



## Should Halloween Make Us Happy?

**Romans 1:25:** (NASB) *For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*



There are some things that most everyone has in common. One of those things is our collective desire to celebrate. Granted, what we celebrate and the ways that we choose to celebrate are as varied as the seasons, but the desire to celebrate is a common thread. Today is one of those days where lots of people celebrate. It is Halloween and, believe it or not, it is not only the second most commercialized holiday in America, only being outspent by Christmas, half of all homes in America are decorated for the occasion. What is Halloween anyway? Where did it come from and what is the secret of its popularity? Stay with us as we examine some history, some tradition and the Bible!

### Our only question for consideration:

#### What ingredients are in the mix that makes Halloween?

Unless otherwise indicated, the sound bytes played today are from The History Channel documentary "*The Haunted History of Halloween*," 1997



#### The Origin of Halloween

*What elements do we notice play a major role?*

- *The earth*
- *The seasons*
- *People*

#### Interestingly, we have a scripture dealing with all three of these things:

**Psalms 104:19-24:** (NASB) <sup>19</sup>*He made the moon for the seasons; The sun knows the place of its setting.* <sup>20</sup>*You appoint darkness and it becomes night, in which all the beasts of the forest prowl about.* <sup>21</sup>*The young lions roar after their prey and seek their food from God.* <sup>22</sup>*When the sun rises they withdraw and lie down in their dens.* <sup>23</sup>*Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until evening.* <sup>24</sup>*O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; The earth is full of Your possessions.*

God placed these in an orderly fashion.

(Source: **The Ancient Celtic Fire Festivals** [www.neopagan.net](http://www.neopagan.net))

There appear to have been four major holy days celebrated by the Paleopagan Druids, possibly throughout the Celtic territories:.... These four major holy days have been referred to as "fire festivals"...Whether in Ireland or India, among the Germans or the Hittites, sacred fires were apparently kindled by the Indo-European Paleopagans on every important religious occasion....

Samhain or "Samhuinn" is pronounced "sow-" (as in female pig) "-en" (with the neutral vowel sound) – not "Sam Hain"... is often said to have been the most important of the fire festivals, because (according to most Celtic scholars) it may have marked the Celtic New Year....

Being "between" seasons or years, Samhain was (and is) considered a very magical time, when the dead walk among the living and the veils between past, present and future may be lifted in prophecy and divination.



## The Importance of the Night

*What elements do we notice play a major role?*

- *The Unknown*
- *The Hereafter*

These are legitimate concerns, especially in a society living off of the earth and a victim of the seasons.

Daniel 2:19-22: (NKJV) <sup>19</sup>Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven. <sup>20</sup>Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. <sup>21</sup>And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. <sup>22</sup>He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.

Are we afraid of the dark? Note, God knows what is in the darkness and is in control. Our level of fear ought to be different, because we have far less unknown about God's design. From the early Celtic perspective, there was little sense of comfort because there was so much unknown. Traditions were developed as a result of the darkness, the unknown, the seasons, and the hereafter.

### Sweets to Appease Fear of the Dead

(Source: [www.religioustolerance.org](http://www.religioustolerance.org))

Samhain was a fire festival. Sacred bonfires were lit on the tops of hills in honor of the gods. The townspeople would take an ember from the bonfire to their home and re-light the fire in their family hearth. The ember would usually be carried in a holder - often a turnip or gourd. They felt nervous about walking home in the dark; they were afraid of evil spirits. So they dressed up in costumes and carved scary faces in their ember holders. They hoped that the spirits would be frightened and not bother them....

Wiccans and some other Neopagans base their religious faith on the religion of the Celts. They continue to celebrate Samhain today.

### Appeasing the gods with Sacrifices

- *The veil between this life and the afterlife was thinnest at this time of year, so those that died during the past year could come back. It was a scary time.*
- *The Celts believed that the gods controlled the sun.*
- *They built fires to honor the gods and pray for the return of the sun.*
- *Blood (animal) sacrifices were offered to thank the earth for her bounty.*

### God IS in control:

Genesis 3:19-21: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. <sup>20</sup>Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. <sup>21</sup>The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

God proclaims justice must be done because of sin.

Where do you suppose those skins came from?



## The practice of sacrifices offered to God was an ever present practice from the very beginning of civilization:

**Genesis 4:2-4:** (NASB) <sup>2</sup>Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup>So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. <sup>4</sup>Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;



Fear creates the opportunity for our minds to take us wherever they will.

**Genesis 8:18-22:** (NASB) <sup>18</sup>So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. <sup>19</sup>Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark. <sup>20</sup>Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. <sup>22</sup>"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

So, the very basic seeds of what was done in the Pagan Celtic societies can be traced back to the history recorded in the Bible - however, there is a vast difference between those seeds and the path that the majority of humanity took, which lead them away from God.

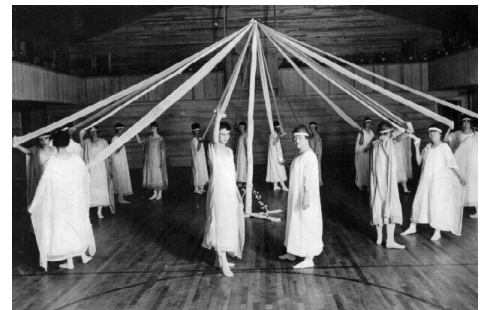
**Exodus 34:12-17:** (NASB) <sup>12</sup>Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst. <sup>13</sup>But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their **Asherim** <sup>14</sup>—for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—<sup>15</sup>otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice, <sup>16</sup>and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods. <sup>17</sup>You shall make for yourself no molten gods.

The clear message: Stay away from idolatry!

**Deuteronomy 12:2-3:** (NASB) <sup>2</sup>You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. <sup>3</sup>You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their **Asherim** with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place.

So, what is this **Asherim**?

(Source: From Outside the Camp, Volume 1, No. 4) ...The Old Testament mentions a pagan goddess from which the festival of Easter is derived. This goddess was the goddess of fertility and sexual lust, known as Ashtaroth or Ashtoreth...Each spring, the pagans would set up phallic poles called Asherahs under trees on high hills and celebrate their fertility festival with unbridled sexual perversion. This is how the May Pole originated.



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## Observations about the Pagan origins of Halloween:

They were founded in very real concerns about life, specifically -

- This was at the end of the Harvest and thanksgiving for it;
- The coming cold winter;
- The coming dark days; and
- The uncertainty of life, death and the hereafter.

These real concerns were expressed through ritual and celebration towards multiple gods.

Right concerns - wrong execution! Where did these gods and this philosophy originate?



### Ancient Roman Celebration of Pomona

*Romans thanked the god Pomona for the harvest and would lay out apples and nuts. Yet another form of Pagan tradition of multiple gods.*

### Where and how did Paganism start?

Isaiah 14:12-14: (NASB) <sup>12</sup>"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! <sup>13</sup>"But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. <sup>14</sup>'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Satan's focus was on his desire to be God. He was the first created being to stop worshipping the Creator.

Genesis 1:26: (KJV) *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

Man, created not as God, but in His image - that of free choice and dominion.

Genesis 3:1-6: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" <sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; <sup>3</sup>but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" <sup>4</sup>The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! <sup>5</sup>"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

(Source: [ds.dial.pipex.com/robotics1/pagan.htm](http://ds.dial.pipex.com/robotics1/pagan.htm) "What Is Paganism")

1. Paganism is a religion of nature, in other words Pagans revere Nature. Pagans see the divine as imminent in the whole of life and the universe; in every tree, plant, animal and object, man and woman and in the dark side of life as much as in the light. Pagans live their lives attuned to the cycles of Nature, the seasons, life and death.

2. Unlike the patriarchal religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) the divine is female as well as male and therefore there is a Goddess as well as a God. These deities are within us as well as without us (imminent); they are us....







3. The Goddess represents all that is female and the God represents all that is male. But because nature is seen as female, the Goddess has a wider meaning. Often called Mother Earth or Gaia, she is seen as the creatrix and sustainer of life, the mother of us all, which makes all the creatures on the planet our siblings.

### Divining the Future through their Sacrifices

*Druids read burnt entrails of sacrifices like tea leaves, divining who would die and prosper in the coming year. This was the best night of the year for predicting the future.*

**2 Chronicles 33:1-6:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>He did evil in the sight of the LORD according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel. <sup>3</sup>For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he also erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. <sup>4</sup>He built altars in the house of the LORD of which the LORD had said, "My name shall be in Jerusalem forever." <sup>5</sup>For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>He made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.

We can see that Paganism and its practices held a very obvious attraction of power, as there is record of a number of Kings of Israel - Saul, Manasseh and even the (formerly) wise Solomon all obliterated the sanctity of worshiping God by allowing Paganism a foothold in their nation.

### Pomona /Samhain Combine and Christianity enters

*Romans conquered Europe and merge traditions of honoring the dead and the harvest.*

**Mark 12:28-34:** (NASB) <sup>28</sup>One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; <sup>30</sup>and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup>"The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup>The scribe said to him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him; <sup>33</sup>and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup>When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

Here lies the principle laid out in the Old Testament regarding our clinging to God and HIS Ways...God first and from the heart! The sacrifices were for the purpose of focusing the minds of the people for good.

### Early Christianity's Belief and Rise to Power

- *First century Christianity tried to conquer everything non-Christian.*
- *Christianity had the conviction that all the spirits that others worship are demonic beings.*
- *The spirit of the waterfall, the stars, the air and natural forces of the universe - all are hostile and evil.*

True early Christianity did not believe the force of nature itself was demonic - it was the worship of the created rather than the Creator that was wrong.



This was a constant battle throughout the ages and will apply to both Pagans and believers.

**Micah 5:14:** (NAS) *I will root out your Asherim from among you and destroy your cities. (also see verses 12 and 13)*



If we are with the Lord, we do not have to fear the darkness.

**Micah 7:8:** (NAS) *...Though I dwell in darkness, the LORD is a light for me.*

As a template, here is how the Apostle Paul dealt with overwhelming Paganism: **Acts 17:22-31:** (NASB) <sup>22</sup>So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. <sup>23</sup>"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup>"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup>nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; <sup>26</sup>and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, <sup>27</sup>that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; <sup>28</sup>for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' <sup>29</sup>"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. <sup>30</sup>"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, <sup>31</sup>because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

What a combination of reason, kindness, instruction and firmness! The apostle Paul acknowledged they were religious, explained there were things they didn't know that he could help with based on reasonability and the need to change. Paul looked for a bridge without compromising the truth of God's word. Constantine (and Pope Gregory later) watered down the truth by interweaving it with Pagan faith. They were to keep it pure.

Now, 240 or so years later:



**Constantine/Conversion and Urgency to Save Pagans**

*The Pagan Emperor of Rome, Constantine, converted to Christianity. Missionaries found that it was so difficult to convert Pagans that it was easier to give them a Christian twist and sanctify the cultural influences in some way, rather than wipe them out.*

**Romans 1:18-25:** (NASB) <sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup>because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup>For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup>For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup>Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. <sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. <sup>25</sup>For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

The opportunity to know God and worship Him was available, but people chose to worship their own idols and in many cases, worship their own selves.



## Differences between Constantine's Christianity and earlier Christianity:

Paul looked for opportunity...

...Constantine ordered conversion

Paul reasoned with Jesus as his basis...

...Constantine mandated by authority of government

Paul lead them away from Paganism...

...Constantine pressed them towards Christianity

Around 600 AD (250 or so years later), Pope Gregory decided to meet Paganism halfway with a concrete plan: Rather than destroy the object of Pagan worship, it would be consecrated to Christ, and he would encourage the Pagans to keep meeting in the same place but bend their beliefs towards Christianity.

This was opposite of the instruction to keep separate and destroy the idols to avoid corruption.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>17</sup>"Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you."

Now, 100 plus years later:

### 8<sup>th</sup> Century, Pope Gregory III and All Saints Day

- Now challenging Samhain directly trying to turn it into a day of the Church.
- November 1<sup>st</sup> proclaimed as "All Saints Day," to honor all Christian saints who did not already have a day of their own.
- All Hallows (Saints) Day, became the Eve of All Hallows/All Hallows Evening, from this came the contemporary word "Halloween."

1 Peter 1:14-16: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; <sup>16</sup>because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

- The first step was now in place to absorb Samhain, but still many Pagans carried on with the old beliefs and practices.

The result was that they diluted Christian thinking but without gaining much.



**1 Peter 2:9-12:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>*But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;* <sup>10</sup>*for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.* <sup>11</sup>*Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.* <sup>12</sup>*Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

**Keep separated! Keep your behavior pure.**

Our purpose here was to begin to understand the origin of Halloween and the pathway it took; understand the (failed) attempts by the church to bring Pagans into the fold; the only real accomplishment was the dilution of something more sacred. Make a choice based on knowing. Whatever we do, be God-honoring!

***So should Halloween make us happy?  
For Jonathan and Rick (and Vicki!) and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!***



*A listener was inspired by the program on September 25, 2010 called, "How Fruitful is Your Life?" to write a poem. Rick read the poem on the air during the "Should Halloween Make Us Happy?" program. The poem in its entirety can be found in the Full Edition CQ Rewind "How Fruitful is Your Life?"*