

Let's Pull the Mask from HALLOWEEN

Every October 31, children across the land learn how extortion works through one of the most popular of ancient, pagan festivals.

We know it as Halloween, which is a shortened combination of the words "Hallowed" and "evening." But there is nothing holy about this night.

"Trick or treat!" the bantam, masked marauders cry as they go from door to door coercing goodies from mostly compliant residents. Along with blackmail, the chance to deface private property and get away with it is also a big part of the "hallowed evening." Shaving cream, soap, and toilet paper are essential in the bag of tricks some of the mischievous prepare especially for this weird, annual rite.

Imagine trying to explain the whole scene to a visitor from another planet!

Not Just for Children Anymore

Visit many offices and department stores on October 31 and you'll see adult employees dressed in silly or grotesque costumes, perhaps with painted faces and fluorescent green hair.

They are psyching up for the Halloween party that night—when they'll get the chance to act foolishly without embarrassment. It seems that as our world sinks deeper into New Age paganism, this heathen, high holy day of the occult has zoomed to the top of the holiday charts. In fact, among adults Halloween is becoming as popular as Christmas.

But is Halloween just a harmless time of fun for the whole family, where everyone can practice their pumpkin-carving skills and then head for the store to try on this year's bizarre costumes?

It's time to rip the mask from Halloween and expose it for what it is. What we find underneath should concern anyone who professes a belief in the Bible.

Night of the Walking Dead

Rooted in Druidic demon worship 2,000 years old, Halloween continues to cast its spell on modern peoples.

The ritual was not called Halloween when the Celtic peoples of pre-Christian Ireland and Scotland observed it on November 1. For them it was the Feast of Samhain (pronounced Sa-win), Lord of the Dead. This was also the beginning of the Celtic new year, a time to give thanks to the sun god for the harvest.

But it was also a dreaded occasion when it was believed time stood still and the souls of the dead walked abroad, mingling with the living and playing malicious tricks on them. The Celts thought that the sinful souls who died during the year had been transferred to the bodies of animals. Through gifts and sacrifices these souls could be freed to claim a heavenly reward. Samhain judged these souls and decreed the form in which their existence was to continue—as animal or human.

The ghosts of the dead that were thought to collect around houses of the living were greeted with banquet-laden tables. (They thought spirits needed food.) When the feast was over, villagers donned masks and costumes to represent the souls of the dead and paraded to the outskirts of town to lead the ghosts away. Thus they thought they might avoid any problems the roving

spirits may cause them if they had not provided sufficient sustenance. Such calamities included causing livestock to die, turning milk sour, and spoiling food.

In some areas, food was set outside for the spirits so that they would leave the house untouched. The trick-or-treat custom re-enacts these ancient superstitions.

Amid all of this the Druids were offering up sacrifices to the sun god. "It was common for horses to be sacrificed since they were sacred to the Sun God. There were also human sacrifices. Men, mostly criminals, were imprisoned in wicker and thatch cages shaped like animals or giants. The Druid priests set fire to the tindery cages and the men were burned to death...In the Middle Ages in Europe, black cats were still being thrown to the flames in wicker cages, for they were thought to be the friends of witches or even transformed witches," **Celebrations, The Complete Book of American Holidays**, 258.

From Samhain to All Saints' Day

So where does "Halloween" (the Hallowed Evening) come in? The celebration in the Roman Catholic Church, which was later to merge with Samhain, was known as All Saints' Day. All Saints' Day originated in the 7th century when the Pantheon at Rome was wrested from the barbarians, made into a cathedral, and renamed the Church of the Blessed Virgin and All Martyrs. Thus, from honoring "all gods" (which is the meaning of the Greek word "pantheon") the Pantheon became the center for glorifying all saints. (**Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia**, Vol. 1, p. 363).

This day that honored all the "hallowed" saints was first observed on the evening of May 13, and was known as the All hallows festival. The day was officially authorized in 835 by Pope Gregory IV after it was moved to November 1 to coincide with Samhain. It began on the evening of October 31, which was called All Hallows Eve.

Thus, without forcing the pagans to drop their pagan practices and accept Christianity, the Roman church merely made room to accommodate the barbarians.

Just as it confiscated the pagan Pantheon for its own uses, this church incorporated the customs of Samhain to further its mission to convert the known world to Catholicism.

The two celebrations made strange bedfellows: one in respect of evil spirits, the other honoring "saints."

One writer noted, "The three days between October 31 and November 2 see pagan and Christian celebrations intertwined in a fascinating way. All Hallows Eve, usually called Hallowe'en, is followed by All Hallow's Day, which is also All Saints Day, and the three-day period is a perfect example of superstition struggling with religious belief," **Year of Festivals**, p. 76.

Can we mix light with darkness? Is a little compromise with idolatry acceptable to a holy Creator? Paul warns us, *"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to Elohim; and I would not that you have fellowship with devils. You cannot drink the cup of the Master, and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Master's table, and of the table of devils,"* 1Corinthians 10:20-21.

Nevertheless, the joining of the two celebrations produced a hybrid of beliefs about what was supposed to happen in the spirit world. Souls in purgatory appeared as witches and toads to persons who had wronged them. Halloween fires took on a new meaning and now were used to comfort souls in purgatory as people prayed while holding burning straw in the air.

Even the idea of trick-or-treating by evil spirits took on an acceptable church flavor: costumed children went around on All Souls Day offering to fast for the departed souls in return for money or an offering.

As the Celts converted to the new religion, they did not forget their stories of the dead traveling to the afterworld on Halloween. Rather, exhibitions of this night became more evil and the observance adopted even more malicious overtones.

Let's take a look at the familiar customs of Halloween, and ask ourselves whether they are fit for a True Worshiper's indulgence.

The Leering Jack-o-Lantern

In America it's a pumpkin, but in Europe it was often a turnip, large beet, potato, rutabaga or even a skull with a candle in it. The fearsome face of the jack-o-lantern was representative of the god of the dead, Saman, who would drive off less powerful evil spirits abroad that night.

As glimmering lights flickered over an English marsh or an Irish bog, people imagined dead souls had returned to earth. They would place the jack-o-lantern on posts and in windows to ward off the spirits of the dead on Halloween.

The word jack-o-Lantern is an abbreviation of "Jack of the Lantern." Jack is another name for joker or Satan. In the Irish tale, a man named Jack was fond of playing tricks on the devil. Annoyed, the devil tossed Jack a burning coal from hell. With the coal in his "lantern" Jack was condemned to walk the earth forever searching for rest.

The jack-o-lantern is a Halloween idol that keeps alive an ancient symbol of demonic superstition.

Witches and Black Cats

A pagan practice that was not eradicated upon the coming of Christianity was witchcraft. The word "witch" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wicce*, or "wise one." Witches were thought to be possessors of magic.

Witches, who worship the deities of nature, have living talismans or symbols through which they derive their dark powers. They invoke evil spirits to enter the bodies of their talismans. Some have dogs, owls, snakes or swine for their talismans, but the most common are cats.

Cats have been closely associated with mystery religion from the Egyptians to the Norse. But the Celts had a particular fear of cats, believing they were humans who had been changed into feline form by evil powers. The black cat particularly was connected to demonic powers.

Black cats are the chief idol of the goddess of Wicca, Diana. In legend, she turns into a black cat to commit incest with her brother, Lucifer.

Eventually the Druids themselves came to be regarded as witches. Witch hunting during Halloween became almost a national pastime in the colonial years of our nation.

But that was yesterday. Halloween is regarded as the high "sabbath" for practicing witches today.

Witchcraft is demonic worship in diametric opposition to the worship of the Heavenly Father Yahweh. Yahweh minces no words about it. He told Israel through Moses, *"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"* (Ex. 22:18). He says in Deuteronomy 18:10, *"There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch."*

How can a True Worshiper allow his son or daughter to dress up in imitation of a witch or warlock, knowing that Yahweh condemns witchcraft? We are commanded to avoid even the appearance of evil (1Thes. 5:22).

Flying Witches

The broomstick is a symbol of the male organ, on which the witch mounts and leaps high around the fields to "teach" the crops how high to grow. (**ABC's of Witchcraft**, pp. 48-49.)

The notion of flying witches relates to the fact that witches believed they could fly great distances to their feasts by smearing their bodies with ointments containing drugs. The drugs gave them psychedelic "trips" making them think they flew. (**ABC's**, pp. 142-146).

Shrouded in Blackness

"Orange, black, and red, the devil's colors, are the colors associated with Halloween..." so says the **Good Housekeeping Book of Entertainment**, p. 168. Black prefigures black magic and demonic influence. The black of night is when these forces of evil are busiest, using the cover of darkness for their sinister works.

Yahweh warns, "*Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from Yahweh, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who sees us? and who knows us?*" (Isa. 29:15)

In John 3:19-20 Yahshua said, "*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*"

How much time should any Bible believer give to a rite that is observed in the dark and that revels in the colors, symbols, and practices of Yahweh's adversary, Satan the devil?

Skulls and Skeletons

The skeleton is a form of the god of the dead, the witches' "horned god." The Dictionary of Satanism by Wade Baskin says this about skulls and skeletons under "skull worship": "Skulls play an important role as sacred relics and as objects of worship among primitives. Among Polynesians and Melanesians, skulls of ancestors are worshiped in order to establish connections with the spirits of the dead. Like the head of Osiris in Egypt, the skulls of ancestors may also serve as tutelar deities. The head or its parts, each of which may stand for the whole, can be used as magical food or as a means of increasing the fertility of the soil."

Under "Skull," the **Dictionary of Lore and Legend** says, "Symbol of death, often with crossed bones beneath."

Isaiah tells us what Yahweh thinks of courtship with death and the dead:

"When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their Elohim? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (Isa. 8:19-20, NIV).

Fire Rites

Being that Halloween is a Celtic new year's festival, many of its surviving rituals trace to the Celtic feast. The fire rite was practiced in many areas around the world on the night before the new year. The old fire was allowed to go out and a new one was kindled—usually a sacred fire from which the fires of the village were relit. The fires were thought to rejuvenate the waning sun and aid in banishing evil spirits. The Druids built hilltop fires to celebrate important festivals (**Celebrations**, pp. 258-259).

Ghosts and witches feared fire, it was thought, and so fire became the best weapon against evil spirits. Witchcraft was punished by burning at the stake, fire being used as a means purification. The light that fires gave off was a sign of sacredness.

Apple Bobbing

Popular at Halloween parties is apple bobbing. It was a means of divination among the Druids and survives in cultures influenced by the Celts.

Because the apple is also a common love charm, the practice of ducking for apples seems to have been associated with the selection of a lover (see **The Folklore of American Holidays**).

Apple bobbing was originally a fertility rite deriving from the Christmas observance, which was replete with various fertility rites (Send for our booklet, **The Untold Story of Christmas**).

Selling Out to Sin

One of the perpetual failings of ancient Israel was their inability to keep their worship pure. The record throughout history has not been any different.

For those who are satisfied with less than total truth, the concessions come easier.

Today we witness Easter egg hunts on church lawns, Christmas trees in church vestibules, and Halloween parties in church basements (on the pretext of keeping the children off unsafe streets and away from tainted Halloween candy).

"It's just for the children," goes the rationalization. "We really just do it for them."

What our children practice they also learn from. Why would we want to introduce to them pagan falsehoods? How can we instill in them righteousness if we allow them to revel in ancient customs of evil on Halloween? How can we promote healthy, decent values while allowing them to don hideous masks of vile creatures or deformed humans—with the underlying themes of murder, mayhem, and death?

Can we live a lie? Can we mix the holy with the profane and expect to be blessed us? *"Learn not the way of the heathen!"* He thunders in Jeremiah 10:2. *"Come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing,"* Paul writes in 2Corinthians 6:17.

Paul also admonished, *"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?"* (2Cor. 6:14)

Halloween has no redeeming value. It is one big trick on an ignorant or indifferent society, and another victory for the forces of darkness.

The Heavenly Father gives us a final warning in the law about demonism and witchcraft: *"For all that do these things are an abomination unto Yahweh: and because of these abominations Yahweh your Elohim does drive them out from before you. You shall be perfect with Yahweh your Elohim"* (Deut. 18:10-13).

Why indulge in practices your Creator hates and condemns? Drop the empty, senseless, heathen observances of man and resolve to begin keeping the true holy days He has commanded in His Word. You'll be blessed if you do!

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