Halloween

What is the origin?

Halloween started among the Celtic people of eastern Europe (1000 - 100 B.C.)

The Celtic priests were called "Druids" and were known for their:

Human sacrifices
Magic spells & Curses

October 31st was the last day of the year

Celebration of the New Year (Nov.1)

Baal (the Celtic god) of spring and summer ended his rule and

Samhain (the lord of death) began his reign.

To appease Samhain, the Druids would perform human sacrifices and a festival honoring him.

The Celtic Druids believed that the departed spirits returned on the eve of November 1st.

The dead souls were released from the grave by Samhain revisit their homes on one night (Oct.31) before judgment

This is how going "door to door" on Halloween began

The dead would play tricks on people (causing panic & destruction)

Food and drink were left out for the "ghosts" to appease them

This is how "trick or treat" began.

Anyone who died the previous year had been transformed into an animal.

To welcome the dead on this sacred night the Celts dressed as animals.

This is the origin of Halloween Costumes

When the Roman Empire took over the Celtic homeland new rituals were added, such as the worship of Pamona, the goddess of harvest.

Apples were sacred fruit of this goddess (bobbing for apples started from this)

Pope Gregory the Great incorporated the Druid's holiday into the Catholic church.

Nov. 1 - Became "All Hallows Eve" or "All Saints Day"

Carved potatoes and turnips with lamps inside to scare off "Jack" (a wicked Irish villain who died and was thought to return)

In 1848, Millions of Irish emigrants came to the USA due to the potato famine

America possessed a new crop, the pumpkin

The carved pumpkin (Jack-o-lantern) replaced the old Irish version.

Colors:

Orange - the color of autumn
Black - the symbol of death

Questions:

Does the devil (Baal or Samhain) control the seasons?

Can the dead come back to haunt people?

Should we participate in the Devil's holiday?

Halloween Origins and Customs

History traces Halloween back to the ancient religion of the Celtics in Ireland. The Celtic people were very conscious of the spiritual world and had their own ideas of how they could gain access to it - such as by helping their over 300 gods to defeat their enemies in battle, or by imitating the gods in showing cleverness and cunning.



Their two main feasts were Beltane at the beginning of summer (May 1), and Samhain (pronounced Sah-ween) at the end of summer (Nov. 1). They believed Samhain was a time when the division between the two worlds became very thin, when hostile supernatural forces were active and ghosts and spirits were free to wander as they wished.

"During this interval the normal order of the universe is suspended, the barriers between the natural and the supernatural are temporarily removed, the sidh lies open and all divine beings and the spirits of the dead move freely among men and interfere sometimes violently, in their affairs"
(Celtic Mythology, p. 127).

The Celtic priests who carried out the rituals in the open air were called Druids, members of pagan orders in Britain, Ireland and Gaul, who generally performed their rituals by offering sacrifices, usually of crops and animals, but sometimes of humans, in order to placate the gods; ensuring that the sun would return after the winter; and frightening away evil spirits.

To the Celtics, the bonfire represented the sun and was used to aid the Druid in his fight with dark powers. The term bonfire comes from the words "bone fire," literally meaning the bones of sacrificed animals, sometimes human, were piled in a field with timber and set ablaze. All fires except those of the Druids were extinguished on Samhain and householders were levied a fee to relight their holy fire which burned at their altars. During the Festival of Samhain, fires would be lit which would burn all through the winter and sacrifices would be offered to the gods on the fires. This practice of burning humans was stopped around 1600, and an effigy was sometimes burned instead.

This Jeremiah Project web site is my response to the situation in America today, a "famine in our land of hearing the words of the Lord" - Amos 8:11
Halloween Origins and Customs
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History Of Halloween
The origin of Halloween is fascinating and anyone interested in finding out about the history of Halloween and where this American tradition was founded, will find the information in this article to be eye-opening.

Blending of Paganism with Christianity
When Christianity spread to parts of Europe, instead of trying to abolish these pagan customs, people tried to introduce ideas which reflected a more Christian world-view. Halloween has since become a confusing mixture of traditions and practices from pagan cultures and Christian tradition.

By A.D. 43, Romans had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. During their rule of the Celtic lands, Roman festivals were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain. The Romans observed the holiday of Feralia, intended to give rest and peace to the departed. Participants made sacrifices in honor of the dead, offered up prayers for them, and made oblations to them. Another festival was a day to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple and the incorporation of this celebration into Samhain probably explains the tradition of "bobbing" for apples that is practiced today on Halloween.

As the influence of Christianity spread into Celtic lands, in the 7th century, Pope Boniface IV introduced All Saints' Day, a time to honor saints and martyrs, to replace the pagan festival of the dead. It was observed on May 13. In 834, Gregory III moved All Saint's Day from May 13 to Nov. 1 and for Christians, this became an opportunity for remembering before God all the saints who had died and all the dead in the Christian community. Oct. 31 thus became All Hallows' Eve ('hallow' means 'saint').
Sadly, though, many of the customs survived and were blended in with Christianity. Numerous folk customs connected with the pagan observances for the dead have survived to the present.

In 1517, a monk named Martin Luther honored the faithful saints of the past by choosing All Saints Day (November 1) as the day to publicly charge the Church heirarchy with abandoning biblical faith. This became known as "Reformation Day," a fitting celebration of the restoration the same biblical faith held by the saints throughout church history. [What about Halloween?]

Trick-or-Treat?



Some trace the origins of present day "trick-or-treat" to Samhain, which was the supreme night of demonic jubilation. Spirits of the dead would rise out of their graves and wander the countryside, trying to return to the homes where they formerly lived. Frightened villagers tried to appease these wandering spirits by offering them gifts of fruit and nuts. They began the tradition of

placing plates of the finest food and bits of treats that the household had to offer on their doorsteps, as gifts, to appease the hunger of the ghostly wanderers. If not placated, villagers feared that the spirits would kill their flocks or destroy their property.

The problem was... if the souls of dead loved ones could return that night, so could anything else,human or not, nice or not-so-nice. The only thing the superstitious people knew to do to protect themselves on such an occasion was to masquerade as one of the demonic hoard, and hopefully blend in unnoticed among them. Wearing masks and other disguises and blackening the face with soot were originally ways of hiding oneself from the spirits of the dead who might be roaming around. This is the origin of Halloween masquerading as devils, imps, ogres, and other demonic creatures.

Others trace "trick-or-treat" to a European custom called "souling". Beggars would go from village to village begging for "soul cakes" made out of square pieces of bread with currants. The more soul cakes the beggars would receive, the more prayers they would promise to say on behalf of the dead relatives of the donors. At the time, it was believed that the dead remained in limbo for a time after death, and that prayer, even by strangers could guarantee a soul's passage to heaven.

In many parts of Britain and Ireland this night used to be known as 'Mischief Night', which meant that people were free to go around the village playing pranks and getting up to any kind of mischief without fear of being punished. Many of the different customs were taken to the United States by Irish and Scottish immigrants in the nineteenth century, and they developed into 'trick or treat'.

Halloween Comes to America

Traditional Halloween symbols (witches, black cats, pumpkins, candles, masks, parties and pranks) appeared in the U.S. during the late 1800's. In 1848, millions of Irish emigrants poured into America as a result of the potato famine. With this sudden influx of people, the holiday of Druidism found its new home on alien shores. "Proudly Celtic, they called Halloween Oidche Shamhna (`Night of Samhain'), as their ancestors had, and kept the traditional observances" [Common Boundary, Sep./Oct. 1993, p. 31].

The Jack-o-lantern is the festival light for Halloween and is the ancient symbol of a damned soul. Originally the Irish would carve out turnips or beets as lanterns as representations of the souls of the dead or goblins freed from the dead.



When the Irish emigrated to America they could not find many turnips to carve into Jack O'Lanterns but they did find an abundance of pumpkins. Pumpkins seemed to be a suitable substitute for the turnips and pumpkins have been an essential part of Halloween celebrations ever since.



Pumpkins were cut with faces representing demons and was originally intended to frighten away evil spirits. It was said that if a demon or such were to encounter something as fiendish looking as themselves that they'd run away in terror,thus sparing the houses dwellers from the ravages of dark entities. They would have been carried around the village boundaries or left outside the home to burn through the night.

Bats, owls and other nocturanal animals, also popular symbols of Halloween, were originally feared because people believed that these creatures could communicate with the spirits of the dead.



Black cats have religious origins as well. Black cats were considered to be reincarnated beings with the ability to divine the future. During the Middle Ages it was believed that witches could turn themselves into black cats. Thus when such a cat was seen, it was considered to be a witch in disguise.

Witches and witchcraft are dominant themes of the holiday. Witches generally believe themselves to be followers of an ancient religion, which goes back far beyond Christianity, and which is properly called 'wicca'. Witches are really just one side of a modern revival of paganism - the following of pre-Christian nature religions, the attempt to return to worshipping ancient Norse, Greek or Celtic gods and goddesses.

To witches, Halloween is a festival of the dead, and represents the "end and the beginning of the witches year. It marks the beginning of the death and destruction associated with winter. At this time the power of the underworld is unleashed, and spirits are supposedly freed to roam about the earth; it is considered the best time to contact spirits" (Halloween and Satanism, P. Phillips and J.H. Robie, 1987, p. 146).

The apostle Paul said Witchcraft is one of the acts of the sinful nature and those who practice it will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:16-21; see also Revelation 22:15).

Divination

The various activities traditional to Halloween are mostly associated with the idea of obtaining good fortune and foretelling the future. Samhain was a time when it was customary for the pagans to use the occult practice of divination to determine the weather for the coming year, the crop expectations, and even who in the community would marry whom and in what order.

- The idea behind ducking, dooking or bobbing for apples seems to have been that snatching a bite from the apple enables the person to grasp good fortune. Unmarried people would attempt to take a bite out of an apple bobbing in a pail of water, or suspended on a string. The first person to do so was believed to be the next to marry.
- Samhain is a time for getting rid of weakness, as pagans once slaughtered weak animals which were unlikely to survive the winter. A common ritual calls for writing down weaknesses on a piece of paper or parchment, and tossing it into the fire.
- There used to be a custom of placing a stone in the hot ashes of the bonfire. If in the morning a person found that the stone had been removed or had cracked, it was a sign of bad fortune. Nuts have been used for divination: whether they burned quietly or exploded indicated good or bad luck.
- Peeling an apple and throwing the peel over one's shoulder was supposed to reveal the initial of one's future spouse.

- One way of looking for omens of death was for people to visit churchyards, because the spirits of those who were going to die during the coming year were thought to walk around the churchyard during this night.

Should Christians adopt such practices?

Can we borrow pagan customs and superstitions of ancient peoples and "Christianize" them?

As believers, we are called to *"Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. [1 Thesalonians 5:21-22]* Who can deny that virtually all of the symbols of Halloween are evil? Witches, monsters, ogres, vampires, ghosts, ghouls, goblins, devils and demons all portray evil. Christians are to *"... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." [Ephesians 5:11]*

Is Halloween just another innocent holiday that doesn't harm anyone? Is it really just childish fun? Vandalism and wanton disregard for the property of others is common on Halloween night. Even normally well-behaved children are driven by unseen forces to destructive behavior. Police officials everywhere report a great increase in such activities on Halloween. Worse yet are the horrifying accounts of poisoned candy and fruits booby-trapped with razor blades and needles. Such threats are so real that many hospitals offer free X-rays of Halloween treats in order to prevent children from being harmed. Who but Satan could inspire such monstrous actions?

Should the church be compromised by accommodating itself to the culture?

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." [Romans 12:2]
"For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?" [2 Corinthians 6:14, 15]

When America and the world celebrates the Festival of Samhain and the powers of darkness by masquerading as evil creatures or decorating our homes, schools, businesses and churches with occult symbols, Satanic power is glorified.

The sort of practices celebrated on Halloween are what defiled the ancient nations [see Leviticus 18:24-30]. The Israelites were warned against such practices when they entered the Promised Land, *"When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations." [Deuteronomy 18:9]*

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. [Deuteronomy 18:10-14]

As an alternative to the celebration of evil and death, Christians should rather do what Christians are supposed to do every day and that is shine the light of Jesus Christ. We should emphasize the Christian influences and strive to make Hallow's Eve a celebration of the acts of God through his people the saints. We should make it a day when acts of charity instead of vandalism and hatred abound. A day that emphasizes the light of Christ instead of the darkness of evil. A day when people meditate on the acts of Godly people instead of ghosts and goblins.

While you may have participated "all in fun," be assured, Halloween is serious business for Satanists and witches. Those who oppose Christ are known to organize on Halloween to observe satanic rituals,

to cast spells, to oppose churches and families, to perform sacrilegious acts, and to even offer blood sacrifices to Satan. While some may say, "But we only do this in fun...we don't practice witchcraft," those things that represent Satan and his domain cannot be handled or emulated "for fun". Such participation places you in enemy and forbidden territory and that is dangerous ground.
Tom Sanguinet, former high priest in the Celtic tradition of Wicca (witchcraft) said "The modern holiday we call Halloween has its origins in the full moon closest to November 1, the witches' New Year. It was a time when the "spirits" (demons) were supposed to be at their peak power and revisiting the earth planet." He went on to say, "Halloween is purely and absolutely evil, and there is nothing we ever have or will do that would make it acceptable to the Lord Jesus." [The Dark Side Of Halloween]
As evil prevails, Americans have embraced an evil day of Satan, with the pranks of 'would be' hoodlums, combined with 'demon faces' on pumpkins, clothing of 'death' being worn, and calling it fun. When Christians participate in Halloween, it sends a message to children that witchcraft, demonism, Satanism, and the occult are something fun, entertaining and harmless.
Many years ago, C.S. Lewis wrote that one of Satan's most deceptive tactics is to convince people that he doesn't exist. Apparently he has done a good job in his deception. Sadly, many people think of the devil as no more than a symbol of evil: like Santa Claus, he is just a fictional symbol. Many people today also do not think of witches as real people who practice magic, but simply as imaginary figures who represent the supernatural world and everything that is 'spooky.'





Recognizing this pagan holiday gives the false impression that what is actually lethal is innocuous. Some children develop a fascination with the supernatural which leads them later into more sinister occult practices. It's the spiritual equivalent of painting a loaded gun to look like a toy and giving it to child to play with.

It is the kind of celebration that encourages kids like the 16-year-old in Pearl, Mississippi who stabbed his mother to death in her sleep and then opened fire at his high school, killing two students and wounding seven. Authorities found this student along with at least six others involved in a small, avowedly satanic clique that calls itself "Kroth."

How some people can defend this kind of activity as just another innocent holiday that doesn't harm anyone is beyond me.
Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (John 3:19-20)
Acceptance of the Supernatural
Central to Satan's goals is the widespread acceptance of the supernatural, including the occult, on the part of North Americans, accompanied by a great revival of spiritism all over the world.

Over the last 30 or so years, the occult has moved into the mainstream of America - in television, movies, magazines, business, and various aspects of daily life. Movies, books, magazines and encyclopedias of the supernatural have abounded. Turn on your TV and hear from the ever-present "Psychic Friends" hotline, or see lead characters in TV shows meet their "spirit guide." Entire bookstores devoted to the occult have become common. Universities regularly offer courses on

witchcraft and magic - usually the so-called "white" variety. Myriads of mystical Eastern religions, bizarre and often demonic, have invaded North America and found in most cases an amazing responsiveness.

Indeed, Halloween has taken root in America. Americans spend $21 million on Halloween candies yearly second only to Christmas in total sales. Halloween is the Number 1 season for selling humorous greeting cards. In North America, some 25 million cards are sold annually. (Peter Smith, "By the Numbers," The Toronto Star, 2002-OCT-27.) Halloween is the third-largest party occasion next to Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Increasingly the curriculum in many public schools is becoming a primer in occultism.

Impressions, a curriculum used in many school districts instructs teachers and students in how to cast spells. One teacher's manual reads, "Tell the children that a magician has cast a spell on some children. Have them work in pairs to write the magic spell the magician used. Have each pair write another spell to reverse the first spell. Have them chant their spells."

About 16,000 school districts use the Pumsey the Dragon curriculum, by Jill Anderson. Many of the relaxation techniques used are identical to those used in hypnosis. Another curriculum called Duso the Dolphin employs relaxation techniques and sends hypnotized youngsters off on guided fantasies to a place called Aquatron.

Satanism has become a phenomena that crosses the city limit into the rural areas of our nation. It is reported there are some 6000 witches, and approximately 10 million people are involved in the occult. However, it is very difficult to establish how many actually participate. These individuals are involved in a wide variety of activities from simply casting spells to human sacrifice. The news wires carry story after story about young children being kidnapped, only to be found later as victims of some bizarre ritualistic crime.



As satantic involvement among our youth increases, we begin to see the primary goal of such activity. According to Scripture (2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9), Satan's goal is to deceive man by blinding him to the truth of the gospel and to receive worship for himself (Matt. 4:9; Isa. 14:12-14).

It has become clear that the primary goal is to alter an individual's values and turn him against himself, his beliefs, family, God and society.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

Young satanists believe the strong will rule with Satan. Once an individual becomes involved, they often make a pact with Satan. They commit themselves to a future date when they will take their own lives by suicide. They believe if they submit themselves to Satan in death, they will come back in another life as a stronger being and rule with him forever. According to recent statistics, fourteen young people a day take their own lives. Recently, a California skateboard manufacturer used a package enclosure similar in appearance to a gospel tract to encourage purchasers to sell their souls to the devil. The



brochure titled, "Let's Make a Deal" has a smiley-faced devil who explains to Flame Boy what happened in heaven after he was banished: "First off, they set up a bunch of dumb rules, and then they imposed a really strict dress code. I'l wager that people must be quite bored up there, but hey, that's what they get for being good." He contrasts this with, "Flame Boy, even a dimwit like you can see that hell is by far the best place to retire. Just look at all the fun to be had." Children are asked to sign and return a contract, by which they give possession of their souls to the devil for eternity.

What's wrong with Halloween?

It does not have even one single redeeming virtue. It is custom born out of pagan superstition. It is a demon-inspired, devil-glorifying, occult festival. It is an evening holy unto evil, death, and divination. The Scriptures tells us to *"Abstain from all appearance of evil." [1Thess. 5:22]*

Wake up Christian! This is the night of evil and those who love the Lord Jesus Christ should have nothing to do with it.

We are all accountable for our choices and decisions. Ignorance is no excuse. The choice is up to you. Have you been involved in this satanic holiday? Do you struggle with giving it up because "it's just fun" and an innocent opportunity for children to dress up and collect candy? Don't take my word for it. Let God show you what he would have you do. You might begin by praying the following:

Father in heaven I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ to confess that I'm a sinner. I'm sorry! Please forgive me. I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is Your Son and that You raised him from the dead. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and that I might be saved. Each and everyday Father I turn my will and my life over to Your care, and may Your Holy Spirit lead and guide me in all the things I think , do and say. I'm Yours and You are mine. Father, please use me that I might help others come to know and love Your Son Jesus Christ. Thank you for saving me. Amen

http://www.jeremiahproject.com/culture/halloween.html

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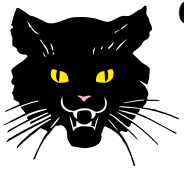
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