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THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES AS GOD'S MEDICINE
with enough power to...

- cleanse from all sin
 - set us free from all bondage
 - break all the power of the enemy over us
 - restore us to total spiritual health
 - develop immunity to all last-day deceptions
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#75 – Thanksgiving and the Beast

Two hippies were strolling down the street during the early 1970s. One said to the other, *“I am going over to pick up my unemployment check. Then I’ll drop in at the university to see what’s holding up my check for my federal education grant. After that I’ll pick up our food stamps. Meanwhile you go over to the free clinic and check your tests, and pick up my new glasses at the health center, then go to the welfare department and apply for an increase in our eligibility limit. Then I’ll meet you at the Federal Building at 4 o’clock for a demonstration against this rotten establishment.”* Genuine Thanksgiving will open our eyes to see blessings all around us of which we are unaware, and this will take away the toxic spirit of grumbling and complaining.

What is a good Thanksgiving? To many it is a day when they get to gorge themselves on turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, yams and pumpkin pie, and then in a satiated stupor they sink into a recliner to watch football to their heart’s content. Is this a good Thanksgiving? It is easy to give thanks when we our stomachs are filled, but genuine Thanksgiving consists in giving praise when there seemingly is nothing to be thankful for, and especially when things do not go our way. The Bible calls this a *“sacrifice of praise”* (Hebrews 13:15).

Would it surprise you that the absence of thanksgiving is one of the factors that give rise to “beast worship,” and that there is more to the worship of the beast than meets the eye? The beast symbol occurs not only in the Book of Revelation, but Paul in Romans chapter 1 connects the lack of gratitude as a source of beastly behaviors among human beings.

“...because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish heart

was darkened, professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed beast (animals) and creeping things” (Romans 1:21-23)...who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and serve the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25).

Failure to acknowledge and worship God as Creator inevitably leads to beastly behaviors. Believing the lie that we can make our lives work better without God in the picture also leads to beastly behaviors. Is it possible that the symbol of the “beast” in Scripture may have a wider meaning than just its last-day prophetic applications? Remember how the Israelites at the foot of Mt. Sinai worshiped a beast, the golden calf, as a substitute (or replacement) for the God who had delivered them from Egypt.

Question: What is your personal golden calf, sacred cow, hobby horse, idol, substitute, or replacement for the living God? Idolatry (beast worship) is rooted in a failure of genuine worship and thanksgiving – *“nor were they thankful” (Romans 1:21).*

Read Eugene Peterson’s incisive paraphrase about this kind of beast worship: *So God said, in effect, “If that’s what you want, that’s what you get.” It wasn’t long before they were living in a pigpen, smeared with filth, filthy inside and out. And all this because they traded the true God for a fake god, and worshiped the god they made instead of the God who made them—the God we bless, the God who blesses us. Oh, yes!” (Romans 1:24 – The Message by Eugene Peterson).*

What are the “beastly behaviors” that arise out of ingratitude? *“Since they didn’t bother to acknowledge God, God quit bothering them and let them run loose. And then all hell broke loose: rampant evil, grabbing and grasping, vicious backstabbing. They made life hell on earth with their envy, wanton killing, bickering, and cheating. Look at them: mean-spirited, venomous, fork-tongued God-bashers. Bullies, swaggerers, insufferable windbags! They keep inventing new ways of wrecking lives. They ditch their parents when they get in the way. Stupid, slimy, cruel, coldblooded. And it’s not as if they don’t know better. They know perfectly well they’re spitting in God’s face. And they don’t care—worse, they hand out prizes to those who do the worst things best”! (Romans 1:28-32 – The Message by Eugene Peterson).*

So let this Thanksgiving be a season to detect any areas in our lives for the absence of the ‘gratitude attitude.’ When the ‘gratitude attitude’ be-

comes as normal to our lives as our breathing, we also develop an inner immunity against the last-day deceptions of the beast. These deceptions are all rooted in the lie that God is not sufficient for our needs, and that we, therefore, are justified in our own attempts to make our lives work.

Satan cannot infiltrate our lives with His lies when we are content and satisfied in Jesus Christ. Paul said *“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content...everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* (Philippians 4:11-13).

The best protection against the beast is still the genuine worship of the Lamb – contentment and satisfaction with the salvation provided by the Lamb. *“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!”* (Revelation 5:12).

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