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Mini Study

Trick or Treat?

'Ye shall not surely die' (Genesis 3:4 KJV)

Halloween and Christmas are in competition in our stores. Pumpkins, broomsticks, pointed black hats, grotesque masks vie with Christmas cards, baubles, toys - even, already, trees (though artificial). This is one face of modern Christianity. Sadly, on the evening of October 31 feral children roam the streets dressed as witches, ghouls - while the elderly cower at home in the dark. 'Trick or treat' is the cry, too often ending in violence. Why *Halloween*? Why this night? What does it have to do with Christianity?

- Interested non-Christian observers must surely believe Christians have left their senses! They may seek in vain for the origin of Halloween in Christianity's foundation document - the Bible. But where is Halloween? Certainly not in the Scriptures.
- *Halloween* - or, the evening preceding All Hallows - is widely celebrated late on October 31st. It is the time known in Ireland and Scotland as Samhain. *Hallowe'n* is followed by *All Souls and All Saints* (together known as *Hallowmas*).
- *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*: "The theological basis for the feast [All Souls] is the doctrine that the souls which, on departing from the body, are not perfectly cleansed from venial sins, or have not fully atoned for past transgressions, are debarred from the Beatific Vision, and that the faithful on earth can help them by prayers, alms, deeds and especially by the sacrifice of the Mass."
- *Hallowmas*, however, is rooted in the Satanic concept that man has an 'immortal soul,' (Genesis 3:4) that the soul survives death and continues its existence eternally. The doctrine permeates all religion from the earliest times. It gives rise to the veneration of ancestors - also to mummification, elaborate burial chambers (eg pyramids), the Mexican 'Day of the Dead' etc. The widespread concept of *Heaven, Hell and Purgatory* derives from the immortal soul fallacy. As does *Halloween* and *All Souls Day*. The remembrance of 'saints in heaven' - *All Saints* - is equally fallacious. But the observance has a long pre-Christian pedigree:
- "...according to Celtic and Wiccan lore, Samhain is a time when the "veil" that separates the world of the living and the world of the dead becomes thinner, allowing spirits and other supernatural entities to pass between the worlds to socialize with humans. It is also the time of the year when ancestors and other departed souls are especially honored, and sometimes entreated for luck. Some neopagans have elaborate rituals to honor the dead ..." *Wikipedia*.
- The concept of 'darkness' was personified by the Druids as Lord Samhain, and a festival was celebrated on the eve of November 1 - the Druidic new year. In the observance of Halloween the Devil, Satan, was worshipped as 'Lord of the Dead'. [Samhain signifies 'end of summer' with its increasing darkness]. The

Trick or Treat?

concepts of darkness, the colour black, evil spirits - perceived as grotesque - and human spirits returned from the dead are reflected in the Halloween celebration. Since 1000AD in Catholicism ‘...[Hallowmas] was celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels, and devils.’

- In the Old Testament the king of the northern House of Israel - Jeroboam - replaced the divinely-revealed *Festival of Tabernacles* (held in the seventh month, September/October) with a new festival a month later, in our late October/early November. The idolatrous worship he invented - he had learned similar practices during his time in Egypt where the cult of the dead was endemic - and the priests he appointed became the foundation, centuries later, for the Druidic faith, carried from Israel to the West by the ‘Celtic’ people of the House of Israel. What is now called *Halloween* was a major festival with the Druids.
- God’s festivals are in spring, summer, autumn (*see Leviticus 23*). However, they are linked to the *harvests* and do not celebrate phases of the sun or moon. In Christianity *All Hallows* is rooted in a festival that celebrates ‘end of summer,’ while *Christmas* is rooted in the idea of the ‘re-birth’ of the sun in late December. *Easter* is widely celebrated with sunrise services. The ‘sun-burst’ adorns many church buildings. Yet God warns: ‘*And that you not lift up your eyes towards the heavens and shall see the sun, and the heavens, and you be drawn away and worship them, and serve them...*’ (Deuteronomy 4:19 KJV).
- The Halloween season - based on a ‘doctrine of demons’ - cements in humanity an irrational fear of death. It promotes on the devout a burdensome round of useless ritual. It blinds Christians to the true divine worship pattern. And it obscures the glorious hope for the Christian of a resurrection from among the dead at Christ’s future coming. *Jesus*, now, is LORD of the dead’: ‘... *Christ both died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord over both the dead and the living*’ (Romans 14:9). It is not for Christians - *and is by no means harmless fun*.

(All Scripture references are LITV unless otherwise noted.)

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