

Ghosts, Ghouls and Goblins: Halloween's Devilish Connections

Over the past millennium or so, in many westernized countries, October 31st was observed among Christians with a special church service or “vigil” in the evening, just before the Christian feast of All Hallows’ Day or “All Saints” day on November 1st, followed on the 2nd with “All Souls Day.”

These were occasions in the Christian liturgical year to remember and honor the “saints” and martyrs of the church as well as departed loved ones. The name of this spiritual observance, “All Hallows’ evening,” became contracted in English speech as Hallowe’en or **Halloween**.

Immigrants brought many secular Halloween customs from Europe to North America, including some pagan ideas and unbiblical practices. Eventually, this “end-of-Fall” event incorporated devilish connections and spiritualist emphases about ghosts, ghouls or goblins. Macabre and menacing decorations and costumes seem to dominate the season for many non-believers. Even some modern, confessing believers decorate as much or more for Halloween as they do for Christmas!

Fearful feelings about death (Heb. 2:15) and the eternal judgments of God, which will follow in the afterlife, may grip many during these days and become a “place” [Greek, “topos,” meaning “territory”] whereby the devil may take the “opportunity” to get a “foothold” (Eph. 4:27) in many lives or even whole families!

What Happens After We Die?

As human beings, we are the highest of God’s creation and are ultimately distinct from animals by having a spirit or God-

consciousness and commitment. We were physically born with what philosopher Blaise Pascal expressed—nearly 400 years ago—as a “God-shaped hole” and our souls/spirits are restless until we seek and find Him to fill that hole.

We are spirit-beings who each have a tangible, physical body and an intangible soul and spirit. The soul is our human consciousness (our intellect, emotions and will), while our spirits are our God-consciousness (as revealed in nature and confirmed in the depths of our hearts). When physical death occurs, one’s soul/spirit departs from his physical body. Our Lord’s brother James clearly explained, “For as the body without the spirit is dead...” (James 2:26a, MEV).

Where our spirit goes upon our demise depends on our spiritual relationship to God at that point; that is are we viewed in God’s sight as righteous or unrighteous? According to Jesus, we must die with a pure heart in order to see God (Matt. 5:8) and qualify to ultimately go home to our Father’s house (John 14:1-3). This pure heart is an eternal gift—freely offered by Christ’s redeeming work on the Cross of Calvary (John 3:16-21). It can be imputed to our account with God (Rom. 8:1-17), giving us right standing with Him and making us righteous in His sight.

The apostle Paul taught the Corinthian believers:

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. Instead, I say that we are confident and willing to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:6-8).

None are Righteous—Naturally

Paul quotes the psalmist when he taught that we are “all are under sin” and “there is none righteous, no, not one;” (14:1-3; 53:1-3). In Romans 3:21-25, he taught that the righteousness of God is available to us “through faith in

Jesus Christ," by whom we can be justified in God's sight because of the ransom paid by the substitute sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Romans 10:9-10 explains we must:

- ADMIT we are sinners and in need of a savior
- BELIEVE in our hearts that Jesus is God's Son, who died to satisfy the Father's just requirements and redeem us from eternal damnation.
- CONFESS our sins to Him, seek His forgiveness and then tell others about His saving grace and transforming power.

Alternatively, if a person dies in an unrighteous condition, he or she will immediately go to a place of torment (see Luke 15:23, 28; Jude 7; Rev. 14:10-11; Ps. 11:6; Matt. 13:42-43; 25:30, etc.) until the end of time when her or his soul is resurrected and they must give account "according to their works" before Father God at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

There is no ultimate "soul sleep" nor mere annihilation, as some wrongly teach. In that ultimate Day of Judgment, "Anyone not found written in the Book of Life.." (Rev. 20:15) will be cast into the lake of fire as their final and eternal torment (19:20; 20:10; Matt. 25:46).

Our Entrance into Eternity

Upon our deaths, our physical bodies will become corrupt while we all enter into a temporary spiritual state as we await our future, resurrected bodies, perfectly prepared and equipped for our celestial, eternal destinies (1 Cor. 15:40-49).

Our resurrected bodies will be like Christ's. You may recall that during the 40 days of post-resurrection appearances, He was observed and recognized. He still had nail prints in His hands and was able to eat food with His disciples, and yet He

could materialize at will and pass through locked doors (John 20; Luke 24). The miraculous catch of fish and breakfast with His disciples on the seashore of Galilee (John 21) demonstrated His continued supernatural power and presence. We can't begin to imagine the spiritual dimensions of our future throughout eternity.

The Bible tells us God has set eternity in the human heart (Eccl. 3:11). We instinctively long for it and desire it but the god of this world would deceive us and keep us from the eternal destiny, which our Creator God has designed for us.

Let us consciously resist the devil and renounce his evil intentions and wicked ways. Let us keep short accounts with God, regularly and humbly confessing our sins and daily seeking the transforming work of His Holy Spirit, "by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:1-2). {eoa}

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