



## Where Did Hallowe'en Come From?



Halloween was originally a festival celebration that was started by the Celts – an ancient people who lived in Europe. It was started 2,000 years ago on November 1<sup>st</sup> which is an interesting parallel to the birth of Jesus. It's as though the devil wanted his holiday of death and darkness just before the Christmas holiday, which celebrates life and light in Jesus.

The celebration marked the beginning of the winter season of cold, decay and darkness. The Celts believed the souls of the dead returned to their homes for this one evening. In those ancient days they believed there was a “lord of death” as they called him, and they honored him the night before on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Today we call the lord of death the devil.

The Celts had priests and teachers that they called Druids. The Druids built huge bonfires on the night of October 31<sup>st</sup>, out of oak wood, which was considered holy. Then everyone put out the fires in their fireplaces at their homes and went to the big bonfire the priests had made.



After sacrifices of crops, animals and sometimes even humans were made into the fire, they would each take some of the fire from the bonfire home to their houses to re-light the fire in their fireplace, thinking it was holy fire. They carried the fire home in carved out vegetables like beets, potatoes, and turnips.

A tradition was added later that we still do today by carving out pumpkins and putting a light inside. It was because of an old Irish legend that said there was a man named Jack who could not enter heaven because he was too stingy, and he could not enter hell because he had played jokes on the devil, so he had to walk the earth with his lantern until Judgement Day. So, they call them “jack-o’-lanterns,” to this day.



The word “Hallowe'en” is actually “hallowed evening.” The word hallowed, means “to make holy.” That's what they thought they were doing when the priests made the sacrifices in the bonfire. They celebrated the dead because they were considered saints.

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Many of these ancient customs of the Celts survived even after the people became Christians. In fact, 800 years after Jesus had lived on earth some churches established All Saints Day on November 1<sup>st</sup> and some of these ungodly customs entered into the Christian church. As time went on new variations were added, with wearing long white robes and masks on their faces made from the heads of animals. Some people lit huge bonfires on hillsides to drive away witches and evil spirits. Some carried torches through the villages and the poor people went door to door to beg for “soulcakes” in exchange for promising to say prayers for the dead. This later developed into asking for a treat or promising to play a trick on the person they asked.

When people from Western Europe – (Irish, Scottish and English) came to the United States, their Halloween customs were not acceptable to the American people because of the strict religious beliefs of the people already settled here.



But, in the 1800's many more Irish, Scottish and English people began to come to America and with them came the introduction of the pagan Halloween practices into our American culture and here they are today – tragically becoming celebrated more and more – honoring Satan as the “lord of death” and featuring hideous monster masks, costumes and movies which celebrate the darkness of evil.

As Christians we can choose not to celebrate the darkness of Halloween. Most churches have Harvest parties where the kids dress in costumes and enjoy treats and fun activities.

It is not a contest between Jesus and the devil, because Jesus has already defeated the devil – so on Halloween, have a party celebrating the victory of Jesus over the devil. Let the children play games and have treats, and celebrate Jesus!



*“The darkness is past, and the true Light now shines.” (1 John 2:8b)*



## *Where Did Halloween Come From?*

Have a discussion and share the joy about Jesus, the Light of the world, overcoming the devil and his evil plans of darkness.

Make plans for your “Hallelujah” celebration!

What food will you serve?

What games will you play?

How about letting the children decorate pumpkin cookies?

What will you tell them about Jesus – how he wants us happy – enjoying life, love, and laughter.

Have a wonderful time with your children!

Your MEMORY VERSE is 1 John 2:8b. Please write it here from the bottom of page 3. (It will help you remember it)

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