

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Mr. Medved notes that, “The new narrative describes the Pilgrims as arrogant oppressors who fled persecution only to become persecutors themselves, depriving Native Americans of their land and their lives. But this is wrong on every count.” What do you think the motivation is for progressives to create a ‘new narrative’ politicizing history? What do you think the consequences are of schools in Seattle promoting the ‘new narrative’ as fact instead of the fiction that it is?
- Mr. Medved goes on to explain about the Pilgrims that, “Free from interference by the Church of England, they feared seduction, not persecution, worrying that their children would be corrupted by the materialistic Dutch culture. That’s why they risked their dangerous 1620 voyage to a wilderness continent: not because they were running from oppression but because they were running toward holiness – fulfilling a fateful mission to build an ideal Christian commonwealth.” What does the fact that the Pilgrims took such a serious risk to fulfill their ideals and purpose demonstrate about the Pilgrims? Explain. Considering their true motivation for journeying to America, do you think that the Pilgrims were focused on destroying an entire nation of people? Why or why not?
- When sharing with us the truth of what happened with the Pilgrims when they landed, Mr. Medved further explains that, “...these supposedly cruel conquerors never actually invaded that village. Instead, they expressed a fervent desire to pay the natives for the dried corn they found, if only they could find someone to pay. But the former inhabitants had perished during three years of plague – probably smallpox – that immediately preceded the Pilgrims’ arrival.” Why do you think that so many people are misinformed about what really happened when the Pilgrims arrived? Considering the facts regarding the village and the already perished Native Americans, do you agree with the ‘new narrative’ that the Pilgrims were conquerors? Why or why not?
- Towards the end of the video, Mr. Medved points out that, “...the sense of purpose of the original Pilgrims left a permanent imprint on the national character. They maintained unshakable confidence that God protected them, not to grant special privileges but to impose special responsibilities. They saw themselves as instruments, not authors, of a mysterious master plan.” What ‘special responsibilities’ do you think the Pilgrims thought God imposed on them? In what way(s) do you think the Pilgrim’s purpose left an imprint on ‘the national character?’
- Mr. Medved concludes the video by stating that, “...the only reason to treat this beloved national holiday as “a time of mourning” is that some foolish Americans actually think that’s a good idea. The Pilgrims knew better: they understood that people of every culture and every era can gain more from gratitude than from guilt.” Who do you think Mr. Medved is referring to when mentioning ‘foolish Americans?’ What do you think Mr. Medved means when stating that people can ‘gain more from gratitude than from guilt?’

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Squanto

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Thanksgiving and the True Story of Squanto,” then answer the questions that follow.

- When were the primary source documents describing Squanto written? What role was Squanto assigned to on the ship that was sailing back to America? Who became Squanto’s family in the end?
- Do you believe that divine providence has shaped American history? Why or why not?
- Why do you think that so many progressives conflate the peaceful and pious Pilgrims with other Europeans that treated Native Americans poorly?



QUIZ

WHAT'S THE TRUTH ABOUT THE FIRST THANKSGIVING?

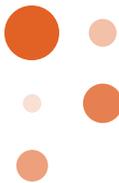
- 1. What Biblical holiday is Thanksgiving inspired by?**
 - a. Passover
 - b. Rosh Hashanah
 - c. Hannukah
 - d. Sukkot

- 2. Pilgrims were arrogant oppressors who fled persecution only to become persecutors themselves, depriving Native Americans of their land and their lives.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

- 3. Why did the Pilgrims cross the ocean?**
 - a. To flee persecution
 - b. Because that worried that their children would be corrupted by the materialistic Dutch culture.
 - c. Because the Church of England sponsored their voyage.
 - d. To preach the Gospel to Native Americans.

- 4. What did Pilgrim leader William Bradford call Squanto?**
 - a. Someone to be controlled.
 - b. Nothing more than a useful tool.
 - c. A wild savage in dire need of God.
 - d. A special instrument sent of God for their good.

- 5. Where did the Pilgrims originally intend to land?**
 - a. Plymouth
 - b. Manhattan
 - c. Boston
 - d. Virginia



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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Thanksgiving and the True Story of Squanto



The time is 1621. The place is the sight of a deserted Indian village now inhabited by bone-weary pilgrims, the survivors of two incredibly difficult years in the New World. The scene is what would become known to many as the first Thanksgiving. The story of how God rescues a 12-year-old Indian boy sold into slavery in Europe and implants him in the middle of this pilgrim adventure is as powerful and history-changing as that of Joseph in the Old Testament.

By sticking strictly to historical facts, author Eric Metaxas displays the awesome ability of God to see ahead and provide for His people, and to turn devastating circumstances into rich blessings for those who are faithful.

Through his skillful writing, Thanksgiving takes on new meaning as you learn the real story of Squanto and the Pilgrims from over 380 years ago.

Terry Meeuwsen: What made you want to write a book about Squanto?

Eric Metaxas: Well, when I found out what happened, when I actually researched it, I couldn't believe what I was reading. I said, "There has to be some mistake here."

Terry Meeuwsen: Did you just happen upon this material?

Eric Metaxas: No. I worked for a wonderful company called Rabbit Ears. I was the editorial director and the head writer, and I had to come up with all these American stories. Some of them were tall tales, like Paul Bunyan and Pacos Bill, and some of them were true. And somebody said, "Do you know the story of Squanto?" And I said, "No, I never heard of Squanto." And they said, "Well, you should look into that."

So I did all this research, and I always had this thing about I wanting to go as deep as I could. I wanted to find the primary documents. So I would read different versions of Squanto that people had written over the years. And then I went to the source documents thinking, "Where did they get this story from?" So I read the original documents, which are obviously written in the 1620s and 1630s, and I was absolutely dumbfounded by what I read. When you read this, you realize that what happened is not really reported. I mean this was an out-and-out miracle. If there's such a thing as a miracle, this is a miracle. And I'm a believer, and I said, "This was God's hand in American history." I had never heard this story.

Terry Meeuwsen: Most of us hear the story of Squanto meeting the Pilgrims, but really, the miracle happened long before that.

Eric Metaxas: Yes.

Terry Meeuwsen: Share just a little bit of the background.

Eric Metaxas: Well, this is just one of the examples of how God does things, and we don't know what He's doing at the time.

Terry Meeuwsen: Isn't that the truth?

Eric Metaxas: First of all, I had no idea that any white man came to the coast of New England before 1620. I just thought the Pilgrims came, and that was the first time Englishmen came to this place. Well, it turned out I was wrong. There were many traders who would come from England and other places, and they would come down the coast of Maine and Massachusetts, and they would trade with those Indians. So those Indians knew of the white man. And it just so happens that around 1612, a trader, a Captain Hunter, came to the coast of Massachusetts and was trading with the Indians. And he was obviously a very bad man, because when the Indians came down trustingly to trade with him, he knocked them over the head, took them to the ship, threw them in the hold of the ship, took them across the Atlantic, and sold them into slavery in Malaga, Spain. This, of course, was a nightmare. And to hear about that, I just was so disturbed.

And then it just so happened - and again, this is all documented, I'm not making this up - monks in Spain, men of God, bought him, and it seems, from what we know, treated him well. Obviously he was well exposed to the Christian faith; these were monks, and I only assume that being monks they shared the faith with him. But somehow it seems that they made it possible for him to get up to England. Now, this is 1615. He went from Spain to England -- just think of an Indian from Massachusetts coming all the way across the ocean and then going up to England so that he could somehow get a ship back across the Atlantic. This is like being on the moon and saying, "So when's this ship going back? I'd like to get back." There were no ships.

So, he worked in a stable as a stable boy for a family called Slaney, and, again, this is all documented, and he was with them for five years until a ship going back to the coast of North America could be found, another trading ship. So it'd be about 1618, I think. And in that time, of course, he had learned English and he had lived in London. All these years I imagine that he was dreaming and hoping and probably praying that he could come back to his family after ten years of exile and slavery. And so, miraculously, a ship is provided. He becomes the translator on the ship. They're going to use him to translate. He gets all the way back, again, against odds we can't even dream of, comes to the coast of Massachusetts, runs to the place where he was raised, and his entire tribe has been wiped out by disease, probably small pox. You talk about heartbreak. It's a nightmare to get all the way there after ten years, and then...

Terry Meeuwsen: It was a nightmare for him. He had a window of time where he really kind of went away and just tried to deal with this.

Eric Metaxas: Yes.

Terry Meeuwsen: And you could really relate to what he was going through. He didn't see God's purpose until time passed, and then...

Eric Metaxas: We never do. When something that horrible happens, it's very hard to get God's perspective on it. And we don't know if he was a Christian. But he went to live with a neighboring tribe, briefly. But we forget that he had as much in common with the neighboring tribe as he did with the English people. He was not one of theirs. So after a short period of time, he went to live in the woods by himself, which is so heartbreaking.

Meanwhile, you cut to 1620, and a band of Pilgrims in a little boat comes across the Atlantic, trusting God is leading them. They land and experience horrors that we can't even dream of today. And these were faithful, faithful Christians, trusting God every moment of the day. Fifty percent of them perished, died. I mean, it's a horror when you think about it. And so they got through their first winter, as we know the story, and you can imagine that they were probably questioning, "Lord, how could You have taken us this far?"

Terry Meeuwsen: "Did we really hear your voice on this?"

Eric Metaxas: "And my family died. I buried my wife and my daughter." I mean, it is so heartbreaking, and you know that they were crying out to God. We know that these were very strong Christians. And suddenly, out of the woods walks an Indian brave speaking the King's English. What kind of sense does this make? This is 1621.

Terry Meeuwsen: Yes.

Eric Metaxas: An Indian speaking perfect English. He was in London much more recently than they were.

Terry Meeuwsen: Yes.

Eric Metaxas: And it just so happens that he grew up on the very spot where they had settled. This was his home that had been abandoned, and now he was back in his village, and they basically adopted him. He had no place to go. They became his family. And he knew everything there was to know about how you plant corn. That's the famous story about planting corn with the fish as the fertilizer - how to plant the gourd around the corn so it goes up the cornstalk. He knew how to get eels out of the streams, out of the muddy streams. He knew where the lobsters were and where the fish were. He knew everything. And the Lord used him truly miraculously. I mean, if you really think about it, it's too much for us to understand.

Terry Meeuwsen: Well, God's ways often make us feel overwhelmed like that. It really is a wonderful book, and something that your family will enjoy for years and years to come.

Order your copy of *Squanto and the Miracle of Thanksgiving*

Eric Metaxas has written for *The New York Times*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Christianity Today*. He has also written many children's books, including several popular *Veggie Tales* stories.