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TITLE: **HALLOWEEN: Truth or Trick?**

Text(s): Selected (Begin by reading Ephesians 6:10-20.)

Subject(s): Halloween; witchcraft; Satan worship

File Number(s): **370**

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) This is the time of year that usually causes me great distress. God has given me-- based on His Word--some serious convictions about Halloween. And you may think that I have made a mountain out of a mole hill. Yet God's Word says He is vitally interested in everything we do and say. In fact, I shall some day have to give an account of "every idle word" that I have said. So if God is concerned with my every idle word, might He also be concerned about the festivals I keep and the holidays I celebrate?
- b) Yet I find that too many people are unaware of the real intent and purpose of Halloween and what the Bible says about keeping this holiday. Moreover, I believe that our celebration of this holiday can often create a stumbling block for other believers. Paul said in Romans 14 that we should be willing to cease anything that would be a stumbling block to our brother or sister in Christ -- even if it meant giving up the meat that we eat.
- c) The apostle Paul strongly believes and teaches that there is a real spiritual battle taking place in the world today. There are real demons, real witches, real evil which confront us. There are those that try to deny these facts but the force of their denial is short-lived when we see those who publicly proclaim to worship Satan. Listen to how seriously Paul takes the reality of this spiritual battle. Listen to God's Word as written by the Apostle Paul: Ephesians 6:10-20: *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*
- d) The deceptive thing about Satan is that he often makes his deception seem so harmless. In fact, that which is evil he attempts to make it look good, or fun, or harmless. Paul describes Satan's appearance as "an angel of light." So often what appears to be harmless fun is in reality a triumph for Satan.
- e) On Halloween, a time when many go door to door saying, "Trick or Treat," and many dress as witches, devils, or ghosts, what is the reaction of our Holy God to these festivities? And what are we as Christians to do? Pray that God will open

our eyes to His truth as we look at Halloween itself and then at the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God.

2) **Halloween Has A Satanic History**

a) It's Name

- i) This holiday instituted by the Roman Catholic church in the early eighth century.
 - (1) November 1 was known as All Saint's Day.
 - (2) Thus October 31 was a Hallowed (Holy) Evening (abbreviated Halloween) in which supplication for the dead was to be made.
 - (3) Note that prayers for the dead are unscriptural. You cannot pray for the dead as their fate is already sealed. Instead we are to pray for the living. So even in its ecclesiastical use, Halloween was not pleasing to God.
- ii) However, the holiday was not new--it was not started by the Catholic church. Instead, the Catholic church took a pagan holiday and tried to make it holy. The original name of Halloween predates the Roman Catholic church and even Christ's earthly ministry.
 - (1) *Samhain* (pronounce SAH win) means "summer's end."
 - (2) This was a Druid holiday on October 31. This holiday was still kept actively until circa A.D. 400. **Active witches continue to practice this even today.**
 - (3) **Samhain is the second most important feast of Satanism and witchcraft (the foremost being May Day).**

b) It's Activities

i) Under the Druids

- (1) "**Trick or Treat**"
 - (a) Druid priests (in Europe) went from house to house on the evening of October 31, knocking on doors, saying, "Trick or Treat."
 - (b) The household was required to give a treat in order to avoid a hex or curse being passed upon the family. Usually the result of such a hex was a person dying (whether by fear or real illness).
 - (c) The "treat" was a young virgin whom the Druid priests would later rape and then offer as a human sacrifice to Satan.
- (2) **Jack O'Lantern --** If the household consented to the demands of the Druids, a candle made of human fat placed inside a carved pumpkin was left on the doorstep to keep curses away from the household for that night.

ii) Under witchcraft and sorcery

- (1) Witches convene inside a circle on a hexagram and call forth the spirits of demons to come forth and work their wicked powers upon the living on that night.
- (2) In Malakoff, TX just down Hwy 175 a number of years ago, several bodies were found dismembered inside a hexagram on the ground down a country road for several Halloweens in a row. This comes close to home.

- (3) The practitioners of witchcraft and Satanism also gather on this night to chant to bring the spirits of the dead forth from hell to do evil.

iii) Under Satanism

- (1) Human sacrifice is still common on this night.
- (2) Shallow graves containing portions of human bodies have been discovered surrounding Anton La Vey's (the high priest of Satanism in America and a frequent guest on Geraldo) mansion in California.
- (3) One member of his "church" was recently arrested when he was discovered with human knuckles in his pocket.
- (4) According the group's own film shown to prospective members, The Church of Satan in San Francisco has black robed priests conducting a black mass with a nude woman on the altar. "Members proclaim their hate and lust, and the leader, Anton La Vey blesses them, saying, 'May all your lustful thought reach fruition. Hail Satan!' A trouserless man is flagellated on a coffin lid; then a coffin opens to reveal a nude girl; the man descends into the coffin, and it is closed -- or almost closed, for it is now a bit crowded. Candidates for membership in the Church of Satan are screened by seven black-hooded members in a candle-lit basement decorated with human skulls. The church claims 7000 fee-paying members. The satanic high priest, La Vey, claims that his religion is one of indulgence and controlled selfishness." (Christian Victory)
- (5) On Halloween in Oakland Park, Florida, for the last six years, Satan worshippers have broken into churches and performed what police term "sexual black masses." The liturgical churches have been most frequently hit, but the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church was also vandalized by someone who signed the guest book "Satan." Following the masses, the participants seem bent upon wrecking furniture and ornaments in the sanctuary. (Pastor's Manual)

c) It's Customs

i) **Jack-O-Lantern**

- (1) Previously mentioned Druid application of this symbol.
- (2) A legend that a man named Jack was unable to enter heaven due to his miserliness and unable to go to hell because he had played practical jokes on the devil. So he had to walk the earth with his lantern until Judgment Day. So even without the horrible application of this symbol by the Druids, we are at best commemorating a disembodied spirit of a long since dead man.

ii) **Black Cats**

- (1) Those practicing witchcraft use animals as the objects for holding their power. The black cat is the most popular of these animals. The witch keeps this animal nearby and receives power from it.
- (2) The body of the animal is believed to be indwelt by a specific demon. Remember that Scripture supports the fact that a demon can indwell the body of an animal--Christ cast a legion of demons into the bodies of pigs.
- (3) Thus, the origin of this symbol is a Satanic practice.

iii) **Witches** -- Simple. This is one of their biggest holidays. Only May 1 is a bigger holiday under witchcraft.

- iv) **Skeletons** -- Whether you approach October 31 as a pagan holiday of Samhain or as a holiday of the Roman Catholic church since circa A.D. 700, either way it is a celebration of death. (Note that even the leaves are turning at this time of year.) I find where Christians are to celebrate not death, but life--the Resurrection of our Savior!
- d) Recent history
 - i) More violence each year is committed on October 31 than any other day of the year historically (with the recent exception of the riots in Los Angeles).
 - ii) One of the highest death tolls in America each year is on this day.
 - iii) Poisoning of candy often occurs on this day.
 - iv) Property damage is common at this time.
 - v) Films
 - (1) Halloween I, II, and now III.
 - (2) Increasing amounts of sexual violence and bodily dismemberment are in these films.
 - (3) What do these films teach our children? Have you ever seen a God-honoring film about Halloween?
- 3) **Halloween is DISPLEASING TO GOD!**
 - a) His View of Witchcraft, Sorcery, etc.
 - i) **Leviticus** is an instruction manual on holy living or on worship. What does it say about keeping holidays that glorify Satan or by associating ourselves with these things?
 - (1) 19:26 -- "Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantments, **nor observe times.**" This means that we are not to keep holidays which are Satanic in origin--we are not to observe their times!
 - (a) enchantments -- Hebrew word nachash {naw-khash'} meaning "to practice divination, divine, observe signs, learn by experience, diligently observe, practice fortunetelling, take as an omen; to practice divination; to observe the signs or omens." Hence, to observe Halloween's customs is to use enchantments. To go to a fortune teller is to use enchantments. To practice superstitions is to use enchantments. We are commanded NOT to do these things. Yes, I know this is the Old Testament, but God's displeasure with these things did not decrease with the advent of the New Testament.
 - (b) observe times -- Hebrew term anan {aw-nan'} meaning "to keep holidays; to practice soothsaying, to conjure or cast spells; to observe times, practice soothsaying or spiritism or magic or augury or witchcraft; to act like a soothsayer, enchanter, sorceress, diviner, fortuneteller." So if we keep pagan holidays with pagan symbols that make people think of spiritism, witchcraft, death, fortunetellers, etc., how can this be pleasing to God?
 - (2) 19:31 -- "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, **to be defiled by them:** I am the Lord your God." To associate with astrologers (horoscopes included), witches, ghosts,

etc.--even to associate ourselves with their images--is to defile ourselves.

- (a) familiar spirits -- Those who have a "spirit guide" -- a popular New Age concept.
 - (b) Wizard -- Means one who tells fortunes, is a soothsayer, or who calls upon the spirits of the departed dead (a necromancer).
- (3) 20:6 -- "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. **Sanctify yourselves** therefore, and **be ye holy**: for I am the Lord your God."
- (a) Both in Hebrew and Greek the idea of sanctification and holiness means to separate ourselves away from worldly or Satanic activities and UNTO service to God.
 - (b) And yet, at Halloween, we often do just the opposite. Is this right?
- ii) **Deuteronomy 18:9-14** -- *When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. You must be blameless before the LORD your God. The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so.*
- (1) Verse 9 -- "*Thou shalt not learn to do after the **abominations** of those nations*" (KJV). These ways are "detestable" (NIV) to the Lord. To what exactly is God referring?
 - (2) Verse 10 -- "*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 a observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.*" It is the responsibility of parents to keep their children from participating in such evil. Did you notice "*maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire*"? Human sacrifice strictly forbidden under all circumstances. Wonder what God thinks about abortion when we sacrifice innocent children upon the altar of human convenience? But what does God think when we sacrifice our children's holiness by involving them in activities which displease Him?
 - (3) Verse 11 -- "*interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead*"
 - (a) witch -- from Hebrew kashaph {kaw-shaf} meaning to practice witchcraft or sorcery, use witchcraft; act as a sorcerer or sorceress.
 - (b) medium (or "charmer") -- from Hebrew chabar {khaw-bar'} meaning "to unite, join, bind together, be joined, be coupled, be in league, heap up, have fellowship with, be

compact, be a charmer; to unite, be joined; to tie magic charms, charm; to unite with, make an ally of; to join oneself to, make an alliance, league together.

- (c) Hence a medium is one who joins himself/herself to the Evil One or to evil practices or put himself/herself in league or partnership with those who do. Or it can even mean one who simply ties together magic charms or puts up symbols of witchcraft. Notice what God say about His people participating in such activities: "*But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so.*"
- (4) Verse 12 -- All this is abomination to God. And it was such practices that caused God to drive the Canaanites out of the land. If the Canaanites lost their homeland because of practicing these things, do you think we might lose the blessing of God if we participate in activities which don't please Him? We cannot afford to take that chance. And we can't afford to offend a brother or sister in Christ because of symbols that make them feel uncomfortable.
- (5) Verses 13 and 14 -- God's people are to be different ("but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do.")
- iii) **2 Kings 23:24** -- *Furthermore, Josiah got rid of the mediums and spiritists, the household gods, the idols and all the other detestable things seen in Judah and Jerusalem. This he did to fulfill the requirements of the law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest had discovered in the temple of the LORD.*
- (1) This passage is fascinating because it deals with what needs to happen when things and practices that do not please God find their way into God's house--then the temple, now the church.
- (2) Josiah DISPOSED OF the things and practices that did not belong in God's house. Why did he do it? "To fulfill the requirements of the law. . . ." What should we do when something displeases God. We should get rid of it to fulfill His Law.
- (3) **Idols** -- from the Hebrew gilluwl {ghil-lool'} or (shortened) gillul {ghil-lool'}. This word occurs 48 times in the Old Testament and is translated as "idols" and as "images." It is not only carved statues but also paintings and pictures that are included in the Hebrew word here.
- iv) **2 Chronicles 33:6** -- *He sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.*
- (1) The thing worth noting here is that honoring or participating in witchcraft or sorcery or spiritists (dealing with ghosts) provoked the Lord to anger. Now that is surely One we don't want to be mad at us!
- (2) Although we may think that ghost decorations are harmless, we are desensitizing our children to the dangers awaiting them in the spirit world.
- (3) When our children go to public school now, they are often taught how to lie on the floor, meditate, and call upon their "spirit guide" who will come and teach them all kinds of knowledge. In some

schools this is required curriculum now. We are stirred to anger when we hear about this open invitation to demonic occupation that is taught to our children. But have we helped by desensitizing them by teaching them that ghosts and goblins and other Halloween characters are fun and harmless?

- v) **Isaiah 8:16-20** -- *Bind up the testimony and seal up the law among my disciples. I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him. Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion. When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.*
- (1) "Wizards that peep" (KJV) or "mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter" (NIV) -- from Hebrew tsaphaph {tsaw-faf} meaning to chirp or peep making sounds to either imitate a ghost or to talk about ghosts. Some scholars think this means to use ventriloquism for the purpose of "conjuring" up a spirit in a seance.
 - (2) Forbids divination, fortune telling, astrology, and necromancy. Necromancy is consulting the dead. We are told never to consult the dead on behalf of the living (God wasn't happy when Saul did this.). Rather we are to go to the Living Word of God and the Testimony!
 - (3) The writer ends this passage by saying that if an activity or word does not agree with the Word, it doesn't have the "light of dawn."
 - (a) Dawn is the time when the intensity of light is just beginning. In other words, if an activity is not in accordance with Scripture, it doesn't have the least bit of truth in it. It doesn't have the least bit of life.
 - (b) So perhaps the question ought not to be "Is celebrating Halloween wrong?" Maybe we ought to ask instead "Is there any biblical reason we OUGHT to celebrate Halloween?" If we can't find a biblical reason for doing it, we shouldn't be involved in it!
- vi) **Jeremiah 27:9-11** -- *"So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands; I will banish you and you will perish. But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and to live there, declares the LORD."*
- (1) Forbidding of using prophets, diviners, dreamers, enchanters, sorcerers.
 - (2) The Bible says these people speak lies -- Jeanne Dixon, a noted witch predicted the Watergate campaign but she also said that Nixon would make sweeping reforms to prevent such actions in the future since they all took place behind his back.
- vii) About witches

- (1) Exodus 22:18 -- "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Seems to me like God takes witchcraft rather seriously!
 - (2) 1 Samuel 15:23 -- "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft." He says this because to rebel against God is to remove ourselves from under His protection and to expose ourselves to direct influence from Satan. In the same way, any activity associated with witchcraft does not enjoy the blessings of God and opens us to the possibility of Satanic influence. Isn't it a shame that the chief market for Halloween is young impressionable children? When we celebrate Halloween, we make the things of Satan seem like a joke to them instead of teaching them a proper fear of evil. Wouldn't it be better to remove all symbols of Halloween and celebrate Reformation night at church-- have the kids dress up like Bible characters! Then they could celebrate that salvation is by faith alone!
 - (3) Galatians 5:20 -- *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions.*" Can we put up pagan images associated with idolatry and/or witchcraft and still please God?
- b) His View of Halloween
- i) **God does not honor compromise in his people. We are to be holy unto Him.**
 - ii) We are not to adopt the abominations of the wicked.
 - iii) We are not to celebrate death.
 - iv) We are not to "observe times" of pagan or evil religions.
 - v) We are to be separate unto Him, "a peculiar people, a royal priesthood."
- 4) **Halloween Has Alternatives**
- a) Halloween Don'ts
- i) Don't go out. This exposes you to:
 - (1) Forces of evil especially powerful on that night.
 - (2) Dangers in drugs. (pharmakia is the Greek word for witchcraft. It is also the word from which we get pharmacy. The use of drugs is a form of sorcery and those who celebrate their witchcraft on this second greatest holiday of Satanism often use drugs on this night and try to get others--either knowingly or unknowingly--to use drugs.)
 - (3) Poor Christian testimony as it compromises our faith with symbols of witchcraft, sorcery, spiritism, etc. that displeases God. We cannot afford a weakened testimony!
 - ii) Don't tolerate symbols of witchcraft, etc. in your church or homes.
 - iii) Don't let children dress in ungodly character dress (no witches, demons, etc.). Encourage them to dress like Bible characters instead.
 - iv) Don't condemn those who celebrate Halloween.
 - (1) Either they aren't Christians, or they've never given serious thought to the implications of this holiday or been educated about its origins.
 - (2) I have never yet met a Christian who when taught about Halloween's true nature and what God's Word says about associating ourselves with such activities wanted to continue to celebrate this holiday in the traditional way.

witness and our testimony and damage our children's future perception of the spiritual world.

- c) Many people grow up believing there is a God, but also believing there is no devil-- after all, they use to dress up just like him on Halloween. But he is real, and he sneaks about as a roaring lion looking for prey. And his ways are subtle like a serpent, and he often poses as something harmless and even good in order to suck us into his ways. Do you think that a child celebrating Halloween is more likely to use a Quija board -- more likely to talk to "spirit guides?" If so, he/she is more likely to open themselves to other forms of demonic oppression until they are out of control.
- d) In Taiwan, on the birthday of a god, a person will dress up to look like the god as a part of the celebration and worship of that God. Is it any different if our children dress up in costumes of ghosts, demons, witches, etc.? How does God view this?
- e) While I certainly don't have all the answers, I know this: God has called me to holiness and purity. *"If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether . . . the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."* Most of the world will choose to celebrate death, demons, witchcraft, etc. on October 31. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord! What will you do?

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