

Is Halloween Really the Devil's Day?

I will never forget the awkwardness of that moment. We had moved recently to North Carolina into a home across the road from a horse farm. My young children were obsessed with the horses that grazed along the fence, and we regularly took them treats. *Toy Story 2* had just released, so it was no surprise they wanted to dress up as Woody and Jessie for Halloween. They already felt like a bona fide cowgirl and cowboy.

We set out in the wagon and began knocking on doors. Because we had just moved across the country, we didn't really know many of our neighbors and had been at our new church for less than two months. A few homes into the evening, we got to the top of one driveway and rang the bell. My new pastor answered the door. My heart dropped. What were his views on celebrating "the devil's day" as many called it?

A broad smile immediately swept across his face. "Welcome!" he said joyfully. "I didn't realize we were neighbors!" as he dropped candy into my children's bags. "Thank you," I stammered, still a little off guard. He must have picked up on my surprise because he chuckled, "Do you find it strange that your minister passes out candy on Halloween? Go three doors down and you'll know why."

We made our way up the street and in no time, we came to a home full of glowing pumpkins. On closer look, I noticed every single one had a cross carved into them somewhere. As we rang the bell a cheerful woman wearing a ladybug costume greeted me. "Pastor Mark wanted me to ask you why he participates in Halloween," I shrugged, feeling a little weird.

She got a twinkle in her eye and shook her head. "My kids are teenagers now, but about five years ago, when we first moved

into the neighborhood, I met Pastor Mark on Halloween when I took my kids trick-or-treating. When he realized we were new in town, he and his wife came and brought us some pumpkin bread the following week. That conversation led to another, until one night, Pastor Mark sat in our living room with us while we prayed to receive Christ. Our oldest son is going on his first mission trip next summer. Some people may claim Halloween to be the devil's day, but that night, the devil lost our family!"

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

The History of Halloween

Historically, Halloween dates back to the first century with a Druid Celtic festival called Samhain. In ancient Ireland, where all livelihood and survival directly tied to the land, they would light bonfires while gathering in the final harvest and offer sacrifices in preparation for a long, dark winter, which was often the time of year associated with death, due to the harshness of the climate. When Ireland became conquered by the Romans, two of their festivals became combined with it: Feralia, which was a commemoration of the dead, and a festival for Pomona, the goddess of fruit and trees. We see the connection today between sweets and bobbing for apples.

In A.D. 609, Pope Boniface reclaimed the holiday as a day to honor Christian martyrs, and in the ninth century, Pope Gregory expanded the day to All Saints' Day, in which both martyrs and expired saints were honored. By A.D. 1000, the holiday became known as All Souls' Day, in which people honored the previous generations of Christ-followers and dressed up as angels and devils. Think of it as the first hellfire and brimstone sermon on display: Which one will you become when you die, an angel in heaven or a devil down below? It was called "All Hallows' Day" and the night before "Hallow

Eve.” “Hallowed” means “sacred” or “set apart,” and it is where we get the word “Halloween.”

Modern Halloween

In the 1920s, with the introduction of the cult of Wicca, its adherents reintroduced many ancient pagan practices, including preparation for the winter solstice, in similarity to the ancient Celtic druids. The founders of Wicca have a strong tie to occult leaders and the day became synonymous with the devil. Christians today sense a rise in the dark rituals of Halloween, which can presumably be traced to the increase in Wicca and occult members in America, compared to 50 years ago when they were fringe religions with minimal adherents.

Light in the Darkness

Popes Boniface and Gregory sought to infuse the dark aspects of this traditional festival by focusing on the light of miraculously changed lives due to Christ. Pastor Mark chose to shine the light of Christ as well. Modern practitioners of Wicca and the occult seek to revive pagan influence. Darkness only prevails when the light has been extinguished. While Christians must follow personal convictions about turning on their porch light and welcoming their neighbors, we hear the words to describe our Savior, who left the glorious light of heaven to come down to this dark, broken earth:

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it” (John 1:5, NLT).

What does shining the light of Jesus look like for your family on Halloween? {eoa}

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

Erica Wighorn is the founder of Every Life Ministries, teaching biblical principles to transform your life. She is

the author of the Unexplainable Bible Study series released by Moody Publishers and teaches regularly on biblical topics in both local and national venues. To learn more about her ministry or connect with her, visit .