

Halloween Explained

Deut. 12:30-32 Be careful that you are not ensnared in following them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not seek after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods, so that I also may do likewise? You shall not do so for Jehovah your God, for every abomination to Jehovah, which He hates, they have done to their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burned with fire to their gods. The whole thing that I am commanding you, you shall be certain to do; you shall not add to it, nor shall you take away from it.

Every year, on the evening of October 31, millions of families celebrate a distinct odd holiday known as Halloween. For our own good as believers in Christ, we need to know what lurks behind the mask of Halloween.

Halloween's origin

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 from the ancient pagan festival of Samhain. The time of Samhain comprised the eve of the feast and the day itself, October 31 and November 1. 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 and supernatural creatures. It was originally a holiday marking the mystical time when the dead supposedly rose from their graves to walk on the earth. It was also marking the beginning of winter as well as the first day of the New Year within the ancient Celtic culture of the British Isles.

Halloween comes to the New World

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, modern Halloween activities have centered on mischief making and masquerading in costumes, often resembling otherworldly characters. Supernatural figures such as the ghost, the witch, the vampire, the 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 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.

Halloween is abominable to God

God's word makes it clear that no one should dare entertain witchcraft or act as a sorcerer. "For everyone who does these things is an abomination to Jehovah; and on account of these abominations Jehovah your God is dispossessing them from before you" (Deut. 18:10-12). God pronounced death on any Israelites who would dare deal with demons or Satan. "If there is a man or woman who is a medium or a spiritist, they shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:27). Why such a harsh penalty? God did not want such perverted, demonic practices to spread among His people and corrupt others.

Halloween appears harmless, especially since it allows children to have fun and enjoy a little entertainment. We will realize the seriousness, however, that what lurks behind Halloween's mask are Satan and devil. Because Halloween focuses one's attention on witchcraft and demonism to celebrate witches and goblins which God abhors. As children of God we should be sanctified unto Him, having nothing to do with worldly traditions especially the demonic Halloween festival.