

HALLOWEEN - TREAT OR TRICK

Text: Deuteronomy 18:9-13

On October 31st of every year, parents find themselves in a position that they must make a number of decisions. Should they allow their children to dress up and go out to "trick or treat" and should they hand out candies or perhaps Christian tracts to the children that come knocking at their door.

When we don't know the facts of the matter, it is easy to give into the pressures of our society. So today I want to equip you with the facts so you can make a decision which will be pleasing to God.

I. The Origin of Halloween

The origin of Halloween dates back to over 2,000 years before the time of Christ. It was practised by the ancient Druids in Britain, France, Germany, and the Celtic (Irish, Scottish, Welsh) countries. The celebration was held to honour their god Samhain (pronounced "sow-en" not "Sam Hain" because the "mh" in the middle of an Irish word has the sound of "w") or Saman, the lord of the dead when they called forth a host of evil spirits.

The Celts believed that November 1st was the "**day of death.**" They were influenced to think this way because the crops were harvested and the autumn was well under way giving a sense of general decay. Therefore it was a day to honour Samhain highlighting the gloom and cold of the season. The falling leaves seemed an appropriate time to honour death and especially the god of the dead - Samhain.

It was also the beginning of the Celtic New year. Their belief was that turning points (like the time between one day and another; the meeting of shore and sea; and the turning of one year to the next) were considered as magickal times. The change from one year to another was especially potent. In order to have order and structure, they also believed there had to be a time when chaos reigned. The time between October 31 to November 2nd was considered as a time of no time. They felt the veil between the two worlds was the thinnest at this time and the living could communicate with the dead who were in the eternal land of youth and happiness called "**Tir nan Og.**"

They did not believe in heaven and hell; demons or devils. Instead they thought that the dead lived in mounds of ground with "Fairy Folk." On October 31st, these departed souls could be communicated with. The fairies were thought to be hostile and dangerous because of their resent of man taking over their land. They would therefore use this night to trick people so they became lost in these moulds of ground and trapped forever. The Celts believed that chaos reigned on that night and that people could be free to play practical jokes and horseplay on each other.

I. The Origin of Halloween (Contd.)

When the potato crop failed in Ireland, many of the Irish people immigrated to America bringing their folk practises with them.

"The Celtic year ended on October 31st, the eve of Samhain, (the lord of the dead), and was celebrated with both religious and agrarian (agricultural) rites.

For the Druids, Samhain was both 'the end of summer' and the 'festival of the dead.' Divination and auguries for the new year were practised at Samhain.

These magical practices concerned such questions as who would die during the next year, the identity of future marriage partners and the chances of good fortune. It was also an occasion when fairies, witches and goblins terrified the populace."

[Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)

This definition from the Encyclopaedia Britannica goes on to state that Halloween is the most important of all the witch's Sabbaths.

"Halloween was thought to be the most favourable time for divination concerning marriage, luck, health, and death. It was the only day on which the help of the devil was invoked for such purposes."

[The New Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)
Vol 5. 15th ed.
Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1992, p. 646

"Halloween . . . is derived from the rites of the druids celebrating the day of Saman, when the Lord of Death called together the souls of the wicked who had died during the past year."

[Collier's Encyclopedia](#)
Vol 12
New York, MacMillan, 1991. P. 192

II. The Druids Practices

The Druids were the pagan priests of the early Celtic religion. Druids are mentioned by name in thirty references in Greek and Roman writers between the second century BC and the fourth century AD. They were a barbaric order and were dreaded for their power and blood-thirstiness.

"They were directly concerned with animal and human sacrifices..."

Richard Cavendish
"Man, Myth, and Magic"
p. 719

"For the ancient Celts it [Halloween] was the Old Year's Night, and the night of all the witches."

Leslie Dunkling
"A Dictionary of Days"
New York; Facts on File, 1988, p.54

"And indeed their altars streamed with the blood of human victims. Holocausts of men, women, and children, enclosed in large towers of wickerwork, were sometimes sacrificed as burnt offerings to their superstition, which were, at the same time, intended to enhance the consideration of the priests, who were an ambitious race delighting in blood."

Lady Queensborough
"Occult Theocracy" p. 102

It is known that most of the Druid rituals would take place in forested areas. Druid means *"the men of the oak trees."* There they could openly worship the sun, moon and stars. Modern witchcraft has its source of ritualistic ceremony from the Druid practices.

Irene Park, a former witch, has explained some of the practices of the Druids.

"The Druids in Ireland would go through the neighbourhoods and countryside on the Eve of October 31 to collect offerings for Satan. They would carry lanterns, bags for money, and canes with very sharp points on the ends (currently known as leprechaun staffs, good luck horns, or fairies' wands). At each house they would demand a specific amount. If the house would not give the offering (penance or treat), the Druid would use his cane to castrate the male human or one of their prize animals."

Irene Park

II. The Druids Practices (Contd.)

There are many renderings of what would take place on Halloween but most of them seem to carry a number of similarities with practices today.

"It was believed and taught by Druids that on October 31st, Samhain called together all the wicked souls that had died within the past twelve months. These departed souls would allegedly have been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals (hence the origin of animal sacrifice to free them).

These souls of the dead demanded to be placated by the living through provision of acceptable food, shelter and sacrifice. If adequate food, shelter and sacrifice were not provided, these evil spirits would cast spells, cause havoc and terror, and haunt and torment the living. Druids believed human sacrifice offered the ultimate appeasement of Samhain.

After the human sacrifice, a large pumpkin was hallowed out, with the smiling face of Samhain carved into it, and a candle of human tallow was placed inside."

*Gene Aven
"Halloween"*

If a sacrifice was not willingly provided, the home was cursed by placing a six-pointed star enclosed in a circle upon the door. An evil spirit would make this his point of entrance to take the victim's life. This drawing of the hexagram is where we get our phrase "*putting a hex on someone*" has come from.

There are four high holy days and 18 holy days which the Druids celebrated.

- 1. Waspurgis Night - April 30th (also called May Day Eve)**
- 2. Candlemas - February 2nd**
- 3. Lammas - August 1st (The first harvest)**
- 4. All Hollows Eve, Halloween - October 31st This was time for the final harvest. Anything left on the vines or in the fields was considered unfit for consumption because the fairies would blast it.**

The townspeople tried many things to protect themselves from the "living dead." They began dressing up in ways that they would look like the wicked spirits in order to "trick" them into believing that they were the same. They also were able to enlarge their empty cupboards with food for the winter.

II. The Druids Practices (Contd.)

Bonfires were lit to ward off the evil spirits and food was set out to appease Samhain and his evil spirits. The Celtic tradition of lighting fires on Halloween survived until modern times in Scotland and Wales. The Druids customarily lit great fires on Halloween, apparently for the purpose of warding off all these spirits. Bon fires stem from the Druidic ritual midnight practises in which adults and children were thrown into huge fires while the celebrants danced around them in demonic fits.

Among the ancient Celts, Halloween was the last evening of the year and was regarded as a propitious time for examining the portents of the future. The Celts also believed that the spirits of the dead revisited their earthly homes on that evening. After the Romans conquered Britain, they added to Halloween features of the Roman harvest festival held on November 1 in honour of Pomona, goddess of the fruits of trees. In and around 43 AD., the Romans added a ceremony honouring their goddess of fruit and trees, thus came the association with apples and bobbing for them. The Celts practised ducking for apples. The first one bite into the apple was an indication through divination that they would be married first in the coming year. Apple peeling was used to see how long your life would be. The longer the unbroken apple peel, the longer your life would be. This again was a divination practise.

The "*Jack-O-Lantern*" was the ancient symbol of a damned soul. The name was derived from a man named Jack who was believed to be wandering to find a place of rest. He is wandering in darkness with his lantern until Judgement Day. Since there was much superstition, the people would carve out pumpkins or turnips and place candles in them to ward off the evil spirits.

III. Contemporary Re-enactments

There has been an increased hunger for this kind of mental and emotion terror in the past few years. Just in time for Halloween large department and video stores begin their sales of videos with such titles of "*The Night of the Living Dead, Crucible of Terror, Blood Legacy, Winsome Witch, Encounter of the Unknown, Ghost Dance, Sisters of Death, Creature, Nightmare on Elm Street, Halloween, Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Friday the 13th, Evil Dead, Poltergeist; House of Frankenstein 1997; The Beast; The Devil's Advocate*"

One Satanist priest recently said,

"We enjoy the commercial exploitation of the public at Halloween
. . . It's free publicity."

III. Contemporary Re-enactments (Contd.)

Satanic groups pray that evil spirits will possess the commercially sold costumes. Modern Witchcraft in North America and Europe has its ancestry directly rooted in ancient Druid rituals. There has been increasing occurrences of animal mutilations, sacrifices as well as human sacrifices in recent years. Many corpses have been found just prior to Halloween that have had their organs removed in precise manners.

“Boy impaled, mom held: girl 11, is eyewitness in witchcraft-tainted slaying of little brother.”

Winnipeg Free Press
Oct 12, 1991, pg A1,A2

“Tales of devil worship chill Albertans”

Toronto Star
Nov 12, 1990 pg A15

“Alarming number of teenagers drawn to Satanism, experts say.”

Toronto Star
Oct 1, 1989 pg A1, A12

“Victoria witches to build own church.”

Vancouver Sun
Oct 31, 1990, pg F15

“US witches’ coven rejoices over acceptance as religion”

Globe and Mail
Aug 14, 1989
pg A18

“Trick or treating more dangerous in Canada than 10 years ago: poll

Halifax Chronicle Herald
Oct 31, 1990
pg. B8

Witchcraft seen on rise in Canada”

Calgary Herald
Oct 28, 1989 pg D8

III. Contemporary Re-enactments (Contd.)

Tom Wedge is one of the leading experts in the United States concerning Satanism and the occult. He tells of an interview he had with Sean Sellers who was in death row at McAlester Prison. Sean told him of the September 8, 1985 evening when he "*sacrificed to Satan*" an employee of the Circle K convenience store. He also sacrificed his mother and stepfather (Vonda and Paul Bellefatte) after worshipping at his Satanic altar on March 5, 1986.

Glen Hobbs, a former Satanist, said that children all over the world are sacrificed on Halloween night during Satanic rituals. He witnessed child-sacrifice as a boy.

Investigations into missing persons (50,000/yr in the USA and 20,000/yr in Canada) are now reaching increasing conclusions that there is a definite link to witchcraft. Many criminals who were involved in terrible slayings are publically admitting to their involvement in Satanism (Son of Sam; Charles Manson etc). Detective Kurt Jackson, of the Beaumont Police Department in the United States, confirms that humans are sacrificed every year on Halloween.

IV. Our Biblical Guidelines

Our text makes it clear to the children of Israel not to conform to the evil practices of the nations surrounding them.

“He [Manasseh- Heb. “causing to forget”] sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practised sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.”

*II Chronicles 33:6
Read 33:7-17*

IV. Our Biblical Guidelines (Contd.)

"When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there.

10. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practises divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft,

11. or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

12. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will not drive those nations before you.

13. You must be blameless before the LORD your God."

Deuteronomy 18:9-13

"When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?"

Isaiah 8:19

The Apostle Peter wrote,

*"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery:
20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred and discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions
21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."*

Galatians 5:19-21

*"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.
15. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;"*

I Peter 1:14,15

IV. Our Biblical Guidelines (Contd.)

According to the Old Testament a witch was not allowed to live (Exodus 22:18); God's people were not to seek after or be defiled by wizards etc (Leviticus 19:31); God's judgement for turning to familiar spirits or wizards was that they would be cut off from their people forever (Leviticus 20:6).

The Apostle Paul also emphasized the fact that we should not adopt the ways of those around us when these practises are not approved by God.

"For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

17. Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.

18. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."

II Corinthians 6:16-7:1

"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."

Ephesians 5:11

"Avoid every kind of evil."

I Thessalonians 5:22 NIV

"Abstain from evil - shrink from it and keep aloof from it - in whatever form or whatever kind it may be."

I Thessalonians 5:22 Amplified Bible

IV. Our Biblical Guidelines (Contd.)

Jesus gave us a very sober statement to seriously consider.

"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

7. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!"

Matthew 18:6

The Apostle John gave us the final word on this area of concern.

"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Revelation 21:8

Pray for God's wisdom on this matter. Pray for those you may know who practise any of the Halloween type of activities. Give them any information that you may feel will help them better understand what they are linking themselves and others into.

Don't make the mistake that the Roman Catholic Church did. In 607 AD. Emperor Phocas turned over the Roman Pantheon (which was built in 100 AD. by Emperor Harian as a dedication to the Roman deities) to Pope Boniface IV. A major celebration was held every May called "All Saints Day." It commemorated all those who had passed on as saints but who had not been recognized as yet.

Then in 834 AD. the Pope Gregory IV moved all Saints Day to the 1st of November to coincide with the Druid practices which had been going on for centuries. Prior to this All Saint's (Hallows) Day was held on May 13th and later on February 21st before the change to November 1st.

It appeared that the two holidays fit because most of the Saints had been martyred. He decreed that day to be a universal church observance of the "highest" rank. The Church attempted to accommodate the recently conquered German Saxons and Norsemen of Scandinavia. The name of the day was changed to "all Hallows Eve or All Saints Day." It later was abbreviated to become "Halloween."

We must be very careful to not "Christianize" pagan practices. The choice is ours now that we understand a little more of the truth. We must remember that once we know the truth, we are also responsible for our actions. We will never be able to stand before God and say we didn't know from this point on.

C:\My Documents\WPWin(11.0)\Sermons.2002\SpecialDays\Deuteronomy18_9.13

Date: Oct 27/02

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Some information from "Halloween," Microsoft (R) Encarta. Copyright (c) 1994 Microsoft Corporation. Copyright (c) 1994 Funk & Wagnall's Corporation.