

WHY A CHRISTIAN SHOULD NOT CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN

Ephesians 6:12

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Halloween is an annual celebration, but just what is it actually a celebration of? And how did this peculiar custom originate? Is it, as some claim, a kind of demon worship? Or is it just a harmless vestige of some ancient pagan ritual?

In North America, the yearly observance of Halloween amounts to a multi-billion-dollar industry, second only to Christmas...selling costumes, candy and food items, party supplies, greeting cards, tours of so-called haunted houses, and other forms of entertainment. But what is the history of this particular day? The story may surprise you.



More than two thousand years ago, a people called the Celts (Kelts) lived in what are now Ireland, Great Britain, and France. Among the Celtic people was an elite intellectual class known as the Druids, who served as religious priests, judges, lawmakers, and scientists. They had an elaborate pagan religious festival, along with certain rituals. Chief among these was the Fire Festival called Samhain (pronounced sow-en), observed at harvest time to mark the Celtic New Year.

The Celts believed that on this night the barrier between the natural world and the supernatural was removed, and the spirits of the dead were able to move freely among human beings. Samhain was the most solemn and important night in the Celtic year.

After the Roman Catholic Church brought Christianity to the Celtic peoples in the seventh century, some of their traditional folk customs were Christianized. In 835 A.D. Pope Gregory IV moved the church's "Feast of All Saints" from the spring to November 1st to replace the observance of Samhain. All Saint's Day, still observed today by many Christians, honored believers who had died. The night before, which featured a sacred vigil in church, became known as "All Hallow's Eve," or Halloween. But the old practices of the Druids died hard and were denounced by the church as witchcraft. This is how Halloween became known as a witch's holiday.

Dressing in costumes and going door-to-door comes from a much later tradition in the British Isles, a practice not restricted to Halloween. Masked players would go from house-to-house, putting on a simple drama or musical performance in return for food and drink. Often these performances had Christian themes.

The "trick-or-treat" custom we know today is thoroughly American in origin. In the nineteenth century, when Irish and Scotch immigrants brought their Halloween traditions to North America, the night became an occasion for pranks and mischief. Vandals would

go through the night, soaping windows, overturning outhouses, and pulling gates from their hinges. These pranks were playfully said to be the work of witches and ghosts, but by the 1920s the joke wasn't funny anymore. The damage to neighborhoods was mounting.

To counteract Halloween vandalism, community clubs like the Boy Scouts began to organize alternatives that are safe and fun. Children were encouraged to go door-to-door and receive treats from homeowners and merchants, keeping the troublemakers away. By the 1930s, the practice was popular nationwide, and young voices crying, "Trick or treat!" were echoing through neighborhood streets.

In this way, a combination of pagan, Christian, and civic elements formed the Halloween celebration we know today. In recent decades, however, a renewed interest in the old pagan beliefs has blossomed in North America. Popular entertainment, including television shows like "Buffy: The Vampire Slayer," and even "Sabrina, the Teenage Witch," make occult themes and witchcraft seem fun and acceptable. The result is that Halloween today has become strongly associated with the occult and a preoccupation with the dead—two influences that Scripture and the church have always warned against.

You see, Satan is not a joke. He's real. Though the Bible clearly states that God is the world's highest authority, He gave Satan a certain amount of power. With God's permission, the evil in this world is under Satan's control. This is why the apostle Paul said, **Ephes. 6:12** **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."**

Satan was the first one in history to openly defy God. He also started a way of life that was self-centered and rejected God's authority. That marked the birth of sin, which is nothing more than rebellion against God. Today sin affects the entire human race. We are all guilty, and therefore all deserve sin's penalty. "For the wages of sin is death...."

So why should we as believers not celebrate Halloween?

I. Because It Glorifies Death.

A. First it is important for us to realize that death does not come from God.

Death is a result of man's own choosing. The Scripture plainly tells us, **Genesis 2:16-17** **"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."**

God told Adam the only thing he was not to do was to eat from this tree, but if he did, he would die. It reminds me of a kid, if you tell him not to do something he will do it or burst.

Adam was just like you and I, he had to touch and taste, the untouchable. How many of you when you see a sign that says, "Wet Paint" you just have go over and touch it.

Adam made a decision to eat and Romans 5:12 tells us the result of his actions, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

Adam represented all of mankind and when he took and ate, God's perfect creation became saturated with sin and it is because of sin we die.

God is not the cause of death, man is.

B. The second understanding we must hold onto is that death is an enemy.

We are in a battle with an enemy called death. But why is death our enemy? It is because it destroys life, it takes life away, whereas God is the Creator and Author of life. In God's original creation there was no sin nor pain, disease or death, remember man chose to sin.

The Bible teaches that death is the enemy of mankind.

I Corinthians 15:26 "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

Christ was subject to the great enemy of man: death. Note that death is the last enemy that will be destroyed.

Death has an end; death will cease to be; the reign of death will be stopped. Man shall be delivered once-for-all from death. Death will be swallowed up in victory.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it" (Isaiah 25:8).

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes" (Hosea 13:14).

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

"[God's purpose and grace] is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Rev. 20:14).

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

II. Because It Honors Satan and Demons.

God is not honored on Halloween. God is not even mentioned. Satan, witches and demons are honored. The Bible teaches that Satan and demons are the enemies of mankind.

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

Throughout Scripture Satan is described as follows:

He is **“the god of this world”** who blinds men’s minds (2 Cor. 4:4).

He is **“the prince of this world”** (John 12:31; John 14:20; John 16:11) and **“the prince of the power of the air”** (Ephes. 2:2; Ephes. 6:12).

A. Satan’s purpose in making war against God is twofold.

1. Satan’s purpose is power and worship, to receive as much of the power and worship of the universe as possible (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-17). He goes about this in three ways.

He opposes and disturbs God’s work in the world.

He discourages believers through various strategies.

He arouses God’s justice against people by leading people to sin and to deny and rebel against God. And when they do, God’s justice has to act and judge people to the fate of their choice: that of living with Satan eternally.

2. Satan’s purpose is to hurt and cut the heart of God. Why? Because God has judged and condemned him for rebelling against God. Therefore, Satan does all he can to get back at God. The best way he can do this is to turn the hearts of people away from God and lead them to sin and to follow the way of evil.

B. However, Christ has broken Satan’s power by two acts.

1. By never giving in to the devil’s temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) and by never sinning (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ overcame sin. He was righteous; He was perfect.

2. By destroying the devil's power of death. Christ was not held by physical or spiritual death (**Hebrews 2:14-15**). He arose and ascended to God's right hand.

It is for this reason that the Bible says **“greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4);** and again, **“If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).**

III. Because People Sin On Halloween.

All Halloween celebrations glorify Satan because they come from paganism. Many people get drunk and take drugs. People dress in horrible, satanic costumes. All of this is sin.

I Corinthians 10:20. But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

Participation in idolatry is fellowshiping with devils. The devil and his angels or demons are behind all idolatry, whether the idolatry of a heathen society or of an educated society. Scripture definitely declares:

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephes. 6:12).

“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

Satan is out to cut the heart of God and to destroy God's purpose in saving man. Satan does this by turning men away from the Lord Jesus Christ, by enticing men to give their lives to the things and gods of this world. When a person becomes consumed with anything upon this earth, then he has fulfilled the will of Satan: he has turned to something other than God. The man prefers something else over God.

Note what Scripture says: when people make sacrifices (whether animals or self) to something other than God, they are sacrificing to devils.

One thing is certain: the offering of their allegiance and commitment is not to God.

And it is not to some man-made thing or idol, for idols and things are nothing. They are meaningless as objects of worship.

To whom then does a person offer his allegiance? Scripture says to devils. Note the clear statement: “Ye shall have [no] fellowship with devils.” In other words, “Flee idolatry.”

Participation in idolatry condemns a person. It is utterly impossible to participate in the true worship of God and in the worship of devils.

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table and of the table of devils” (1 Cor. 10:21).

A person cannot be a guest of the Lord at His table and a guest at the table of idolatrous devils. God will not allow it. Such hypocrisy provokes the Lord. And we are not stronger than He. We cannot escape His judgment if we practice idolatry.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools...who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever” (Romans 1:21-22, 25).

“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them” (Deut. 11:16).

“Neither shalt thou set thee up any image [thing or person]; which the LORD thy God hateth” (Deut. 16:22).

“There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god” (Psalm 81:9).

“I am the LORD: that is my name: my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Isaiah 42:8).

IV. Because God Himself Hates Halloween.

God says, **“I hate every false way.” Psalm 119:104.**

God does not hate mankind, but He hates man’s evil ways

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Genesis 6:5-7

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Matthew Henry also points out these facts.

1. God is pressed by the sins of man

“Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves” (Amos 2:13).

2. God is wearied by man’s sins.

“Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities” (Isaiah 43:24).

3. God is broken by man’s sins.

“I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations” (Ezekiel 6:9).

4. God is grieved by man’s sins.

“Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways” (Psalm 95:10).

5. God is grieved to the depths of His heart with man’s sins.

“And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Genesis 6:6).

(Matthew Henry’s Commentary, Vol.1, p.53).

Conclusion

Man was God’s creature, the most noble and dignified creature ever created, but man abused God’s love and purpose in creating him. Man rebelled against God: he rejected God’s love and purpose in creation. Man chose to reject, ignore, neglect, and deny God, his Creator.

You need Jesus Christ to save you from the penalty of your sins.

Make the right choice today and choose to put sin aside and turn to Jesus.