

Halloween: Treat Or Trick?

By Rafael Martinez, Director, TVBSA

With the arrival of autumn comes our annual October 31st observation of Halloween. Few can deny an awareness of Halloween's undeniably yet inexplicably dark, even frightening overtones, but fewer seem to even care. What is this "dark side" and why should we speak of it in such dire terms. Unknown to most people, the underlying essence of our celebrations of Halloween is based upon modern Wiccan interpretations of pre-Christian paganism and can involve occultic rites and practices that Christians should have absolutely no dealings with. Why should involvement with such activities be avoided by those who make even the most nominal confession of faith in Christianity? In this article, we urge you to consider these questions.

The Pagan Roots Of Halloween

Paganism is a spirituality based loosely upon a belief in many gods and goddesses. This was the belief of the Celts, peoples of ancient western Europe that were guided by a priestly class called the Druids. The Druids served as advisers to Celtic rulers, led them into ritual communion with their own gods and goddesses, and preserved their mythology and learning. It is from these Druidic traditions that the observation of a Celtic festival called Samhain (pronounced sah-win) originated, one that affects us to this day. It was observed over three nights in the fall season across Celtic regions and involved prayers, offerings and ritual magic that sought contact with the Celtic deities, as well as attempts to divine the future and commune with the spirits of ancestors. Through their casting of spells, induced dream states, delivery of prophecies and sacrificial offerings at sacred hilltops with blazing bonfires, we can see that the Druids made Samhain an earnest time of search for contact

with their gods and goddesses, a vital part of pagan thought and practice.

By the fifth century A.D., Christianity clearly was the dominant spirituality in the Celtic regions, particularly in the British Isles, but observation of various aspects of Druidic tradition stubbornly endured. The festivals of Samhain were one of these. Many converted Celts sadly continued to mix the old Druidic traditions with their newfound Christianity. This situation was made even worse in the eighth century when Pope Gregory IV established the celebration of All Hallowed Evening (on October 31) followed by All Saints Day (on November 1) as a means to both honor the martyrs of the Church and assert its' authority. It was a compromise, and a serious one with major implications for our day.

Over time, the condensed term of "Halloween" became used to identify the evening celebrations. Irish emigrants to American soil brought along with them their distinctive Celtic traditions, which included some of the pagan practices found in Samhain. These were imported into American popular culture by the mid 1800's and used to celebrate Halloween. It is these practices that are based purely upon pagan spirituality that we now wish to look at.

Pagan Occultism In Halloween

Halloween's pagan elements of Druidic tradition hold a profound spiritual significance yet are freely entered into by many a non-pagan at this time of year as two Wiccan authors relate:

The Wearing Of Masks - "The purpose of wearing a mask in most primitive religious traditions is to make a spiritual connection with the deity or the Nature Spirit represented by the mask. .. Though much of this has been lost or temporarily forgotten, there is still much about the tradition costumes worn by children today that tells us Halloween is a celebration of the spirits."

The Jack O' Lantern – "... it is the candle inside the pumpkin that is of magickal importance. The candle flame represents not only the element of Fire, but also the white light of pure spirit. .. in Ireland candles are lit in cottage windows to welcome home the ghosts of the dead."

Contact With The Dead (Necromancy) - "At this time of year, the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead is very thin. As the old Pagan year draws to a close, it is time to receive messages from those who had gone before .. Necromancy is technically the raising of the dead for the purpose of learning the future from them."

Divination - "There are a number of devices that might be used for the purpose of contacting spiritual entities, such as the Ouija board .. and the pendulum and the alphabet board .. Probably the most popular object for scrying with among Wiccans is the cauldron,, another symbol of the Goddess."

"Trick-Or-Treating" " .. On the eve of Samhain, people would go house to house looking for food contributions to the deities. . They would stop at each house recite some verses that told the farmer that his prosperity was due to the gods and if he wishes to prosper he should make a contribution to the spirit. .. people in costumes and masks went begging from farm to farm, reciting verses that described the damage that spirits would do to a farmer's house or barn if the farmer refused to give something."

All of these practices are Halloween tradtions observed on October 31, and as we can see, Halloween is a holiday based upon ancient pagan spirituality. Even if the gods invoked by the ancient Celtic Druids aren't being acknowledged by the masquerading fifth grade elementary school class down the street, the holiday still must be remembered as one set up to give them their due. This is a reality that Godfearing people cannot compromise with.

A Christian Response To Halloween

What are the key issues Halloween confronts the Christian Church with in light of these facts and how should Christians respond? To cut to the chase, we suggest these be kept in mind:

The One True God Is Revealed In Jesus Christ By The Bible Alone: God reveals Himself by His Word and through the person of Jesus Christ — this is totally incompatible with the pagan beliefs that view Halloween as a sacred religious holiday given over to contacting and worshipping other gods or the deceased. Yet the Bible reveals His personal nature as Creator and not the creation, as the almighty Lord over all time and all eternity. He is not simply one deity in a whole universe full of other gods and goddesses who share elbow room in the spirit world. He is the Sovereign Lord of all lords whose reign and Lordship tower over all other gods (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2; Isa. 45:18; Ps. 19:1, 97:9).

God Calls The God-Fearing To Honor His Lordship At All Times: As we have seen, Halloween originally sought to draw people into submission and worship of pagan gods and goddesses. But all who respect and love the One True God are called by Him to live a life that proves that they actually do so. And it is this call

by God that also demands total rejection of the authority claimed in opposition to Him by all other "gods", a theme that is dominant in the Bible: (Matt. 22:37, Jn. 14:15, 1 Co. 10:31, Exod. 34:14, Deut. 6:14-15) The attention given at Halloween - or indeed any other time - to pagan gods and goddesses is an insult to His Lordship and a rejection of His lovingkindness and care. Halloween is a prime time in many casually commit these kinds of sins at the expense of the glorification of God, professing Christians among them. How could a Christian even pretend to perform ritual magick to control their destiny if they are claiming to be trusting God for their daily needs, let alone pursue the casting of spells? What kind of "fun" is this that both saddens and angers the Lord?

No matter how harmless it seems, exploring the realms of the occult – even if in "games" – is to tread exceedingly dangerous ground the Lord forbids natural men to go. This because demonically inspired power awaits to deceive those who foolishly flirt with it. Some of this *will* occur, the grace of God not intervening, during some of the occultic Halloween parlor games that many people will dabble with at this time of year. In many cases, there have been verifiable displays of seemingly miraculous power that have accompanied these contacts, phenomena that 2 Thessalonians 2:9 calls "signs" and "lying wonders" which turn people away from trust in God to trust in their own selves or worse, in other

Heed God's Command To Shun The Occult:

In closing, we would plead with Christians to allow our pagan friends to have their holiday and that we, instead of trying to play along with their idolatry and false worship, should remind ourselves of the Lordship of Jesus over all things, and to not be tricked by a false treat called "Halloween." Follow the apostle Paul's clearest command to believers when confronted with the uncertainties of the world around them.

gods. Let God's Word have the final word on this!

(Deut. 18:9-13; , 2 Chron. 18:18-21; Isa. 8:19-20;

Acts 16:16-18).

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ 1 Thess. 5:21-23

READ THE FULL LENGTH ARTICLES ON HALLOWEEN ON OUR WEBSITE!

www.spiritwatch.org