

FACTS ABOUT HALLOWEEN

Introduction:

October 31, though not an American legal holiday, has become a part of the American commercial and cultural scene. Besides candy and costumes dozens of other elements have attached themselves to this yearly observance. But, how do these "rituals" and traditions stack up with Biblical teaching and standards? Is there anything incompatible between "Halloween" and Christianity? Let's see.

I. ORIGIN OF THE DAY

- A. "Halloween" comes from the words "Hallow's eve" and was observed by the Catholic Church (since the 900's) as the evening before "All Saints Day" Nov. 1 (The words "hallow" and "saint" come from the same word).
- B. But, the same day (Oct. 31) was observed in pre-Christian times with Scottish and Irish folk customs and dates back to the ancient "Druids" and "Celts" (of Britain, France and Germany) who worshiped "Samhain" as the lord of the dead on Nov. 1. (See "Encyclopedia Britannica" on "Druids").
- C. The day can even be traced further back to celebrations throughout the world of the death of all mankind (resulting from the Great Flood) and the beginning of life on a cleansed earth. (See "The Flood" by Rehwinkel, pp. 169-171).

II. PRACTICES WHICH HAVE DEVELOPED AROUND "HALLOWEEN"

- A. The imitating of or glorifying of Ghosts, Goblins, Spirits, Spooks, Skeletons, Monsters, etc., symbolizing death. (These all stem from ancient pagan practices of honoring/consulting the dead).
- B. The imitating of or glorifying the Devil, Witches, Black Magic, Sorcery, Seances, Horoscopes, Ouija Boards, Fortune Telling, etc., are related to Superstition or the Occult, things forbidden by God (Deut. 18:10-12; Gal. 5:19-21, etc.)
- C. Other practices and traditions that have grown up around Halloween are: Jack-O-Lanterns, Black Cats, Bats, Trick or Treat, etc.

III. WHAT IS THE PROPER CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO SUCH HALLOWEEN "TRAPPINGS"?

- A. Deut. 18:8-12. How does God view the various occultic practices?
- B. Eph. 4:27; James 4:7; II Cor. 2:11; Jude 9. What are some of the dangers connected with any kind of involvement with Satan, the devil?
- C. I Thess. 5:22. If there is a question about whether something is evil, what is the Christian's responsibility?
- D. Eph. 5:11-12. If a practice can be determined to be a "work of darkness" what is the Christian's responsibility?
- E. I Cor. 10:25-29. Is a particular practice (such as eating food sacrificed to idols) to be avoided simply because it had a history of pagan idolatry? How might this principle apply to certain "decorations" used in connection with Halloween?

Other discussion questions

1. Are "pranks" that produce harm, loss or inconvenience to people acceptable behavior for Christians?
2. Should the emotions of "fear", "fright" and becoming extremely "scared" be cultivated by Christians? (See Heb. 12:14; Isa. 26:3)
3. Do you think there are acceptable alternatives which Christians can observe during the Halloween "season?" (Such as fall decorations, "Harvest Parties", Costume parties, etc.)