



Rice Memorial MBC

Rice Memorial Missionary Baptist Church

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Definitions in **bold** letters are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 /1913 Edition,
Dictionary.com or **Collins Dictionary.com** – **October 23, 2022**

YouTube: **[Rice Memorial Missionary Baptist Church](https://www.youtube.com/RiceMemorialBaptistChurch)**

Podcast: **<https://anchor.fm/ricememorialbaptistchurch>**

Ancient Origins of Halloween

<http://www.history.com/topics/halloween>

Halloween's origins date back to the ancient **Celtic festival** of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The **Celts**, who lived **2,000 years** ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on **November 1**. This day marked the end of **summer** and the **HARVEST** and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. **On the night of October 31 they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the GHOSTS of the DEAD RETURNED to earth.** In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly SPIRITS made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. **For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world**, these prophecies were an important source of comfort and direction during the long, dark winter.

To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred BONFIRES, where the people gathered to BURN crops and ANIMALS as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. **During the celebration, the Celts wore COSTUMES, typically consisting of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes.** When the celebration was over, they re-lit their hearth fires, which they had extinguished earlier that evening, from the sacred bonfire to help **PROTECT** them during the coming winter.

By 43 A.D., the Roman Empire had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. In the course of the four hundred years that they ruled the Celtic lands, **TWO Festivals of Roman ORIGIN were combined** with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain. **The FIRST** was Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the DEAD. **The SECOND** was a day to honor **Pomona, the Roman goddess** of fruit and trees. **The symbol of Pomona is the APPLE** and the incorporation of this celebration into Samhain probably explains the TRADITION of "**BOBBING**" for **APPLES** that is practiced today on **Halloween**.

On **May 13, 609 A.D.**, **Pope Boniface IV** dedicated the Pantheon in Rome in honor of all Christian martyrs, and the Catholic feast of All Martyrs Day was established in the Western church. **Pope Gregory III** (731–741) later expanded the festival to include all saints as well as all martyrs, and moved the observance from May 13 to **November 1**. By the 9th century **the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands, where it gradually blended WITH and supplanted the older Celtic rites.** In 1000 A.D., the church would make Nov. 2 **All Souls' Day**, a day to honor the dead. It is widely believed today that the church was attempting to REPLACE the Celtic festival of the dead with a related, but church-sanctioned holiday. **All Souls Day was celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels and devils.** The **All Saints Day** celebration was also called **All-hallows** or All-hallowmas (from Middle English **Alholowmesse** meaning **All Saints' Day**)

and the night before it, **the traditional night of Samhain in the Celtic religion, began to be called All-hallows Eve and, eventually, HALLOWEEN.**

History of Halloween

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halloween>

Like Beltane/Calan Mai, it was seen as a liminal time, when the spirits or **fairies (the Aos Sí) could more easily come into our world** and were particularly active. Most scholars see the **Aos Sí** as "degraded versions of ancient gods, both Celtic and pre-Celtic, whose POWER remained active in the people's MINDS even after they had been officially replaced by later religious beliefs". **The fairies were both RESPECTED and feared**, with individuals often invoking the protection of God and Mary when approaching their dwellings. **At Samhain, it was believed that the Aos Sí needed to be propitiated (appeased) to ensure that the people and their livestock survived the winter.**

OFFERINGS of food and drink, or portions of the crops, were left for the **Aos Sí**. The souls of the DEAD were also said to revisit their homes. **Places were set at the dinner table or by the fire to welcome them.**

...Special BONFIRES were lit and there were rituals involving them.

Their flames, smoke and ashes were deemed to have protective and cleansing powers, and were also used for divination. It is suggested that the fires were a kind of imitative or sympathetic MAGIC – they mimicked the Sun, helping the "powers of growth" and holding back the decay and darkness of winter.¹ Christian minister Eddie J. Smith suggests that the bonfires were also used to scare **witches of "their awaiting punishment in HELL"**.

Thought 1. Above was just a portion of the article on Halloween found at the Wikipedia website. You can visit it to see the entire article. Now, in regard to what you just read, there are three sets of scripture that give Christians God's wisdom about why we should not do the things normally being done on October 31, commonly called "Halloween."

Deuteronomy 18:9-10, When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, **thou shalt NOT learn to DO after the abominations (disgusting morally, abhorrence [extreme hatred]) of those nations.** There shall NOT be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the FIRE, or that **useth (determine by lot or magical scroll; soothsayer) divination (WITHCRAFT), or an observer of times (practice MAGIC)...**

Witchcraft, the practices or ART of witches; sorcery; intercourse (interchange of THOUGHT and FEELING; association) with EVIL spirits.

Magic, the ART or SCIENCE of putting into action the POWER of spirits (any supernatural being, good or bad).

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 ...**or an enchanter (to HISS, i.e. whisper a magic SPELL [CHARM consisting of some words of occult {secret, hidden} power]), or a witch (sorcerer [magician {one skilled in magic}]), Or a charmer (one that uses or has the power of ENCHANTMENT)...**

Enchantment, the act of producing certain wonderful effects by the invocation or aid of DEMONS, or the agency of certain supposed spirits; the use of MAGIC arts, spells or charms; incantation.

Deuteronomy 18:11-14 ... or a **consulter with familiar spirits**, or a **wizard (conjuror [one who practices magic arts]), or a necromancer (necromancy [art of revealing FUTURE events by means of a pretended communication with the dead]).**

For ALL that DO these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and **because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them OUT from before thee.** Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, **hearkened unto observers of times,** and unto **diviners:** but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath NOT suffered thee so to DO.

Matthew 15:1-13, Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the TRADITION of the elders? for they wash NOT their hands when they eat bread. **But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your TRADITION?** For God commanded, saying, HONOUR thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour NOT his father or his mother, he shall be FREE.

Thus have ye made the commandment of God of NONE effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, HEAR, and UNDERSTAND: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but **that which cometh out of the mouth, this DEFILETH a man.** Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were OFFENDED, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, **EVERY plant, which my heavenly Father hath NOT planted, shall be ROOTED up.**

Luke 8:14-15, And **that which fell among thorns** are they, which, when they have heard, go forth ...are **CHOKED with cares ...riches and PLEASURES of this life,** and bring **no fruit to perfection.** But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **KEEP IT,** and bring forth fruit with patience.

1 Corinthians 10:18-22, Behold Israel after the flesh: **are NOT they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?** What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that **the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to DEVILS (dæmonic being), and NOT to God: and I would NOT that ye should have fellowship with devils (dæmonic being).**

Colossians 3:17...whatsoever ye do in WORD or DEED, do ALL in the **name (authority [authorization]) of the Lord Jesus,** giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Thought 2. As we see, everything we DO should be authorized by the Lord. If he didn't AUTHORIZE it, we should NOT participate in it, even IF it SEEMS innocent.

Ancient Origins of Halloween - continued

<http://www.history.com/topics/halloween>

Halloween Comes to America

Celebration of Halloween was extremely limited in colonial New England because of the rigid **Protestant belief** systems there. Halloween was much more common in Maryland and the southern colonies. As the beliefs and customs of different European ethnic groups as well as the American Indians meshed, a distinctly American version of Halloween began to emerge. **The first celebrations included "play parties," public events held to celebrate the harvest,**

where neighbors would share stories of the DEAD, tell each other's FORTUNES, dance and sing. Colonial Halloween festivities also featured the telling of **ghost stories** and mischief-making of all kinds. By the middle of the nineteenth century, annual autumn festivities were common, but Halloween was NOT yet celebrated everywhere in the country.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, America was flooded with new immigrants. These new immigrants, especially the millions of IRISH fleeing Ireland's potato famine of 1846, helped to popularize the celebration of HALLOWEEN nationally. **Taking from Irish and English traditions, Americans began to dress up in COSTUMES and go house to house ASKING for food or money, a practice that eventually became today's "TRICK-OR-TREAT" tradition.** Young women believed that on Halloween they could DIVINE the name or appearance of their **future husband** by doing tricks with yarn, apple parings or mirrors.

In the late 1800s, there was a move in America to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers than about ghosts, pranks and witchcraft. At the turn of the century, HALLOWEEN PARTIES for both children and adults became the most common way to celebrate the day. **Parties focused on games, foods of the season and festive COSTUMES.** Parents were encouraged by newspapers and community leaders to take anything "frightening" or "grotesque" OUT of Halloween celebrations. **Because of these efforts, Halloween lost most of its superstitious and religious overtones** by the beginning of the twentieth century.

By the 1920s and 1930s, Halloween had become a **secular,** but community-centered holiday, with parades and town-wide parties as the featured entertainment. **Despite the best efforts of many schools and communities, VANDALISM began to plague Halloween celebrations in many communities during this time.** By the **1950s,** town leaders had successfully limited vandalism and Halloween had evolved into a holiday directed mainly at the young. Due to the high numbers of young children during the fifties baby boom, parties moved from town civic centers into the classroom or home, where they could be more easily accommodated. **Between 1920 and 1950,** the centuries-old practice of TRICK-OR-TREATING was also revived. Trick-or-treating was a relatively inexpensive way for an entire community to share the Halloween celebration. In theory, families could also prevent tricks being played on them by providing the neighborhood children with small treats. **A new American tradition was born, and it has continued to grow.** Today, Americans spend an estimated **\$6 billion** annually on Halloween, making it the country's **SECOND LARGEST** commercial holiday.

Today's Halloween Traditions

The **American Halloween** tradition of "**trick-or-treating**" probably dates back to the early All Souls' Day parades in England. During the festivities, POOR citizens would BEG for FOOD and **families would give them pastries called "SOUL CAKES" in return for their promise to pray for the family's DEAD relatives.** The distribution of SOUL CAKES was encouraged by the CHURCH as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving food and wine for roaming spirits.

The practice, which was referred to as "GOING A-SOULING" was eventually taken up by children who would visit the houses in their neighborhood and be given ale, food, and money. **The tradition of dressing in COSTUME for Halloween** has both European and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes.

To AVOID being recognized by these GHOSTS, people would wear MASKS when they left their homes AFTER DARK so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On

Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter.

Halloween Superstitions

Halloween has always been a holiday filled with mystery, MAGIC and superstition. It began as a Celtic end-of-summer festival during which people felt especially close to deceased relatives and friends. **For these friendly spirits,** they set places at the dinner table, left treats on doorsteps and along the side of the road and lit candles to help loved ones find their way back to the spirit world. Today's Halloween ghosts are often depicted as more fearsome and malevolent, and our customs and superstitions are scarier too. **We avoid crossing paths with black cats,** afraid that they might bring us bad luck. **This idea has its roots in the Middle Ages, when many people believed that WITCHES avoided detection by turning themselves into cats.** We try not to walk under ladders for the same reason. This superstition may have come from the ancient Egyptians, who believed that triangles were sacred; it also may have something to do with the fact that walking under a leaning ladder tends to be fairly unsafe. And around Halloween, especially, we try to avoid breaking mirrors, stepping on cracks in the road or spilling salt.

But what about the Halloween traditions and beliefs that today's trick-or-treaters have forgotten all about? Many of these obsolete rituals focused on the future instead of the past and the living instead of the dead. **In particular, many had to do with helping young women identify their future husbands** and reassuring them that they would someday—with luck, by next Halloween—be Married. In **18th-century Ireland,** a matchmaking cook might **bury a ring in her mashed potatoes** on Halloween night, hoping to bring true love to the diner who found it.

In Scotland, fortune-tellers recommended that an eligible young woman name a hazelnut for each of her suitors and then toss the nuts into the fireplace. The nut that burned to ashes rather than popping or exploding, the story went, represented the girl's future husband. (In some versions of this legend, confusingly, the opposite was true: The nut that burned away symbolized a love that would not last.) Another tale had it that if a young woman ate a sugary concoction made out of walnuts, hazelnuts and nutmeg before bed on Halloween night she would dream about her future husband. Young women tossed apple-peels over their shoulders, hoping that the peels would fall on the floor in the shape of their future husbands' initials; tried to learn about their futures by **peering at egg yolks** floating in a bowl of water; and stood in front of mirrors in darkened rooms, holding candles and looking over their shoulders for their husbands' faces. Other **rituals** were more competitive. At some **HALLOWEEN PARTIES,** the first guest to find a burr on a chestnut-hunt would be the first to marry; at others, the first successful **apple-bobber** would be the first down the aisle.

Of course, whether we're asking for romantic advice or trying to avoid seven years of bad luck, **each one of these Halloween superstitions relies on the good will of the very same "spirits" whose PRESENCE the early Celts FELT so keenly.**

The Legend of "Stingy Jack"

<http://www.history.com/topics/jack-olantern-history>

People have been making jack-o'-lanterns at Halloween for centuries. The practice originated from an Irish myth about a man nicknamed "STINGY JACK." According to the story, **Stingy Jack invited the Devil to have a drink with him.** True to his name, Stingy Jack didn't want to pay for his drink, so he convinced the Devil to turn himself into a coin that Jack could use to buy their drinks. Once the Devil did so, Jack decided to keep the money

and put it into his pocket next to a **silver cross**, which **prevented** the **Devil** from changing back into his original form.

Jack eventually freed the Devil, under the condition that he would NOT bother Jack for ONE year and that, should Jack die, he would NOT claim his soul. The next year, Jack again tricked the Devil into climbing into a tree to pick a piece of fruit. While he was up in the tree, Jack carved a sign of the cross into the tree's bark so that the Devil could NOT come down until the Devil promised Jack NOT to bother him for TEN more years.

Soon after, Jack died. As the legend goes, God would NOT allow such an unsavory figure into heaven. The Devil, upset by the trick Jack had played on him and keeping his word NOT to claim his soul, **would NOT allow Jack into HELL.**

He sent Jack off into the DARK night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the Earth with ever since. The Irish began to refer to this ghostly figure as

"Jack of the Lantern," and then, simply **"Jack O'Lantern."**

In Ireland and Scotland, people began to make their own versions of **Jack's lanterns** by **CARVING SCARY FACES into turnips or potatoes** and **placing them into windows or near doors** to frighten away Stingy Jack and other wandering EVIL spirits.

In England, large beets are used. Immigrants from these countries brought the jack O'Lantern tradition with them when they came to the United States.

They soon found that PUMPKINS, a fruit native to America, make perfect jack-o'-lanterns.