

Seeking Out

The Old Paths

Volume 11 Issue 10

October 2005

HALLOWEEN: BEHIND THE MASK

Every year, on the evening of Oct. 31, millions of families celebrate a distinctly odd holiday known as Halloween. For your own good, you need to know what lurks behind the mask of Halloween.

Halloween is undoubtedly one of the strangest holidays people celebrate, with its symbolism of witches, devils, skeletons, bats and black cats. Is it not a little bizarre that children are taught to dress up as ghosts and monsters to go from house to house demanding “trick or treat!” (with the threat of a trick or prank constituting a playful form of extortion)?

While tricks are no longer the norm in most places, it used to be common in many areas that refusal to give trick-or-treaters candy invited minor acts of vandalism, such as having one’s windows marred with a bar of soap, trash dumped on the lawn, toilet paper unrolled across tree limbs, and raw eggs thrown against the house and car.

Where, how and when did such

strange customs begin? And why do they continue?

Many parents encourage their children to celebrate Halloween, assuming it to be harmless and innocent fun. But why? Would parents honor this holiday if they knew what’s behind it—behind the mask?

Few people really understand the origins of Halloween. However, many clues are obvious from the trappings of the holiday—witches, ghosts, jack-o’-lanterns, skeletons and the like.

History shows that behind the dark mask of this popular children’s holiday reside the terrors of an ancient Celtic festival renamed All Hallows Eve. It was originally a holiday marking the mythical time when the dead supposedly rose from their graves to walk the earth.

To better understand the origins of Halloween one needs to be introduced to the ancient pagan festival of Samhain (usually pronounced sow-en).

In *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, under the heading “Halloween,” the authors link Halloween to the eve of Samhain, “a celebration marking the beginning of winter as well as the first day of the New Year within the ancient Celtic culture of the British Isles.”

This encyclopedia explains that “the time of Samhain comprised the eve of the feast and the day itself (31 October and 1 November). This event was a crucial seam in the social and religious fabric of the Celtic year, and the eve of Samhain set the tone for the annual celebration as a threatening, fantastic, mysterious rite of passage to a new year”

Both the eve and day of Samhain were thought to be a time when the barriers between the human and supernatural worlds were broken, allowing passage between the two. “Other worldly entities, such as the souls of the dead, were able to visit earthly inhabitants, and humans could take the opportunity to penetrate the domains of the gods

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“We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good.” Numbers 10:29

Dryden Road
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 3201 Dryden Road
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 298-6555

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday School - 10 A.M.

Morning Worship - 11 A.M.

Evangelistic Service - 6 P.M.

TUESDAY

Youth Service - 7:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY

Prayer Service - 10 A.M.

THURSDAY

Family Service - 7:30 P.M.

“Where A Warm
 Welcome Awaits You...
 In This Church We
 Teach Holiness Too...”

Pastor
 Bennie D. Sutherland

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Around Home

Prayer List

Please remember the following people in our church who need a touch from the Lord.

Patsy Roberts, Verna Williams, Edna Pelfrey, Demia Abner, Ruby Carpenter, Marty Hatcher, Bessie Richmond, Evelyn Houston, Brenda Houston, Donna Maggard, Willidean Curtis, Opal Houston, Odie Boggs, Rachel Thompson, Flodie Baldwin, Steve Phillips, Carl Henson, Richie Sutherland, and Ray Driscoll.

Thanksgiving, Christmas, and another new year are not that far away. You're probably asking yourself, where has this year gone!

Please don't forget those who are in need at Thanksgiving. Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board in the basement for those who are able to contribute for the Thanksgiving Baskets. For any further information please see Brother Gary Scott.

In December names will be drawn for Christmas gifts for our needy children. If you are able to help it will be greatly appreciated.

Birthdays

Elizabeth Combs.....	2
Midas Whitley	4
Darren Dotson	5
James Pelfrey.....	5
Carl Henson.....	6
Todd Hatcher	8
Darius Tempelton.....	8
Millie Mills.....	9
Donald Dixon.....	10
Donna Maggard.....	11
Jennifer Austin	12
Lisa Hasty.....	14
Austin Spencer.....	15
Jean Rogers	17
Seth Phillips	17
Tammy Brooks.....	17
Shannon Baker	17
Sylvester Carpenter.....	22
Andrew Bishop	28
Sarah Hasty	29
Vickie Henson.....	29
Jessica Joseph.....	30
Rick Reed.....	31

Anniversaries

Gary & Jamie Isaacs.....	5
Doug & Stephanie Joseph.....	6
Keith & Jennifer Austin	14
Tony & Terri Robinson.....	20
Gerald & Jenny Pearson	29

Postcard to psychiatrist: “Having a wonderful time. Wish you were here -- to tell me why.”

SHOUTIN' SHOES

Say goodbye to the blues!
Put on your shoutin' shoes!
Let's sing and praise the Lord!
Then, upon us all,
The Holy Ghost will fall,
When we get in one accord!

On The Solid Rock we stand!
So, let's join hand in hand,
As we magnify the Lord up above!
Then, He will grant our desire,
To be filled with Holy Ghost fire,
And baptize us in His heavenly love!

The reason we came,
Was to lift up His name,
Not to see who was here tonight!
As love flows from breast to breast,
And the Spirit crests,
It sure is a welcome sight!

Now we've got no time to lose.
We must go spread the good news,
That the Holy Ghost is real today!
We not only "talk the talk,"
He helps us to walk,
On the Straight and Narrow Way!

Robert F. Dotson © 2005

INGRATITUDE

A young man from a wealthy family was about to graduate from high school. It was the custom in that neighborhood for parents to give their graduate an automobile.

"Bill" and his father had spent months looking at cars, and the week before graduation, they found the perfect car. Bill was certain that it would be his on graduation night.

Imagine his disappointment when, on the eve of graduation, Bill's father handed him a gift-wrapped Bible. Bill was so angry, he threw the Bible down and stormed out of the house. He and his father never saw each other again. Only his father's death brought Bill home again.

As he went through his father's possessions that he was to inherit, he came across the Bible his father had given him. He opened it to find a cashier's check, dated the day of his graduation -- in the amount needed for the car they had chosen -- together.

Is There Not A Cause?

The society of today promotes many agendas, services, or causes. A cause in this sense is defined as a goal or principle served with dedication and zeal. Many of the causes promoted in today's society are relatively positive, but there are equally as many negative causes. There are three inherent attributes with any given cause: The cause requires participation. The cause works toward a specific goal. There exists an associated outcome with the specific cause. Every cause requires these three attributes to exist. Missing any one of the preceding attributes will ensure failure of the specified cause.

As mentioned before, there are many causes promoted in today's society. Some well-known causes of today are humanitarian causes, civil liberties causes, and religious causes. However, other causes hold wide participation. Causes such as materialism, self-preservation, and humanism are abundant in the world of today.

Be certain that every person will participate in a cause. Every person is either voluntarily or unknowingly working toward a specific cause or goal. For each cause there exists an end goal or desire. For example, if an individual chooses an end goal of early retirement and a life of luxury, then they will most likely have chosen the materialistic cause.

However, there are alternatives to the causes promoted by today's society. The cause I present is not

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and supernatural creatures.

“Fiery tributes and sacrifices of animals, crops, and possibly human beings were made to appease supernatural powers that controlled the fertility of the land. Samhain acknowledged the entire spectrum of nonhuman forces that roamed the earth during that period”

The Encyclopedia of Religion then explains the origin of the bizarre customs that survive in today’s Halloween: “Divination activities remained a popular practice. Adults, dressed in fantastic disguises and masks, imitated supernatural beings and visited homes where occupants would offer tributes of food and drink to them. A fear of nocturnal creatures, such as bats and owls, persisted, since these animals were believed to communicate with the spirits of the dead.”

Centuries later, Irish and Scottish immigrants brought the custom of Halloween with them to the New World. After massive immigration of the Irish to the United States during the great potato famine in Ireland (1845-46), Halloween eventually became a national event.

Today, says The Encyclopedia of Religion, “modern Halloween activities have centered on mischief making and masquerading in costumes, often resembling otherworldly characters. Folk customs, now treated as games (such as bobbing for apples), have continued from the various divination practices of the ancient celebrants of this occasion. Supernatural figures (such as the ghost, the witch, the vampire, the

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devil) play a key role in supplying an aura of the mysterious to the evening, whether or not they originally had an association with the festival.

“Children are particularly susceptible to the imagery of Halloween, as can be seen in their fascination with the demonic likeness of a carved and illuminated pumpkin, known as the jack-o’-lantern. In recent times, children have taken up the practice of dressing in Halloween costumes and visiting homes in search of edible and monetary treats, lightly threatening to play a trick on the owner if a treat is not produced . . .

“There also has been renewed interest in Halloween as a time when adults can also cross cultural boundaries and shed their identities by indulging in an uninhibited evening of frivolity. Thus, the basic Celtic quality of the festival as an evening of annual escape from normal realities and expectations has remained into the twentieth century.”

Does the Bible have anything to say about strange customs and holidays such as this? In fact, it does—and none of it is good.

While God’s Holy Days in the Bible celebrate the role of Jesus Christ in bringing mankind to salvation in the eternal family of God, Halloween is a celebration of the opposite—of demonism, witchcraft, death and evil spirits.

God’s Word makes it clear that no one should dare entertain witchcraft or act as a sorcerer. “There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter

to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or 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: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Deuteronomy 10,11,12.

God pronounced death on any Israelites who would dare dally with demonism or Satanism: “A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.” Leviticus 20: 27. 18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. Exodus 22:18

Why such a harsh penalty? God did not want such perverted, demonic practices to spread among His people and corrupt others. “And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.” Deuteronomy 13:5

Would God be against something as harmless as Halloween, especially since it allows children to have fun and enjoy a little entertainment? Can’t we let them have a little harmless fun?

Frankly, Halloween is anything but

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harmless. It focuses one's attention on witchcraft and demonism, which flies in the face of the holy God Almighty! When parents not only allow but also encourage their children to celebrate witches and goblins, they are teaching them that it's acceptable to deal in demonism. And we have seen what God thinks of that. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1: 5). Satan, the god of this world, is a very real being—a being of darkness, deception and death. "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44). We are to have nothing to do with his ways.

Do not assume that Halloween is a harmless holiday. God hates mankind's dabbling in the spirit world of Satan and his demons!

If there were no other reason available, that should be enough. But there are more reasons. Halloween keeps humankind, and many Christians, confused. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Nor is He the author of Halloween or any other "Christianized" pagan holidays. Why would the only true God who loves mankind support any worldly holiday that blinds human beings to Him and His truth and that holds men, women and children captive to deception?

You now know what lurks behind Halloween's mask: Satan the devil! God is highly offended by the holidays designed and perpetuated by the god of this world.

God is not a god of masks, but a God of truth. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." 1 John 4:24

"You can impress people at a distance but you can impact them only up close."

THINGS DON'T JUST HAPPEN

Things don't just happen to us who love God,
They're planned by His own dear Hand.
Then moulded and shaped, and timed by His clock,
Things don't just happen they're planned.

We don't just guess on the issues of life,
We Christians just rest in our Lord.
We are directed by His Sovereign will,
In the light of His Holy Word.

We who love Jesus are walking by faith,
Not seeing one step that's ahead.
Not doubting one moment what our lot might be.
But looking to Jesus instead.

We praise our dear Saviour for loving us so,
For planning each care of our life.
Then giving us faith to trust Him for all,
The blessings, as well as the strife.

Things don't just happen to us who love God,
To us who have taken our stand,
No matter the lot, the course, or the price,
Things don't just happen, they're planned.

Esther L. Fields

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28

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very well known and even less likely to be followed. Very simply, I present the cause of Christ. Some may ask, "What is the cause of Christ?" The cause of Christ is best represented in Mark 16:15 when Jesus exhorted to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." I am not advocating that each of us become missionaries or evangelist, but we are all responsible for promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ to those around us. Each of us has a different audience to which we can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We each have co-workers, friends, and family that no one else may be able to reach. That places the responsibility of preaching the gospel to each of them squarely on our shoulders. Some may say, "I cannot change the world." While it may be true that no one person

can change the entire world, each of us has the opportunity to change at least one person's world by introducing them to the gospel of Jesus.

Brother Tim Varney

A cannon is but a short tube; but its direction at the moment of its discharge governs the whole flight of the ball. A clay mold is a fragile thing; but the molten metal poured into it may retain the shape so given ages after the mold has crumbled into dust.

The plate prepared by a photographer may be exposed to the light only a few seconds; but the impression then caught may be retained for many years.

Flowers are frail, and soon drop

into the ground; but they leave behind a ripening seed that may perpetuate the species forever. Such is the influence we have upon our children.

One has said, "The Bible does not need to be defended; it needs to be taught."

Joseph Parker was asked for the best reply to attacks upon the Bible. "Circulation!" was the answer.

C.H. Spurgeon, upon being asked if he could defend the Bible, replied: "Defend it! I would as soon defend a lion. Let it out, it can defend itself."

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