





Popular Symbols


Some symbols of Halloween also have their origins in ancient customs.


 **Cats**—believed by the Druids to be humans that had been changed into animals by evil powers. Linked with Samhain and later with witches, the cat found a permanent place in Halloween, standing for the spirit of evil.


Jack-o-Lanterns—imagined to be the souls of sinners condemned to walk the earth until the end of time. The Irish claim that a man named Jack made a deal with the devil that he couldn't keep, so when he died he couldn't go to heaven and the devil wouldn't let him into hell. 

 **Ghosts, Goblins, and Ghouls**—thought to have special freedom to travel freely among the living on Halloween.

Bats & Owls—Celts believed these animals were able to communicate with the dead. 

 **Skeletons & Skulls**—symbols of death, referencing the origin of Halloween.

Costumes—When disaster, illness, or other hardships struck towns, people would don their most hideous masks, hoping that the demons they thought had brought the disasters would be frightened away. 

 **Treats**—The Celtic tribesmen of Europe believed that ghosts and other spirit-beings visited the land of the living on the eve of Samhain, so they presented offerings to them on that night. Just as people once offered gifts of food to the spirits, people today offer treats to the children who represent them.



History

Halloween originally came from the Druids as the festival of Samhain – a celebration honoring death. The Druids' New Year began on November 1, marking the change from the harvest time to the beginning of winter.

An article entitled, "Hail to the Sabat, Samhain!" states the following:

In the Druidic calendar, this was the time when barriers between man and the supernatural were lowered.... On the eve of Samhain, the gates of the Abyss were unlocked and spirits from below flew free. Human souls that had been trapped in the bodies of animals were released by the Lord of the Dead and sent to their new incarnations.

In order to please Samhain, the Celtic priests held cruel fire rites. Prisoners of war, criminals, and/or animals were burned alive. This was also the time when it was believed that witches rode through the skies on their broomsticks. The idea was prevalent among the Druids as it had been among early Egyptians and Romans, that there were women who had sold themselves to the devil. On Halloween, these witches were said to dance on the hilltops with goblins and imps, while the devil played the bagpipes or castanets made from dead men's bones. As the people celebrated that night around the fire, they talked of the mysterious sights or weird sounds they encountered, perhaps forerunner to telling ghost stories on Halloween.

After the spread of Christianity, enemies of the church made fun of the Christians and on Halloween they worshipped the devil, set skulls on pretend altars, or painted profane crosses on church walls. Understandably, Christians rejected and detested this idolatrous festival.

What does all this mean?

This is not to say the Christians who choose to participate in Halloween are necessarily sinning, however they need to decide whether by their participation, they bring honor to God.

Can we truly align ourselves with something traditionally, and even currently, involved with the occult and be certain we will never be affected in any way? By merely participating in Halloween, are we ignorantly skirting the territory of the devil? Historically, isn't this the day that has been considered for evil as special above all others--from the ancient Druids to the modern Druids, witches, and Satanists? Unfortunately, isn't it also true that most Christians don't even know this? But if the purpose of the Christian life is to glorify God, is it really possible to glorify God by imitating such dark practices?

Can we, even indirectly, be setting up our own children to become familiar with the "flavor" or practices of the occult? Is it possible to not imitate or learn evil while imitating or "learning" modern symbolism of ancient evil practices? When our kids ask us why they and other kids dress up in costumes and why they trick or treat, can we as their parents give them any other answer that is not tied back to evil, pagan, and occult practice?

Let's ask the final question. How does God, as He looks down on Halloween night, in full awareness of the events that have happened on this night historically and today, view little children, especially Christian children, dressed up as ghosts, devils, witches, and goblins? How does God view Christian parents, His own spiritual children, participating in an event that is still so honored by occultists—a day on which, historically, so much evil has been committed?

What God says:

"Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14

"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." Ephesians 5:11

"The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." Romans 13:12

"Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good..." 3 John 1:11

If you choose
to say no:

Don't apologize for honoring God: Christians belong to God: the world is in rebellion against God. We're not supposed to fit in here. God tells us to be different from our neighbors (Romans 12:1-2). Remember there's nothing to apologize for when you challenge your kids to honor the Lord.

Challenge your kids to spiritual growth: Use Halloween as an opportunity to spiritually educate your kids. Describe the spiritual battle being waged in the world today (Ephesians 6:10-18). Help them gain a godly perspective on Halloween and challenge them to take a personal stand.

Don't discourage your kids: It's good for kids to have fun. Having fun is not what's wrong with Halloween! If you provide a fun alternative, they will be less likely to feel cheated when you say "no" to Halloween (see Colossians 3:21).