

HALLOWEEN & ALL SAINTS' DAY



Spiritualism's Connection With These Two Holidays

Halloween, in the United States, is being celebrated by more and more people with each passing year. In fact, the night is the second most popular party night of the year after December 31 (New Years Eve) for adults. Many of them look at it as the one night of the year they can dress up and act foolish. Merchants also look forward to October 31. In 2021, the sale of candy (close to \$3 billion), costumes (\$3.3 billion), pumpkins (\$708 million), greeting cards (\$666 million), decorations and party goods (\$3.2 billion), makes Halloween second on holiday spending (total sales reaching \$10.14 billion) after Christmas. Following Halloween on the calendar is All Saints' Day on November 1. This is no coincidence. By tracing their origins, it can be proven that the two holidays go hand in hand.

■ **HALLOWEEN.** Hundreds of years ago (around 700 B.C.) in what is now Great Britain and Northern France, lived the Celts. Among the Celtic traditions was the festival of Samhain (pronounced SOW-EN or SAH-WIN). The festival of Samhain would last for three days, starting on October 31. This yearly festival was a celebration marking the beginning of winter as well as the first day of the Celtic New Year (November 1). Some historians believe that the festival did not honor any particular Celtic deity; while others claim that Samhain was the Lord of the Dead.

The priests of the Celts, the Druids, believed that on one night each year (October 31), evil spirits and the souls of

the dead would roam the earth. The Celtic people worshipped nature and in their belief system, the turning of one year into the next was the time to placate the supernatural powers controlling the processes of nature. So, on the evening of October 31, this was the night when the veil separating the living from the dead was at its thinnest. The evil spirits would take on themselves different forms — the most evil taking the form of black cats. The Druids were charged with appeasing the goblins and preventing harm to the people. At this same time, the Druids claimed that most of the witches (those that have died) emerged, flying on brooms, seeking homes where they too would try to harm the people. The Druids set huge Samhain bonfires at night on hilltops to guide the way of the spirits to their earthly homes. As the Druids danced around the fires, the season of the sun passed and the season of darkness and cold would begin. When the morning arrived (November 1), the Druids would give an amber from their fires to each family, who would then take them to start new cooking fires. These fires would keep the homes warm and free from evil spirits.

The Celtic people did certain things on their end to appease the spirits. ONE – left out food for the spirits, hoping that a “treat” would prevent an evil “trick.” The people looked upon this as a way to give the spirits a type of worship and offering. The Celts believed that the spirits could torment the living by destroying the crops, killing farm animals, and stealing babies. TWO – masquerading in frightening costumes made of animal skins to ward off the spirits of the dead. The people would also carve demon faces in hollowed-out turnips and lighted them with candles. Gradually, the Celts began to roam from house to house demanding food in exchange for the “spirits” leaving the home unharmed. THREE – families would stay up together all night for protection from the angry spirits. They dressed up like the dead to confuse the evil spirits — in some cases, the

men dressed as women and women as men.

The Celtic people also thought that this was an opportunity to use various methods of divination, attempting to discover their future events. These were performed through such methods as ducking for apples and apple peeling. Ducking for apples was a marriage divination. People, surrounding a tub of water with apples floating in it, would try to retrieve them without using their hands. The first person who got one out would be the first to marry in the coming year. Apple peeling was a divination to see how long a person's life would be. The longer the unbroken apple peel, the longer was that person's life destined to be. The festival of Samhain was also a festival of the dead. Since the gates to the otherworld were opened, the Celts believed they could communicate with the dead. This was another way to seek out answers for the future.

Many stories were told at this time. The Irish have a story about a man who tricked the Devil into an agreement that would never allow him to take his soul. This man was named Stingy Jack. When Jack died, he first went to heaven where he was turned away because of his miserly ways. When he tried to enter the gates of hell, the Devil reminded Jack of the agreement and turned him away. As a final gesture of contempt, the Devil threw a burning coal from the fires of hell at Jack. Jack picked up the coal and put it in a hollowed-out turnip. This makeshift lantern is what Stingy Jack now uses to light his way as he travels the earth searching for a place to rest — this is the origin of jack-o-lanterns.

Throughout the centuries this Celtic festival, in one way or another, was celebrated and it still continues on to this very day. Certainly in America this is true. The Samhain festival observances came to America in the 19th century. A massive immigration of the Irish (modern day descendants of the Celts) to the United States came during the potato famine (1845-1846). They brought with them their pa-

gan superstitions, including Samhain, the Festival of Death. In the New World, the Celtic immigrants found pumpkins much easier to hollow-out and carve than turnips. Gradually, the pagan practices of Samhain became an established part of American life. Over the years, October 31 eventually was named, "Halloween."

October 31 also has other meanings to other people. For some Christians, it is known as Reformation Day. On that day in 1517, Martin Luther posted his "Ninety-five Theses" on the door of the castle church at Wittenberg, Germany. Witches and Satanists still consider Halloween as the most important day (night) to practice their occultic arts.

During the first century A.D., the Romans invaded Britain. They brought with them many of their festivals and customs. One of these was the festival known as Pomona Day, named for their goddess of fruits and gardens. It was also celebrated around the 1st of November. Roman pagans prayed for the dead. After hundreds of years of Roman rule, the customs of the Celtic's Samhain festival and the Roman Pomona Day mixed, becoming one major fall holiday.

The principle place of worship for the pagan Romans was the Pantheon in Rome. It was a temple dedicated to all of the Roman deities. Rome was captured and the Pantheon fell into disrepair. Emperor Phocas captured Rome and gave the Pantheon to Pope Boniface IV in 609. He reconsecrated it to the Virgin Mary. Pope Boniface was instrumental in superimposing a "Christian" festival over the pagan festival of Samhain.

■ **ALL SAINTS' DAY.** The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) attempted to divert this interest in pagan customs by adopting the festival of the dead to become the festival of all saints and martyrs — their way to remember the dead. This led to an annual commemoration on May 13. A century later, Pope Gregory III shifted it to November 1. In 834 A.D., Gregory IV extended the feast for all the Church. This

day became known as All Saints' Day, beginning at sunset on the day before. Older names for this day were Hallowmas and All Hallows ("hallow" is another word for saint). The evening before was called All Hallows' Evening. From this ("Hallows' Eve") the modern name "Halloween" was derived. Two centuries later, November 2 was added as another holy day to honor the dead, called All Souls' Day. Here can be seen the way the RCC built "Christian" practices around pagan foundations — even the length of the festival is the same (three days).

By the 13th century, the Catholic festival of the dead was firmly established, but the old pagan rituals still persisted. Unable to get the people to stop celebrating Samhain, the RCC simply sprinkled a little holy water on it and gave it new names — this is where the confusion enters in. As noted, the word, "Halloween," gets its name from the Catholic holiday, it is a hallowed evening because it precedes All Hallows' Day or All Saints' Day. "Halloween" (Hallows' Eve) in its original meaning, supposedly, did not relate to any of the pagan practices surrounding Samhain. But, down through the ages, the festival of Samhain had become synonymous with Halloween (especially in the United States). The truth is, the religious aspect of Halloween/All Saints' Day/All Souls' Day does share a major belief with Samhain — the accessibility to the dead at this time. An examination of the last two days of this "Christian" observance will bring this out.

When Christianity began to spread through Europe and the British Isles in the third and fourth centuries, the old Samhain traditions continued to be practiced. To combat this festival, when Papal Rome was in power, the RCC established an alternative way to honor the dead — honor the Christian dead, saints (known and unknown) that have died and are now with the Lord. The RCC hoped that the similarity would cause the people to accept the "Christian" holiday and abandon the pagan holiday of Samhain.

In 998, the Benedictine monastery of Cluny, Ireland, began celebrating a feast to remember all of their dead on November 2. From Cluny, the observance of this date spread and was adopted by Rome in the 14th century. Today, known as All Souls' Day, it commemorates all of the faithful departed (if November 2 falls on a Sunday, it is celebrated on November 3). During this day, special masses and prayers are offered for souls in purgatory, relating the idea that the departed detained there may be helped by the prayers and good works of the faithful on earth.

An ancient legend said that many poor souls are allowed to leave purgatory for a few moments every Ember-tide (observed in the Catholic Church, consisting of three days — Wednesday, Friday, Saturday — which are set aside for prayer and fasting in a specified week of each of the four seasons of the year: after the first Sunday of Lent, after the seventh Sunday of Easter, after September 14, and after December 13). These souls appear in visible shape to those relatives and friends who fervently pray for them, in order to thank them and ask for more prayers for themselves and for the souls who have no one to pray for them. This custom of praying for the "forgotten souls" remains to this day in the Catholic Church.

One Catholic country has taken the festival of The Day of the Dead to a great extent. It is considered by the people of Mexico to be the most important holiday of the year in their country. The celebration begins on the evening of October 31; it is a time of happiness, remembering, and much feasting. Special foods, such as candy, breads, and buns are baked; these are often in the shapes of skulls, skeletons, and coffins, covered with icing. Puppets and masks, usually as skeletons, are very popular. Newspapers run fake death announcements for famous people and politicians. The Mexican people bring food and candles to the cemeteries as family members who have died are believed to return to their grave sites.

The false belief that exists in the festival of Samhain and the feasts of All Saints' and All Souls' Days is the natural immortality of the human soul. During Samhain, it was the opportune time to commune with the souls of the dead when they roamed the earth. On All Saints' Day, the souls that are in heaven are honored. With All Souls' Day, people are reminded to pray for the souls in purgatory. Worship of the dead, praying for the dead, and pretended communion with the dead, goes against God's Holy Word.

■ **THE BIBLE.** Necromancy is the practice that claims to foretell the future by alleged communication with the dead. This practice is forbidden by God (see Deuteronomy 18:10-12.) The modern day practice of Halloween allows children and adults to imitate the ancient Celtic pagan customs; and yes, even if it is done for fun. Behind the scenes, unseen by human eyes, are "the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12), with Satan as the prince of the powers of darkness. We are plainly told that we are to "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

The Holy Word of God does not support that the 'soul' has a separate existence apart from the body at death. When a person dies, this is what basically happens: the breath of life returns unto God (Ecclesiastes 12:7), thoughts perish (Psalm 146:4), feelings perish (Ecclesiastes 9:6), wisdom ceases (Ecclesiastes 9:10), and the body, now a dead soul, returns to the dust of the earth (Ecclesiastes 12:7). At death, all mankind, good and bad, rest in the grave (hell) and wait for one of two resurrections (separated by 1,000 years), "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29), the latter of which will result in their "second death" (see Revelation 20:6, 14). There is no second chance after death. While living, one must make a choice "for" or "against" God. Once in the grave, a person cannot change the deci-

sion he made while alive on the earth; no amount of prayer can reverse his decision because it's too late.

Meanwhile, Satan is loving all the attention that is given toward the departed "souls" from those who practice pagan and "Christian" traditions which honor the dead. Why? He knows very well that this homage belongs to him because he is the ruler of the demons (the angels that were cast out with him when there was war in heaven — see Revelation 12:7-9), working together to deceive as many as possible. He is doing a very good job of it. This can be seen as people are giving their worship to Satan without their knowledge — this is how Satan operates. It is even getting to the point that Satan does not exist to some; he has many tricks up his sleeve.

The holidays of Halloween (Samhain) and All Saints' Day, in every act, gives tribute to Satan. He is passing out his bag of tricks, which should be checked over to see if they can poison one's mind. The Bible describes Satan, our adversary, as "a liar" (John 8:44), "a murderer" (ibid.), and "a roaring lion, [walking] about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The commandments of men are the doctrines of devils. These false teachings are meant to keep people in the dark, which men love rather than light. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Let us not worship the dead, but worship the "Prince of life" (Acts 3:15). ❖

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