

TWENTIETH CENTURY  
**WATCH**

## "Trick or Treat?"

Every fall, Ghouls, goblins, ghosts, and witches find their way to the doorsteps of tens of thousands of homes across the country, as the professing Christian world dons the trappings of an ancient festival honoring the "Lord of Death."

by Vance A. Stinson

It's that time of year again that is, time for Samhain, the Celtic "Lord of Death," to permit the "souls" of the wicked to return to their earthly homes for an evening. It's also time for bonfires, apple-bobbing, scary stories, jack-o'-lanterns, fortunetelling, and children arrayed as the "hosts of hell." In other words, it's time for Halloween.

Have you ever wondered why Christian parents permit, even encourage, their young-sters to "dress up" like evil, God-defying, wicked crea-tures? Why would God-fearing, Bible believing Christians want to participate in a festival of ancient pagan origin?

"But what difference does it make if Halloween customs were handed down from the pagans?" someone asks. "After all, isn't the celebration just a fun tradition?"

Indeed, Halloween is a tradition, and it's been around for a long time. Though not well accepted by many early American settlers, it has been alive and well in the United States since the influx of large numbers of Irish and Scottish immigrants who, along with their customs and traditions, made their way to American shores in the 1800s.

But what does the Bible say about tradition? Does "tradition" justify the things we do?

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Tradition, then, does not necessarily justify our actions.

But what about Halloween? Does it really make any difference that the custom developed from ancient pagan festivals?

Yes, it does! God warned Israel not to follow after the gods and religious customs of heathen peoples. "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them...and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise...thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods...what thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:30-32).

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God says, "Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people are vain" (Jeremiah 10:2,3).

But is there any real proof that Halloween was derived from paganism?

Actually, anyone capable of looking up the word "Halloween" in an encyclopedia at

any library can easily discover the pagan origins of the custom. (For more information on the origins of Halloween, write for a free copy of our brochure entitled "Hallowe'en.")

"But we don't observe Halloween as a religious custom," someone argues. "It's just fun, especially for the kids."

It may be fun, but consider this: God commands us to keep His appointed festivals His weekly and annual holy days. (For a thorough study of the holy days, write for our booklet, God's Seasonal Plan.) We are commanded, at the Passover season, to take the symbols of our Lord's shed blood and broken body; to eat unleavened bread seven days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, picturing our dependence upon the "Bread of Life" as the Source of our salvation; and to annually, at the Feast of Tabernacles, picture the fact that we are "pilgrims" and "sojourners" in this world, as we look forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon this earth.

In other words, God commands us to "act out" His plan; and in so doing, we become more and more like Jesus Christ, who is portrayed in some way in each of God's annual feasts and holy days.

Apparently, many professing Christians would rather have their children pretend to be witches, ghouls, ghosts, and other "hosts of hell" than have them "act out" God's plan. Why? Because its easier to go along with the crowd than chance being labeled an "odd ball" or risk loss of social status.

Most parents wouldn't approve their children adopting the rituals of satanism even the seemingly "harmless" rituals. Yet, thousands of children from professing Christian homes go out dressed as ghosts, or "souls departed from the body" (a completely pagan and unbiblical concept), demons (twisted, warped, angelic beings who followed Satan the devil in rebellion against God), witches (disciples of an ancient anti-God mystery cult), ghouls (walking, murderous, half-decayed, "living" corpses a mockery of the glorious resurrection promised to Christ's true followers), and other weird, demonic, creatures of darkness.

Does it not seem curious that we teach our children customs derived from ancient, pagan religious/harvest festivals, while completely ignoring God's harvest festivals?

God's Feast of Tabernacles, occurring at the end of Israel's harvest year (September-October), is generally ignored. In fact, thousands of professing Christians have never so much as heard of the festival. Many reject it outright, calling it "Jewish," or claiming that the Sabbaths and holy days were "nailed to the cross" and shouldn't be kept. Yet, a festival associated with ancient, pagan superstition is "fun" for nearly everyone.

But what if your pastor, just for "fun," decided to throw a big "Buddhist" party at the church's fellowship hall? Suppose everyone was to come in Buddhist religious garb, carrying little Buddha images; the walls of the fellowship hall were to be decorated with traditional Buddhist religious art work; and, of course, images and incense were to add to the "Buddhist spirit" of the party.

The pastor explains that the party would be "in the spirit of Christianity," and assures his parishioners that "it's just for fun."

Do you honestly think Jesus Christ would be pleased with such a party? Is it fitting that a Christian church don the apparel of pagan Buddhism? Probably, a good number of church members would be utterly outraged, absolutely refusing to participate in such an affair.

Yet, incredibly, tens of thousands of professing Christians the same people who would adamantly refuse to attend the "Buddhist party" would think nothing of attending

a church-sponsored Halloween celebration, or of taking their children (dressed as demons, witches, and ghouls) "trick-or-treating"!

What about you? Will you observe a festival founded on superstitious celebration with roots extending into pagan antiquity? And what of God's festivals? Will you ignore them?

The Creator of the universe commands us to obey His laws. And His laws forbid the observance of heathen religious customs. Are you willing to obey Him?

The choice is yours.

End

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