

Holidays and Holy Days

Halloween

What Every Christian Should Know About This Day!



The Festival Of Death

Come with me to the south of Britain; it is cool, late autumn, and the time is 300 years before the birth of Jesus. The Celtic civilization is in full flower, spreading by bloody conquest from the British Isles through Scandinavia, Europe and all the way to Asia Minor. The people are thoroughly pagan, worshipping many gods, and are ruled in a sense by kings; but the real power is in the hands of the Druids, a secret priestly society which rules by terror and by sorcery. Even the kings fear the mysterious, ever-present Druids; and when the king becomes too old to lead in battle or to father children, they sacrifice him to the gods, cutting his body cavity open while he is still alive and using his internal organs for divination and other magic.

Spiritual darkness covers the land, overshadowing every aspect of the people's lives, eroding even the laughter and play of the children with the penetrating presence of fear. Life is always hard, especially for the peasants; and the ever-nearness of the mysterious, powerful, silent Druids is a constant menace, looming like a dark, brooding presence, always felt and feared but never understood.

But now the darkness is thicker still, and more threatening; the pervasive, choking fear is at higher levels within, for it is the day they dread all year long. It is October 31st, the festival of Samhain, the Festival of Death.

Samhain is their God of Death and most powerful god. Every year on this day, they believe, the old year dies and the new year begins. It is the Celtic New Year, as well as the Festival of Samhain, the Festival of Death. He is particularly honored on this day, but more especially on this night; and the great climactic moment will come at midnight. Darkness, fear and death prevail; many human sacrifices are to be presented to Samhain, and midnight is the high moment of the year for divination, spiritism and sorcery of all kinds. Darkness is deepest, and death more sovereign tonight than at any other time of the year, and midnight will be the climax.

As the sun goes down over the western hills and darkness begins to flood the valleys, the people become more and more silent, doing the things they must do, but saying little. The fires are already being prepared on the hilltops, strange cries are heard, and other muffled sounds that are difficult to identify. Chores are hurried through and doors closed early. Lamps are extinguished; it will soon be time for the Druids to be out.

With darkness deepening the fires blaze higher and higher on the surrounding hills, the flames leaping and stabbing into the gathering gloom. Strange figures move about the fires, seen only in eerie redorange glimpses. Strange singing and chanting begin. And screaming. Paralyzing waves of fear rise and fall. Then, as if materializing out of the blackness, they appear . . . the Druids have come. Dressed in peculiar robes with mysterious magical markings, heads covered, silent as death, they appear. Each has, slung over his shoulder on a cord, a large, hollowed-out turnip with an oil lamp burning inside. Carved into the side of the hollow turnip is a hideous face, the likeness of the demon spirit that dwells inside. This spirit is the Druid's spirit guide, his personal little god, who directs and empowers his life. The smokey, yellow light from the oil lamp within shines dimly, causing the carved-out face to light up in a menacing, hideous grin.

The people tremble in silence within, barely breathing, hoping the Druids may pass them by and go on to another thatch-roofed home. Children cling to their parents, burying their faces in parental robes; the parents wish they could. Then comes the thumping on the door and the unnatural, moaning chant. They aren't going to pass by; oh, no . . . they are here! (Oh mighty gods, preserve us, they are here!) The door is opened with trembling hand and the Druid spokesman demands certain foods. The Druids adhere to strange dietary restrictions, and on the night of the Festival of Death they go from home to home demanding these peculiar foods. If the people comply, they pass on in silence; if their demands are not met, the people and their home are cursed with trouble, sickness and death.

The fires roar skyward, feeding on their own fury, summoning and guiding the spirits of the wicked dead. Witches and evil spirits go forth over the land, vexing and afflicting the helpless people. Cats screech and howl (the Druids believe them to be reincarnations of the wicked dead, possessed with supernatural knowledge and power). It is a night of raw, sickening terror.

As the midnight hour approaches, the madness increases; human sacrifices are ripped open, hearts torn out still beating; the viscera are spilled in the dust to be used for divination. Other things are done, too hideous to describe. Then the sacrifices are thrown into the fires, celebrants dancing and screaming around them in drunken, demonized fits of orgiastic abandon.

Satan's help is invoked as many forms of magic, witchcraft and sorcery are performed and much divination is done, for this night is known to be the premier night of the entire year for such

things. Much guidance and information concerning the coming year are sought. It goes on all night, but the madness reaches its climax at midnight and gradually diminishes after that.

By daylight the exhausted people begin cautiously to stir. On the hilltops, fires have died down, nothing remaining but ashes and the bones of the sacrifices. The people call them "bonfires," and avoid going too near, for the smell of death and the presence of evil hang heavily there still. But it's over.

Another Festival of Death has come and gone; they are weary but relieved, for they have somehow survived.

And you and I have seen this Samhain, this night of death, for ourselves; with them we have experienced this horrible festival of darkness . . . this celebration of the devil that plagues and vexes people to this day. We have seen it in its full flower on the misty, chill moors and windy hills of Celtic Britain.

Now walk with me in giant strides across the centuries, as we see how it has come down to us, bringing its destruction, dread, fear and death in an unbroken tradition of darkness to this enlightened Christian era. For Samhain is with us still.

Popularizing Samhain. As the centuries passed, and the Druids, under Roman domination, declined in numbers and in power, the common people entered more and more into the practices of Samhain. They particularly practiced a growing number of forms of divination, and these works of darkness were woven deeply into the very fabric of Celtic life. Since Samhain was the beginning of the new year, much divining was done concerning the coming year, and many things were done to invoke "good luck" (which meant finding favor with the evil spirits) for the coming year. A very popular form of this was to kneel around a tub of water with apples floating in it, and the first one who could get one out without using hands or teeth would have good favor with the spirits in the coming year. Then each would peel his (or her) apple, trying to get the peel off in one piece (which gave the peeling particular power, and gained special favor with the spirits). The peel was then thrown over the left shoulder, and, whirling quickly about, each was supposed to see an apparition (ghostly vision) of the one who would become his or her sex partner (or spouse, depending upon local custom) during the coming year. Many such superstitious customs developed as time passed, all for the purpose of knowing the future, pleasing the spirits and seeking their help.

The Pope Strikes Back. In the eighth century the Pope, in an attempt to get the people to abandon the festival of Samhain and all its occult, idolatrous practices, established All Saints Day on November 1st. This holy day was to be a day for honoring the Christian dead, particularly those who died as martyrs in the terrible Roman persecutions. He apparently hoped that the similarity of meaning, although in a godly context, would cause the people to accept All Saints

Day as a substitute and abandon the Festival of Death. But it didn't work. As a matter of fact, this attempt to end Samhain follows us and causes trouble to this day, because its location on the calendar has led many people to believe that Samhain is a Christian observance. Nothing could be farther from the truth, but let me show you how this gigantic misunderstanding developed.

In the British Isles, All Saints Day came to be called "All Hallowed's" since it was a day to honor all the "hallowed ones", the Christian dead. Since Samhain always occurred the evening before All Hallowed's, it came to be called "All Hallowed's Evening," or just "Hallowed's E'en." From this it evolved to "Hallows E'en" and, finally, to "Halloween" as we know it today. Because of the relationship in the names, and the adjacent dates, many today entertain the completely unfounded idea that Halloween is somehow a Christian holiday. This has made it much easier for the ungodly festival to move right into the churches each October and flourish there, spreading its occult poison.

But we know better; we know the truth. This hideous holiday for devils has nothing at all to do with Jesus and the Christian Church and it never has! It has been going on since at least 500 years before the birth of Jesus, and is in every way an abomination to our Holy God, and a deadly enemy of the faith of the saints. To link Halloween with the Christian Church makes less sense than for the Jewish survivors of the Nazi holocaust to happily celebrate the birth of Adolph Hitler, honoring the morals and reenacting the practices of the death camps!

In the Middle Ages. In the midst of the darkness that prevailed during the Middle Ages there was a mighty revival of witchcraft and satanism. During this time there developed the belief that on October 31st witches traveled to their covens flying on brooms, guided by evil spirits in the form of black cats. There was a great outpouring of satanic power, and as all the old practices continued, some new ones developed; the Festival of Death continued without interruption as the most important day (night) of the year for witches and all satanists, deepening the darkness that already covered the Earth, as a corrupted weakened Church was ineffective in opposing it.

In the New World. When our Puritan ancestors came to the New World in the seventeenth century, they strictly forbade all such occult practices and pagan festivals. Our textbooks and social commentators today paint them as intolerant, legalistic, loveless bluenoses; but I am now beginning to suspect that they knew some things, important things, that have been lost to our modern churches. Among the Puritans there was no Festival of Death, there was no Saturnalia, there were no Maypoles, no Midsummer Night, nor any such things; they were well aware of the satanic origins, nature and dangers of them. They may have been harsh, but at least they nourished no vipers in the bosom of the Church.

Then, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there came a flood of Celtic immigrants to the New World, mostly from the British Isles, and they brought with them their folk beliefs and pagan

superstitions; they brought with them Samhain, the Festival of Death. In the New World they found pumpkins, much easier to hollow out and carve than turnips. Among the English-speaking Celts the hollowed turnip or pumpkin was known as "Jock (or Jack) of the Lantern," referring to the spirit guide (Jock or Jack) who lived in the thing; he was literally "Jock/Jack who lived in the lantern." This was soon shortened to "Jack o' the lantern," then to "Jack o' lantern" and finally to "jackolantern" as we know it today. These popular, but pagan practices were increasingly accepted by the general populace and gradually became an established part of American life. The few small Christian voices raised against this invasion of paganism were shouted down and swallowed up in the rising tide of popular acceptance. Except for the substitution of pumpkins for turnips, the old practices continued very much the same as they had been in the British Isles and in western Europe.

Until This Day. Today there is a fresh outpouring of evil upon the Earth. There is a revival of witchcraft and all forms of satanism of greater proportions than that of the Middle Ages; it is probably the beginning of Satan's final assault, his last great offensive to damn the lost and weaken the Church. There are growing numbers of Satan worshippers, meeting freely in increasing numbers of satanic "churches". Practicing witches, numbering in the tens of thousands, advertise in newspapers, on television and radio, and keep regular office hours. More and more the police are required to deal with strange, new problems of law enforcement such as the opening of graves and mutilation of bodies for occult purposes, and the stealing of pets for sacrificing and divination. Children, teenagers and derelicts are increasingly being abducted, tortured and ritually murdered as sacrifices to Satan. And in the midst of all this outpouring of evil, Samhain, the Festival of Death, is still the ultimate high holy day of the satanic year. Now generally called Halloween, October 31st is definitely the focal point of this flood of filth, and at midnight of that date these hellish activities reach their yearly climax. Sacrifices are offered to the God of Death and Darkness all over the world. Sacrifices are offered in many forms, from food and drink offerings to chickens, goats, dogs and cats; and, in some places, there are human sacrifices. Witches still gather, satanists still convene, and all the dark doings of antiquity are repeated as spirits, goblins and demonic forces of darkness are loosed upon the land.

Samhain (Halloween) is still a night people dread; we are like those ancient Britons, relieved to see the sun coming up on November 1st, spreading light and scattering the darkness. It is still a night when the old, the weak and the helpless tend to turn out all lights and go to bed early in hopes that the Halloween marauders will think no one is home and pass them by. It is still a night in which the innocent are in danger as, every year, there are children who disappear, those who are killed in dark streets by cars, victimized by poisoned and drugged candy. It is still a night of dread as people are careful to put their cars into garages, and bring lawn furnishings inside to protect them; the cost in terms of property damage and cleaning up the mess rises every year. Bonfires still blaze, and in some places buildings are set on fire as the midnight madness mounts. Extra policemen are hired for this one night at great expense to the citizens. It has

become such a significant problem that many cities and even some states are now outlawing Halloween activities completely.

What are the Churches Doing? And what are the churches doing and saying in the midst of all this? It surely must break the heart of God, but many of the churches are right in the middle of this celebration of death, decorated with leering jackolanterns, giving Halloween "parties," complete with fortunetelling and other forms of divination, and building houses of horror in their fellowship halls. This may well be the worst part of all, for the very little children, the innocent lambs whom the Lord has entrusted to the churches for safe-keeping and protection, are deliberately subjected to fears and terrifying sights and sounds that may inflict permanent emotional injuries and open them up to invasion by demonic forces which seek to destroy them. Although some churches denounce and forbid such pagan practices, most enter in; and those voices raised in protest in such churches are themselves denounced as radical and dangerous. One such sincere Christian, a leader in the renewal movement within the Church, was quietly and humbly teaching the simple, undeniable truth about these things and how the Scriptures relate to them. He was singled out and rebuked by name from the pulpit by his Irish priest, to whom these Celtic traditions were still dear.

It is sad, but true, that the most significant days in the Christian year have all been invaded by the enemy, bringing in pagan practices and appealing substitutes (jolly old elves, benevolent bunnies, etc.) to take our eyes and affections from the Lord. But Halloween is the exception; there was nothing Christian to invade! This one was the devil's holiday all along, and he has somehow duped the Christians into embracing it and accepting it as our own!

Doreen Irvin, who was once the ruling witch of western Europe and the British Isles, and mistress of the High Priest of Satan over the same area, who is now a Spirit-filled woman of God, says, "If Christian parents had any idea of what Halloween really is they wouldn't even mention the word around their children." She knows whereof she speaks.'

What Saith the Scriptures? The scriptural denunciation of all such practices is so overwhelming as to make even a sample listing of passages much too great to be included here. Let it suffice to say that God hates and forbids all forms of paganism, for it honors other, false gods and leads to the destruction of the people He loves. He calls it spiritual adultery, "a whoring after other gods" (Lev. 20:5,6; Deut. 31:16, et al). He even warns that the bondages and sicknesses may be felt by succeeding generations (Ex. 20:3-6). The "images of their gods" (which a jackolantern most obviously is) are not to be tolerated or brought into our homes, lest we "be snared therein" and become "a cursed thing like it" (Deut. 7:25,26). The Lord warns us very specifically about divination, spiritism, enchantment, sorcery, witchcraft and all the other activities dear to Halloween observances and says that "all who do these things are an abomination unto the Lord" (Deut. 18:9-12). What could be plainer?

Jesus said that the great condemnation of men is that they choose darkness rather than light, preferring darkness "because their deeds are evil" (Jn. 3:19-21). Have you ever wondered why Halloween activities are always carried out in the dark? Why do you suppose the great climactic moment of the entire satanic year occurs on October 31st at midnight? Why not October 31st at noon? It is obviously because, as Jesus said, their deeds are evil. They avoid the light, for all these activities belong to the darkness. The apostle Paul teaches us (I Cor. 10:20-22) that to do these things is to "have fellowship with devils," and declares that we "cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and (also) the cup of devils." We are likewise taught clearly that we are to come apart from such unholy works of darkness, that we are not even to touch such unclean practices and objects (II Cor. 6:14-18). In this same passage we are asked "what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (verses 15,16); the only answer is a resounding "NONE!" You can't combine light with darkness; the Holy and the profane don't mix . . . not at all. You cannot have the God of Death and the Prince of Life; they are completely incompatible; they are mutually exclusive!

We are told plainly to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"; rather we are told to "reprove them" (expose them for that they really are), and this leaves no room for any dabbling (Eph. 5:6-11).

"But," some will still say, "I don't take it seriously; I love the Lord, and I certainly don't worship pagan gods; but I just do the Halloween things for fun." The Word of God leaves no room for such "middle ground"; there IS no "middle ground." We are plainly told that we are even to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thes. 5:22). It just cannot be.

What About You? And what about you? What do you perceive in Halloween? Be honest and think of what you associate with it. When you think of this time of "fun," when you try to enumerate the things that Halloween represents in your thinking, you probably think of the following: death, darkness, murder, fear, hate, bloodshed, mutilation, bats, witches on broomsticks with fearsome black cats, skeletons, graves, tombstones, demons, etc. You know that this is true. In the small Bible Belt town where we live there has been a contest each year in which the little children paint Halloween scenes on store windows around the courthouse square; these painted windows are supposed to express the meaning and spirit of Halloween, and the best ones get prizes. They are all decorated with scenes of death, mayhem, vampires, witches, skeletons, bats, demons, mutilated bodies, ghosts, goblins, graves, etc. Come on, now; we cannot deny that these things are the essence of this day of darkness. It is not even disguised; it is not even subtle. Can you deny this, even to yourself? You know that this is true! It is totally negative, basically destructive, rooted in darkest paganism, thriving in darkness, featuring fear, cruelty, violence and death. It is the antithesis, the very opposite, of all that is godly, good, positive, healthy, right, constructive and pleasing to the Lord.

And There Is a Lot of Money in It. I don't suppose anyone really knows just how much money there is in Halloween-related sales each year, but it is a bundle. Think of all the money spent on costumes, decorations, and candy, just for the privilege of being put in physical danger, emotional danger and spiritual danger. My wife and I always made the costumes for our children, partly because we were creative and enjoyed making them, and partly because we couldn't afford to buy them. But the effect was the same. And we had to buy a supply of candy and fruit for those who came to the door.

And in recent years, there has developed what is by far the most illogical part of this entire illogical nightmare: the greeting card industry is now marketing "Happy Halloween" cards! Yes, this October your Hallmark shop (or its equivalent) will be decorated in the usual orange and black, with the usual representations of death and darkness, and there will be featured a rack of Halloween greeting cards. Over all this, strung across the store, will probably be a large banner saying "Happy Halloween". Think of this; just stop and think what it really means to wish someone a "happy Halloween." It is like saying, "Have a happy night of dread, anxiety and fear!"; or "Happy terrifying dreams!"; or "Here's wishing you pleasant property damage!" For the children, why not, "Enjoy your new fear of the dark!", or "Happy tummyache!" And, for the emotionally vulnerable, why not, "Have a happy nervous breakdown!"; Oh, yes, and for the Christians, why not "Enjoy a night and day of spiritual adultery!"; or "Have a happy time grieving God!" We might even sell one saying "Congratulations! You are an abomination unto the Lord!" Oh, well . . .

By now I'm sure that you see what I mean. But the vast majority of Americans (including a great many Christians) apparently do not. They go right on, following blindly rather than thinking (the herd mentality is such a sad thing), buying the costumes, decorations and the ridiculous cards.

And the Children Suffer. Aside from what I know all this does to the heart of God, the thing about it that hurts me most is seeing innocent and helpless children victimized. Without doubt, the principal victims are the little children. This past October I ached, watching young mothers carrying babies and toddlers through the stores, buying demon, witch, and vampire costumes for them. I remember vividly one mother, carrying a tiny little girl who was too young even to be excited about a party; the woman had already put a large, black witch's hat on that tiny little head and was leaving the store with a triumphant smile on her face, thinking how "cute" her little girl was going to be. The little girl, puzzled about the whole thing, looked at me as she went by, oversized witch's hat falling over on her undersized, little girl's head, and I saw innocence being swallowed up in the symbolism of darkness, unable to understand and helpless to resist.

We conduct parties for them where we frighten them with horror stories and contaminate them with divination and magic; then we send them out into the deadly darkness, dressed like demons,

witches and corpses (or in Cinderella dresses . . . what's the difference?) to reenact the Druidic "trick-or-treat" rituals of Samhain. Some don't ever come back.

My wife and I always went out with our children; we considered ourselves to be good parents (and we were, in the limited light we had to walk in) because we didn't just send our little children out into the darkness for "tricks-ortreats," we took them. We watched over them. But this only reduced the physical danger to them; and we didn't know about the other kinds of danger.

So What Do We Do? With all this laid out before us, what do we do about it? How do we relate to all this? If we are going to obey and please God, we must have nothing to do with this pagan day of darkness; we must cleanse our lives of it all. If we want to be free, really free, we must renounce all such vestiges of hideous devil worship in the name of the Lord . . . no matter how innocent they may seem. Then we must call upon Him to deliver us from all bondages and hindrances that may have come upon us as a result of such things.

There can be no compromise with evil, not even with the appearance of evil; there is no middle ground. Some will say, "But I don't take it seriously, it's only harmless fun." To them I reply that it may be fun, but it isn't harmless. I'll say that again: it may be fun, but it definitely isn't harmless!

We must take the same uncompromising stand against the enemies of God and those things that would destroy us (the two are one and the same) that the prophets took, that Jesus took, and that the early Church took. This evil thing has come down to us, out of the misty darkness beyond the dawn of history, in an uninterrupted tradition of evil. It permeates the Body of Christ today, unchanged, sowing its deadly seeds of idolatry, doubt, spiritual weakness, sickness and death. Turn from it; have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It is all a stench in the nostrils of a holy God and an insult to the Prince of Life.

It will rob you of your freedom. Flee from it, and don't look back.

The Festival of Death, the text above, is also available as a separate pamphlet, illustrated and footnoted. 25 Cents each (15 Cents in bulk).

[*Festival of Death*](#) by Tom McKenney. A powerful and factual presentation of the origins and nature of Halloween traditions and practices, and their place in the lives of Christians. An excerpt from the author's book *Live Free* .

Excerpt from Tom C. McKenney's book, *Holidays and Holy Days*

