

# Halloween

## A Celebration of Evil

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Modern celebrations of Halloween may appear on the surface to be quite harmless, but the spiritual implications of dabbling with the spirit world are extremely serious.



God has called His people to a different standard. Instead of superstitions and myths, God tells us to look to Him for our blessings, direction and future.

What must an unfamiliar observer think of Halloween? Parents dress their children as monsters, vampires, devils, witches and ghosts and encourage them to approach total strangers to ask them for candy and other treats. Homeowners decorate their houses with images of black cats, ghosts, goblins and carved pumpkins and sometimes transform their yards into



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make-believe graveyards. Adults dress in similar strange and outlandish costumes and go to parties in rooms decorated like dungeons or crypts.

Why are such bizarre practices so popular? Why would anyone celebrate a holiday emphasizing the morbid and macabre? Where did such strange customs originate?

As with Christmas and Easter, we can trace the roots of Halloween far back into the pagan past. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* says, "Halloween, or Allhallows Eve, is a festival celebrated on 31 October, the evening prior to the Christian Feast of All Saints (All Saints' Day). Halloween is the name for the eve of Samhain [pronounced *sow-en* ], a celebration marking the beginning of winter as well as the first day of the New Year within the ancient Celtic culture of the British Isles. The time of Samhain consisted of the eve of the feast and the day itself (31 October and 1 November)" (1987, p. 176, "Halloween").

Besides Halloween, the Celts observed many other holidays including the winter solstice (later transformed into Christmas), spring fertility rites (reborn later as Easter) and May Day as a harvest festival.

Concerning Halloween *The Encyclopedia of Religion* continues: "On this occasion, it was believed that a gathering of supernatural forces occurred as during no other period of the year. The eve and day of Samhain were characterized as a time when the barriers between the human and supernatural worlds were broken. Otherworldly entities, such as the souls of the dead, were able to visit earthly inhabitants, and humans could take the opportunity to penetrate the domains of the gods and supernatural creatures.

"Fiery tributes and sacrifices of animals, crops, and possibly human beings were made to appease supernatural powers who controlled the fertility of the land ... Samhain acknowledged the entire spectrum of nonhuman forces that roamed the earth during the period" (pp. 176-177).

On this holiday "huge bonfires were set on hilltops to frighten away evil spirits ... The souls of the dead were supposed to revisit their homes on this day, and the autumnal festival acquired sinister significance, with ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, black cats, fairies, and demons of all kinds said to be roaming about. It was the time to placate the supernatural powers controlling the processes of nature. In addition, Halloween was thought to be the most favourable time for divinations concerning marriage, luck, health, and death. It was the only day on which the help of the devil was invoked for such purposes" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, Micropaedia, Vol. 4, p. 862, "Halloween").

#### Ancient practices continued today

As with Christmas and Easter, church leaders adopted this ancient celebration to serve their own purposes. "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



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customs by adding a Christian celebration to the calendar on the same date as Samhain. 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” ( *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 177, “Halloween”).

Several ancient Halloween practices still exist in modern observances. Bobbing for apples was originally a form of divination (fortune telling) to learn of future marriages. The first person to bite an apple was predicted to be the first to marry in the coming year ... The jack-o-lantern ... represent[ed] a watchman on Halloween night or a man caught between earth and the supernatural world” (Jack Santino, *All Around the Year: Holidays & Celebrations in American Life*, 1994, p. 26).

### **The Bible condemns the occult**

Although some may dismiss the demonic symbolism and divination associated with Halloween as harmless fun, the Bible reveals the existence of evil spirits, led by Satan the devil, whom God holds responsible for great suffering and sorrow inflicted on the human race. Revelation 12:9 speaks of “the great dragon ... that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan ... [who] deceives the whole world ...”

The name given him in the Bible, Satan, means adversary or enemy. The apostle John tells us that “the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). Satan and the other fallen angels (demons) constantly try to keep humanity spiritually blinded, turning them aside from their awesome destiny as part of the family of God.

As a loving Father, God commands us to avoid things that can harm us. Concerning the spirit world, notice what God says to His people: “Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God” (Leviticus 19:31).

In addition to this command to avoid practices that pertain to evil spirits, God warned ancient Israel to avoid any kind of occult practices: “There shall not be found among you anyone who ... practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord ” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

God has called His people to a different standard. Instead of superstitions and myths, God tells us to look to Him for our blessings, direction and future.

Modern celebrations of Halloween may appear on the surface to be quite harmless, but the spiritual implications of dabbling with the spirit world are extremely serious. Fortune-telling, Ouija boards, astrology, voodoo, clairvoyance, black magic and the like can all be related to occult, satanic forces or the worship of natural phenomena and are forbidden in Scripture.

Jesus Christ tells us that “the first and greatest commandment” is to love our Creator “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37-38). God alone is the



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giver of life and all good things. To give recognition to false gods, and to imitate practices that honored them, is unacceptable and idolatrous.

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**Taken from:** <http://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/holidays-or-holy-days-does-it-matter-which-days-we-observe/halloween-a>