thanks for God's Personal Provision (Verses 23–26).

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalm 136:1

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

*A very general statement of gratitude

“for His lovingkindness is everlasting”

ki L’olam hasdo לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

Lovingkindness	חֶסֶד	*hesed*
Everlasting	עוֹלָם	*olam*

- His lovingkindness is “everlasting” or “forever”
- Hebrew word *olam* also means “infinite” – God has no dimension, He is infinite in all dimensions (unmeasurable)

We Serve The One True God

Give thanks to the God of gods, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. To Him who alone does great wonders, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; Psalm 136:2-4

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

to Him who made the heavens with skill, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who spread out the earth above the waters [Genesis 1:2], for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who made the great lights [Genesis 1:14-18], for His lovingkindness is everlasting: the sun to rule by day [Genesis 1:16], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, the moon and stars to rule by night, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Psalm 136:5-9

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

To Him who smote the Egyptians in their firstborn [Exodus 12:29], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, Psalm 136:10

- Why does verse 10 only mention the death of the firstborn?
- Where are the other 9 plagues?
- Commentaries say, “We don’t celebrate the suffering of the Egyptians, we only celebrate the salvation and redemption God performed for His people.”

ki L’olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

and brought Israel out from their midst [Exodus 12:51-13:3], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm [Exodus 6:1,6], for His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 136:11-12

*Strong hand and outstretched arm… Thanks to God's intervention, the Jews left Egypt with their heads held high. God could have taken them out during the plague of darkness (9th plague - Exodus 10:21-29), but that would have been sneaking out like thieves.

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

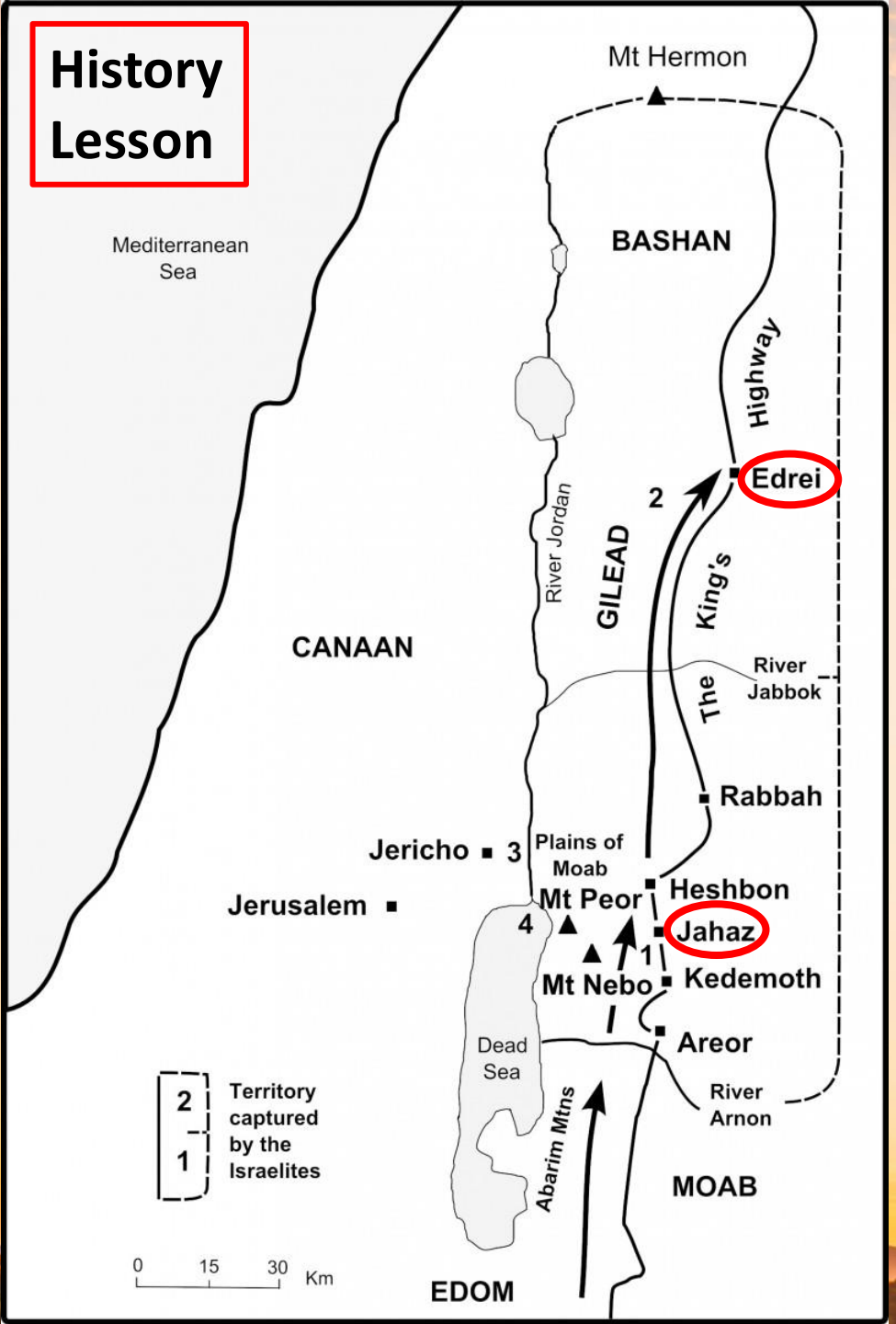
To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder [Exodus 14:21], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, and made Israel pass through the midst of it [Exodus 14:22], for His lovingkindness is everlasting; but He overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea [Exodus 14:27], for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Psalm 136:13-15

*Verses 13-15 could have been reduced to a single verse… when there is elaboration in scripture, there is always a reason. We are to thank God for everything He does, not just the results.

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

To Him who led His people through the wilderness [Exodus 13:18, 15:22], for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who smote great kings [Psalm 135:10-12, 136:17-22], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, and slew mighty kings, for His lovingkindness is everlasting: Sihon, king of the Amorites [Numbers 21:21-24], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, and Og, king of Bashan [Numbers 21:33-35], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, Psalm 136:16-20

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ



- Numbers 21:21 When the Israelites reach Kedemoth, they send messengers to King Sihon of the Amorites who is occupying the northern area of Moab requesting safe passage though his territory (see also Deuteronomy 2:26-28).
- Numbers 21:22 They assure him that they will travel along the King's Highway, and they promise not to plunder the fields and vineyards alongside the road.
- Numbers 21:23-24 King Sihon refuses and attacks the Israelites at Jahaz. The Israelites defeat the Amorites and occupy the land of northern Moab from the River Arnon to the River Jabbok.
- Numbers 21:25-32 All the Amorite cities, including Heshbon and Jazer are captured.
- Numbers 21:33-35 As the Israelites continue to move north, King Og of Bashan is defeated at Edrei. The Israelites then occupy all the land of Gilead and Bashan from the River Arnon to Mount Hermon (see also Deuteronomy 4:48).
- **Lesson: Sihon and Og were both very powerful kings. When God does something particularly significant, mention your thanksgiving specifically.**

https://www.thebiblejourney.org/biblejourney2/26-the-journey-continues-from-sinai-to-moab/the-israelites-defeat-king-sihon-and-king-og/

and gave their land as a heritage [Joshua 12:1], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, even a heritage to Israel His servant [Isaiah 41:8], for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Psalm 136:21-22

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

Who remembered us in our low estate [Psalm 9:12, 103:14], for His lovingkindness is everlasting, and has rescued us from our adversaries [Judges 6:9, Nehemiah 9:28], for His lovingkindness is everlasting; Psalm 136:23-24

*When has God shown up in the middle of your dark and painful days?
*When has He protected you from evil?

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

Who gives food to all flesh [Psalm 104:27], for His lovingkindness is everlasting.
Psalm 136:25

*For there is no partiality with God. Romans 2:11

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

A Final Reminder

Give thanks to the God of heaven לְאֵל הַשָּׁמָיִם

[Genesis 24:3,7; 2 Chronicles 36:23, Nehemiah 1:4],

for His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 136:26

ki L'olam hasdo כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ

*Proclaimed 26 times in 26 verses

Lessons from Psalm 136

- One problem with our prayer lives is we lack stamina and patience
- Another problem is that we forget the past
- Truly thankful people remember the past and remember God’s goodness

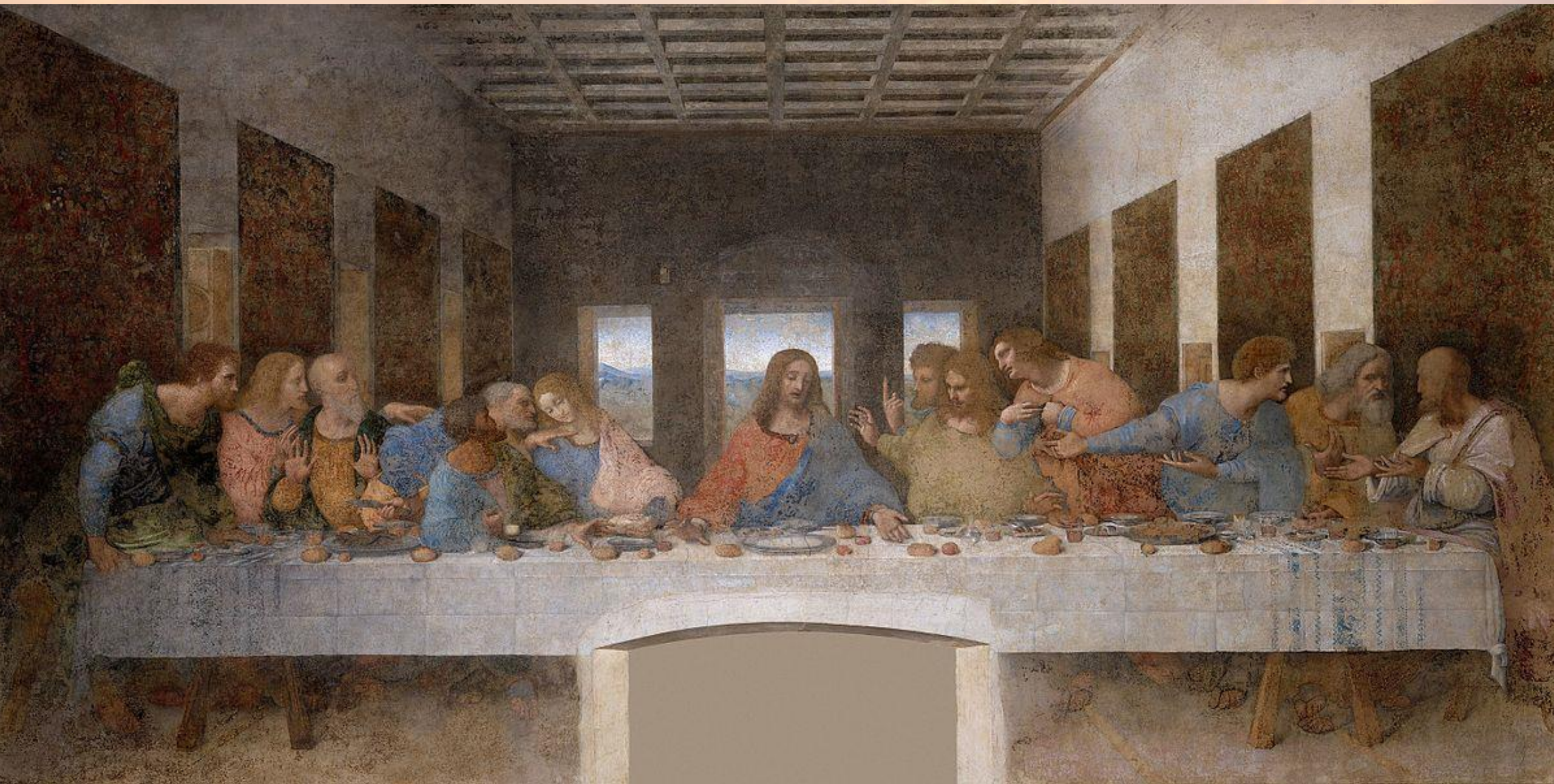
Psalm 136 is a song of gratitude, giving thanks to God for a variety of circumstances and events. Sometimes we give thanks generally ("for He is good" in verse 1), sometimes we give thanks specifically ("divided the Red Sea" in verse 13).

Grateful people understand that God is always at work. Grateful people remember their past. Grateful people look back and see God's hand in every circumstance.

Psalm 136 is perfect for the Thanksgiving table…



Consider this table…



Or, more accurately, this table…



The Last Supper

- Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the **table** with the twelve disciples. Matthew 26:20
- When it was evening He came with the twelve. As they were reclining at the **table** and eating… Mark 14:17-18a
- <u>After singing a hymn</u>, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Matthew 26:30

What “hymn” did Jesus and the disciples sing?

- Psalms 113-118 are collectively called *Hallel* הַלֵּל (meaning “praise”). They are also called the “Egyptian Hallel.” In ancient times Jews recited these hymns on the three Pilgrim Festivals, when they offered their sacrifices in the Temple of Jerusalem.
- In modern times, during the Passover Seder meal, when Jews praise God for taking them out of Egypt, they recite Hallel (Psalms 113-118). Some of it is included in “Maggid,” the main recital of the Haggadah (story of the Exodus told during the meal). The balance is said later following Grace After Meals (*Birkat Hamazon* בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן).
- This Hallel (Psalms 113-118) is said while holding aloft the second and fourth of the four cups of wine drunk during the course of the Seder.
- **Psalm 136 is the “Great Hallel” (*Hallel HaGadol*), sung at the end of the Hallel prayers (Psalms 113-118) which conclude the Passover Seder meal.**

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4181720/jewish/What-Is-Hallel.htm

Jesus and Psalm 136

- When Jesus gathered with His disciples on Thursday night for the Last Supper, they joined together to sing “The Great Hallel” (Psalm 136) and thank God for His goodness and His deliverance. This is the “hymn” of Matthew 26:30.
- As these Jewish men celebrated Passover with Messiah Jesus, they thanked God for His deliverance of the Jewish people from slavery and bondage in Egypt.
- As the Lamb of God was singing about the Passover lambs of Exodus 12, He knew that He would sacrifice His own body in less than 12 hours to pay the penalty for the sins of all mankind.
- Today, when people recite Psalm 136 as they bake the matzah bread to prepare for the Seder, followers of Jesus understand from Matthew 26:26 that the Savior connected the breaking of that unleavened break to His own body which would soon be nailed to the cross.
- While all of Israel was gathered in the Temple to sacrifice their Passover lambs, the Lamb of God was preparing for His own sacrifice.

What happens in a place of worship when the people are grateful and God is glorified?

[At the dedication of King Solomon's temple…]

When the priests came forth from the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to divisions), and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music…

2 Chronicles 5:11-13b

and when **they praised the Lord** saying, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

2 Chronicles 5:13b-14

Followers of Jesus and Psalm 136

- We are called to become people of gratitude, thanking God for His lovingkindness (*hesed*) in every circumstance of life.
- We ought to be thankful for His general goodness and His specific goodness.
- Be thankful for the “little” things.
- Be thankful for the “big” things.
- Be thankful for the “biggest” thing.

We ought to be most thankful that God made a way to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death… the sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the cross.



Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting (*l’olam* לְעוֹלָם) life.” John 3:16

What do we say this Thanksgiving?

His lovingkindness is everlasting

ki L'olam hasdo

כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ