

DID YOU KNOW?

HALLOWEEN IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DAY OF THE YEAR FOR SATAN WORSHIPPERS

***** *The Facts Behind Halloween—Ancient Night of Terror* *****

It is the last night of October. By the light of the moon, a small group of costumed figures move from house to house stating their demands with dire threats. Guarding some doorsteps are grimacing pumpkin heads glowing with burning candles—made from human fat. Other doors drip with human blood. It is the night of Samhain, Celtic lord of the dead.

Perhaps in no other holiday does Satan so obviously honor himself and honor his war dead. The writer J. Garnier suggests that celebrations of suffering and death can be traced back to the ancient destruction of all of the Devil’s human followers, as well as the giant bully sons of fallen angels, at the time of the Flood. Cultures the world over have festivals for the dead, “held worldwide on or almost the exact day on which, according to the Bible, the Flood took place: the seventeenth day of the second month—the month nearly corresponding with our November.”—The Worship of the Dead, by J. Garnier.

The Druids were no exception. On October 31, Samhain was said to release the spirits of the dead to mingle with the living. Druids roamed the streets with lanterns, and on coming to a house, they demanded money as an offering for Satan.

Halloween is a major satanic ritual day. “It’s a religious holiday for Satan and the Demons, with satanists performing sacrifices and witches quietly celebrating with prayer circles or meals for the dead,” according to a USA Today article. It quoted Washington witch Bryan Jordan as saying, “[Christians] don’t realize it, but they’re celebrating our holiday with us. . . . We like it.”

Anton LaVey, author of The Satanic Bible and high priest of the Church of Satan states, “Satanists consider Halloween the most important day of the year. Satanic, occult and witchcraft powers are at their highest potency level...Satan and his powers are at their best that night.”

Traditional Halloween activities continue Samhain's spirit of celebration in the face of frightening thoughts of death and the supernatural. These include: scary movies, haunted houses, ghost stories and Ouija boards to contact the demons and the spirit realm. Greeting cards, decorations, and candy are also a big part of Halloween. The holiday is second only to Christmas in the amount of money stores make off of it.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION:

1) Read Matthew 22:37 and you decide: Would a worshiper of Jehovah have ANY part in a celebration that is designed to honor Satan the Devil?

2) Read Ecclesiastes 9:5,10 and you decide: Would a holiday that honors “spirits of the dead” as if they were not dead but ghosts be something that makes Jehovah happy or makes Jehovah mad?

1) Read Deuteronomy 18:10-13 and you decide: What are the reasons that you do not want anything to do with Halloween?

DID YOU KNOW?

WHERE DO HALLOWEEN TRADITIONS COME FROM?

The Jack o' lantern

When the Irish immigrants arrived in America, they brought with them the tradition of carving-out turnips or potatoes and placing coals or a small candle inside of it. These were then displayed on doorsteps at Halloween to ward off evil spirits. However, the Irish quickly discovered that it was much easier to carve out the pumpkin and this was soon a basic tradition of the Halloween festivities.

The belief behind the Irish tradition of this carving is based upon the myth called "Stingy Jack":

Stingy Jack was a miserable, old drunk who loved playing tricks on anyone and everyone. One dark, Halloween night, Jack ran into the Devil in a bar where Jack tricked the Devil by offering his soul in exchange for one last drink.

When Stingy Jack eventually died several years later, he went to the Gates of Heaven, but was not allowed in because he had spent his whole life lying and drinking. So, Jack then went down to Hell, but the Devil would not let him enter.

From that day forward, Stingy Jack has been doomed to roam the earth as a ghost with only a turnip that he had stolen, hollowed out, and with a coal from the fires of Hell inside of it to light his way.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION:

1) Are Jack o' lantern's just "innocent fun"?

Trick or Treating

Trick or treating started as leaving food and wine for roaming dead spirits and ghosts. The custom was referred to as "going a-souling" and was eventually practiced only by the children who would visit the houses in their neighborhoods and be given gifts of ale, food and money. It was believed the spirits of the dead returned to visit their old homes during Halloween and, in ancient times, people left food out for them and arranged chairs so that they would be able to rest.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION:

1) Is trick or treating just "innocent fun" as some people claim?

2) Read Genesis 3:19 and Psalm 146:4 and tell me, what really happens to someone after they die? Why does this make the idea of trick or treating even more disgusting to a worshiper of Jehovah?



Costumes:

On Halloween, when it was believed that spirits returned to the earthly world, people would wear masks when they left their homes during the night hours. In this way, they hoped they would avoid being recognized by the ghosts and be mistaken merely for fellow ghosts.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION:

1) Why do you think that Satan tries so hard to get people to dress up on Halloween?

Witches and Cats:

The use of witches and cats (together with ghosts) in the celebration of Halloween comes from the belief that on Halloween night evil spirits come back to harm the living. It was a common Celtic belief that cats (particularly black ones) had once been human beings who had been transformed into cats as punishment for their evil deeds or through coming in contact with bad magic.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION:

1) Read Leviticus 19:26 and you decide: Why does Satan try so hard to get people to practice magic?

Halloween Parades:

In ancient times, pagan Celtic priestesses would roam the countryside, chanting songs in order to frighten away the evil spirits thought to be out on Halloween night.

MAKE YOUR OWN DECISION:

1) What are the reasons that you do not want to participate or even watch a Halloween parade?



FOR MY TEACHER:

***** The Truth About Popular Celebrations *****

WITCHES and ghosts, pumpkins and bonfires, trick or treat. The outward trappings of Halloween are easy to identify. But what lies behind this and similar celebrations? Halloween has also been called All Hallows' Eve, the eve of All Saints' Day. This supposedly Christian name, however, hides origins that are far from hallowed. In fact, scholars say that Halloween's roots go back to a time long before Christianity—the era when the ancient Celts inhabited Britain and Ireland. Using a lunar calendar, the Celts divided the year into two seasons—the dark winter months and the light summer months. On the full moon nearest November 1, the Celts celebrated the festival of Samhain, meaning “Summer's End.”

This festival, which marked the beginning of the Celtic new year, came at the end of summer, when the harvest had been gathered and the flocks and herds had been brought down from pasture into shelter. The Celts believed that as the days shortened, it was necessary to reinvigorate the sun through various rites and sacrifices. In symbolism of the dying old year, all fires were put out, and the new year was inaugurated with sacred bonfires from which all members of the community rekindled their hearths. These bonfires—an echo of which can be found today in Britain on Guy Fawkes Night and in Brazil in the June festivals—were also thought to frighten away evil spirits.

It was believed that on the festival of Samhain, the veil between the human and the supernatural worlds was parted and spirits, both good and evil, roamed the earth. The souls of the dead were thought to return to their homes, and families would put out food and drink for their ghostly visitors in hopes of appeasing them and warding off misfortune. Thus, today when children dressed as ghosts or witches go from house to house demanding a Halloween treat or threatening a mischievous trick, they unwittingly perpetuate the ancient rituals of Samhain. Jean Markale comments in his book *Halloween, histoire et traditions* (Halloween—History and Traditions): “In receiving something in their hands, they establish, on a symbolic level that they do not understand, a brotherly exchange between the visible and the invisible worlds. That is why the Halloween masquerades . . . are in fact sacred ceremonies.”

Since people believed that the barriers between the physical and supernatural realms were down, they thought that humans were able to cross over into the spirit world with ease. Samhain was therefore a particularly auspicious time to unlock the secrets of the future. Apples or hazelnuts, both viewed as products of sacred trees, were used to divine information concerning marriage, sickness, and death. For example, apples with identifying marks were placed in a tub of water. By seizing an apple using only the mouth, a young man or woman was supposed to be able to identify his or her future spouse. This divination practice survives today in the Halloween game of bobbing for apples.

Samhain was also characterized by drunken revelry and a casting aside of inhibitions. “Traditional values, if not flouted, were reversed,” states Markale. “What was forbidden was allowed, and what was allowed was forbidden.” Halloween still reflects this spirit today, which no doubt accounts to a great extent for its increasing popularity. Commenting on this, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* describes Halloween nowadays as “a time when adults can also cross cultural boundaries and shed their identities by indulging in an uninhibited evening of frivolity. Thus, the basic Celtic quality of the festival as an evening of annual escape from normal realities and expectations has remained into the twentieth century.”

Religious Rivalry

Following the potato famine in the 19th century, Irish immigrants took Halloween and its customs to the United States. From there it has returned to Europe in the past few years. The growing popularity of Halloween, though, is not viewed favorably by all. As notes the newspaper *Le Monde*, “Halloween, which coincides with All Saints’

Day and All Souls' Day (November 1 and 2) and could even replace them, is making shopkeepers happy and panicking churchmen."

Church representatives in France have expressed concern over the decline of these traditional Catholic holidays in favor of Halloween, seeing it as a sign of the "paganization of society." For Stanislas Lalanne, spokesman for France's Conference of Catholic Bishops, Halloween 'distorts the meaning of life and death.' The bishop of Nice, Jean Bonfils, stated that "this festival and its rituals have nothing to do with our Mediterranean and Christian culture," and he warned Catholics against "the most important festival of Satanists the world over."

Commenting on the French abandonment of Catholic traditions for such pagan festivals, Hippolyte Simon, bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, notes: "It is as if French society were looking for a kind of civil religion capable of replacing Christian symbolism." He writes: "At Halloween the dead are imitated and their 'ghosts' come back to frighten us and threaten us with death. On All Saints' Day, in contrast, we affirm that the departed are alive and that we are promised to rejoin them in the City of God."—Vers une France païenne? (Toward a Pagan France?)

In a similar vein, Carlo Maria Martini, cardinal of Milan, Italy, urged Italians not to abandon Catholic holidays, declaring that Halloween is "alien to our tradition, which has immense value and must be continued. All Souls' Day is a celebration that belongs to our history. It is the moment in which hope for eternal life unfolds, a moment in which the Lord makes us understand that there is more to life than that on earth." Many sincere Catholics no doubt feel the same way. Yet, is the distinction between Halloween and All Souls' Day as clear-cut as these comments would lead us to believe? What does a close examination of the roots of these Catholic holidays reveal?

A Hallowed Masquerade

The Catholic Encyclopedia defines All Saints' Day as a feast to "honour all the saints, known and unknown." At the end of the second century, so-called Christians began to honor those who had been martyred for their faith and, believing that they were already with Christ in heaven, prayed to them to intercede on their behalf. A regular commemoration began when on May 13, 609 or 610 C.E., Pope Boniface IV dedicated the Pantheon—the Roman temple of all the gods—to Mary and all the martyrs. Markale comments: "The Roman gods left their place to the saints of the triumphant religion."

The change of date to November came under Pope Gregory III (731-741 C.E.), who dedicated a chapel in Rome to all the saints and ordered that they be honored on November 1. Exactly why he did this is unknown. But it may have been because such a holiday was already being celebrated on this date in England. The Encyclopedia of Religion points out: "Samhain remained a popular festival among the Celtic people throughout the christianization of Great Britain. The British church attempted to divert this interest in pagan customs by adding a Christian celebration to the calendar on the same date as Samhain. . . . The medieval British commemoration of All Saints' Day may have prompted the universal celebration of this feast throughout the Christian church."

Markale points out the increasing influence of Irish monks throughout Europe at this time. The New Catholic Encyclopedia also observes: "The Irish often assigned the first of the month to important feasts, and since November 1 was also the beginning of the Celtic winter, it would have been a likely date for a feast of all the saints." Finally, in 835 C.E., Pope Gregory IV made this festival universal.

As for All Souls' Day, on which prayers are recited in order to help souls in purgatory attain heavenly bliss, this holiday was fixed on November 2 during the 11th century by the monks of Cluny, France. While All Souls' Day is ostensibly a Catholic holiday, it is clear that confusion existed in the minds of ordinary folk. The New Catholic Encyclopedia notes that "throughout the Middle Ages it was popular belief that the souls in purgatory could appear on this day as will-o'-the-wisps, witches, toads, etc."

Unable to uproot pagan beliefs from the hearts of its flock, the church simply hid them behind a "Christian" mask. Highlighting this fact, The Encyclopedia of Religion says: "The Christian festival, the Feast of All Saints,

commemorates the known and unknown saints of the Christian religion just as Samhain had acknowledged and paid tribute to the Celtic deities.”

Popular Celebrations and You

Just how concerned should you be about the dark past of Halloween and similar celebrations? After all, in most people’s minds, Halloween is little more than a time to dress up and have fun. But would you not agree that it is important for parents to make sure that whatever recreation their children pursue is wholesome and not harmful?

A school inspector from France with more than 20 years of experience in teaching was asked about the influence of Halloween on young children. He commented: “I am worried that going from house to house threatening adults in order to obtain sweets can have long-term negative consequences on children. It can foster a selfish and egocentric personality. They learn that by exerting pressure, by demanding with threats, by making others afraid, they can obtain what they want.” Parents must therefore ask themselves, ‘What “lessons” will my children learn from celebrating this holiday?’

Not surprisingly, many families find that giving in to childish demands for treats and costumes can be an expensive undertaking. “Halloween . . . is not a holiday,” observes Robert Rochefort, general director of France’s Research Center for the Study and Observation of Living Conditions, “it is event marketing.” Halloween fills a shopping lull prior to Christmas. In other words, it is just one more thing pressuring people to spend money—money that in many cases they cannot afford to spend. Do you really need to follow the crowd in this regard?

Of even greater concern to Christians, however, is the fact that Halloween and celebrations like it are steeped in paganism. The apostle Paul wrote: “I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons.” (1 Corinthians 10:20-22, New International Version) He also asked: “What common interest can there be between goodness and evil? How can light and darkness share life together? How can there be harmony between Christ and the devil? What can a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-16, Phillips) The Bible thus condemns the whole idea of putting a Christian mask on a pagan practice!

Also, the Bible warns against the practice of spiritism. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) While it is true that the vast majority of those who celebrate Halloween would claim to spurn Satanic practices, we should, nevertheless, be aware that historically this holiday has close connections with the occult. Thus, it can serve as a door leading to spiritism, especially for impressionable youths. Pagan rites and traditions tainted by spiritism simply have no place in Christian worship; they are far from harmless.

Finally, there is the fact that Halloween, All Saints’ Day, and All Souls’ Day are all based on the beliefs that the dead suffer or that they can somehow bring harm to the living. However, the Bible clearly shows that such beliefs are not true, saying: “The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5) For that reason, the Bible counsels: “All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [the common grave of mankind], the place to which you are going.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10) Since the dead are unconscious and thus incapable of harming others or suffering themselves, we have nothing to fear from them. At the same time, prayers to help them are of no use whatsoever. Does this mean that there is no hope for our dead loved ones? No. The Bible assures us that “there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.”—Acts 24:15.

With knowledge comes the freedom to choose. We cannot be expected to make intelligent decisions if we do not have all the facts. After considering the facts brought up in this series of articles, what will you decide?

***** g93 11/22 pp. 8-10 “We Are Not Deprived!” *****

Comments have been made by schoolteachers and others that the children of Jehovah’s Witnesses are deprived by not being allowed to join in the fun of school celebrations of Christmas, Easter, and Halloween. Following is a small sampling of comments of children who are Jehovah’s Witnesses, expressing in letters why they themselves decline to have any part in celebrating these holidays.

“ALTHOUGH I explained to my schoolmates why I didn’t celebrate these things, they still felt I was being deprived. But I wasn’t! See, they always had to wait until their Christmas or some other holiday to get gifts, while I was given things and went to parties all year round. I know I’m loved not only by my family but by the congregation and Jehovah as well, and that is more special to me than any holiday.”—Becky, age 13.

“Halloween. The basic idea of Halloween doesn’t appeal at all to me. Ghosts and witches, YUCK!”—Katie, age 10.

“Every holiday is celebrating something false and is focused on false things. Most of the kids I know celebrate holidays for the candy or presents. Something that I have that is better than holidays is the wonderful organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Instead of lasting one day, like a holiday, Jehovah God’s Word has a happy message that lasts forever.”—Brooke, age 14.

“Reasons I don’t miss holidays:

- 1. The Bible says they’re bad.*
- 2. I don’t care about them.*
- 3. My mommy and daddy give me presents.”—Brandi, age 6.*

“There were times when I was small that I felt I was missing out, but I later laughed when I thought how eggs, Jesus, and the Easter bunny all got together. When I was older and my parents explained to me how all the symbols originated, I found it disgusting. It hurt me to think how Jehovah and Jesus must feel to be connected with such pagan ideas.”—Alexa, age 18.

“Instead of having Christmas or any other holiday, we have Big Toys Day. We get a gift of money to spend on anything we like. One year I gave a speech to my class about my religion. Instead of following the world’s path, I set my own path to make the meetings, go out in field service, and make prayer part of my life. I am getting baptized this coming assembly.”—George, age 11.

“When I missed holidays at school I wasn’t regretful. The kids do a lot of weird things, like dress up on Halloween. I don’t miss it at all. I tell them how my parents buy me things all through the year. They tell me about their church and how boring it is, and I tell them about the meetings we have in the park, and they get jealous sometimes. But I’m not jealous of them. Summing up, I say only make friends that respect your beliefs and never let a student or a teacher force you to do anything against Jehovah’s will.”—Justin, age 12.

“Halloween. Children dressing up as devils, comic-book characters—what for? The kids roam the streets going from one house to another getting bagfuls of candy. Or throwing eggs at houses, stringing toilet paper over trees, and the worst part is most parents go along with it.”—Zachary, age 10.

“I don’t have to wait for a special day to get presents. My mom and dad get me plenty of toys all the time. Halloween is the worship of dead spirits. It’s not right. The only God we should worship is Jehovah.”—Nicholas, age 6.

NOW IT’S YOUR TURN:

What are your feelings about not celebrating Halloween?
