

***Supplemental Notes:***

# Halloween

## Invitation to the Occult?

The celebration of the pagan festival of Halloween is now a \$2.4 billion merchandiser's market. 50% of Americans will decorate for Halloween (compared to over 80% for Christmas). It is now the third most popular party activity, after the Superbowl and New Year's Eve.<sup>1</sup>

This is always a difficult time for Christians, especially those with children. It is also a dangerous time for some, since many of the seemingly "harmless" involvements associated with Halloween can also be "entries" for the occult, and can prove very tragic for the unwary.

# Halloween

## Pagan Background

In ancient Britain and Ireland, the Celtic festival of *Samhain* was observed on October 31, the end of summer. In Cornwall it was known as *Allantide*, of apple time; in Ireland it was also known as *Geimredh*.<sup>2</sup> November 1 was the new year for both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon calendars and the date was connected with the return of herds from pasture and the renewal of laws and land tenures. It was one of the most important, and yet sinister, calendar festivals of the Celtic Year.

The Celts were the first Aryan people who came from Asia to settle in Europe. Settling in northern France and the British Isles, the Celtic people engaged in occultic arts, worshiped nature, giving it supernatural, animistic qualities. (Much like the Federal government is attempting to enforce today.)

The ancient Druids were the learned priestly class of the Celtic religion. Many of their beliefs and practices were similar to those of Hinduism, such as reincarnation, and the transmigration of the soul, which teaches that people may be reborn as animals.<sup>3</sup> They worshiped the Lord of the Dead on *Samhain*, October 31. According to Julius Caesar<sup>4</sup> and other sources, the Celts believed they were descended from the god *Dis*, the Roman name for the god of the dead. (Much of what we know of this ancient culture comes from the records of the Romans.)

Human sacrifice occurred regularly among the Druids. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, the Druids "covered their altars with the blood" of the

victims—mostly criminals; according to Caesar, human sacrifice was a common and frequent element in Druidism. In large cages, scores of people were burned alive at once; the larger the number of victims, the greater the yield of crops.<sup>5</sup> According to Lucan, a 1st century Latin poet, in *Pharsalia*, three Celt gods in particular were hungry for human souls—Teutates, Esus and Taranis.<sup>6</sup> The struggles of the dying victims were held to contain predictions of the future. The Druids had full confidence in human sacrifice as a method of divination. “Horrible indeed was the method by which the Druids divined the future events after a human sacrifice. ‘The Druids,’ says Tacitus, ‘consult the gods in the palpitating entrails of men,’ while Strabo informs us that they stabbed a human victim in the back with a sword and then drew omens from the convulsive movements made by him in his death-struggles. Diodorus says that they augured from the posture in which the victim fell, from his contortions, and the direction in which the blood flowed from the body. From these, ‘they formed their predictions according to certain rules left them by their ancestors.’”<sup>7</sup> (Human sacrifices are still a part of certain satanist and neo-pagan groups.)

The Druids believed that on October 31, the night before their New Year and the last day of the old year, *Samhain*, the Lord of Death, gathered the souls of the evil dead who had been condemned to enter the bodies of animals. It was believed that he would then decide what animal form they would take for the next year. (The souls of the good dead were reincarnated as humans.) The Druids also believed that the punishment of the evil dead would be lightened by sacrifices, prayers and gifts to the Lord of Death. (This begins to reveal the strange link between this holiday and the non-Biblical concept of purgatory, etc.)

Druid worshipers attempted to placate and appease the Lord of Death because of his power over the souls of the dead, whether these souls were good or evil. For those who had died during the preceding 12 months, Samhain allowed their spirits to return to earth to their former places of habitation for a few hours to associate once again with their families.

It was on these occasions that ancient fire festivals, with huge bonfires set on hilltops, were set to "frighten away evil spirits." The souls of the dead were supposed to revisit their homes on this day, and the autumnal festival acquired a sinister significance, with ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, black cats, fairies, and demons of all kinds said to be roaming about. It was the time to placate the supernatural powers controlling the processes of nature. The hilltop Halloween fires of the Scots were called *Samhnagan*, suggesting the lingering influence of the ancient Celtic festivals.<sup>8</sup>

On this night, evil or frustrated ghosts were supposed to play tricks on humans and cause supernatural manifestations. As part of the celebration, people donned grotesque masks and danced around huge bonfires to scare away the evil spirits. Food was also put out to allow the good dead that *Samhain* had released to feel welcome and at home. Halloween was also thought to be the most favorable time for divinations concerning marriage, luck, health, and death. It was the only day on which the help of the devil could be invoked for such purposes.

Other festivals worldwide also celebrate a time when the dead return to mingle with the living. The Hindus have their night of Holi. The Iroquois Indians celebrate a Feast of the Dead every 12 years. In Mexico, the Day of the Dead begins on

November 2. In Russia, all the witches are said to gather once a year, as celebrated in Moussorgsky's *Night on the Bare Mountain*, which was featured in Walt Disney's *Fantasia*.

In early American history, Halloween was not practiced. It was not widely observed until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was introduced by the Irish Catholic settlements. (Ireland is the only country in the world where Halloween is a national holiday.)

## **Catholic Traditions**

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church attempted to oppose the paganism involved in the *Samhain* festival by making November 1 All Saints' Day, a day commemorating all the saints of the church. The first evidence for the November 1 date of the church celebration occurred during the reign of Pope Gregory III (731-741). In 837 Pope Gregory IV ordered its general observance. November 2 was later designated as All Souls' Day, which eventually became a special day to pray for the dead.<sup>9</sup>

## **Soul Cakes**

In the late 1800s, it was customary for English Catholics to assemble at midnight on Halloween to pray for the souls of their departed friends. On November 2 in Belgium, people eat special "All Soul's" cakes because, supposedly, "the more cakes you eat on this night, the more souls you can save from Purgatory."<sup>10</sup> In Sicily, on All Soul's Day, cakes with images of skulls and skeletons are eaten.<sup>11</sup> In France, All Soul's Day (*Le Jour des Morts*) is "dedicated to prayers for the dead who are not yet glorified."<sup>12</sup> In earlier times, people took special bread called "souls" to the cemeteries, placing it on the graves. The people ate these "soul cakes" because they were thought to be a powerful antidote

against any flames of purgatory "that might be invoked by returning ghosts. At dusk the festival changed from All Saint's Day to All Soul's Eve. Lighted candles were placed on graves and in windows, to guide the dead back home."<sup>13</sup>

These examples illustrate how Halloween appears to be related to both the ancient Celtic practices and the Catholic concept of purgatory. The Catholic concept of purgatory is also related to the Druid belief "that the sinful souls of those who had died during the year had been relegated to the bodies of animals. Through gifts and sacrifices their sins could be expiated and the souls freed to claim a heavenly reward. Samhain judged the souls and decreed in what form their existence was to continue, whether in the body of a human being or in an animal."<sup>14</sup>

## **Martin Luther**

In the year 1483 in Eisleben, Saxony, a baby boy was born to a poor coal miner. As he grew up and observed the poverty of his father, this boy, named Martin, chose to pursue a different vocation. He decided to become a lawyer and, in 1501, entered the University of Erfurt, where he excelled in his studies. As he came to the end of his schooling in 1504, an event took place which changed his life.

While he was walking the campus grounds, a storm broke so forcefully that Martin fell on his face in fear. The thunder was deafening and lightning struck all around him. Instinctively, he cried out to the patron saint of coal miners, whose name he had heard invoked during his childhood, "Saint Anne! Save me from the lightning. If you save me I will become a monk." Shortly thereafter the storm stopped. Being a man of his word, Martin withdrew from Law school and entered an August-

tinian monastery where he applied himself so diligently that he obtained a Doctorate of Theology within a few years. But the more he studied, the more troubled his heart became; for although he was becoming an expert in theology, he lacked peace personally. The question he repeatedly wrote in his diary was: "How can a man find favor with God?" In search of such peace, Martin devoted himself to an exceedingly pious life-style. He would fast for ten to fifteen days at a time; when temperatures dropped below freezing, he slept outside without a blanket; between his studies, he beat his body until it was black and blue and bleeding—hoping that somehow by punishing his flesh, he could rid himself of the thoughts and motives that he knew were not right. (These were typical practices of the medieval church...)

He went to confession so many times a day that finally the abbot said, "Martin, either go out and commit a sin worth confessing or stop coming here so often." Martin was so introspective and continually plagued by what he knew of his own depravity and sinfulness. Once, while sitting at his desk writing theology, he felt the presence of Satan so tangibly that he grabbed a bottle of ink and hurled it across the room to where he thought the devil was standing. The bottle crashed against the wall and left a mark that can still be seen today.

Finally, in 1509, Martin decided to make a pilgrimage to Rome in hopes of finding the elusive peace for which he longed. He set out on foot and crossed the Alps. On his descent, he almost died of a high fever before making his way to a monastery at the foot of the mountains. There the Brothers nursed him back to health. While there, a wise monk approached him and said, "You need to read the Book of Habakkuk." And so Martin did just that. He read Habakkuk. Good suggestion. Habakkuk was a struggler just like Martin. Like today: If

God is good, why does He allow suffering? If there really is a devil, why doesn't God just obliterate him? (We throw out questions, then immediately plunge into our personal pursuits—and wonder why we don't get answers.)

One verse captured Martin's imagination: Habakkuk 2:4. "The just shall live by faith." He couldn't get it out of his mind.<sup>15</sup> And having recovered sufficiently to continue his journey to Rome, he went on to the Church of St. John's Lateran, a typical cathedral of that day. There is a staircase there that is said to be from Pilate's judgment hall. The existing stairs are four parts: The outer two are ordinary. The special inner two are said to have been transported there miraculously from Jerusalem. The inner steps are not walked on. Here pilgrims mount painfully on their knees, a step at a time, saying prayers as they go. The pope had promised an indulgence to all who would undergo this rite. As Martin repeated his prayers on the Lateran staircase, Habakkuk 2:4 suddenly came into his mind: *the just shall live by faith*.

He ceased his prayers, returned to the University of Wittenberg, went on to explore the revolutionary idea of "justification by faith." And, on October 31, 1517, he drove a stake into the heart of many of the prevailing non-Biblical concepts by nailing his famous 95 Theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany, and started the movement known today as the Reformation—the single most important event in modern history.<sup>16</sup> Appropriately, he did this on Halloween. His name, of course, was Martin Luther.

The leadership didn't like the implications of his views and, ultimately, at the Diet (council) of Worms (a town) they excommunicated him as a heretic. He went on to write commentaries that



are classics today, and hymns like “A Mighty Fortress is our God.” He also translated the entire Bible into German, a classic which remains the literary masterpiece in the Germanic tongue.

In medieval England, the Halloween festival was known as All Hallows’ Eve. Since it was associated with prayers for those in purgatory, the feast was abolished in the Church of England after the Reformation but has since been revived in Anglo-Catholic churches.

## **Modern Halloween Traditions**

Gradually, Halloween became a secular observance, and many customs and practices developed.

**The Jack-O’-Lantern:** The carved pumpkin may have originated with the witches’ use of a skull with a candle inside to light the way to coven meetings. However, the legend of “Irish Jack” is also told: A stingy drunk named Jack tricked the devil into climbing an apple tree for an apple, but then cut the sign of a cross into the trunk of the tree—preventing the devil from coming down. Jack forced the devil to swear he would never come after Jack’s soul. The devil reluctantly agreed. When Jack eventually died he was turned away from the gates of heaven because of his life of drunkenness and selfishness. He next went to the devil who also rejected him, keeping his promise. As Jack was leaving hell (and happening to be eating a turnip) the devil threw a live coal at him. Condemned to wander the earth, Jack put the coal inside the turnip, making a “jack o’lantern.” Eventually, pumpkins replaced the turnip.

**Trick-or-Treat and Costumes** Among the ancient Druids, “the ghosts that were thought to throng about the houses of the living were greeted

with a banquet-laden table. At the end of the feast, masked and costumed villagers representing the souls of the dead paraded to the outskirts of town leading the ghosts away.”<sup>17</sup> Immigrants to the U.S., particularly the Irish, introduced Halloween customs that became popular in the 19th century. Traditional mischief-making on this occasion was eventually replaced by the familiar small children going house to house, usually in costume, demanding “trick or treat.” Going from door to door seeking treats may hail back to the Druid practice of begging material for the great bonfires. (This is also related to the Catholic concept of purgatory and the custom of begging for a “soul cake.”) The “trick” custom of Halloween appears to be derived from the idea that ghosts and witches created mischief on the living if they did not provide the “treats.” (It became obvious to some people that a sense of humor could be camouflaged by blaming practical jokes on the ghosts or witches roaming about.)

Since 1965, UNICEF, an agency of the United Nations, has attempted to incorporate into the Halloween observance the collection of money for the United Nations Childrens Fund. This exploitation by the ungodly United Nations of this pagan holiday seems strangely appropriate.

## **The Role of the Planet Mars?**

It is provocative that almost all the early cultures *worshipped* the Planet Mars. Why? (The worship of Baal included the worship of the Planet Mars.) Perhaps it was because it *intervened* in their lives.

All of the ancient calendars appear to have been altered about 701 B.C. Previously, all calendars seem to have used either March or October as their terminus, which coincides with the projected intersection of the planets Earth and Mars, according to

some models. The near pass-bys which would occur every 108 years seem to account for the catastrophes recorded at those times and for the fear and trepidation Mars inspired in the ancient cultures. ("Martial arts" still lingers in our modern vocabulary.) The possibility that the ancient calendars were perturbed by orbital resonance with the Planet Mars is explored in our briefing package, *The Mysteries of the Planet Mars*, and *Signs in the Heavens*.

If this conjecture is correct, it gives us a penetrating insight into the ancient worship of the "hosts of heaven." It's no wonder they were so frightened by them: the planets intervened in their very lives. The gravitational proximity of a near pass-by of such a large object could have caused the dramatic earthquakes, tidal waves, meteors and other catastrophic phenomena recorded by the ancients. It is conjectured that these intrusions by the Planet Mars contributed to the worship of Mars (Baal) by the early pagan cultures and also gave rise to the October 31 year-end tradition and, thus, our Halloween. [Highly controversial, of course, but colorful conversation for a brisk October evening.]

### **Modern Superstitions**

It is still believed, in many places, that following a particular ritual can have real supernatural effects, such as bringing up an apparition of one's future mate, etc. Girls, eating an apple before a mirror at midnight might produce an image of one's future mate behind you, etc.<sup>18</sup> The innumerable superstitions surrounding this holiday—all over the world—is beyond cataloging... In New Orleans, the Voodoo Museum offers a special Halloween ritual in which people may see true voodoo rites.<sup>19</sup> In Salem, Massachusetts, a Halloween festival occurs from October 13 to 31 and includes a psychic fair.<sup>20</sup> There

are many serious Christians that are becoming increasingly perplexed as to how to deal with this popular—yet pagan—holiday.

### Overreacting?

Halloween is not our only holiday that manifests remnants of ancient paganism. The **Christmas tree** originated from ancient tree cults. (The term *druid* originally referred to a priest of the oak-cult). The custom of kissing someone under a mistletoe branch can be traced back to Druid beliefs relating to sexual potency and reverence for the plant. **Easter** (Babylonian *Ishtar*) and the “Golden Egg of Astarte” originated in fertility cults. (The identity of rabbits with fertility explains the bizarre association with bunnies that lay eggs!) The practice of sending cards on **Valentine’s Day** can be traced back to the characteristically licentious Roman feast of *Lupercalia*. **Birthday cakes** may have derived from offering candles and cakes to *Artemis*, the ancient Greek goddess of the moon and the hunt.

The custom of giving out **cigars** at a baby’s birth may come from the ancient Mayan fathers who would blow tobacco smoke toward the sun god as an offering of thanks. Our childhood “**tooth fairy**” may be related to attempts to hide physical items from practitioners of voodoo who would use such items for their cursing rituals. The idea of **June brides** is related to *Juno*, the Roman goddess of marriage. Most aspects of the American wedding ceremony can be traced to ancient pagan customs—including the bride’s white dress and veil, exchanging of wedding rings, and the father giving the bride away. Should we avoid weddings merely because of its “pagan” elements? Hardly. Yet Halloween is, for many, a “crossover” involvement in which innocent games can lead to serious entangle-

ment with real witches, neo-pagans, New Agers, and other occultists.<sup>21</sup>

## **Ouija Boards**

A common pastime is the use of a Ouija board to attempt to contact ghosts or spirits that are believed to be roaming about. This can lead to serious consequences including demon possession. Invented as a game: “Oui”, French + “Ja”, German. [Curious fact: Patents and copyrights are now owned by Parker Bros Inc. Their corporate headquarters? Salem, Massachusetts.] William Blatty’s *Exorcist*, based, surprisingly, on a real life case study, is a grim example. The trouble all began with a Ouija board. *Dungeons and Dragons* apparently can lead to similar consequences. These are called “entries.” Many games and entertainments harbor potential dangers that are far beyond innocent amusements. Astrology is another such example. The Word of God makes it clear that these are to be shunned as dangerous.

## **Biblical Principles**

Paul’s discussion of circumstantial prohibition, individual conscience, and personal conviction: 1 Cor 10:18-29; Rom 14:1-13, et al. That which is sacrificed is unavoidably related to that for which it is sacrificed. “When the people of Israel ate part of the sacrifice made at the altar (Lev 7:15; 8:31; Deut 12:17-18) they participated in the worship of God, who established the sacrifices and whose altar it was.” (NIV textnote on 1 Cor 10:18.)

There is only one true God (Isa 44:6, 8; 46:9). Thus, only one true religion. Scripture declares “all gods of the nations are idols” (Ps 96:5). All false religion and idolatry is by definition involved in demon worship—whether or not the participants recognize it

(Acts 26:18). Hence Paul's concern. The spiritual power and reality behind idols involves demons (1 Cor 10:20; Ps 106:37). The Bible tells us to shun occult practices: Mediums and spiritists (Lev 19:31; Deut 18:10, 11, 14; 2 Chr 33:6).

## **Tape 2: Witchcraft and the Occult**

**Which Witch is Which? or  
Can you really find a happy medium?**

### **The Occult is Popular**

We have the wife of the President contacting Eleanor Roosevelt. Neo-paganism, New Age, et al., is now "politically correct" and a source of popular entertainment: "Ghost Dad" with Bill Cosby; "Ghost" with Patrick Swayze, and "Ghost Busters." There are more witches in England and America today than at any time since the Reformation. *Time* magazine estimated that there were about 160,000 witches in America, and about half that many in Britain. The United States may harbor the fastest growing and most highly organized body of satanists and occultists in the world.

The forms of the occult can include mediums, channelers, clairvoyants, psychics, spiritists, diviners, mystics, gurus, shamans, psychical researchers, Yogis, psychic and holistic healers, astral travel, astrology, mysticism, Ouija boards, Tarot cards, contact with the dead, UFO's, and thousands of other practices which almost defy cataloging. Occultism includes Satanism, astrology, Kabbalah, Gnosticism, theosophy, witchcraft and many forms of serious magic. It includes activities seeking the acquisition of "hidden" things—which are expressly forbidden by God in the Bible. Don't overlook the pulpits: It includes views and doctrines that Paul warned Timothy about: Doctrines of Demons (1 Tim 4:1).

Walter Martin estimated that over 100 million Americans were actively or peripherally involved in these areas.<sup>22</sup> A recent University of Chicago national poll revealed that 67% of Americans “now profess a belief in the supernatural,” and that 42% “believe they have been in contact with someone who died.”<sup>23</sup>

Check any secular bookstore, and by comparing the allocation of productive shelf space, it is obvious that the occult and New Age materials are bigger than any other religious interest. Occultism is not limited to “fringe” elements; it has become a commanding presence with almost irresistible persuasion. In one form or another almost everyone in our culture will sooner or later be exposed to its dangerous entanglements.

The English word “occult” comes from the Latin *occultus*, meaning “to cover up, hide, or conceal.” Its purpose is to deceive. It is not simply a philosophy or pastime. It is the domain of extremely powerful, sentient, hostile superbeings who have a vigorous agenda to destroy you. Personally. There were many superstitions of false concepts in ancient Israel about which the Bible is silent. Occultism, in any form, was punishable by death! Why?

## **The Reality of the Spirit World**

J.B. Rhine and modern parapsychology promotes the notion that psychic power are natural abilities in all people. This is one of the occultic delusions.

## **Ghosts?**

Poltergeists (German: “*Polter*,” to make noise by throwing or tumbling around; “*geist*,” ghost or spirit.) (Over 1,000 English books on poltergeists this past century alone.) Poltergeist activity oc-

### Reincarnation

"What is reincarnation?"  
a cowboy asked his friend.  
It starts, his old pal told him,  
when your life comes to an end.  
They comb your hair, wash your neck,  
and clean your fingernails,  
and put you in a padded box  
away from life's travails.  
Now the box and you goes in the hole  
that's been dug in the ground.  
Reincarnation starts in when  
you're planted 'neath that mound.  
Them clods melt down just like the box  
and you who is inside.  
And that is when you begin  
your transformation ride.  
And in awhile the grass will grow  
upon your render'd mound  
Till someday upon that spot,  
a lonely flower is found.  
And then a horse may wander by  
and graze upon that flower  
That once was you and now has become  
your vegetated bower.  
And now the flower the horse done eat  
along with his other feed  
'Makes bone and fat and muscle,  
essential to the steed.  
But there's a part that he can't use  
and so it just passes through  
And there it lies upon the ground,  
this thing that once was you.  
And if, perchance, I should pass by  
and see this on the ground  
I'll stop awhile and ponder at  
this object that I've found.  
And I'll think about reincarnation  
and life and death and such  
But I'll come away concludin'  
—why, you ain't changed all that much.

-- Wallace McRea

curs every day of the week. Common theories regarding the occult include:

- 1) Mediumistic: poltergeists are roaming spirits of the dead;
- 2) Parapsychological: they constitute an entirely human phenomenon resulting from psychic or psychokinetic power;
- 3) Biblical: they are demons.

(1) Denies the Biblical view that the spirits of the dead are confined to heaven or hell (Mt 25:46; Lk 16:16-20; 2 Pet 2:9; Rev 20:10-15; Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:6-8; Lk 16:22-26.) These views are often incorporated in the belief in reincarnation. (See poem.)

(2) Re: Dr. J. B. Rhine, Parapsychology Lab, Duke University, et al. Also, now, New Age related. Difficult to explain without recourse to supernatural phenomena and refuted in current Biblically based re-



search.<sup>25</sup> Necromancy also expressly forbidden in Scripture: Deut 18:9-12. Modern views are attempts to discredit the Biblical view. The trap of poltergeist phenomena is to cause unsuspecting people to assume the truth of the occult world view such as mediumism (“channeling”), witchcraft, reincarnation and paganism. The enforced paganism in Federally supported schools is frightening.

Demons have a vested interest in Halloween because it supports the occult, and also offers novel and unexpected opportunities to control on influence people. Cf. Deut 18:10-12.

## **The Biblical Realities**

Afterlife myths refuted: Heb 9:27; Jn 8:24; Heb 2:3, 12:25; Mt 25:46. Unsaved dead presently confined in a place of torment; saved dead are in glory with Christ: Lk 16:19-31; 2 Pet 2:9; Phil 1:23; 2 Cor 5:6,8. Poltergeist events grant spiritual authority to the occultists (psychic, spiritist, medium, channeler, parapsychologist, psychical researcher...) These often serve to mask the real activity of the demons.

## **Spirits in Control**

Wherever psychic powers are found, the spirit world is also found. Psychic power comes from the spirit world. It is not a natural, human ability. People are not necessarily aware that spirits are indwelling them. Part of the deception is for the subject to assume that they have a “natural” psychic ability. [The girl with the apparent power of divination lost her skill when the demon was cast out: Acts 16:16-19.]

## **“White” Witchcraft?**

Witchcraft is the most common theme of Halloween. Witchcraft is always evil.<sup>26</sup> Revisionist his-

tory continues to cast the witch and neo-pagan communities as those who would help both mankind and planet Earth itself. (“White” witchcraft is an attempt to promote a alleged difference from “black” that is no more than an alluring deception.) Painting witchcraft in a good, positive (“white”) light is the reason for the success of witchcraft—along with the general breakdown of Western culture. Halloween practices open the door to the occult and can introduce forces into people’s lives that they are not equipped to combat.<sup>27</sup>

## Contemporary Witchcraft

A standard book on neo-paganism highlights *Samhain* (Halloween) as one of the “greater sabbats” for the celebration of witchcraft.<sup>28</sup> Some witches even request a day off from work for their special day while others have actually sought to have schools closed to commemorate their great sabbat.

Most satanic groups consider Halloween a special night as reflected in the view that Halloween “became the only day of the year in which it was believed that the devil could be invoked for help in finding out about future marriages, health, deaths, crops, and what was to happen in the near year. Satanism and witchcraft share many commonalities. Divergent emphases and differences in ritual cannot obscure the commonalities in source of power, psychic development, anti-Christian worldview, use of spirits, use of evil, etc.

There is genuine power in the occult (Isa 47:9), but it’s *demonic* power (Mt 24:24; Acts 8:7; 13:6-11; 16:16-19; 19:18-20; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 6:7-11, 22; 2 Tim 3:8). Any serious study of Biblical demonology will reveal Satan as the power behind false religion, witchcraft, idolatry and the occult (Deut 32:16,17; Ps 106:35-40; Acts 16:16-19; 1 Cor 10:19-21; 2 Thess 2:9, 10; 1 Tim 4:1f).

## **Biblical View of Satan**

- An apostate angel who fell from heaven (Lk 10:18; Jude; Rev 12:9)
- “Tempter” (1 Thess 3:5)
- “Wicked,” “Evil” (Mt 13:19)
- “God of this world” (2 Cor 4:4)
- “Prince of this world” (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
- “Dragon, Serpent” (Rev 12:9; 20:2)
- “Liar,” “Murderer” (Jn 8:44)

He has a kingdom (Mt 12:26) which is hostile to Christ’s kingdom (Mt 16:18; Lk 11:18) and he rules a realm of demons (Mt 9:34). He deceives the whole world (Rev 12:9; 13:14), works in the children of disobedience (Eph 2:2) and even among the apostles (Mt 16:23; Lk 22:31; Jn 13:2). He opposes the people of God (1 Chr 21:1; Zech 3:2; Acts 5:3; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Thess 2:18) and sows the seeds of error and doubt in the church (Mt 13:39). Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers (Mk 4:15; Acts 26:18; 2 Cor 4:4) and is capable of possessing men (Jn 13:27). He has the power of death (Heb 2:14) and prowls about like a roaring lion seeking those he may devour (1 Pet 5:8). His key abilities are power, deception and cunning. He is the cunning enemy of all men (Isa 47:9; Mt 6:13; 9:34; Lk 8:12; Jn 8:44; 13:27; Acts 16:18; 2 Cor 2:11; 4:4; 11:3; Col 1:13; 2 Thess 2:9; 2 Tim 2:26).

He has great power (2 Thess 2:9), subtlety (Gen 3:1), treacherous snares (2 Tim 2:26), wiles (Eph 6:11), devices (2 Cor 2:11), and transforming, impersonating abilities (2 Cor 11:14). He is mentally unbalanced and self-deluded: He attempted to gain the worship of God Himself (Mk 1:13; Mt 4:1-10)!

## **Salem Witch Trials**

The burning of witches at the Salem witch trials continues to be a source of distortion and a great

irony of revisionistic history. For example, in the 1692 trials, Christians were accused, Christians died, Christians tried to stop the trials, and still Christianity gets the blame. Far more ministers were making a stand *against* prosecution than were lending themselves to it.<sup>29</sup>

### **Biblical Example: Saul & the Witch of Endor**

In his preoccupation with his pursuit of his rival David, Saul neglected the growing Philistine threat to Israel. The Philistines undertook a new strategy and marched into the Jezreel Valley where they could use their chariots to advantage, thus cutting Saul off from the northern tribes. David at this time was not only in the Philistine army, but had also been appointed the bodyguard for King Achish (1 Sam 28:1-2). David's ambiguous response to Achish regarding his participation in the war with Israel was a stall for time, anticipating God's deliverance from his predicament. Samuel was dead. No encouraging word from the Lord would be forthcoming (1 Sam 28:3). Saul had removed mediums from the land and those delving in the realm of the occult (cf. Deut 18:9-13; Ex 22:18; Lev 19:31).

#### **The Military Situation**

The Philistines were encamped at Shunem, a city in the Valley of Jezreel, situated on the south slope of the Hill of Moreh. The Israelite forces were camped 5 miles to the south at Mount Gilboa (1 Sam 28:4; cf. 31:1). Saul was so afraid that his heart "trembled greatly" (1 Sam 28:5). He was gripped with fear.

Saul inquired of the Lord, but the heavens were silent. God did not respond by dreams as He had

to Joseph, or by the Urim and Thummim as He had to the high priest, or by prophetic revelation as He had with Samuel (26:6).

(The comment of the chronicler (1 Chr 10:14) is not a contradiction, but points to the fact that Saul went to the medium for counsel rather than *persistently* seeking a word from the Lord.) That was not a harsh or unjust act on God's part, for Saul had been given many opportunities to repent and discover God's Will, but he had refused to do so (cf 19:23-24).

### **The Pursuit of the Occult**

With the heavens silent, Saul sought out a medium to enable him to determine the outcome of the battle with the Philistines. Saul was informed by his servants that at Endor, between Mount Tabor and the Hill of Moreh, there lived a medium who had escaped his purge (1 Sam 28:3,7). (The Hebrew phrase indicates a "mistress of necromancy," that is, one who consults the dead to determine the future.) The Old Testament law forbade occultic practices of any kind and called for the death penalty on any who would consult mediums (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut 18:10-11). This was literally fulfilled in the case of Saul.

Saul disguised himself and traveled under the cover of darkness to Endor to consult the medium. Assuring her that she would not be punished for practicing her forbidden profession (Ex 22:18), he requested that she bring up Samuel from the dead (1 Sam 28:11). The medium carried out Saul's instructions, but rather than using the tricks of her trade to deceive Saul, she was shocked to see an old man appear who Saul identified as Samuel (1 Sam 28:14)!

## **Alternative Views**

Some have suggested that the appearance of Samuel was psychological—in the mind of Saul. However, the woman also saw Samuel (v.12); and Saul actually talked with Samuel (v.15).

Some of the early church fathers held the view that a demon impersonated Samuel and appeared to Saul. But the message in 1 Sam 28:16-19 would have hardly come from a demon. Still others have concluded that the medium was a fraud and tricked Saul into thinking that he saw Samuel. Yet the medium was surprised herself by Samuel's appearance (1 Sam 28:12) and that would not have been the case if it were a conspired trick.

## **The Rabbinical View**

The traditional rabbinical view is that verses 12-19 record a genuine appearance of Samuel that God Himself brought about. There are at least 5 arguments that favor this view:

- 1) The medium was surprised, indicating that something happened that she was not expecting (1 Sam 28:12);
- 2) Saul identified the figure as Samuel and bowed down in respect for the prophet. It is unlikely that Saul, who knew Samuel so well, would easily have been tricked by an impersonation;
- 3) The message that Samuel spoke was clearly from God (1 Sam 28:16-19);
- 4) The Biblical text itself says that the figure was Samuel (1 Sam 28:12,15,16). It is clear that the intent of the Scripture is for the reader to understand that Samuel actually appeared to Saul.
- 5) A similar appearance of one returned from the dead occurs at the Transfiguration (Mt 17:3).

## **The Prophet's Counsel**

Samuel proceeded to remind Saul that the kingdom had been taken from him because of his disobedience in the Amalekite war (1 Sam 28:17-18). He then predicted Israel's defeat and the deaths of Saul and his sons at the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam 28:19).

Samuel never really answered Saul's initial question, "What should I do?" There was nothing that could be done. Because of his disobedience, his fate was sealed. Saul was understandably terrified because of the message of doom that Samuel had communicated to him (1 Sam 28:21). Judgment was imminent and certain. All that had been Saul's as king would soon be lost because of his rebellion and contempt for God's will. Having eaten, Saul departed with his servants to return to the camp of Israel.

## **The Defeat at Mount Gilboa**

The battle was a disaster from the beginning. Saul's army was quickly routed, then slaughtered, including Saul's sons: Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua. The king himself was wounded by an arrow. In agony, Saul begged his armor-bearer to thrust him through with a sword but he refused. In desperation, Saul fell on his own sword and ended his life in ignominy.

Ironically, Saul accomplished what David had refused to do—to take the life of the Lord's anointed king. So great was Israel's defeat that many of the cities in northern Israel were abandoned as their citizens fled to regions safe from the Philistine menace. As a result, the Philistines were able to occupy many Israelite cities (1 Sam 31:7).

When Saul's body was found by the Philistines, they dishonored it by cutting off the head, stripping off the armor and hanging the naked body on a wall in the open square of Beth-Shean (1 Sam 31:1-10; 1 Chr 10:1-10). The armor was put on public display in a temple. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, whom Saul had helped early in his reign (11:1-11) at great risk, removed the bodies from the wall of Beth-Shean and gave them proper burial<sup>30</sup> (31:11-13). A week of fasting as a sign of public mourning for the king was observed. Saul appeared to be full of promise as a young man, but proved impulsive, prideful, and ended his own life in disgrace. The great failure of Saul as king was his lack of obedience to the will and word of God (cf. 15:22-23).

## **A Halloween Project?**

Every year, many people are perplexed as to how to deal with the children's celebrations surrounding Halloween. On the one hand, participating in the perpetuation of the usual pagan (and occultic) rituals are hardly the enterprise of a Biblical Christian. On the other hand, creating constructive alternatives can be challenging.

"For a Christian to celebrate Halloween is like asking a Holocaust survivor to celebrate Hitler's birthday."  
Pat Matrisciana

Many churches and families organize a "Harvest" festival with games, prizes, etc., as an alternative party opportunity. These are gaining widespread interest and are to be encouraged. There is also an appeal to organizing a drama event to involve the older children and one candidate for such an effort could be *Saul and the Witch of Endor*, as a play.<sup>31</sup> Other Alternatives: Martin Luther: let the class research and write their own biographies. Or read



"The Lady is not for burning," a secular classic by Christopher Frey.

## **Aliens?**

Another modern "packaging" of the occult: UFO's. Numerous researchers, who have set out to "debunk" the UFO tales, have come back convinced they're real. The evidences point to parapsychical aspects. The messages they present clearly identify them as demonic. Possible link to the Nephilim of Genesis 6. "As the days of Noah were..." [See *The Flood of Noah* or our *Expositional Commentary on Genesis* for background.] Both Hal Lindsey and Dave Hunt have mentioned publicly that they would not be surprised if the Coming World Leader, when he arrives, will boast of a special "alien" connection... For more info, see Ankerberg and Weldon's *The Facts on UFO's and Other Supernatural Phenomena*.

## **Protection**

Spiritual discernment needed. Intellect alone is insufficient. "If it were possible, it would deceive the very elect." (Mt 24:24).

## **The Armor of God**

Put on the whole armor of God: an essential imperative. Put it on before, not during the battle.

Girded with Truth  
Breastplate of Righteousness  
Shoes with the preparation of the gospel  
Shield of Faith  
Helmet of Salvation  
Sword of the Spirit

Heavy artillery: prayer (cf. *Armor for the Age of Deceit* briefing package).

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- Also the video, *Halloween: Trick or Treat*, Jeremiah Films, Hemet CA.

### Notes (Many citations courtesy of John Ankerberg):

1. Jennifer deCoursey, "Monster Event for Marketers," *Advertising Age*, Oct 16, 1995, p.1,40.
2. The other three festivals were Lughnasad, August 1 (known in England as *Lammas*, and in Ireland as *Bronntroghain*); Beltaine, May 1 ("Bel" was the ruler of the Celtic underworld; "taine" means fire; in Ireland this festival was also known as *Samradhor Cetsamain*; in Wales it was *Cyntefun*); and *Oimelc*, February 1 (known in Ireland as *Earrach*).
3. Encyclopedia Britannica, "Celtic Religion."
4. Julius Caesar, *Commentaries*, Book 6, Chapter 18.
5. Lewis Spence, *The History and Origins of Druidism*, Aquarian Press, London, 1971, p.104ff.
6. "Celtic Religion", Encyclopedia Britannica Macropaedia.
7. Spence, p.159. And Encyclopedia Britannica.
8. Robert J. Meyers, *Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays*, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New York, 1972, p.259.
9. This custom originated with a vision of the Catholic Saint Odilo, Abbot of Glugny, who died in 1048. Ethel L. Urlin, *Festivals, Holy Days and Saint's Days: A Study in Origins and Survivals in Church Ceremonies and Secular Customs*, Simplin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., London, 1915, p.201.
10. Dorothy Gladys Spicer, *Festivals of Western Europe*, H. W.

Wilson, New York, 1958, p.17.

11. Urlin, p.202.
12. Spicer, p.47.
13. Ruth Hutchison and Ruth Adams, *Every Day's a Holiday*, Harper & Bros., New York, 1951, p.236.
14. Meyers, p.258.
15. Paul wrote a trilogy on Hab. 2:4, quoting in three of his epistles: Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; and Heb 10:38. (Assuming Paul wrote Hebrews.)
16. Manuscript by his son D. Paul Luther preserved in the library at Rudolstadt, quoted by F.W. Boreham in *A Bunch of Everlastings or Texts That Made History*, Philadelphia, 1920, p.20. Also, see Courson, p.33-38.
17. Meyers, p.260.
18. Joseph Gaer, *Holidays Around the World*, Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1955, pp.155-56.
19. Sue Ellen Thompson and Barbara W. Carlons, *Holidays, Festivals, and Celebrations of the World Dictionary*, Omnigraphics Inc., Detroit, 1994, p.132.
20. DeCoursey, p.41.
21. See *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*, Harvest House, Eugene OR 1996.
22. Cited in *Christianity Today*, November 17, 1989, p.50.
23. Andrew Greeley, "Mysticism goes Mainstream," *American Health*, January-February 1987.
24. Robert Curran, *The Haunted: One Family's Nightmare*, St. Martins Press, New York, 1988, p.101.
25. *Cult Watch*, Harvest House, Eugene OR 1991, pp.257-81.
26. *The Coming Darkness*, Harvest House Publisher, Eugene OR 1993.
27. Russ Parker, *Battling the Occult*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downer's Grove IL, 1990, p.35.
28. Margaret Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess worshipers, and other Pagans in America Today*, the Viking Press, New York, 1979, p.108.
29. Marion L. Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Inquiry into the Salem Witch Trials*; Aida Besoncon Spencer, et al., *The Goddess Revival*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids MI 1995, pp.198-99.
30. Cremation was not a normal Hebrew practice (Gen 38:24; Lev 20:14; 21:9; Josh 7:25). In this instance, the bodies were probably burned and mutilated by the Philistines.
31. The results of a play writing contest held a few years ago are available through K-House.



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