

Halloween vs. Christianity: What are the facts?

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Have you ever wondered about the origins of Halloween? Where does it come from? What is its overall significance? Does Halloween glorify evil and darkness? Should a Christian celebrate Halloween? These are all very important questions for Christians everywhere. It is for this reason that this study exists; to help answer important questions with informative answers! We are told in Ephesians 5:11, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." It is our sincerest hope that you find this information to be a positive blessing in your personal walk with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Question #1 - What are the origins of Halloween?

The origin of Halloween dates back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced "sow-in"). The Celts, who lived 2,500 years ago, in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom, and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1st. This day marked the end of summer and the harvest season. It looked forward to the dark, cold winter that was often associated with human misery and death. On the night of October 31st, they celebrated Samhain! The Celts believed that on this night, the disembodied spirits of all those who had died in the previous year would come back in search of living bodies to possess for the following year. This was their idea of an afterlife! On this night, it was believed that the laws of time and space were temporarily suspended, allowing the spirit world to freely intermingle with the living. Naturally, the living did not favor spirit possession; so on the night of October 31st, the villagers would extinguish all fires; thereby making their homes cold and undesirable for any restless spirits. They would then dress up in animal heads / skins and attempt to frighten away any disembodied spirits by acting in a riotous and destructive manner. Primarily, the Celts worshipped nature, and were considered a Wiccan society. A practice that is still observed today! However, we now refer to this form of nature worship as witchcraft. On this night of Samhain, Celtic priests, called Druids, believed the spirits of the dead could be contacted in a necromancy ritual for the purpose of divination and fortune telling. The powers of darkness were conjured up during this celebration, and the devil himself (a.k.a., the god of Samhain – also known as the lord of darkness) would be called upon to foretell future events. Among the most common forms of divination had to do with marriage, weather, and the coming fortunes for the following year. These occult rituals included such methods as ducking for apples and apple peeling. Ducking for apples was an early form of marriage divination. The first person to bite an apple would be the first to marry in the coming year - like the modern toss of the wedding bouquet! Apple peeling was an occult ritual to see how long your life would be. The longer the unbroken apple peel, the longer your life was destined to be. Nonetheless, the practice of idolatry, witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy and riotous living are all associated with this pagan festival of Samhain! Years later, the Roman Empire would seize control over the land of the Celts. As was common for the Roman Empire, they adapted some of the Celtic customs to fit their own society. The feast of Samhain was assimilated with other Roman celebrations that took place in October, such as the festival of Pomona, the Roman fertility goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple, which might explain the origin of our modern tradition of bobbing for apples on Halloween.

Question #2 - How did Halloween make its arrival to the United States of America?

The custom of Halloween was brought to America in the 1840's by Irish immigrants fleeing their country's potato famine.

Question #3 - Where did the term "trick or treat" come from?

The custom of "trick-or-treating" is thought to have originated, not with the Irish Celts, but with a ninth-century European custom called 'souling'. On November 2nd, All Souls Day, early Christians would walk from village-to-village begging for "soul cakes," made out of square pieces of bread with currants. The more soul cakes beggars would receive, the more prayers they would promise to say on behalf of the donors' dead relatives. At the time, it was believed that the dead remained in limbo for a time after death, and that prayer, even by strangers, could expedite a soul's passage to heaven. Today, this idea is commonly referred to as "Purgatory" in a number of churches; an idea which completely contradicts both faith and the Bible.

Question #4 - Where did Jack-O-Lanterns originate from?

The Jack-O-Lantern custom originates from Irish folklore. As the tale is told, a man named Jack, who was notorious as a drunkard and trickster, tricked Satan into climbing a tree. Jack 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 promise to let him down the tree. According to the folklore, after Jack's death, 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 for a long period of time. The Irish originally used turnips as "Jack-O-Lanterns". But when Irish immigrants came to America, they found that pumpkins were far more plentiful than turnips. So the Jack-O-Lantern in America became a hollowed-out pumpkin, lit with an ember. In the days of Irish History, it was believed that Jack-O-Lantern's were placed outside of a person's front door during Samhain to scare away evil spirits, such as Jack!

Conclusion – What can we say about Halloween?

Halloween is a pagan holiday promoting Satanism, idolatry, witchcraft, sorcery, necromancy, and the occult. None of these things should exist in the life of a Christian! They are spiritually dangerous, and should be avoided at all costs. What does the Bible have to say about the idea of Halloween, and the activities often associated with this pagan festival? I refer you to Deuteronomy 18:9-13:

Deuteronomy 18:9-13 - "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations (idolatry) of those nations (pagans). There shall NOT be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer (those who talk with the spirits of the dead). For ALL that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be upright with the LORD thy God."

Final note: Did you know that October 31st is considered by Satanists to be one of their most important days of the year? It's true! So please don't give glory to the Devil by actively participating in this pagan festival. Give Glory to God Alone through Jesus Christ!