

Christians and **Halloween**

This is a *scary* message

Store owners delight

- On average, Americans will each **spend \$77.52 on Halloween this year**. That includes costumes for people and pets, candy, decorations and all the rest.
- Halloween will bring in approximately **\$8 billion** this year to the stores and retail outlets.

How much



**Will you
spend?**

Origin of Halloween

- Halloween" comes from the All Saints Day celebration of the early Christian church
- Supposed to be for remembrance of the martyrs

Cpl. Nathan Cirillo



Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent

Not sure where they stood with God, but lets assume they trusted Jesus.
These men would be examples of Martyrs.

Martyr - a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

Origin of Halloween

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- Remembrance of the martyrs



Pakistani Christian Asia Bibi has lost her appeal against a death sentence for blasphemy. The campaign to free the first Christian woman to face execution under Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws will now be taken to the Supreme Court.

The Lahore High Court rejected her appeal last Thursday, 16 October, and upheld the death sentence against her.

A representative of VOM Australia's partner office in the UK, Release International, was in court. He says up to 25 Muslim teachers attended the hearing, possibly to increase pressure on the court to uphold the death sentence. The tactic of packing the court to intimidate judges is frequently used in blasphemy cases in the lower courts.

Asia, a farm labourer from Punjab, has been in custody since 2009. She was arrested after an argument with Muslim farm labourers who accused her of blaspheming against Islam's prophet Mohammed. She denies the charge.

Asia was given the death sentence in November 2010. She has been on death row ever since. The news will come as a blow to campaigners who have maintained Asia's innocence and have been pressing for the repeal of the blasphemy laws, which are often invoked just to settle personal scores.

Origin of Halloween

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- Remembrance of the martyrs

Fulani militants attacked Christian villages in the Riyom local government area of Plateau state on Friday 3 October.



Ministry partners of Release International, sister mission of Voice of the Martyrs Australia, reports that 12 villagers and a soldier were killed.



At the same time, the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram, which is presently engaged in skirmishes with government forces, has abducted more than 40 people, a number of whom are Christians. Among those taken on 30 September was a mother with her newborn twins.

Origin of Halloween

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- Solemn remembrance of the martyrs

**People have
died for Jesus
in China
prisons**

Over 200 police raided a house church's Sunday service on 21 September in Foshan City, in China's Guangdong Province.

More than 100 church members, including children, were arrested.

'We don't know exactly why they raided our church,' a local believer said. 'The government does not want us to get together and worship as a church.' Local believers explained that the church was raided without any warning. The police left behind a notice stating that the church members were detained for conducting an 'illegal gathering.'

Most church members, including the children, were detained for 10-20 hours and then released.

All house churches in China are considered 'illegal gatherings' and are frowned upon by the government. Any believers meeting together to practise their faith in house churches risk being arrested.

Global executions for 2013

- China: 1,000+
- Iran: 369+
- Iraq: 169+
- Saudi Arabia: 79+

Origin of Halloween

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- Solemn remembrance of the martyrs
- All Hallows Eve, the evening before All Saints Day, began the time of remembrance.

**Do you think people
consider Halloween as
a time of
remembrance?**

Origin of Halloween

- Halloween" comes from the All Saints Day celebration of the early Christian church
- Solemn remembrance of the martyrs
- All Hallows Eve, the evening before All Saints Day, began the time of remembrance.
- Christianity as it grew collided with cultures and customs and since these holidays and festivals were so entrenched, Christians moved Christian celebration close to those days to try and overcome the traditions.

Christian or Pagan

- They planned to counter pagan influences providing a Christian alternative.
- Unfortunately it often only succeeded in "Christianizing" a pagan ritual which stayed pagan with Christian symbols.
- That's what happened to All Saints Eve--it was the original Halloween alternative!



Celtic pagan rituals

- Celtic people of Europe and Britain were pagan Druids with celebrations marked by the seasons.
- At the end of the year in northern Europe, people made preparations to ensure winter survival by harvesting the crops and culling the herds, slaughtering animals that wouldn't make it. Life slowed down as winter brought darkness (shortened days and longer nights), fallow ground, and death. The imagery of death, symbolized by skeletons, skulls, and the color black, remains prominent in today's Halloween celebrations.

Earliest Mention of Druid's: In about 750 CE the word druid appears in a poem by [Blathmac](#), who wrote about [Jesus](#), saying that he was "... better than a prophet, more knowledgeable than every druid, a king who was a bishop and a complete sage



Celtic pagan rituals

Samhain

Also called	Samhuinn/Samhainn (Scottish Gaelic) Sauin (Manx Gaelic)
Observed by	Historically: Gaels Today: Irish people , Scottish people , Manx people , Celtic neopagans and Wiccans
Type	Cultural, Pagan (Celtic polytheism , Celtic neopaganism , Wicca)
Significance	End of the harvest season, beginning of winter
Celebrations	Bonfires , guising/mumming , divination , feasting
Date	Sunset 31 October – sunset 1 November (N. Hemisphere) Sunset 30 April – sunset 1 May (S. Hemisphere)
Frequency	annual
Related to	Halloween , Hop-tu-Naa , Calan Gaeaf , Kalan Gwav , All Saints' Day , All Souls' Day

- Pagan (Celtic/Gaelic) Samhain festival (pronounced "sow" "en") celebrated the final harvest, death, and the onset of winter, for three days--October 31 to November 2. **The Celts believed the curtain dividing the living and the dead lifted during Samhain** to allow the spirits of the dead to walk among the living--ghosts haunting the earth.



Practices of occult

Some **celebrated by engaging in occult practices** such as divination and talking with the dead. They tried to **talk to "divine" spirits** (demons) and the spirits of their ancestors about weather forecasts for the coming seasons, harvest expectations, and even romantic prospects. **Bobbing for apples** was one practice the pagans used to divine the spiritual world's "blessings" on a couple's romance.



For **others the focus on death, occultism, divination, and the thought of spirits returning to haunt the living**, fueled ignorant superstitions and fears. They **believed spirits were earthbound until they received a proper sendoff** with treats--possessions, wealth, food, and drink.

Spirits who were not suitably "treated" would "trick" those who had neglected them. The fear of haunting only multiplied if that spirit had been offended during its natural lifetime.



Trick bent “spirits”

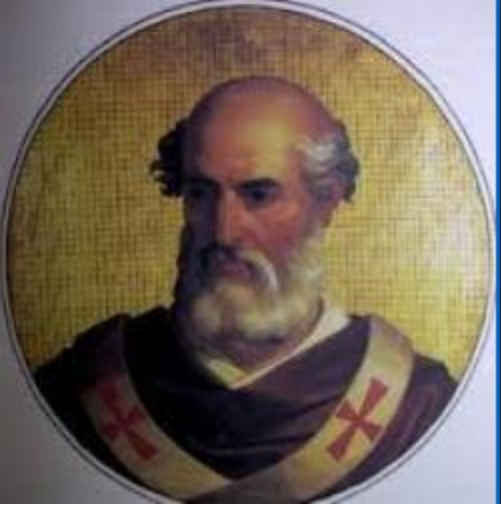
Trick-bent spirits were believed to assume grotesque appearances. Some traditions developed, which believed wearing a costume to look like a spirit would fool the wandering spirits.

Others believed the spirits could be warded off by carving a grotesque face into a gourd or root vegetable (the Scottish used turnips) and setting a candle inside it--the jack-o-lantern.



What is the truth? What should we do?

- **Practices the LORD Hates – Deuteronomy 18**
- ⁹ You will enter the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you do, don't copy the practices of the nations that are there. The LORD hates those practices.
- ¹⁰ Here are things you must not do. Don't sacrifice your children in the fire to other gods. Don't practice any kind of evil magic at all. Don't use magic to try to explain the meaning of warnings in the sky or of any other signs. Don't take part in worshiping evil powers. ¹¹ Don't put a spell on anyone. Don't get messages from those who have died. Don't talk to the spirits of the dead. Don't get advice from the dead.
- ¹² The LORD your God hates it when anyone does those things. The nations that are in the land he's giving you practice the things he hates. So he will drive out those nations to make room for you. ¹³ You must be without blame in the sight of the LORD your God.



Pope Gregory IV (~1100 years ago)

- Pope Gregory IV reacted to the pagan challenge by moving the celebration of All Saints Day in the ninth century--he set the date at November 1, right in the middle of Samhain.
- As the centuries passed, Samhain and All Hallows Eve mixed together.

Over the centuries

- People began to understand that the **pagan ancestral spirits were demons** and the **diviners were practicing witchcraft and necromancy**.
- However the festival time provided greater opportunity for **partying**.
- Trick-or-treat became a time when **roving bands of young hooligans** would go house-to-house gathering food and drink for their parties. Stingy householders ran the risk of a "trick" being played on their property from drunken young people.

How Halloween got to America

- Halloween didn't become an American holiday until the immigration of the working classes from the British Isles in the late nineteenth century.
- While early immigrants may have believed the superstitious traditions, it was the mischievous aspects of the holiday that attracted American young people.
- Younger generations borrowed or adapted many customs without reference to their pagan origins.

Hollywood and Halloween

Hollywood has added to the "fun" a wide assortment of fictional characters--demons, monsters, vampires, werewolves, mummies, and psychopaths. That certainly isn't improving the American mind, but it sure is making someone a lot of money



Halloween today

- Today Halloween is a non-Christian holiday
- Many who celebrate have no concept of its religious origins or pagan background.
- Children dress up in entertaining costumes, wander the neighborhood in search of candy, and tell each other scary ghost stories; but adults often engage in shameful acts of drunkenness and debauchery.

How should we as Christians respond?

First, Christians should *not* respond to Halloween like superstitious pagans

- Spirits are not different at Halloween than any other night.
- It's people who are different that night as they give control of themselves to doing the wrong things.

1 Peter 5:8 (NIRV)

⁸ Control yourselves. Be on your guard. Your enemy the devil is like a roaring lion. He prowls around looking for someone to chew up and swallow

We should not be scared

- God is stronger than evil spirits

Dear children, you belong to God. You have not accepted the teachings of the false prophets. That's because the One who is in you is more powerful than the one who is in the world 1 John 4:4

- God has already beaten the evil

Colossians 2:15 (NIRV)

¹⁵ He took away the weapons of the powers and authorities. He made a public show of them. He won the battle over them by dying on the cross.

We should be **careful**

- Actual incidents of satanic crime are very low.
- The real threat on Halloween is from the social problems that attend sinful behavior
 - drunk driving,
 - pranksters and vandals,
 - and unsupervised children.
- Make sure parents are with kids on Halloween evenings. To keep them out of trouble and trouble away from them



Parents and responsible adults can keep young people safe!

We need to respond with love and compassion

- Unbelievers fear death
- Christians know death is not to be feared

Romans 2:14-16 (NIRV)

¹⁴ Those who aren't Jews do not have the law. Sometimes they just naturally do what the law requires. They are a law for themselves. This is true even though they don't have the law.

¹⁵ They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts. The way their minds judge them gives witness to that fact. Sometimes their thoughts find them guilty. At other times their thoughts find them not guilty.

¹⁶ People will be judged on the day God appoints Jesus Christ to judge their secret thoughts. That's part of my good news.

Limited, non-compromising participation in Halloween

There's nothing inherently evil about candy, costumes, or trick-or-treating in the neighborhood.

In fact, all of that can provide a unique gospel opportunity with neighbors.

Even handing out candy to the neighborhood --provided you're not stingy--can improve your reputation.

As long as the costumes are innocent and the behavior does not dishonor Christ, trick-or-treating can be used to further God's work.

Christian participation in Halloween

Ultimately, Christian participation in Halloween is a matter of conscience before God.

Whatever level of Halloween we choose, we must honor God by keeping ourselves separate from the world and by showing mercy to those who are going towards a bad death.

Halloween gives us ways to tell people about Jesus Christ.

Maybe we should tell people what Halloween is really about

Halloween could be used to honor Martyrs



**Instead of
selfish, ignorant and nasty
acts!**

Martyr - a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs.

Will you offer prayers for Martyrs each time you see a trick or treat situation this Halloween?