

Thank God for Halloween

Whenever I think of Halloween, my memory immediately goes back to when I was in third grade. I wore a Batman costume. Remember when they made the mask out of the most inexpensive plastic manufactured and it was held on your head by a single rubber band stapled into place? The hole for you to breathe through had to be smaller than the eye of a needle. And, when you arrived at the front door to shout, "trick or treat," you could only muster a muffled attempt at sound. Once I accomplished the goal of attaining the treat, I would lift the mask in order to examine my bounty, only to find that I literally dripped sweat. I spent most of my evening drying my face and wishing that more neighbors would give the cherished Snickers or M&M's.

Now that I am all grown up, I've traded in my costume for a much more fulfilling Halloween experience; I no longer wear a mask while in costume! Oh yes, I still enjoy the festive occasion of visiting my neighbors in the attempt to attain those Snickers or M&M's. And, I would say that I (almost) deserve the prized candy while donning my Goofy costume.

Goofy's my favorite Disney character because he lives life simply and seems to enjoy himself so much. I know, you're thinking that someone who's goofy might not be the smartest in the pack, but you've got to admit, as one grows up, we have a real tendency to not allow ourselves to be goofy and enjoy life. So, I choose to wear my mask-less Goofy costume with the awesome hat with ears. I don't even mind putting on a little make-up. But, only once a year will I wear make-up!

You may ask yourself, "Hey, why isn't this guy taking Halloween more seriously? Doesn't he know that it is evil?" Yes, I know. I used to be a Satanist. And, I used to take Halloween very seriously—so seriously that I believed the lies that are associated with Halloween.

Anton Szandor LaVey, the founder of the Satanic Church in 1966 and proclaimed author of *The Satanic Bible* was someone I used to listen to for “spiritual” growth. He stated that after one’s own birthday, the two major satanic holidays are Walpurgisnacht and Halloween. I literally took him at his word. But, how good *is* his word?

LaVey’s real name is Howard Stanton Levey, and he didn’t really even write *The Satanic Bible*. He came up with a much more theatrical name and plagiarized the works of Ragnar Redbeard, John Dee and Ayn Rand. (For more information on who LaVey really was, go to)

LaVey states what Halloween is in *The Satanic Bible*, but he never gave a reason for it *being* a major holiday. Nor did he ever give a method of observing such a major holiday for the Satanist. The Satanist who follows LaVey’s teachings is left without direction. One is left on his own. I bring all of this up about LaVey because I have read and heard too many Christians stating that Halloween is evil because they take LaVey at his word. I’ve learned my lesson. I no longer listen to Mr. Howard Stanton Levey.

So, what is Halloween all about? Many have heard unsubstantiated reports of Halloween beginning with the ancient Druids. Truth be told, we know very little about the Druids. We do know that ancient civilizations were prone to superstitions. And superstition from early pagan civilizations is primarily where we get the belief that the veil between the living and the dead is most thin on the eve of Oct. 31.

Because of this false belief, many pagans participated in condemning practices. We know this. We know that witches of old and today build bonfires for reasons that God Himself condemns. We know that “bobbing” for apples was used as a means of divination. Again, divination is a condemned practice in Deuteronomy 18:10. We know there are a lot of things going on at Halloween that we need not participate in, like the lies

and superstitions about Halloween.

As a Christian, my life is to honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. And the way I do that is by knowing the truth. Jesus promised me that knowing the truth would set me free. The truth sets one free of lies. And lies, when acted upon, result in bondage. That's exactly what occurs in pagan civilizations—both ancient and today. They do not have revealed truth. But the Christian does. We're not left "in the dark" seeking hidden knowledge. God has revealed Himself in His Son and the Bible.

I simply love this verse and live its truth: "He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).

I'm not to be dominated by darkness—especially in my mindset. Satan is no more active on Halloween than any other day of the year, yet so many of us allow ourselves to be dominated by fear—for no reason.

Enjoy Halloween! How? By being free! I know that the theme of death surrounds the celebration of Halloween. I know that the activities of Halloween had pagan beginnings. I know that there are even criminally minded occultists that do very evil things on Halloween. But that doesn't nullify the reality that we are not to be dominated by all of this. We can celebrate life instead of death. We can participate in activities without compromising our Christian faith.

Let me explain this one: Bobbing for apples may have been used as a means of divination, but when I bob, I'm not divining anything. I'm simply attempting to get an apple out of the water without drowning! I'm playing and enjoying myself—free from the pagan practice. And since there may be criminally minded occultists out there doing very evil things on Halloween, I as a Holy-Spirit-filled Christian, should be out

there doing very godly things.

How are you going to celebrate Halloween? I plan to be Goofy, enjoy life, enjoy God and participate in a godly manner by sharing His love with the pagans.

Jeff Harshbarger nearly lost his life to Satanism. He now has a master's degree in Christian counseling, and is an ordained minister with Calvary Chapel. His latest book, *Dancing with the Devil* (Charisma House), released in September. Jeff and his wife, Liz, run *Refuge Ministries*, which reaches out to those who are involved in the occult, Satanism, Wicca and Witchcraft.