

MYSTERIES OF HALLOWEEN

SHOULD YOU OBSERVE IT?



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Should You Observe It?

Halloween has been called the devils holiday. Is it? One writer referred to this holiday as “a mystery hidden behind a mask.” Where did Halloween and the idea of ghosts and goblins or evil spirits originate? What about Jack-o-lanterns, witches, apple-bobbing, and trick or treating -- and what is the meaning behind them?

In recent years Halloween has become a highly commercialized event involving most communities, schools, business and government offices throughout the U.S. Many schools and businesses go all out in taking part with its celebration. Today, children and adults alike wear the costumes and play out the rituals of this seemingly harmless event without ever considering their origins and true meaning or possible consequences. Most reason, “How could having fun “pretending” possibly have any harmful effects? After all, who believes in the devil and evil spirits today?”

Are Halloween traditions really just harmless “fun” as most suppose? How did they come to be accepted by traditional Christianity?

What are Halloween Traditions all about?

Present day Halloween festivities and beliefs are an amalgamation of superstitious traditions and religious beliefs of many cultures, some going back 3000 to 6000 years ago.

Like Christmas and Easter, the festival of Halloween with its traditions of witches, ghosts, hobgoblins and spirits, its games and incantations, pranks and parties “originated in a pagan celebration, even though its present name derives from the (Catholic) festival of All Hallows' [all the holy ones'] or All Saints' Eve” (Strange Stories, Amazing Facts, 1980, by the Readers' Digest Association). “Only since the late 18th and early 19th centuries has Halloween developed into a festive time for children, with costumes, lanterns, and games. Before then it was regarded as a night of fear, and wise men, respectful of hobgoblins (mischievous goblins) and wandering demons, stayed indoors. (Book of Festival Holidays, 1964, pages 123, 125, by Marguerite Ickis).

“In the 17th and 18th centuries it was customary...for people in weird masks and costumes to go from house to house, singing and dancing to keep evil at bay, or to go about as representations of the ghosts (disembodied souls of dead persons believed to inhabit the unseen world, which may appear to the living in bodily likeness; also spirits or demons) and goblins of the night (ugly spirits that are mischievous and sometimes evil and malicious).” (ibid.)

“Halloween was scarcely observed in the United States until the last half of the nineteenth century. It is thought large-scale Irish immigration had much to do with the popularizing of the holiday”. (ibid.)

“There were two different festivals in the early world at this time of year, and they are both represented in our own Halloween activities. When you duck (bob) for apples, or throw an apple paring over your shoulder to see what initial it makes on the floor, you are doing (divinations) as the Romans did--honoring Pomona, the Roman goddess of orchards and especially of apple orchards. And when you light a candle inside a jeering pumpkin face (jack-o-lantern), you are in a small way imitating the Celtic Druids of northern Britain, who lit a fire to scare away winter and the evil spirits who were waiting to come rushing in when summer was over.” (The Book of Holidays, 1958, pages 149-153, by Walker McSpadden)

“The two chief characteristics of ancient Hallowe'en were the lighting of bonfires and the belief that of all nights in the year this is the one during which ghosts and witches are most likely to wander abroad. Now on or about the 1st of November the Druids held their great autumn festival and lighted fires in honour of the Sun-god in thanksgiving for the harvest. Further, it was a Druidic belief that on the eve of this festival Saman or Samhain, lord of death, called together the wicked souls that within the past twelve months had been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals [ie. black cats]. Thus it is clear that the main celebrations of Hallowe'en were...Druidical, and this is further proved by the fact that in parts of Ireland the 31st of October was, and even still is, known as Oidhche Shamhna, 'Vigil of Saman.' On the Druidic ceremonies were grafted some of the characteristics of the Roman festival in honour of Pomona held about the 1st of November.” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed. (1911)

“The Druids, an order of priests in ancient Gaul and Britain, believed that on Halloween, ghosts, spirits, fairies, witches, and elves came out to harm people. They thought the cat was sacred and believed that cats had once been human beings but were changed as a punishment for evil deeds. From these Druidic beliefs comes the present-day use of witches, ghosts, and cats in Halloween festivities.” (World Book Encyclopedia's article on Halloween)

“The Druids had an autumn festival called Samhain (pronounced SAH-win), or summer's end. It was an occasion for feasting on all the kinds of food, which had been grown during the summer. The custom of using leaves, pumpkins, and cornstalks as Halloween decorations comes from the Druids. The early peoples of Europe also had a festival similar to the Druid holiday.” (ibid.)

“The custom of holding a festival at harvest time goes back over two thousand years. The last day of the year on the old pagan calendar, October 31, served the triple purpose of bidding goodbye to summer, welcoming winter and remembering the dead. The Irish built tremendous bonfires on hilltops to offer encouragement to the waning sun and to provide a warm welcome for visiting spirits and ghosts that walked about in the night.” (Book of Festival Holidays)

“People of the British Isles had the quaint custom of tossing objects, such as stones, vegetables and nuts, into a bonfire to frighten away any “spooks” that might be near. These symbolic sacrifices were also fortune-telling props, still widely used at Halloween parties today... If the nuts tossed by young lovers exploded in the flames, theirs would be a quarrelsome marriage...” (ibid.) “...Fearful of spooks....folks began hollowing out turnips and pumpkins and placing lighted candles inside to scare evil spirits from the house.

According to tradition, they were called “jack-o-lantern” because an Irish Jack, too wicked for heaven and expelled from hell for playing tricks on the devil, was condemned to walk the earth with a lantern forever” (ibid.)

“It was the Irish, too, who initiated the “trick or treat” system hundreds of years ago. Groups of Irish farmers would go from house to house soliciting food for the village Halloween festivities in the name of no less a personage than Muck Olla (ancient god of Irish clergy). Prosperity was promised to cheerful givers and threats made against tightfisted donors. It was the custom for English children to dress up in each other's clothes (boys donning girls' outfits and vice versa) and wearing masks, to go begging from door to door for “soul cakes.” (ibid.)

“Souling,' or 'Soul-caking,' is the custom descended from pre-Reformation times, of going about on All Saints' or All souls' and begging for cakes, in remembrance of the dead.... The cakes householders gave were in exchange for prayers for the dead, a 'charity' for the departed.... Bonfires, 'to light souls out of purgatory,' and the ringing of church bells, also characterized old-time observances.” (Yearbook of English Festivals, by Dorothy G. Spicer, 1954, pages 153-157)

Pagan Beliefs in Ghosts, Goblins and Evil Spirits

“Defense against evil spirits was a concern in Mesopotamia from earliest times.” (The Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 5, page 1521,22 - Demonology in the Ancient Near East).

According to the beliefs of demonology, “The intervention of spirits in nature and in human affairs is made possible by means of magic. Thus, magic is employed by primitive peoples to prevent drought, to produce rain, and to ward off disease or famine. By means of propitiation and spells, evil spirits may be diverted from their malevolent designs or pursuits. Among some primitive tribes, the path along which it is believed a demon will approach is barricaded with thorns, brushwood, odors, fire or other obstacles... To the primitive tribesman magic is the only available source of power whereby the attacks of demons may be averted or withstood.” (Collier's Encyclopedia, Vol. 8, page 96 - article on Magical Influence)

“Types of Spirits. Among the spirits most familiar to students of demonology are the spirits of vegetation, water spirits, domestic spirits, ancestral spirits, and dream demons.” (ibid.)

“Ancestral Spirits. Belief in ancestral spirits and the practice of ancestor worship are widely prevalent. In its cruder forms, this phase of demonology stresses the malignancy of the souls of suicides, of those who die by violence, and of women who died in childbirth. Demons of the unburied are feared more than ordinary ghosts. The worship of ancestral spirits, either as gods or as surviving souls of departed members of the family, reflects belief in immortality and the almost universal belief that death does not dissolve an individual's relation to the group. The postmortal status of the individual corresponds to that during his mortal existence. For this reason spirits of the departed are accorded the respect, love or fear shown them during their earthly state. Although all dead are held in

awe, those who lived evil lives or died by violence are dreaded because, in the former instance, they are freer to work harm and, in the latter instance, may be intent upon revenge. It follows that the living must safeguard themselves against dangerous spirits or demons. Hence, exorcism and charms are superlatively important wherever this form of demonology prevails.” (ibid.)

Origins of Halloween

Halloween means hallowed or holy evening. October 31, the eve of November 1st became known as All Hallows' Eve, or All Hallow E'en because it takes place on the eve before All Saints' Day.

All Saints' Day was a Catholic mass “first celebrated on May 13, A.D. 610 as the feast of All Holy Martyrs.” (All Hallows' Day) (World Book Encyclopedia, article on All Saints Day).

In the 8th century (the 700's) the Roman Catholic Church moved All Hallows' Day (All Saints' Day) to November 1st “To counteract the pagan celebrations held on that date... October 31... the last night of the year in the ancient Celtic calendar, was celebrated as the end of summer and its fruitfulness. It was a festival that the Celts of northern Europe (and the British Isles) marked with bonfires, to help the sun through the winter.” (Strange Stories, Amazing Facts).

“To ancient Druids (Celtic priests), the end of October commemorated the festival of the waning year, when the sun began his downward course and ripened grain was garnered from the fields. Samhain, or “Summer's End,” as this feast to the dying sun was called, was celebrated with human sacrifice, augury (divination, foretelling events by signs or omens) and prayer; for at this season spirits walked and evil had power over souls of men.” (Yearbook of English Festivals)

“[Catholic] Christianity has swept the world in a relatively short time... [However], the pagans were reluctant to give up their false gods and ancient practices. So the missionaries, unable to convert them easily to an entirely new code of worship, did the next best thing. They took the pagan festivals as they were and gradually grafted the observances of the new faith onto these festivals and the rites and customs surrounding them.” (Strange Stories, Amazing Facts) “The old pagan customs and the [Catholic] feast day were combined into the Halloween festival.” (World Book Encyclopedia).

“The pagan vigil for the god of light (sun worship) gave way to “All Hallows,” a mass for Catholic saints; and...the Druids' death feast became All Souls', the day of prayer for souls that had entered rest. Cakes for the dead were substituted for human sacrifice, fortune-telling for heathen augury, lighted candles for the old Baal fires... The early English Church called All Saints', the feast to commemorate all the saints, All Hallows. Hallow E'en, All Saints' and All Souls' (October 31, November 1 and 2, respectively) share a common tradition. The three festivals concern remembrance of departed souls. Hallow E'en...is celebrated with games and divination rites, since people...believed spirits of the

dead walked abroad on this night. All Saints' and All Souls', on the other hand, are popularly observed with "souling" customs and plays. (The Yearbook of English Festivals)

But who were the Druids and Celts and where did their beliefs originate?

The Biblical Perspective

In the Garden in Eden, God, whose name is Yahweh, instructed Adam in His laws and the foundations of all truth. And He said:

"Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17)

Why did God forbid man to partake of the tree of good and evil knowledge? Evil knowledge would deceive them because man can not tell the difference between good and evil without God's guidance. Partaking in sin would cut them off from God, the source of all truth and eternal life and result in death (Gen. 3:22-24; Psa. 66:18; Isa. 59:2 ; Eze. 18:4).

When the serpent deceived Eve into believing that she had an immortal soul, she and Adam took of the tree of good and evil knowledge cutting themselves off from the tree of life (Gen. 3:1-24) -- opening Pandora's box of evils as Greek mythology puts it. So from that time to the present the world has been blinded to much of the truth by deception and lies.

The serpent's lie that man has an immortal soul is the source of the beliefs in the ghosts and goblins or spirits of the dead wandering around on Halloween. The whole world is deceived and has accepted this lie..."Thou shalt NOT surely die." Many participate in the pagan rituals honoring and trying to appease those evil spirits as just "harmless fun." Some occult groups, Satanic cults, believe in the traditional devil and the demons as Satan worshippers. Halloween is their most important religious observance of the year.

The Bible gives many warnings against participating in the worship of false pagan gods and evil (man-made) entities and the torment and curses that can result for doing so.

In Gen. 12:1-4 Abram was told to "Get...out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house..." Why? The land of Ur (part of Mesopotamia) and Abraham's ancestors worshipped gods and demons (Josh 24:2). God instructed: "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex. 20:3). The ancient Babylonians had a god called Samas. "...from the Amorite period the major name for Satan was Samael" Jewish legend says 'Samael-Samiel' is the angel of death and the head of the devils. The Greek rendering of the word 'Samael' is 'Sammame'. (The Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 5, page 1020 and Vol. 14, page 719)

Deut. 18:9-12 God warned Israel, “When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft (uses divination), or a soothsayer (an observer of times), or one who interprets omens (an enchanter), or a sorcerer (witch), or one who conjures spells (a charmer), or a medium (consulter of familiar spirits), or a spiritist (a wizard), or one who calls up the dead (a necromancer). For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.”

Ex 22:18 “You shall not suffer a witch to live.” 1 Sam 28:3 “The worship of these demons were practices of appeasement... The pagans believed these 'gods' had to be 'fed' during licentious feasts. They believed they had to be fed the lives of their own children. But God instructed Moses that no one could serve the Lord God and serve gods' at the same time.” (Halloween! Modern-Day Sacrifices of the Dead!, by The House of Yahweh)

Deut. 4:15-19, 24-26 “Take therefore good heed unto yourselves...lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image...the likeness of anything...and be driven to worship them and serve them...For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. When you shall beget children and children's children... and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord your God, to provoke Him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it: you shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.”

But Israel did not heed the Lord their God. Num. 25:1-5 “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel...and Moses said unto the judges of Israel, 'Slay you every one his men that were joined onto Baal-peor.’”

Psa. 106:28-29 “They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked Him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.”

Origin of The Feast of the 8th Month (October, octa or octo = 8) 1 Kings 12:26-33 Jeroboam, king of Israel, feared that, “If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah. Therefore the king took counsel and made two calves of gold and said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!' And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.”

Jeroboam (king of Israel) ordained a feast on the 15th day of the eighth month (Heshvan - equivalent to late October early November), like unto the feast that is in Judah,

and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. So he made offerings ...on the 15th day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel..." 2 Chron. 11:14-15 "The Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the Lord."

These sins of Jeroboam which he introduced in Israel continued until they were taken captive by the king of Assyria about 721-718 B.C. "Yet the Lord testified against Israel...saying, 'Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes...' Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them. So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger." (2 Kg 17:5, 13-17)

As a result of following the sins of Jeroboam, the ten northern tribes of Israel were rejected by God and went into captivity (2 Kgs 17:20-23). They became scattered and lost their true identity and knowledge of the true God because they rejected His true feasts and Sabbaths (Ex. 31:13-17) and set up their own priests.

Eventually some became known as Celts and their priests as Druids or the Druidic priesthood as they migrated to northern Europe and the British Isles. Others, known as Saxons (Isaac's sons) also migrated to northern Europe and the British Isles some becoming known as English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish peoples of the British Isles. They were later converted to modern "Christianity" by Catholics and later the Protestant reformation. But in the process they still kept their pagan rituals and combined them with other pagan rituals incorporated into Christianity by Roman Catholicism.

Warnings for Christians Today

Christians should consider the evil, wicked, pagan origin and character of Halloween with its occultic and heretical rituals and activities and the consequences of observing them. Christians are admonished to "Prove all things and hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

When Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) was tempted in the wilderness, He answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh.'" (Matt. 4:4). He warned, "Beware of false prophets..." (Matt. 7:15). And, "Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many... For false christ's and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect." (Matt. 24:5-6,24).

How can you know who are false ministers? “You shall know them by their fruits.” (Matt. 7:16). “And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums, and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony (the Word of God)! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (Isa. 8:19-20).

The apostles also gave many warnings. Paul warned, “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work... The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of the adversary, with all power, signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. 2:7, 9-12).

James instructs, “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble. Therefore submit to God, resist the accuser (with the Word of the Eternal) and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:6-8).

Speaking of the great false religious system inspired by carnal man’s deceptions, the Book of Revelation tells of its final end and warns mankind, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities... Therefore her plagues will come in one day--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.” (Rev. 18:4-5,8).

In conclusion, consider the following points regarding the Halloween observance:

1. The roots of Halloween are from pagan idolatry, superstition and heretical ritual, which blind man to God's truth, His ways and His great plan.
2. It is the most sacred time of the year for the Satanic cults.
3. It treats the occult and the world of mythical evil spirits as merely children's fantasies, thereby deceiving its believers.
4. Halloween is idolatry, giving honor and attention to a pagan god or deity called Satan. (Write for our booklet, *The Traditional Satan the Devil Exposed!*).
5. God's word says to abstain from all appearances of evil, (1Thess. 5:22) and to do all things to the glory of God (1Cor.10:31). Christians are to separate themselves from all unrighteousness (2Cor.6:14-18).
6. In contrast, God's true feasts or Holy Days teach the Word of God and give understanding of the difference between good and evil and of God's plan of salvation for all of mankind (Neh. 8:1-12,17-18).

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