

## **Halloween - Harmless Fun or Dangerous Deception?**

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Halloween is big business. But how did it start? Where did it come from?

### **Pagan Origin**

Its origin lies in the time before Christ, among the Celtic Druids of Gaul and the British Isles. October 31st was the end of the pagan year, the dividing line between summer and winter and observed as the feast of Samhain, the "lord of death". At that time of year, it was believed, the veil between the natural and the supernatural was at its thinnest and the spirits of the dead could enter animals, especially black cats. At this festival, human sacrifices as well as animal were offered to Samhain.

### **Pagan Customs**

The turnip lantern derives from the fact that the Druids used to have slung over their shoulder on a cord a hollowed-out turnip, with an oil lamp burning inside, which was supposedly their personal god and guide. Later, in America, a pumpkin was used rather than a turnip.

The spirits of the dead were regarded as liable to return to their homes on the 31st October and cast spells or play tricks unless appeased by a treat, usually food. This is the origin of "Trick or Treat". People also dressed up in hideous masks to disguise themselves among the evil spirits.

Bobbing for apples in water without using the hands and also being able to peel them in one piece were seen as gaining favour with the spirits. Bonfires were lit to frighten off evil spirits and someone would often go round the edge of the village with burning sticks for this purpose.

### **Pagan with a Make-over**

After the apostles' time, much of the church gradually departed from Biblical teaching. Various unbiblical doctrines and practices were introduced until what became Roman Catholicism was fully developed, with the Bishop of Rome holding supreme power as the Pope. An integral part of this lamentable development was the practice of absorbing pagan festivals by putting a Christian veneer on them as church festivals or holy days.

Pope Boniface IV reconsecrated the Roman Pantheon temple, previously used for the worship of Cybele, to the virgin Mary in 609 AD and it was used for prayers for the dead. In 834 Pope Gregory IV made November 1st "All Saints Day" and November became the month especially for prayers for the dead whose souls were allegedly in purgatory. The evening of October 31st was known as "all saints eve" or "all hallows even" and hence shortened to hallowe'en. Over much of Europe the old pagan practices continued alongside the false Christian ones.

### **Pagan Still**

Satanists still offer sacrifices to the Devil at Halloween. The observance of Halloween is a serious business for the large number of wizards and witches' covens in the country today. Halloween is not harmless fun, nor should it be treated as such.

The Bible condemns all witchcraft, (2 Chronicles 33 v 6 and Galatians 5 v 20). *"There shall not be found among you. . . a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord."* (Deuteronomy 18 vs 10-12). A "necromancer" is someone who attempts to communicate with the dead.

The Roman Catholic make-over is no more Biblical than what it was intended to replace. All Saints Day was introduced with no basis in the Bible, the Word of God. The idea of purgatory is an invention. The Bible speaks of a Heaven of endless joy for those redeemed by Christ and a Hell of endless misery for those who are not. *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."* (Matthew 25 v 46). Praying for the dead is not Christian. Halloween was pagan from the start and remains so today, despite any pseudo-christian gloss put on it. Christians should have no part in it and should ensure that their children do not either. *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* (Joshua 24 v 15).

If you are not a Christian, then far from engaging in the darkness of Halloween, you must seek the light of God's Word. Search the Scriptures. In them you will find the message of forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ. He bore the guilt of sin in the place of sinners when he died on the cross. Seek him. *"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."* (Isaiah 55 v 6).