

WHY “I BELIEVE” CHRISTIANS SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE, CELEBRATE OR SUPPORT HALLOWEEN

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History

Halloween was started by Celtic inhabitants of Britain and Ireland. In Celtic Ireland, summer officially ended October 31. The dark, cold winter and the new year began November 1. The festival that marked the eve of the new year was called *Samhain*. One story says that on that day, the disembodied spirits of all those who had died throughout the preceding year would come back in search of living bodies to possess for the next year. The Celts believed that during Samhain, the living and the dead were as close together as they would ever be. They believed that on the night of October 31, evil spirits and the souls of the dead would pass through the barrier and enter into the world of the living. When this happened, deceased family members would be able to revisit their earthly homes. The Celts also believed that these spirits and dead souls could torment the living by destroying crops, killing farm animals and stealing babies.

In response to this, the Catholic Church in 700 A.D. established November 1 as “All Hallow’s Day” or “All Saints’ Day.” Instead of honoring evil spirits and the souls of the dead, the Catholic Church chose to recognize the saints, or hallowed ones, who had lived godly lives. Since November 1 was called All Hallow’s Day, the evening before was called “All Hallow’s Evening,” from which we get the modern name “Halloween.” Even later, in 1000 A.D., the church would make November 2 “All Souls’ Day,” a day to honor the dead. The custom of Halloween was brought to America in the 1840's by Irish immigrants.

Even though Christianity began to spread through Europe in the third and fourth centuries, pagan worship never stopped, and old Samhain practices continued.

Dressing Up in Costumes

On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from entering.

Trick-or-Treating

Originated from a ninth-century European custom called “souling.” On November 2, All Souls’ Day, poor citizens and Christians would walk from village to village begging for “soul cakes,” made out of square pieces of bread with currants. The more soul cakes they would receive, the more prayers they would promise to say on behalf of the dead relatives of the donors. The distribution of soul cakes was encouraged by the church as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving food and wine for roaming spirits, hoping that a “treat” would prevent an evil “trick.” The practice was eventually taken up by children who would visit homes and be given ale, food

and money. Children also practiced many customs with the purpose of foretelling the future; the person who retrieved an apple with his mouth from a tub of water was thought to have a lucky upcoming year.

Pumpkins & Jack-o-Lanterns

Probably from Irish folklore. A tale is told about a man named Jack, who was notorious as a drunkard and trickster. Jack tricked Satan into climbing a tree and then carved an image of a cross in the tree's trunk, trapping the devil up the tree. Jack made a deal with the devil that if he would never tempt him again, he would let him down the tree. According to the tale, after Jack died, he was denied entrance into Heaven because of his evil ways. But he was also denied access to Hell because he had tricked the devil. Instead, the devil gave him a single ember to light his way through the frigid darkness. The ember was placed inside a hollowed-out turnip to keep it glowing longer. When Irish immigrants came to America, they found that pumpkins were far more plentiful than turnips. The Jack-o-Lantern in America is a hollowed-out pumpkin with a light inside.

Specific Reasons Why Christians Should NOT Participate In or Support Halloween

1. We are taught in the Bible to **acknowledge** the reality of death, but we do not **celebrate** the death of any **soul**. We believe that at death, it is the body that dies (stops functioning), but the soul goes to be with God.
2. We acknowledge that the devil has power, and that evil spirits are real. But those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior are filled with **the power of the Holy Spirit**. We, therefore, are not and will not be afraid or intimidated by evil spirits. **We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit.**
3. The Bible teaches us that the devil and his demons are real and present forces in the world today. The Bible teaches that we should "shun the very appearance of evil." (1 Thess. 5:22.) The societally accepted images of Halloween are not the images God would have Christians to convey to a sin-sick world. We are not to give the devil **any** foothold on or in our lives.
4. As Christians, we should not want to promote **deception** or **trickery**. The Bible expressly speaks against "appearing" to be one thing when you are something else.
5. Halloween is an example of **poor Stewardship of our resources**. Today, Americans spend \$2.5 billion annually on Halloween, making it the country's second largest commercial holiday.
6. There is no **benefit** to the body of Christ. Ask yourself, "What good does celebrating or acknowledging this day do for my walk with God?"

RECEIVE THIS IN THE SPIRIT IT IS GIVEN. ASK GOD FOR ILLUMINATION & UNDERSTANDING.