

HALLOWE'EN



How come people celebrate it? Hallowe'en was started by devil-worshippers, right?

THE DRUIDS

Many people innocently suppose that the Druids of ancient Wales began Hallowe'en as their New Year, thousands of years ago. But history tells us that it was not Hallowe'en that they started, but the **Vigil of Samhain**. They did not celebrate it on October 31, but on September 22 (the autumnal equinox of the sun).¹ We know little about the Druids and what they practiced because they never wrote anything down.² By the time the Church began an October 31 celebration of Hallowe'en (A.D. 731),³ the Druids had been extinct for hundreds of years.⁴ There have been a few unsuccessful attempts to restart the cult in the last several centuries, the latest of which dates back no more than 50 years.

WHICH DO WE CELEBRATE?

Many people insist that we unknowingly worship Satan on Hallowe'en, because they believe the things we do appear similar to the horrible (but largely undocumented) practices of the Druids in their ancient celebration of the "Vigil of Samhain." So which is it?

Do we celebrate Hallowe'en or the Vigil of Samhain each autumn?

Samhain
on September 22 do we...
burn our prisoners alive
relight all household fires
worship the god of winter
rejoice over shorter days

Hallowe'en
on October 31 do we...
trick-or-treat
wear costumes
pranks & noisemakers
parties & pageants



I guess we celebrate Hallowe'en...

But who started it, then?

MEMORIAL DAY

For 300 years after Christ, the Early Church was horribly persecuted. Christians were captured and tortured for days before being murdered, all because they refused to recant the name of Jesus! Rome killed over seven million believers, men, women and children. In A.D. 373, the holocaust was over, and Christians began remembering their heritage with a Memorial Day. Originally held on May 14, it was called "Martyrs Day" until 609 when it was changed to "All Saints Day," and was also known as the "Hallowed (holy or sanctified) Day." Many Christians changed their celebrations to November 1 when an old building in Rome, formerly used to torture Christians, was ironically dedicated to their memory on Nov 1, 734. The Church made the change official worldwide, in 835.⁵

THE NAME

In ancient cultures, each day began at dusk. Many, including the Jews, still practice this. What we call Friday night, they would call Saturday night, because the evening always came before the day, just as God created them (Genesis 1:5). This is the origin of Christmas Eve; It's not the 24th, but actually the evening before the day of Christmas. New Year's eve, too! In the same way, celebration of the "Hallowed Day" began on the evening before the day, the "Hallowed Even." This was shortened over time to the contraction "Hallowe'en," and has remained that way until today.



Haw... Just a minute!!

How can you honor Jesus with bloody costumes of dead people? And, of devils and witches...?

That part of it isn't Christian, is it?

COSTUMES OF THE DEAD

To remember the martyrs, churches held pageants on the Hallowed Evening. The entire congregation would dress up as various martyrs as they appeared in death, because when Jesus rose from the grave, He too wore the scars of His ordeal. Matthew was run through with a pole, Paul was beheaded, Ignatius was burned, James' head was crushed. Peter, often called the chief apostle, was crucified upside-down (and it is his cross which became the Early Church's symbol of Martyrdom -- **the upside-down cross**). Today, costumes like these might appear bloody and offensive, but to those celebrating back then, it could be no more horrible than the marks on the Savior's face, hands and side. It was a banner of victory over Satan! And, because the skits must have antagonists, many of the congregation would dress as devils, witches, etc. These were laughed and jeered at as the "defeated ones," each Hallowed Even.



HECK! This is INCREDIBLE!! I've never heard of any of this before! No wonder the Church wanted to remember it. It was the Christian Memorial Day, and ~~we~~ we've forgotten it!!

But wasn't all this for the Roman Catholic Church only?

What about the Pumpkin? I heard a guy say if you put one in your window on October 31st that the Devil will get you...



Actually, now that I think of it, that sounds alot more like superstition than Christianity.

JACK-O-LANTERN

him coming to hell, he chased him off by throwing a red-hot coal. Jack caught the coal in the half-eaten turnip he still carried, and was condemned to wander between heaven and hell until Judgment Day.⁶ A carved turnip was used at Christian parties (in fun), to say "the Devil isn't welcome here." Should he come this way, he'll see it, believe Stingy Jack is here, and run away. In more superstitious homes, it became a magic charm to ward off evil spirits.

The origin of the carved pumpkin is a fanciful old Irish folk tale about a miser named "Stingy Jack," who ignored his wife's attempts to get him to church, and give to the poor. He tricked the Devil three times, and Satan hated him for it. Years later, Jack choked to death on a turnip, and was turned away by heaven as a miser. When Satan saw

Since the Protestant Church did not exist before A.D. 1500, this is the common heritage of Christians everywhere... This was the Early Church!

TRICK-OR-TREAT

After the skits and church services, costumed Christians would spill into the streets to wander from door to door begging for food -- the poor and rich alike (the rich would leave what they collected at the church for later distribution) -- because it was the harvest season, and in the Bible provision was always made for the poor at harvest (Lev 19:9-10). In time, many young men took it upon themselves to play pranks on the stingy who did not give enough to the poor -- Treats or a Trick! Trick-or-treat was originally a welfare system practiced by the Early Church, each harvest; and yes, they did adopt it from someone else...



Hey, this is great!!

What about Trick-or-Treat? somebody told me it's an old ceremony that involved human sacrifice!!

Surely the Christians got this from somebody...

You cannot help but marvel at the amazing courage of seven million hearts that chose death rather than renounce Jesus. (One wonders if such courage exists in the Church today!) But it wasn't courage, it was faith -- the unswerving belief that in death, "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." For 300 years, their enemies ironically "threatened" them with the very thing they wanted most -- to be at the side of Jesus. You see, Hallowe'en is a celebration of death -- Jesus' victory over it, and faith's victory over the fear of it. As Paul said, "O death, where is thy sting?"

Does the "threat" of you own death horrify you? Are you terrified that you might lose everything you've acquired -- lose everything the world has to offer? That's the Spirit of God telling you that your heart isn't where it should be. This is the true meaning of Hallowe'en -- a Christian is immortal and thus has nothing to fear from death.

But you know what is really scary? Millions of folks celebrate this Memorial Day who do not belong to Jesus -- and they too are immortal! That's right, every man, woman and child ever conceived will live forever! The question is not "if," but "where." Mark 16:16 says it all: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Now that's scary...

PURIM

To this day, and from a time 600 years before Christ, each spring the Jews send their children door to door in costume, carrying baskets of treats; the only difference is that they are delivering rather than collecting them. The next morning they hold parades where they bonk each other with plastic hammers for not sending treats (trick-or-treat)! They are celebrating "Purim" as related in the Bible (Esther 9), on the 14th of the Hebrew month Adar. It is no coincidence that both Purim and the original Hallowe'en were celebrated at the same season, in the same part of the world, on the same day of the month (the 14th), with the same symbols (costumes, & trick-or-treat), celebrating the same thing -- a time when the same God turned the certain extinction of His people into worldwide victory over their enemies!

Clearly, Hallowe'en's traditions were adopted from the Jews who both peopled the Early Church, and from which the Church drew so much of its heritage and tradition. The Druids had nothing to do with it!

¹v.15, p.433, 2a, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, IL, 1992

²Rhys, Prof., Celtic Heathendom, Modern America Corp., Chicago, 1936

³v.1, p.275, 2a, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, IL, 1992

⁴v.6, p.281, 2b, Academic American Encyclopedia, Danbury, CN, 1989

⁵v.1, p.275, 2a, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago, IL, 1992

⁶Phillips, Phil, Halloween and Satanism, Starburst Publications, Lancaster, PN, 1987

