

SHOULD WE CELEBRATE HALLOWEEN?

Intro: Should Christians celebrate Halloween? Some say it's completely evil, while others laugh and say it's harmless fun. Is it a devilish trick or harmless treat?

⁸*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.* *Philippians 4:8*

²¹*Test everything. Hold on to the good.* ²²*Avoid every kind of evil.* *I Thessalonians 5:21-22*

I. How Did Halloween Begin?

- ***Originally a pagan Celtic event called _____*** (Sow' - ěn) – Begun over 2,000 years ago, Celts in Britain believed on October 31 (last day of Celtic year) the spirits of dead came back to earth to haunt the living. Druid (a pagan religion) priests lit bonfires to scare off these evil spirits and even made human sacrifices. Costumes of animal skins and heads worn to scare and confuse the spirits.
- ***Christianity arrives, and tries to _____ Samhain*** – The church moves All Saints Day (celebrating the lives of the saints) to November 1, and called October 31 All Hallows Evening (preparing for All Saints Day), eventually shortened to Halloween. But the peasants didn't let go of their heritage of superstitious beliefs of visiting spirits, simply combining them with Christian beliefs of Satan and demons. Superstitious Christians began associating witches with bad events in their lives. Folk remedy healers and weird, unlikable women were identified as witches.
- ***Trick or treating began as a _____ event*** – The poor (especially children) would go to richer people's homes on All Hallows' Eve in the Middle Ages, promising prayers for dead loved ones in purgatory if treats were given. If treats weren't offered, "tricks" were played. Masks eventually were worn to hide the identity of the tricksters.
- ***Halloween develops in _____*** – English settlers coming to America brought their superstitions and traditions. Halloween further develops into a major festivity in a new, fresh society. It became scarier, naughtier, and filled with malicious mischief. Efforts to tame it in the 1920's and 1930's gave us the holiday of today. Today many adults are as involved in Halloween as the children. More money is spent on Halloween than any other holiday except Christmas.

II. Today, Is Halloween an Evil Trick or Harmless Treat?

- ***Much of Halloween is pagan and _____*** – This evil can be attractive and tempting, and can influence, dominate and control some. Halloween drains the image of evil from being real and spiritually dangerous for many, making them susceptible to its dangerous influences. Could this be Satan's evil trick?
- ***Halloween can be _____, and a G-rated treat*** – Halloween's emphasis can focus on activities and costumes that are fun and not evil – no devil, demons, ghosts, witches, or malicious pranks.
- ***If Christians don't _____ between the evil and the harmless; it will give the green light to everyone else to be fully involved, without discrimination.*** (III John 11)

III. So What Should a Christian Do?

- ***Option #1: Complete _____*** – It's all an evil trick! Anything associated with Halloween is bad. Problem: It pushes us to ultra-strict, fun-sapping legalism. (II Corinthians 6:17)

- **Option #2: Total** _____ – It's just a harmless treat. The evil isn't really serious or dangerous. Unfortunately, much of Halloween must offend, hurt and anger God.
- **Option #3: Prayerful** _____ – It can be an evil trick, but let's make it a harmless treat as an alternative. How?
 - 1) Dressing up, but not in costumes denoting evil or horror.
 - 2) Have fun in activities that are not evil.
 - 3) Educate people on the darkness and dangers of Halloween's true evil, and contrast that with the Light and love Jesus Christ (I John 1:5-6). In Christ, we don't need to walk in darkness and fear; Jesus has overcome evil and this world (John 16:33).
(I Thess. 5:21-22, Philippians 4:8)

Answers: I. Samhain; counteract; semi-religious; America. II. Evil; harmless; discriminate. III. Rejection; accommodation; customization.