

# The Truth About

# HALLOWEEN

This booklet is offered free of charge by the authors and publisher as an educational service in the public interest. All Scriptures are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

© 2000, 2024 the Eternal Church of God



# The Truth About

# HALLOWEEN

The fall season is a strikingly beautiful time of year. As the sun wanes, harsh weather looms on the horizon and many plants die or become dormant. Foliage changes its appearance stirring up a stunning atmosphere filled with shades of yellow, red, brown, and green.

During this unique time, a strange ritual of behavior takes place. Millions of people adorn their surroundings with images of witches, black cats, skeletons, ghosts, monsters, and spiders. Many will masquerade as devils, fairies, and ghouls. They attend parties as children parade through neighborhoods knocking on doors declaring “trick or treat,” expecting to receive candy or a gift.

But is Halloween something Christians should observe? Where did this holiday come from? Why the hideous imagery with a dominant theme of witchcraft and death?

## ***Digging up Halloween’s Roots***

Few realize that our modern-day Halloween celebrations can be traced to ancient times; long before the birth of Christ. The earliest accounts of its observance reveal that it was pagan Celts who linked the waning sun, and declining fruitfulness, with the chill of a lifeless grave. A religious mythology developed and gave rise to pagan priests known as Druids. Historians Ralph and Adelin Linton wrote:

The earliest Halloween celebrations were held by the Druids in honor of Samhain, Lord of the Dead, whose festival fell on November 1 (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 4).

The druidic festival has been reviewed and documented by many authors. As *Reader's Digest* wrote:

October 31, the eve of November 1, was the last night of the year in the ancient Celtic calendar and was celebrated as the end of summer and its fruitfulness. It was a festival that the Celts of northern Europe marked with bonfires, to help the sun through the winter.

Winter also called to mind the chill and blackness of the grave, and so it was a time when ghosts would walk, and supernatural spirits, warlocks, and witches would hold their revels (*Strange Stories and Amazing Facts*, p. 285).

The revels held by ancient pagans during this season were strange indeed. They were dark, superstitious rituals, focusing on mystical creatures and spirits of the dead. Though many now jest during the festivities of Halloween, the ancient ceremonies were not a laughing matter. They involved elements of terror, murder, and reverence for ghosts that supposedly roamed the earth during this time. As Dorothy Gladys Spicer wrote:

To ancient Druids 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, and prayers; for at this season spirits walked, and evil had power over souls of men. Not until the fourth century did the pagan vigil for the god of light give way to All Hallows, the mass for Christian saints; and not until the tenth, did the Druids' death feast become 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 Yearbook of English Festivals*, pp. 153-154).

Though the depraved ceremonies of ancient pagans morphed into seemingly less wicked practices, the traditions retained such themes as witches, demons, sorcery, monsters, and wandering spirits. It seems that the only element removed from the original observance was that of human sacrifice. Divination and superstitious enchantments continued to dominate the celebration.

Because these rites still exist today, it takes little effort to trace them to the ancient pagan observance known as



Samhain. This was a day celebrating the turn from summer and its celebration began in the evening. In fact, the night of October 31<sup>st</sup> is still called *Oíche Shamhna* in Ireland, and *Oidhche Shamhna* in Scotland. Both of these expressions are translated as “Samhain Eve.” November 1<sup>st</sup> is known as *Lá Shamhna* in both Ireland and Scotland meaning “Samhain Day.” The reason it began the evening prior is noted by

James Napier who explained:

The northern nations, like the Hebrews, began their day in the evening. Thus we have Yule Eve, and Hallow Eve (Hallowe'en), the evenings preceding the respective feasts. The name Hallowe'en is of Christian origin, but the feast itself is hidden in ancient mythology (*Western Scottish Folklore & Superstitions*, p. 183).

Samhain was considered to be the time when a door to the supernatural world was opened for fairies and the dead to communicate with humans. However, Samhain “was

essentially a festival for the dead” (*The Encyclopedia of Celtic Mythology and Folklore*, p. 41). It is a morbid holiday with a long history of dark and mystical customs. Down through the ages, Samhain has spawned numerous superstitious activities such as:

- You can hear their destiny in the wind at a crossroads on that night.
- Making a circuit of torches around your fields on this eve will ensure fertility.
- Leading sheep to pass through a hoop of rowan tree will ward off witches and fairies.
- A girl who sows hemp seed over nine ridges of a plow while repeating an enchantment can look over her shoulder and see an image of her future husband.
- Dropping egg whites in a bowl of water will allow one to see how many children they will have.
- If a man crawls under the tendrils of a blackberry bush, he will see the shadow of a girl he will marry.
- Bobbing for apples can also determine who will be married that year.
- Washing a chemise and hanging it on a chair will yield the image of your future husband.



- Roasting nuts side by side in a fire will foretell peace or hostility between friends.
- Baking cakes for the dead will quell a potential hostile rendezvous with evil spirits.
- Boiling egg shells will purge changelings placed in your midst by demons.
- Taking a walk with nine grains of oat in your mouth will cause you to hear the name of your future spouse.

This is only an abbreviated list of the numerous pagan superstitions associated with this holiday.



As the unholy Roman Empire conquered heathen communities, rather than outlaw such practices, the organization that became known as the Catholic Church absorbed them by adding their own twist to a variety of pagan celebrations. They began to teach the spirits of those who die are in a place called “purgatory,” and these spirits could be assisted in passage to heaven on the day of Samhain. As Ralph Linton explained:

This festival of the Catholic Church is set apart for those who, although they have not suffered

martyrdom or achieved sainthood, have died in the faith. It is dedicated particularly to those who have passed away during the preceding year and whose souls can be helped on their journey through purgatory by the prayers of the faithful... there is widespread belief that the spirits of the dead return to visit their former homes on one particular day of the year. Most of the pre-Christian cults celebrated a Day of the Dead... many of the pagan attitudes toward this day have been retained (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, pp. 13-14).

Most would consider such beliefs akin to fairy tales, and yet people have managed to retain various elements of these ungodly practices. However, it must be understood that all of them are doctrines of devils. As Edwin and Mona Radford wrote:

It should be mentioned that all these Irish superstitions of Hallowe'en to be successful had to be accompanied by an appeal to the Evil One in "words too diabolical to repeat," according to an old Irish book. In this the Irish superstitions differ from those in England and Scotland, for Ireland holds, or rather held, that Hallowe'en is an evil night (*Encyclopedia of Superstitions*, p. 141).

The idea that Halloween is an evil night is nothing new. In fact, with all of the dark and frightening imagery, ghouls, witches, and the obvious identification with death, it should be clear to everyone—it is truly a devil's holiday. Still, many continue to enjoy the wicked rituals of Samhain as if they are harmless entertainment. As Spicer noted:

All Hallows' Eve or All Hallow E'en, with its tradition of witches, ghosts, hobgoblins and spirits, its games and incantations, still is a gay time for pranks and parties in many North Country homes. Fun-loving Americans have borrowed from their British ancestors many Hallow E'en games such as

apple-bobbing, nut roasting and tossing of apple parings. Transplanted to the New World soil, the old practices have become revitalized, and currently are observed with more enthusiasm than in the country of their birth (*The Yearbook of English Festivals*, p. 153).

### ***Masquerading and Trick or Treating***

The pagan belief that spirits rise from the grave and roam the earth on the evening prior to November 1<sup>st</sup> led to all kinds of superstitious behavior. This is noted by Francis X. Weiser who wrote:

Our pagan forefathers kept several “cult of the dead” rites at various times of the year. One of these periods was the great celebration at the end of fall and the beginning of winter (around November 1). Together with the practices of nature and demon lore (fires, masquerades, and fertility cults) they also observed the ritual of the dead with many traditional rites (*Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, p. 312).

The “traditional rites” of this time were numerous. Perhaps the most popular was masquerading as a monstrous creature—but why?

During Samhain, pagans thought that ghosts and evil spirits mingled with the living. Because people believed that supernatural beings could bring harm to mortals, this was a fearful time for many. Alexander Macgregor did extensive research in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century regarding superstitious beliefs of druids, witches, and many pagan people of ancient times and wrote:

It was the night, above all others, when supernatural influences prevailed. It was the night for the universal walking abroad of all sorts of spirits, fairies, and ghosts, all of whom had liberty on that night (*Highland Superstitions*, p. 44, 1891).

Fearing injury, townsfolk did many things to appease the spirits. History reveals that this began with Druids who, on the eve of Samhain, had a procession “led by a man in a white robe wearing a horse-head mask” (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 103). The horse was sacred to the sun god; further indicating that this custom was a survival of the Druid rites based on their worship of the sun and seasons. The parade levied a contribution of butter, eggs, corn, potatoes, and other produce from the farmers. Unless the procession was “treated liberally with gifts,” the farmers would be tricked by a curse that would ruin next year’s crops (ibid). This practice eventually led to another form of trickery. As Weiser continued:

Another, and more important, tradition is the Druidic belief that during the night of November 1 demons, witches, and evil spirits roamed the earth in wild and furious gambols of joy to greet the arrival of “their season”—the long nights and early dark of the winter months. They had their fun with the poor mortals that night, frightening, harming them, and playing all kinds of mean tricks. The only way, it seemed, for scared humans to escape the persecution of the demons was to offer them things they liked, especially dainty food and sweets. Or, in order to escape the fury of these horrible creatures, a human could disguise himself as one of them and join in their roaming. In this way they would take him for one of their own and he would not be bothered. That is what people did in ancient times, and it is in this very form the custom has come down to us, practically unaltered, as our familiar Halloween celebration: the horrible masks of demons and witches, the disguise in strange and unusual gowns, the ghost figures, the frightening gestures and words, the roaming through the streets at night, the pranks played, and finally the threatening demand of a “trick or treat” (*Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, p. 315).

In fear of wandering demons and ghosts, many designed hideous masks so that they would not be recognized and

attacked. Some believed that spirits would leave a person alone if they tricked them by dressing as an evil creature. Others thought that frightening costumes would ward off these ghosts. As we can see, our modern activity of masquerading and trick or treating is inextricably tied to this pagan rite.

The “treat” part of this holiday came from attempts to “buy off” evil spirits by presenting them with gifts. Some actually believed spirits possessed various animals and that these imprisoned beings could be released by giving gifts or tribute to the lord of the dead. Napier wrote of this stating:

... there was a prevailing belief among all nations that at death the souls of good men were taken possession of by good spirits and carried to paradise, but the souls of the wicked men were left to wander in the space between the earth and moon, or consigned to the unseen world. These wandering spirits were in the habit of haunting the living, especially their relations, so that the living were surrounded on every side by the spirits of their wicked ancestors, who were always at hand tempting them to evil. However, there were means by which these ghosts might be exorcised (*Western Scottish Folklore & Superstitions*, p. 23)



It was believed that one way to “exorcise” spirits was to present them with treats. Because the souls of the dead were thought to return to their original homes and visit relatives, people would set out food as a form of treat. These included dainties, sweets, and cakes of bread which came to be called “soul cakes.” If satisfied, the spirits would leave in peace. If not, they would cast spells and cause absolute havoc to the inhabitants of the home.

Eventually, because of their belief that spirits were able to possess people and animals, all callers to any particular home were given a treat. *The Encyclopedia of Superstitions* states that:

It was believed by Catholics of mediaeval times, and the superstition became general throughout Europe, that on this day the dead returned and for a time lingered among their living kin. Throughout the country, as late as the end of the nineteenth century, soul cakes were baked and given to all callers at a house... peasants spent the day "a'Souling," proceeding from one house to another (*Encyclopedia of Superstitions*, p. 15).

From this practice developed the tradition of trick or treating. As Spicer wrote:

In a popular sense soul cakes today mean apples, money, goodies of any kind. These things are given to the Soulers, who make village rounds on All Souls' Eve [November 1] (*The Yearbook of English Festivals*, 268).

The belief that evil tricks could be suppressed by the exchange of a treat gave rise to the expression "trick or treat." If a particular home did not present a gift to callers, they would risk having a dirty trick being played on them. The superstitious tradition was later brought to America where it caused waves of vandalism that was not tamed until the 1950s.

What was once something greatly feared has transformed itself into fun and games. However, the present practice of trick or treating is nothing less than a continuation of degenerate and absurd customs which originated with the pagan Druids. These practices were wicked then and are still evil today.

## **Jack O' Lanterns**

A trademark of Halloween is the carved pumpkin. It is known as a Jack o' lantern. It can now be seen annually in a variety of shapes, sizes, and designs. However, this tradition is also of heathen origin. *Reader's Digest* points out that:

The Halloween lantern, made from a hollowed-out pumpkin or turnip with a candle inside it, is a relic from the days when food offerings were made to spirits of the dead (*Strange Stories, Amazing Facts*, p. 285).

In ancient times, many people carved frightening faces into produce and put small candles inside them to scare away wandering spirits on the eve of Samhain. These lanterns would be placed outside the doors of homes in the hopes that ghosts would not attempt to enter the dwelling.

In addition to this superstitious tradition, there is a Celtic tale regarding the origin of the lanterns name. It is said that a man named Jack played dishonest tricks on the Devil, thereby escaping the fires of hell. However, after Jack died, God would not allow such an unsavory figure into heaven. The devil was so upset by Jack's trickery that he sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the earth ever since.

The Irish began to refer to this figure as "Jack of the lantern" which led to the simplified Jack o' lantern. In Ireland and Scotland people made their own versions of Jack's lantern by carving faces into turnips or potatoes to frighten away wandering spirits. In England, large beets are used. Immigrants brought this tradition to America and soon found that pumpkins make perfect Jack o' lanterns.



While this mythical tale might seem like harmless entertainment, we must realize that its history actually unveils a demonic past. As Linton explained:

Halloween did not find a place on the American calendar of holidays until after the Gaelic people began to arrive on these shores. With them came the Catholic observance or Allhallows and All Souls and also the folklore about which still cling shreds of the ancient Vigil of Samhain and the Halloween sports of the fairy folk. These later colonists began the custom of holding gatherings at the farmhouses on the night of October 31. Since this was the time when apples and nuts were ripe, these two delicacies were an important feature of such parties... The participants played the traditional divination games with nuts on the hearth, ducked for apples, threw apple peelings over their shoulders to determine the initials of future bridegrooms, and indulged in other folk customs from the old country. They also discovered the American pumpkins were excellent for making jack-o'-lanterns, and these carved pumpkin faces became traditional for Halloween (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, pp. 100-101).

The activity of carving a face into a pumpkin and placing a light inside is nothing short of participating in pagan rites. Shocking as it may seem, those who use such decorations are following in the footsteps of the Druids. Satan inspired their activities which have been handed down to our generation and this tradition continues to be a form of fellowship with devils (1Cor. 10:20). The depraved history of these glowing gourds reveals that no Christian should participate in carving and displaying Jack o' lanterns.

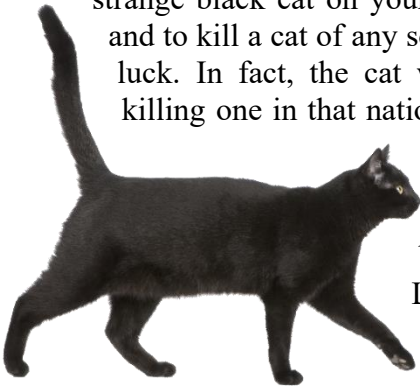
### ***Black Cats***

Throughout history, the black cat has been blamed for many wrongs of the world. Even today, these animals conjure up mystic tales and images of witchcraft.

In times past many believed that witches could change into cats nine times which may be the origin of the superstitious belief that cats have nine lives. George William Douglas noted the significance of cats in the ancient observance of Samhain when stating:

The cat was sacred and it was long believed that cats had once been human beings and had been changed into that form as punishment for evil deeds (*The American Book of Days*, p. 566).

Many Druids believed that cats were in fact reincarnated human beings and the Druid priest had the ability to see the future through them. However, if a black cat crossed your path, it was considered to be a bad omen. It was also thought that a strange black cat on your porch would bring prosperity and to kill a cat of any sort would bring 17 years of bad luck. In fact, the cat was worshipped in Egypt and killing one in that nation was once a capital crime. In



stark contrast, thinking it was a means of protecting the community, it was popular to burn black cats the day before Lent. These nonsensical superstitions were summarized by Linton who wrote:

This concept of the cat as a sinister and magical animal goes back to ancient times. The Egyptians worshipped the cat as a deity. In the legends of Greece and Rome, a woman who had been changed into a cat was chosen as priestess by Hecate, the goddess of sorcery and the patron of witches. In classical times the cat fared rather well as a feared but respected beast. But during the witch persecutions, the cats were tortured and killed along with their mistresses. Probably the cat was associated with the witch because cats are the frequent companions of strange, lonely old women who are likely to be regarded as witches... To burn the cat therefore was a warning to

other witches... The Irish also believe that, if a man begins a journey and encounters a cat which stares him right in the face, he had best turn around and go home, for a witch is in his path and his journey will turn out badly. The notion that it is bad luck to have a black cat cross one's path is a widespread superstition... A weird survival of the Druid burnings [human sacrifice] is reported from Mediaeval Europe, where black cats were put into wicker cages and burned alive on Halloween. The cat sacrifices were made in the conviction that the cats were the familiars of witches or even the witches themselves, since it was commonly believed that witches often transformed themselves into cats (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, pp. 59-60, 5).

Today we see silhouettes of black cats clinging to window panes as celebrants anxiously await the festivities of Halloween. Second only to the dog in domestic popularity, it's a shame to see such pagan superstition follow this creature that God had made.

### ***How did Samhain become a Christian Holiday?***

Few celebrants realize that Halloween was given its name by a professing Christian church. It is actually pronounced Hallowe'en and means hallow, or holy, evening. As Dobler explained:

It is a date noted on the calendar of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican (Protestant Episcopal) Church in memory of the holy ones of all days whose names are only known by God (*Customs and Holidays Around the World*, p. 118).

Understanding the dark nature of Samhain and our modern Halloween celebrations, it is clear that this evening is far from holy. How then did we arrive at such a strange mixture of Christian terms and pagan religious rites? Edwin and Mona Radford explain the transition in their *Encyclopedia of Superstitions* stating:

Like most of these Christian feasts it is a survival of a much earlier pagan feast—in this case the pagan Festival of the Dead. The early Christian Church, unable to suppress it and keep their converts, connived at it, but gave to it a religious turn (p. 16).

Samhain was widespread throughout key areas of Europe. As the “Holy” Roman Empire began to move from east to west, the church believed it had a God-given mission to convert the conquered territories to Christianity. However, the people of these pagan nations refused to abandon their traditions. As a result, the apostate church compromised the clear commands of the Bible (Deu. 12:29-30). They allowed these “converts” to retain many of their beloved holidays while attempting to make them appear Christian. This was accomplished by simply changing names and redefining the meaning of their symbols. Therefore, the ancient mythological celebration of the dead was simply renamed by the Roman church to honor dead saints. Douglas explained this in his work titled *The American Book of Days*:

The mystic rites and ceremonies with which Hallowe'en was originally observed had their origin among the Druids centuries before the dawn of the Christian era in their celebration on the eve of the festival of Samhain... The early Christian church adopted the eve and the day following and gave new names to them, as it did with many other non-Christian observances (p. 565).

This adoption by the that church is also noted by Linton who wrote:

In Britain horses were sacrificed at the feast of Samhain as late as 400 A.D. Even after the Christians had taken over the pagan temples and consecrated them to worship of the Christian God, oxen continued to be sacrificed on Hallowmas, sometimes being led down the church aisle to the altar (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 5).

A pagan form of Christianity was on the rise, and was not only condoned by the Roman church, it was encouraged. This is confirmed by the ecclesiastical historian Bede who documented a letter from Pope Gregory to the Abbot Mellitus in 601 A.D. In this letter, the Pope expressed his desire for the pagans to keep their practices while simply redefining the reason for observing them. He wrote:

The temples of the idols in that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed... And because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for them on this account... and no more offer beasts to the Devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God (*Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, Book I, ch. XXX).

This was the general practice of the “Holy” Roman Empire—to convert pagans as quickly as possible. From the time of Constantine, who made Christianity the state religion, the pagan traditions were appropriated for use in order to encourage conversion by those who were deeply tied to their heathen activities. To do this, the names of false gods were changed to those of Christ, Mary, and the saints. Consider the words of Linton who wrote:

All Saints Day was introduced into the church calendar because the year was not long enough to make it possible to dedicate a special day for each saint of the Catholic Church... That the day chosen was one already associated in the popular mind with a thronging of spirits of the dead was quite in line with church policy of incorporating harmless pagan folk ideas (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 6).

As a result of this heretical policy, we can see their actions were far from harmless. Their strategy directly violates several of the Ten Commandments and has caused billions of people to sin against God.

The exact year that All Hallows or All Saints Day’s was substituted for the pagan Samhain is uncertain. Some believe it was declared by Pope Gregory in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Others

think that it was by Pope Gregory III (731-741 A.D.). Still others believe it was introduced by Pope Boniface in 615 A.D., and transferred by Pope Gregory IV 100 years later. Regardless of the confusion regarding these dates, the Catholic Church, and much of the world, still observes this celebration, and no matter how hard men have tried to whitewash the day, shreds of the old pagan superstitions stubbornly cling to Halloween.

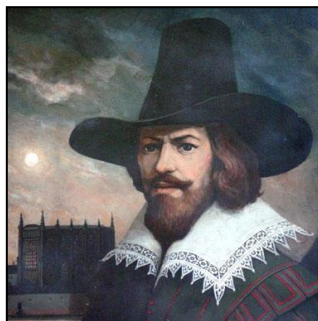
Additionally, despite the fact that many Protestants reject the usurped authority of Catholicism, most accept the morphed pagan celebrations of their mother church. As Linton pointed out:

In spite of its pagan accompaniments, Allhollows was retained at the time of the Reformation in the calendars of the Church of England and of many Lutheran groups. Halloween has a special significance for Protestants, since it was on that day, in 1517, that Martin Luther posted his epoch-making ninety-five theses on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg... He chose Halloween night because he knew that the townsfolk, the university students, and many pilgrims would be coming to the church that night (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, pp. 9-10).

Luther's thesis caused an enormous revolution in the church. However, because the leaders of this reformation did not believe in deified Saints, to them, there could be no All Saints Day. This would obviously eliminate the Halloween festivities. Therefore, in order to please those who still wanted to observe this day, the revelries were moved to November 5<sup>th</sup> and Halloween was renamed Guy Fawkes Day.

Guy Fawkes was one of a group who plotted to blow up the Protestant English Parliament and thus assassinate King James. Guy Fawkes Day celebrated the failure of this plot. Still, the day was Samhain in spirit as bon fires were lit, lanterns were carved in turnips, and children went begging for treats and gifts. Thus, Halloween survived the Protestant reformation to live on with its ancient pagan traditions.

Eventually, Guy Fawkes Day was forgotten, but Halloween remained. Protestants and Catholics alike celebrate it on the evening of All Hallows and prior to All Saints Day. This observance was instituted by pagans, and adopted by the religious organization that became known as the Roman Catholic Church long after the death of Christ and the apostles. It was retained by the Protestants and is still kept at the same time, and in much the same way, the ancient Druids honored their false gods. The connections are clear. As *Reader's Digest* stated:



Like Christmas and Easter, the festival of Halloween originated in a pagan celebration, even though its name is derived from the Christian festival of All Hallows' or All Saints' Eve. It was introduced in the seventh century to commemorate all those saints and martyrs who had no special day to themselves and was held on May 13th. But in the eighth century, All Hallows' day was moved to November 1, to counteract the pagan celebrations held on that date... 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 and wandering demons, stayed indoors (*Strange Stories, Amazing Facts*, p. 285).

### ***Who is the Lord of the Dead?***

Like the Greeks and Romans who conjured up many gods linked to seasons, animals, planets, and constellations, the ancient Druids did likewise. For example, their passion for the rites associated with Samhain, or summer's end, ultimately led to the creation of a deity related to the dying flora. Because the festival was centered on death, Samhain was personified

and given the title “lord of the dead.” As historian Ralph Linton wrote:

The American celebration rests upon Scottish and Irish folk customs which can be traced in direct line from pre-Christian times. Although Halloween has become a night of frolicking fun, superstitious spells, and eerie games that people take only half seriously, its beginnings were quite otherwise. The earliest Halloween celebrations were held by the Druids in honor of Samhain, Lord of the Dead, whose festival fell on November 1... The Celtic order of the Druids originated in the Gaul about the second century B.C. By that time the Gauls had had a good deal of contact with the Greeks, and the order may have been modeled on some of the Greek mystery religions. However, its rites also included many savage and primitive elements. The Celtic peoples sprang from the same ancient Indo-European stock as the Greeks and Romans and worshipped many of the same gods and goddesses, although these deities had different names. In addition to honoring Minerva, Apollo, and Mars, the Celts also worshipped a Sun God, to whom the horse was sacred, and Samhain, Lord of the Dead. A joint festival was held for the latter two on November 1 (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 4).

This Druidic festival in honor of devils was far from the playful “fright” found in most Halloween celebrations today. As Linton stated, “The rites performed on this day were eerie enough to thrill the most blasé, but the spirit of fun was sadly lacking” (ibid). Instead, the ceremonies involved horrific violence causing people to shudder in fear. Linton continued:

Horses and human beings were sacrificed at this time. The human victims were usually criminals who had been rounded up for the occasion. These unfortunates were confined in cages of wicker and thatch made in the form of giants or huge animals.

The cages were set afire by the priests and the hapless victims roasted alive (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 4).

This horrid practice of burning people alive to Samhain was outlawed by Suetonius in 61 A.D. In spite of his suppression, a lesser practice survived for centuries in the sacrifice of black cats. The link between Samhain's brutal murders and Halloween is also noted by Napier who wrote:

The Celtic name for the autumn festival was *Sham-in*, meaning Baal's Fire. The Irish Celts called it *Sainhain*, or *Sainfuin*; *Sain*, Summer, and *Fuin*, end,-i.e., the end of summer... The Druids are said on this day to have sacrificed horses to the sun, as a thank-offering for the harvest. An Irish king, who reigned 400 A.D., commanded sacrifices to be made to a moon idol, which was worshipped by the people on the evening of *Sain-hain*. Sacrifices were also offered on this night to the spirits of the dead, who were believed to have liberty at this season--to visit their old earthly haunts and their friends--a belief this, which was entertained by many ancient nations, and was the origin of many of the curious superstitious customs still extant in this country on Hallowe'en (*Western Scottish Folklore & Superstitions*, pp. 183-184).

The ties to modern day Halloween may shock celebrants who believe that their activities are all in good fun. However, it should also motivate readers to consider the question; what good can possibly be found in a holiday honoring a lord of the dead? In fact, who is this supposed lord of the dead?

Shortly before His crucifixion, Christ was questioned by the Sadducees about the concept of a resurrection. In order to demonstrate that there will be a future resurrection from the dead, the Savior told them:

But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,

“I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matthew 22:31-32).

The Sadducees only accepted the first five books of the Bible (Torah) as holy writ. Thus, refusing to recognize the writings of the prophets, they found no reason to believe in a resurrection. With this in mind, the Messiah quoted the book of Exodus to prove that a resurrection would one day occur (Exo. 3:6). He did this by illustrating the fact that, long after the death of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God continued to refer to Himself as the God of these patriarchs. He did not say I WAS the God of these people, but that “I AM” their God.

The point that Christ made was, although these patriarchs were dead, they will live again in the resurrection (Dan. 12:2; Luke 14:14; John 5:28; Rev. 20:4-6). They were as good as alive because God’s promise of a future resurrection is immutable (Rom. 4:17).

With this understanding, Jesus’ words take on greater meaning. The God of the Bible is the GOD OF THE LIVING! He is not the lord of the dead! However, according to pagans, Samhain is the lord of the dead. That lord is none other than Satan who continues to be honored in our modern Halloween celebrations. If we desire to worship the true God, we should not participate in rites dedicated to appeasing wicked spirits. Doing so honors the devil. In reality, when people celebrate Halloween, they are actually paying homage to Satan!



### ***International Celebrations***

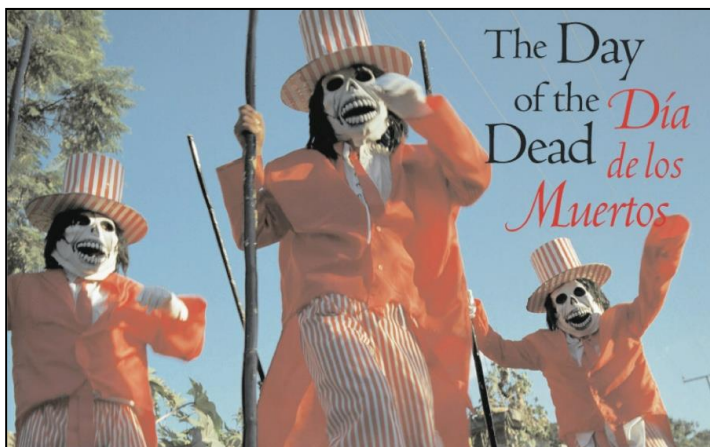
The Bible explains that Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9). To one degree or another, everyone has been deceived by him. This truth is evident in the universal observance of Halloween.

Though Samhain was the pagan lord of the dead, this holiday has been observed by nearly every nation on earth. Though its name may vary, Samhain continues with the same theme of death. As Napier noted:

The belief that the spirits of the dead were free to roam about on that night is still held by many in this country. Indeed, where the forms of the feast have all but disappeared, the superstitious auguries connected with it survive (*Western Scottish Folklore & Superstitions*, p. 188).

A holiday for the dead can be traced to nearly every nation around the globe. For example, in Mexico it is known as *Día de los Muertos* translated as day of the dead. In the book *Adonis* by Frazer, the Hispanic observance is clearly identified to that of Samhain; not only by its date, but also by its symbolism and rituals. He recorded that:

The Miztecs of Mexico believed that the dead came back in the twelfth month of the year, which corresponded to our November. On this day of All Souls the houses were decked out to welcome the spirits. Jars of food and drink were set on a table in the principal room, and the family went out with the torches to meet the ghosts and invite them to enter. Then, returning to the house they knelt around the table, and with their eyes bent on the ground, prayed the souls to accept the offerings (*Adonis*, p. 244).



The elements of this death feast are also found in such faraway places as Brazil. There it is a public holiday in which people spend the day visiting graves and churches. Linton also spoke of this observance in Egypt where they worshipped Osiris, a god of the afterlife:

In ancient Egypt the Day of the Dead was celebrated at the time of the winter solstice. This feast was in honor of Osiris, the god whose death symbolized the death of vegetation... On this anniversary of the death of Osiris the souls of the dead returned to the land of the living. Food was spread in the houses for the homecoming spirits, and at dusk rows of oil lamps were fastened outside all the housefronts. They were kept burning throughout the night, making the streets as bright as day, so that the wandering ghosts would have no difficulty in finding their way home (*Halloween Through Twenty Centuries*, p. 14).

The Philippines, China, Korea, and nearly every country in Europe; all have their own version of Halloween in which they honor Samhain in their activities. According to E. Aymonier, Cambodians prepare various foods for the dead on this day and chant the words:

O all your ancestors, who are departed, deign to come and eat what we have prepared for you, and to bless your posterity and to make it happy (*Notice sur le Cambodge*, p. 59).



*Ghost Festival (China)*

The trappings of Samhain have covered the earth. It is equally obvious that the practices embraced by this holiday are not Christian at all, but are blatantly evil.

### ***Do Humans have an Immortal Soul?***

We need to understand the shocking truth that formed the basis of this celebration. It came from a belief in an immortal soul. Druids concluded that a person's spirit cannot die and it would pass from a person at death to seek out another dwelling place. As Douglas wrote:

November 1 among the Druids was the beginning of the year and a festival of the sun god. They lighted fires in his honor. They believed that on October 31, the end of the old year, the lord of death gathered together all the souls of the dead who had been condemned to enter the body of animals and decided what form they should take for the next year. They believed that the souls of the good entered the body of another human being at death.

And they also believed that the punishment of the wicked could be lightened by gifts and prayers to the god (*The American Book of Days*, pp. 565-566).

Samhain was celebrated with the idea that the soul is immortal and the spirits of the dead roam the earth. The Celts believed that the spirits of good men went to paradise while the souls of those who did evil would be either reincarnated in the form of animals or would sit in a shallow grave for the next year. The Catholics believe something similar and teach that the soul goes to heaven, hell, or purgatory. The only chance these disembodied spirits had for a decent afterlife was to return on the eve of Samhain and try to make some sort of transition to a new body.

This theme continues to be a central part of Halloween, and it is based on a fear of spirits of the dead. The anxiety is driven by a belief that man has an immortal soul. However, the Bible declares that humankind is a soul—a living creature (Gen. 2:7). We are not immortal. Writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul said that it is God:

...who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power (1 Timothy 6:16).

The clear teaching in the Bible is that the soul of men is mortal. Only God has immortality at this time. Solomon actually wrote that the same fate befalls both man and beast:

For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all *is* vanity. All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20)

God's Word repeatedly explains that the dead are in the grave awaiting a resurrection. The words translated as "hell"

throughout the Bible are the Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades*; both of which refer to the grave. Therefore, the dead are just that—dead. They have no contact with the living at this time. They are not conscious (Ecc. 9:5). However, because almost all heathen nations have no knowledge of the true God, they have created superstitions to honor their deceased. This is exactly what we find in the celebration of Halloween.

### ***Should You Celebrate Halloween?***

When the average person thinks of Halloween, they picture carved pumpkins, skeletons hanging from doorposts, ghosts, zombies, witches, and devils. Black is a favorite color of this holiday; rooms are darkened, and yards are made up to resemble haunted graveyards.

Think about all the symbolism of this day. What does any of it have to do with God and true Christianity? The symbols of Halloween are darkness, witchcraft, and death—symbols of Satan, not God. God is light and there is no darkness in Him (1John 1:5). This holiday reflects the opposite of God's values. Halloween with its monsters and goblins is nothing Christ would approve of. He would never celebrate anything like it and neither should we!

Consider the concept of trick or treating. In principle, this is no less than simple extortion. Halloween encourages wrong by suggesting that if you don't get what you want, you are justified in vandalizing someone's home. This holiday is in direct opposition to the Scriptures (Mat. 5:43-48). It is the very antithesis of Christianity. As Christ stated:

I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (John 8:12).

God further warns us, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness" (Isa. 5:20). By celebrating Halloween people are agreeing with the notion that darkness is light and evil is good—even fun! However, nothing connected with

Halloween is even remotely good or Christian. Its images are of death, demons, the spirit world, and sorcery; all of which are contrary to God's word.

Furthermore, we need to understand that Samhain is not just an ancient pagan festival. It is still celebrated by the occult today. One Wiccan website states that it is considered to be one of their most important holidays:

Samhain is the most important holy night of the year. In fact, it is considered the Celtic New Year. It is believed to be the evening in which the veil between the realm of the living and the dead is thinnest, allowing members of the spirit realm to walk the earth in great numbers. It is thereby considered the evening where our loved ones who have gone over to the other side of the veil are honored with a special feast. This is certainly the reason All Saint's Day was created by the Roman Catholic Church to celebrate honored individuals who have passed on, as well as the similar All Souls Day, which honors the memories of our individual loved one's who have passed on. The association with spirits of the dead walking the earth, as well as faeries and other etheric beings roaming the material plane in large numbers that evening, is probably the basis for the modern Halloween's emphasis on ghosts and goblins, and the popular stereotypical image of the witch as a swarthy old crone with green skin was derived from negative images of real witches as being corrupt harbingers of evil or mischief. The jack o' lantern, a still popular decoration, is derived from the image used by ancient Pagans to keep unwelcome spirits from the hearth during the celebration. Calls to your ancestors and loved ones for assistance is appropriate for those practicing spell work on this day (<http://a-rainbow-of-spirituality.org/sabbats.html>, retr. 10/23/12).

Another Wiccan minister stated this about the neo-pagan observance of Samhain:

For Wiccans this is a very powerful time of year. Summer's End, Samhain, is the New Year. It is a time to connect with deceased loved ones and their wisdom as they do continue on behind the veil. It's tradition to set up altars with pumpkins, apples, and squash, along with a skull, which is a symbol of physical passage. The Samhain altar also is personalized with framed photos and favorite foods of ancestors. During Samhain we actually make something our ancestors loved (Napa Valley Register, Oct. 28, 2011).



Those who openly practice evil are very much aware of Halloween's relationship to Samhain. Because of this, they are intimately connected with its symbols and rituals. Modern day witches even mock professing Christians who denounce Wicca and yet observe the holidays that honor their pagan gods.

Should any God-fearing person be connected with this holiday? What are the Almighty's instructions concerning such festivals? The answer is obvious. He strictly condemns them! In Exodus 20, God outlined His great moral code—the Ten Commandments. The first of these states we are to have no other gods than Him. He even instructed His people to abstain

from inquiring after other religions. Consider the following stern words of our Creator:

Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it (Deuteronomy 12:30-32).

The clear instructions of God are to avoid anything that comes from heathen worship. We cannot use symbols and traditions of pagans and claim they are confiscated for Christ. We can only pay homage to God by observing what He has commanded.

In another example, while speaking through the prophet Jeremiah, God admonished Israel to refrain from learning pagan practices and indicated that there would be severe consequences for failing to obey Him:

Thus saith the LORD, learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people *are* vain... But the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king: at His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens... They *are* vanity, *and* the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish (KJV, Jeremiah 10:2-15).

God's word is clear. Pagan practices, like those of Halloween, are to be rejected. He not only forbids inquiring after false gods and practicing heathen ways, but He outlines the consequences for doing so—those people will perish (Rom. 6:23).

### ***Is it Good Clean Fun?***

The customs of Halloween were, and still are, celebrated by pagans. God condemns such observances. Even if we reject the dark imagery of witches and goblins, and dress up as a ballerina or Superman in the name of fun, rename the day as some sort of harvest festival, we are actually serving demons and not God! It is still the same age-old lie that has come from the devil himself. It is the same holiday occurring at the same time and has the same author.



Innocent children whose parents dress them up in costumes and walk them door to door so that they can shout “trick or treat” are not serving the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Rather, they are unwittingly serving the god of this world who has blinded them to the truth (2Cor. 4:4). We need to think this through. Do we really want to serve the lord of the dead in any way, shape, or form? Halloween is a holiday dedicated

to the lord of darkness. The true God is the God of the living and light. If we desire to do what is right in His eyes, we must have nothing to do with Halloween.

In short, Halloween is a trick, not a treat. It is a trick that has been played on an unsuspecting world. God's Word declares that the time will come when Christ will return and rule this world. Then, the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). In that day, people will honor God's Sabbaths and keep His holy days (Lev. 23; Zec. 14). Once people begin to obey God, Halloween will become hollow instead of "hallow."

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, audio, and video to help people better understand the Bible. Some of the printed material available includes:

*The Truth about Christmas*

*The Day of Christ's Resurrection*

*The Shocking Truth about Valentine's Day*

*The Truth about Easter*

*Sabbath Confessions*

*The Truth about Tithing*

*The Truth about The Cross*

*Understanding God's Holy Days*

*This is Not the Only Time of Salvation*

*The Truth about New Year's Day*

*The Truth about Mardi Gras and related holidays*

*The Historical Jesus*

*Read the Book*

**The Eternal Church of God**

PO Box 20034  
Billings, MT 59104  
USA

eternalcog.org  
(406) 290-9980