Part I – History of Halloween

Many people think Halloween originated with the Christian holiday of All Hallows Eve which was to honor all the Saints that had died in the past year. This is not true, however. All Hallows Eve was celebrated in May when it was originated by the Catholic church, but in 834 AD it was moved from May to October in order to combine it with an ancient Druid festival in October. At this point in history, the Catholic church was growing and trying to convert the masses. The Church felt it would be easier to convert the masses to Christian worship by combining the existing pagan celebrations with traditional Christian holidays, feasts or celebrations. The people still had their holiday, yet it was celebrated in the name of the Church. Halloween originally had nothing to do with any Christian celebration.

So what was the original pagan holiday which began what is celebrated as Halloween today? Halloween began some 2,000 years ago among the Celts. Ancient Druids who lived in what is now England, France, Scotland and Wales celebrated the Vigil of Samhain honoring their god, Samhain, lord of the dead. This holiday was celebrated on the Celtic New Year’s Eve which falls on our October 31st. These people believed that on this day the wicked spirits of the dead came back to wreak havoc and mayhem on the living. The holiday and all that took place was designed to appease Samhain as well as the spirits of these wicked dead.
The Vigil of Samhain as well as other occult practices gave rise to many of the traditions we see practiced on Halloween today. More of the history of Halloween will be revealed as attention is given to some of these traditions.

Back to Table of Contents

**Part II − Halloween Traditions**

What do you think of when you see *Halloween* written in the October 31st box of your calendar? Many people think of trick or treating, getting candy, wearing costumes/masks, bonfires, a full moon circled with flying bats, black cats and Jack−O−Lanterns. While these are symbols of Halloween, few Christians realize that EVERY SINGLE ITEM listed above has its symbolic origin rooted either directly in the Vigil of Samhain honoring the Druid lord of the dead or in some other form of occult worship.

"You mean little kids dressing up, saying "trick or treat" and getting candy is a modern−day leftover from practices honoring death and all that is evil? " YES!

Remember the Druids who believed Samhain and the wicked spirits of the dead would come back to haunt the living on October 31st? Well, these people devised ways they believed they could appease, fool or scare away the evil spirits.

**TRICK OR TREAT**

One way it was believed to appease an evil spirit was to leave food for it. This practice was later adapted by the poor who would go about on October 31st begging for food. In return for the food, the beggars would say a prayer for any members of the family who had died.

The other way believed to fool or scare away the evil spirits was to dress up to look like them. It was believed the spirits would leave their own alone or would be scared away by the scary mask.

Masks have been a way of trying to deal with evil throughout history. People have worn masks during natural disasters such as droughts, epidemics, etc. believing that the demons which brought on these disasters might be scared away by the masks. People involved with witchcraft, voodoo, channeling and other dealings with the supernatural often wore masks as a sort of link or doorway to the spirit world.

But whether the people scared away the spirits or fooled them into thinking the people were also demons, the whole purpose was to "treat" the spirits so they would not "trick" you. *Trick or treat.*

**BONFIRES**

Have you ever wondered how a campfire came to be called a bonfire? The Druids who celebrated the Vigil of Samhain on October 31st were very superstitious and had a number of ways they believed they could see both good and bad omens of the future. Trying to scare away Samhain and the other evil spirits, the Druids would build a huge fire. At this time they would build oddly−shaped baskets and burn alive prisoners of war, criminals and animals. They believed by observing the position of the bodies of those who were burned, they could see into the future. Bone + Fire = *Bonfire*
JACK–O–LANTERN & A MAN NAMED JACK

If there were such a thing as a universal symbol of Halloween, it would probably be the hollowed-out pumpkin with the face carved in it that we call a Jack–O–Lantern. It is interesting to note that this probably most popular symbol of Halloween is associated so closely with a story about a meeting between man and the devil. After all, Halloween is just supposed to be innocent fun.

As the story goes, an Irish drunk named "Stingy Jack" met up with the Devil on Halloween night. Jack offered to have a drink with the Devil. The Devil accepted on the condition that Jack would pay for the drink. Jack argued that the Devil could turn himself into anything he wanted, so he tricked the Devil into turning himself into a sixpence to pay for the drink. Before the Devil could change himself back, Jack grabbed the sixpence and put it in his pocket next to his silver cross which supposedly kept the Devil from changing back. The Devil bargained with Jack and agreed to leave Jack alone for one year if Jack would let him out. Jack agreed thinking he would change his wayward ways and the Devil would leave him alone. Jack never gave to the poor, attended church or took his paycheck home to his wife like he had intended. The Devil came back for Jack the next Halloween, but this time Jack tricked the Devil into leaving him alone for ten years, but Jack died before even a year had expired. When Jack was turned away at the gates of heaven, he turned for hell. The Devil told Jack he would have to go back and wander the earth because he had tricked the Devil into leaving him alone for ten years. Jack went back to the earth eating a turnip while wandering in the dark for a place to rest. The Devil threw Jack a live coal from the flames of hell, and Jack being desperate to find his way, put the coal inside the turnip. Since then it is believed to be Jack and his Jack–O–Lantern seen roaming the earth for a place to rest whenever ghostly lights are seen in swamp areas and the like.

BATS, BLACK CATS AND THE FULL MOON

These last three symbols of Halloween really have little to do with the Vigil of Samhain or the early roots of the holiday. Rather, these are symbols of the occult that seemingly became a "natural" part of Halloween. The full moon is a time to perform certain occultic rituals (as will be discussed further in section three). The black cat came to be associated with witches because of superstition. It was believed that witches could transfer their spirit into a cat, and so witches, it was believed, always had a cat. The cat was referred to as a familiar spirit and was often killed along with a person who was suspected of being a witch. The black cat was not originally the only color cat believed capable of being a witch’s familiar spirit, but it gradually became known as the witch’s cat.

The last Halloween/occult symbol discussed here is the bat. Because of the bat’s ability to hunt its prey in the dark, the animal has formed the reputation of having occultic power. The bat has characteristics of both a bird (a symbol of the soul in the occult) and of a demon (dweller in darkness). During medieval times, it was believed that the Devil often turned himself into a bat. With this kind of history, it is easy to see how the bat became a part of Halloween.

Part III – Why October 31st?

Now that some of the history of Halloween has been documented and it has been noted that a celebration on October 31st originated not with the Church but with the the Vigil of Samhain, it may still be difficult to understand why October 31st is so significant.
Before continuing this point, it would be helpful to understand that there are certain unholy days, times or seasons that witches, Satanists, Pagans and others celebrate. As previously alluded to, every full moon is believed by the occult to be a time of extra power. (NOTE: Extra power as in supernatural power. Scripture teaches that supernatural power comes from one of two sources: God, or the devil). Solar solstices and equinoxes are celebrated as high, unholy days as well as a day in February (approaching spring), April (approaching summer), August (approaching harvest) and the highest unholy day of the occultic calendar, October 31st (approaching winter).

But the question still remains, "Why concentrate on these days, and particularly October 31st? First of all, October 31st was chosen by the Druids and was their New Year’s Day, but it seems this is the day Satan has tried to declare as his. More human sacrifices take place in the Western world and in the U.S. on this day than on any other.

An interesting theory has been put forth as to why Satan chooses certain days. Radio commentator, occult expert and author Bob Larsen has used the phrase, the "Law of Conservation of Demonic Power" to describe this phenomenon. This term obviously is not found in the Bible, but it does not contradict what the Bible says. Basically, this theory states that since Satan is not all-powerful (omnipotent) or present everywhere at once (omnipresent) like God, he must conserve and concentrate his power. He chooses certain days to have his followers concentrate on evil and do the wicked deeds, rituals and practices that bring attention and power to him. October 31st is the day Satan has tried to claim as his high, unholy day.

Part IV – What Does God’s Word Say?

Up to this point, Halloween has been discussed from a factual and historical standpoint. The origin and symbols of Halloween have been discussed, but the bottom line must be, "What does God’s Word say?" Halloween is not in the concordance of any version of the Bible. However, God’s Word is a book of divine principles that apply in very practical ways to life today. As this topic is covered in more detail, it may seem that some of these verses could very well go under Halloween in a Bible’s topical index.

Many of the Scriptures that apply to the traditions, practices and symbols that are a part of Halloween are found in the Old Testament, but this first argument comes from the New Testament. II Timothy 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (KJV) If there were one word to summarize haunted houses, witches, bats, Jack−O−Lanterns and all that goes with Halloween, would it not be fear?

Deuteronomy 18:9–14 says, "When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. 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."

Sacrifices, divination, interpreting omens, witchcraft, casting spells, medium or spiritist, consulting the dead... could this passage not apply to Halloween?

"During one part of the Samhain Ritual, one of the celebrants chants, ‘We gather tonight to celebrate the turning of the year. The harvest has been brought home, and now begins the season of rest. This is a time for reflection on the past year, and a time to speak once again with those who have passed during that time, for on this night, the veil between the worlds is thinnest’ " (from the article What Do Al Gore and Halloween Have in Common by Keith Wilkerson in Christian Crusade Newspaper, 1993).
Isaiah 8:19 warns, "When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?" (NIV). God was very clear when addressing this area to His people, Israel. He said in Leviticus 19:31, "Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God." (NIV). And even more blatantly, in Old Testament times God said in Exodus 22:18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." (KJV).

Two more Scriptures will be addressed in Part VI, but one last warning from the Word of God will be mentioned here. I Chronicles 10:13−14 says, "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse." (NIV). If our God is the unchanging God the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8), would he approve of a holiday today that symbolizes, celebrates and casts a favorable light on these same practices?

Part V − Just Symbols?

Perhaps you have read all of this information about Halloween and said to yourself, "Well, maybe it started out that way, but I’m not really celebrating that when I do my Halloween stuff. After all, it’s just a bunch of symbols...the pumpkin and costumes and all."

Just symbols? How about some of the other symbols pictured here (not shown in the text−only version). Are they just symbols without meaning? Does the cross not mean more than two perpendicular lines? To take a thought from Bob Larsen once more, if these are just symbols without meaning, why not take the cross down from church steeples and replace it with a swastika or skull and crossbones? Obviously this would be blasphemous, and obviously symbols are not without meaning. If this is the case, why do Christians display symbols of Satan, witchcraft and the occult in the name of “fun” during this “holiday”?

Part VI − The Alternative(s)

If Halloween is deeply rooted in pagan, demon worship, what should Christians do on October 31st? Many churches have some sort of Christian alternative, and just a few of these alternatives will be mentioned here. Some churches prefer to make October 31st a night of spiritual warfare and designate a time to meet at the church and pray.

Another alternative is the "Fall Festival". This is what our church does. We believe that October 31st (just as every other day of the year) is the day that the LORD has made (Psalm 118:24). Why should we, as Christians, run and hide or try to act like Halloween doesn’t exist? 1 John 4:4 tells us, "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."(NIV). Why not turn the day into an opportunity to share the love of Christ with the unsaved, give our children something wholesome to do and keep unchurched children safe? Our church sponsors "Hallelujah Night" and has a fall festival with booths for games, activities, food and bags of candy for the children. Tickets are sold for a nominal price. Not only do the church’s children have wholesome activities for the evening, but neighborhood children are welcome to come in as well and are kept from the possible dangers of the night (poisoned candy and kidnapping to name just a few). The children are encouraged to dress up, but not as witches and demons, rather as Bible characters or animals (from Noah’s Ark).

Some churches have also rented out skating rinks or bowling alleys on this night. Although this does not reach out to the unchurched, children are still given an alternative and Mom and Dad don’t have to listen to the doorbell being rung hundreds of times.

Other families whose church does not have a Fall Festival choose to have a family night. I remember when I was a child, my Dad used to board up the windows in our walk−out basement and my Mom, Dad, sister and I would have a family game night. We
didn’t play board games such as Monopoly, rather we got unique ideas from game books and the like. I don’t remember every game we played, but I do remember thinking it was better than any Trick–or–Treat I had ever done before my parents felt convicted to have us stop celebrating Halloween.

Back to Table of Contents

Part VII – Conclusion

This paper was by no means written to give Satan any more “press” than he already gets on Halloween, rather it was written for Christians to evaluate their activities on this day. Scripture tells us that light has no fellowship with darkness (2 Cor. 6:14), and it is my firm belief that we, as Christians, need to avoid taking a day the Lord has made and turning it into a celebration of evil.

I also believe that Christians should not fear Halloween. October 31st is the Lord’s day, and I, for one, will do all I can to keep Satan from trying to claim it as his own.

With the exception of Part VI (the Alternatives), I have tried to share just the historical facts of the celebration of Halloween as well as portions of God’s Word that deal with those facts. My opinion is not going to matter in eternity, so it is not my desire to persuade you to follow my opinion as to what you should or should not do on October 31st. You have, however been given information AND the Word of God. That was my desire. You are now responsible for what you do with what you have been given...you can no longer claim ignorance.

I hope the information here has been helpful to you and your family in understanding both sides of the Halloween issue. I have included a short bibliography and a list of other sources (current as of the first writing of this paper) should you wish to do any further research on your own. God Bless.

Back to Table of Contents

Works Consulted and Other Sources


A Note To Wiccans, Pagans and Satanists

Every year I get a number of e−mail from Wiccans and Pagans informing me that they do not worship Satan or do not even believe he exists. (Strangely enough, many Satanists do not believe Satan exists). It was not my purpose in writing this paper to explain what these religions practice/believe. I will publically state that Wiccans, Pagans and Satanists...according to their beliefs...do not worship Satan/the devil in their rituals or worship practices. I will also publically state that Scripture (as quoted in Part IV of this paper) plainly says what is practiced during Wiccan, Pagan and Satanic services/rituals is demonic...of the devil. Even the law "Do what you will, harm none" can be traced to Satanic rebellion in the Garden of Eden. While I will be happy to discuss this matter further via e−mail, the beliefs of these different religions was never my motivation for writing this paper. (You may re−read my conclusion which sums up my purpose for writing this paper).
If you send me links to more "accurate" sources about your beliefs, I will try to check them out. I must admit trying to research Pagan history is a bit frustrating. For example, I have talked with some Pagans who celebrate Samhain, and then received e-mail from others informing that there is not documented "proof" of god of the dead called Samhain. (Perhaps Pagan beliefs would be easier to refute, or defend, if they were consolidated into one source that all "orthodox Pagans" could agree on). However, as I have already stated, my purpose in writing this paper was to comment on the practices and symbols of Halloween, not a history of Paganism. This paper only touches on these religions only as they relate to the practices and symbols of Halloween. You may have a different opinion as to whether these practices, etc. are demonic, but that does not change what the Bible says about these practices.

For further information on the web, visit Annie's Halloween Page. Annie's Halloween Page is PACKED full of useful resources. If you stop by, please let her know who pointed you her way.

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Please drop us an e-mail if you would like to comment on the information presented.
Wiccans, Pagans and others also welcome to comment, but please read the "A Note to Wiccans, Pagans and Satanists" section first. Also, please do not write and tell me I have the history of Samhain "all wrong" if your your information is not agreed upon by Pagans across the board. I often talk to three Pagans and get three answers about Samhain. The information I have printed is not inaccurate according to some Pagans I have talked to... it is inaccurate according to others. If you information is going to keep me in the same boat, I am not going to add anything to what I already have.