

The Meaning of “Halloween” or “All Saints Day”

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Dear All

It is quite clear that people do not really understand the meaning of the word “Halloween” or even “All Saints Day”. They sadly celebrate in a way that supports the worship of Satan.

People sadly try to make it easy and fun for the children, forgetting the fact that many people started teaching their children to have fun in this satanic celebrations and ended up in a terrible thing for those who believes this fun activities. These people now worship Satan and built for him churches called “Lucifer Church”; as I am sure you all have seen and heard of it happening in Michigan and South America.

Do you see the danger of allowing children to have the wrong “fun”? Please do not underestimate the participation of your children in these activities and dress them up in devilish costumes or any other costume whatsoever. Come to church and let’s celebrate the Eve of St. Mary’s Feast, St. Reweis, Joel the prophet, Lazarus and all the Christian saints; as the church taught us.

Anyway, instead of making my own writing and description, I thought to share with you some of the writing of the church fathers, adding just a few verses in Arabic to help our Arabic readers.

Let’s get started.

Halloween Hallowed or Harmful? H.G. Bishop Suriel

The subject of Halloween is something that has caught my attention over the last few weeks. Some might ask Why?

As this is a natural part of life in America and Canada, they may add that: “this is the second important occasion on our yearly calendar after Christmas. It is a fun time for us and our children, who dress up in a scary clothes and go around trick or treating and having lots of fun.

Fun? I am not so sure about that? Can we call dressing up our children as vampires, ghosts, devils and witches as fun? As I passed through some stories, I was some what surprised by how much impact Halloween played in people lives. It was everywhere, in shopping centers, banks, hospitals, households, everywhere you could see signs of people preparing for this “fun” celebration. I was even asked by one person in a retail store where I had obtained my black gown, because this was exactly what she was looking for, for a Halloween party! When I replied “from Egypt”, she became so sad, perhaps because she expected me to tell her which costume shop I had bought it from!

We also need to realize that Halloween is a big business in America and Canada. The Christian Broadcasting Network states that, “Merchants also look forward to October 31. The sale of candy, costumes, decorations, and party goods make Halloween one of the major retail seasons of the year”.

In a book called “Halloween and Satanism” it states, “Did you know that Halloween is a day witches celebrate above all other days?... Even the Internal Revenue Services has given tax exempt status to the church of Wicca (the official church of witchcraft), which means your gift to witchcraft is a tax deductible, charitable donation of a religious nature, the same as if you were tithing to the (Christian) Church”.

So how did Halloween begin? Many centuries before the birth of Christ, the Celts and priests, inhabitants of Britain and Ireland, observed the festival of Samhain on October 31 (Samhain is their god, lord of the dead), this marked the eve of the Celtic New Year, which began on November 1.

It was at this time that full harvest was complete and winter was creeping in. The Celts believed that the power of the Sun was fading and for the next few months, darkness would prevail. They also believed that during the Samhain, the evil separating the living and the dead was at its thinnest. They believed that on the evening of October 31, evil spirits and souls of the dead passed through the barrier and entered the world of the living. Departed family members would revisit their earthly homes. The thought was frightening and exciting!

The Celts believed that these spirits and dead souls could torment the living. Crops might be destroyed, babies stolen, farm animals killed. But this was also an opportunity to commune with the spirits, and divine the future. The Devil, the lord of darkness, was ordinarily feared, but during Samhain, his power would be called on to foretell the future.

Trick or Treat

The Druids were responsible for appeasing the goblins and preventing harm to the people. Huge Samhain bonfires were lit to guide the way of the spirits. Various sacrifices, including human, were performed to assure a good year. Like many pagan cultures around the world, the Celts left out food for the spirits, hoping that a “treat” would prevent an evil “trick”.

Centuries later, descendants of the Celts continued to observe the Samhain festival by dressing as evil spirits. They roamed from house to house demanding food in exchange for the “spirits” leaving the home unharmed. They craved demon faces in hollowed-out turnips and lighted them with candles. This is what is called “Jack-O-Lantern”. The story says that an Irish drunkard named Jack made a deal with the devil and devil agreed to spare his soul for ten years. But a year later, Jack died and was turned back from the gates of heaven. So he went to the gates of hell and was rejected by the devil also. So as Jack was walking to find a place, he was eating a turnip so the devil threw him a live coal out of the fires of the hell. So Jack put the coal in the turnip to help him see. It is believed that since that time Jack is roaming the face of the earth with the Jack-O-Lantern seeking a place of rest. I hope such a story that is rooted in devil worship will make people think carefully before they put a Jack-O-Lantern in their house!

Just as people once offered gifts of food to the spirits, people today offer treats to the children who represent them. In reality, the lighted Jack-O-Lanterns, the children carry, are really a symbol of the fires and torches of former Halloweens and of the ancient Samhain. This was the beginning of the trick or treat!

All Hallows' Eve

In the seventh century, the Roman Catholic Church set aside a day in May in memory of the early Christians who died for their faith. It was called "All Saints Day". By the year 900 the date was changed to November 1st. Another name for "All Saints Day" was "All Hallows". October 31st was known as "All Hallows Eve", which was later shortened to Halloween. The reason for the change of the date was an attempt to encourage people to replace this evil celebration with a holy feast.

Halloween in America

Halloween with all its customs arrived in America in the mid-1800's with the Irish immigrants. The costumes of the Children going "trick or treating" have become an established American tradition. Only in recent years have parents hesitated to send their children into streets because of the increased danger of accidents, poisoned food, and menacing strangers.

People today might be innocently imitating the ancient Celtic customs, but in an indirect way they are participating and celebrating something sinister and evil. The Christian Broadcasting Network states that, "Witches and Satanists still consider Halloween to be one of the strongest times during the year to cast a spell". On Halloween most witchcraft practitioners participate in ritual called "drawing down the moon". In this, the chief witch of the coven (group of witches) becomes, they believe, a channel for the moon goddess. During this ritual, the participants both male and female are "sky-clad" that is, naked... Evidence persists that some Satanist and voodoo groups offer sacrifices - usually animals but possibly human babies.

The Biblical Response to Halloween

People celebrating Halloween today are naturally not thinking about the darkness and evil that underlies most Halloween practices. They are just thinking of it as a fun time. Some might say, "Surely, you cannot deny children or adults the fun of the Halloween just because of its past hideous history. Can there be anything wrong with lighthearted raging?"

Let us see what the Bible says

In the Book of Deuteronomy, God gives clear instructions to His people concerning associating with such practices:

✠ "متى دخلت الارض التي يعطيك الرب إلهك لا تتعلم ان تفعل مثل رجس اولئك الأمم. لا يوجد فيك من يجيز ابنه او ابنته في النار ولا من يعرف عرافة ولا عائف ولا متفائل ولا ساحر. ولا من يرقى رقية ولا من يسال جانا أو تابعة ولا من يستشير الموتى" (تثنية 18: 9 – 11)

✠ "When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. These shall not be found among you anymore who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who

conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead” (Deuteronomy 18: 9 - 11).

In the Second Book of Kings, it says:

✠ "وَعَبَرُوا بَنِيهِمْ وَبَنَاتِهِمْ فِي النَّارِ وَعَرَفُوا عِرَافَةً وَتَفَاعَلُوا وَبَاعُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ لِعَمَلِ الشَّرِّ فِي عَيْنِي الرَّبِّ لِإِغَاظَتِهِ" (2 ملوك 17: 17)

✠ “And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger” (2 kings 17:17)

So, all of these practices God saw as evil, and angered Him.

Saint Paul mentioned witchcraft amongst the works of the flesh saying:

✠ "وَأَعْمَالُ الْجَسَدِ الظَّاهِرَةِ الَّتِي هِيَ زَنَى عَهَارَةَ نَجَاسَةِ دَعَارَةٍ. عِبَادَةُ الْاَوْثَانِ سِحْرٍ عِدَاوَةٌ خِصَامٍ غَيْرَةٌ سَخَطٌ تَحَزْبٌ شِقَاقٌ بَدْعَةٌ. حَسَدٌ قَتْلٌ سَكْرٌ بَطْرٌ وَامْتِثَالٌ هَذِهِ الَّتِي اسْبِقُ فَأَقُولُ لَكُمْ عَنْهَا كَمَا سَبَقْتُ فَقُلْتُ أَيْضًا أَنْ الَّذِينَ يَفْعَلُونَ مِثْلَ هَذِهِ لَا يَرِثُونَ مَلَكُوتَ اللَّهِ" (غَلَاطِيَّة 5: 19 - 21)

✠ “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-21)

Also Saint John in his Revelation mentions that sorcerers:

✠ "وَأَمَّا الْخَائِفُونَ وَغَيْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالرَّجْسُونَ وَالْقَاتِلُونَ وَالزَّانِةَ وَالسَّحِرَةَ وَعِبَادَةَ الْاَوْثَانِ وَجَمِيعَ الْكَذِبَةِ فَنُصِيبُهُمْ فِي الْبَحِيرَةِ الْمَتَقَدَّةِ بِنَارٍ وَكِبْرِيَّتِ الَّذِي هُوَ الْمَوْتُ الثَّانِي" (رُؤْيَا 21: 8)

✠ “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

In the Book of Micah the prophet also, God speaks out strongly against those who practice witchcraft and the like by saying:

✠ "وَأَقْطَعُ السِّحْرَ مِنْ يَدِكَ وَلَا يَكُونُ لَكَ عَائِفُونَ. وَأَقْطَعُ تَمَاثِلِكَ الْمَنْحُوتَةَ وَأَنْصَابَكَ مِنْ وَسْطِكَ فَلَا تَسْجُدُ لِعَمَلِ يَدَيْكَ فِي مَا بَعْدَ. وَأَقْلَعُ سِوَارِيكَ مِنْ وَسْطِكَ وَأَبِيدُ مَدْنَكَ. وَبِغَضَبٍ وَغَيْظٍ أَنْتَقِمُ مِنَ الْاُمَمِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْمَعُوا" (مِيخَا 5: 12 - 15)

✠ “I will cut off sorcerers from your hand, and you shall have no soothsayers. Your carved images I will also cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst; you shall no more worship the work of your hands; I will pluck your wooden images from your midst; thus I will destroy your cities. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury on the nations that have not heard” (Micah 5:12-15)

I hope that it is clear to the beloved readers, the background behind Halloween and that it is not something, which is fun and nice. It does have evil connotations to it that we must be aware of. What does it mean as a Christian to dress your child as a witch or a devil? Is this what our Lord has asked us to teach our children? Some might say that, “this helps us to teach our children not

to be afraid of anything”. Is this the way to teach our children not to fear, or is it through the words of Christ that fear is cast out and peace and comfort prevail? I am sure the answer is clear!

Let us rethink how we spend this day. Let us educate our young people about the facts of Halloween and perhaps arrange for a spiritual meeting to replace the Halloween parties that young people attend. During this time, perhaps a lecture or discussion can be organized around this topic. It should be also a time of fervent prayer, so that our Lord Jesus Christ will protect us from all the powers of the Enemy. As we say in the Prayers of Thanksgiving. “All envy, all temptation, all works of Satan, all intrigues of the wicked, rising up of enemies, visible and invisible do cast away from us and all your people”.

Halloween
H.G. Bishop Youssef
Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

My Dear Brethren,
May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

As October 31st draws near, I want to make all uninformed Christians within our Diocese aware of certain traditions celebrated on this day, in the United States. This celebration, “Halloween,” pays tribute to Satan. Every act revolving around Halloween is in honor of false gods. False gods are spirits in the realm of the Satanic.

Many say to me, “We only do this in fun.” Others say, “We do not actually practice witchcraft.” I often ask myself how one justifies the celebration of Halloween, the day Satanists set aside as their “holy day.” I am told that children “dress up” as witches, goblins, ghosts and little devils. Let me think about this for a moment, a small child dressed to resemble Satan’s darkness.

Also, I am told of games played at Halloween festivals that promote fear in children as they are ushered through horror houses and rooms decorated with skeletons, black cats, and bats. Does this representation of death and darkness seem like fun? Certainly not to me, I am told that pumpkins designed with faces are “cute ways” to denote the present day meaning of Halloween... the literature purports that pumpkin’s with faces are symbolic of death’s head. Also around Halloween I am told of theatre movies ,which celebrate the cult of death ... Somehow I still have not found fun within all of this... Have you? Have your children? This sounds more like fixation with death and mental illness to me...

Many attempt to compromise on the celebrating of Halloween. Many think the meaning behind Halloween has become obscure today. The fact of the matter is, the actual methodology of witchcraft survives until today. When our children are taught it is “alright” to celebrate heathen practices such as “Halloween” it does not give them the repulsion and resistance they need to stand against greater satanic involvement. When celebrations such as these are taken lightly, it sets our children to accept evil rather than resist it.

Many have asked me, “What is the harm?” My answer to this question is that occultism can be seen as a threatening storm brewing on the religious horizon and becoming very strong. More specifically, let’s contemplate a moment on the origin of “Halloween,” begun as a day to give tribute and praise to the dark force of Satan. “Halloween” is derived from the word “Samhain (Sa-ween).” Samhain, the lord of the dead, called together all the wicked souls who died within the past year and that were destined to inhabit animals. The celebration of the dead honored the god of the dead on this particular night always October 31. Bonfires were lit high on mountaintops so the spirits of the dead could find their way. Suitable food and shelter were provided for these evil spirits or they would inflict havoc, cast spells, steal infants, destroy crops, kill farm animals, and instill terror as they haunted the living. This is where “trick or treat” is derived. To worship evil spirits and false gods is against scripture.

If one knows the Lord Jesus Christ before death, their spirit is already with the Lord. St Paul tells us that to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord Christ. If one is an unbeliever at death, the scripture says there is no second chance as it is appointed unto man once to die and after that judgment. Therefore, prayer for the satanic is in opposition to God’s Word and a pagan practice cannot become “Christianized.” We must make a decision to be for or against Christ. Our Christian practices must display our beliefs and be an example for others.

Furthermore, the Bible tells us:

✠ "لا يغركم أحد بكلام باطل لأنه بسبب هذه الامور يأتي غضب الله على ابناء المعصية. فلا تكونوا شركاءهم. لأنكم كنتم قبلا ظلمة واما الان فنور في الرب اسلكوا كأولاد نور. لان ثمر الروح هو في كل صلاح وير وحق. مختبرين ما هو مرضي عند الرب. ولا تشتركوا في اعمال الظلمة غير المثمرة بل بالحري وبخوها. لان الامور الحادثة منهم سرا ذكرها ايضا قبيح" (أفسس 5: 6 - 12)

✠ “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret” (Ephesians 5:6-12)

It is at this point I want the reader to stop and think about October 31st. Do we find “All Saints Day” in the Coptic Synaxarium? My Synaxarium does not include this celebration. Please let me know if yours does. I would certainly like to read this. I was under the impression we celebrated Coptic Saints throughout the ENTIRE year, not on one particular day. While you were searching in your Coptic Synaxarium did you happen to notice two very important feasts, which occur on October 31st, and another the following day? Did you know that the Commemoration of St. Mary and the Feast of Anba Roewis start on the Eve of October 31st? I am quite sure these feasts were more familiar to you as Coptic than the pagan celebration of “Halloween.” Am I correct? The following day is the Feast Day of the Great Evangelist St. Luke. I am quite sure you also knew this. Am I again correct?

I do not believe it is in Christian fellowship to celebrate Halloween. I do NOT encourage our children to dress in costumes. Costumes on this night are symbolic of celebrating Halloween. The same holds true for the acceptance of candy. Please think about the following points... Why do we not greet one another during the Holy Passion Week from Wednesday until Saturday morning? It is because we do not want to do anything symbolic of Judas kiss. Another thought to coincide with this thought is, on Holy Thursday we must complete the Divine Liturgy, according to Church Canons, before sunset. There is a reason for this. The Coptic Church does not want to have fellowship with the Jews eating at Passover. Therefore, I am telling you that any day not set aside for Halloween is okay to eat candy and wear appropriate costumes. Any day in which these practices are not symbolic of Satanic practices. There exists 364 days in which one can eat candy and wear costumes. Only one day in which one cannot.

Attend Church, the Vespers, and the Exaltation of the Saints on October 31st. Create plays and skits for the great saints St. Mary, St. Rewis, and St. Luke. The Mother of God, a poor layman who sold salt, and a Gospel Writer's life could teach us so much! Reflect upon their lives. Spiritually meet together, and then enjoy the social atmosphere of Christian fellowship, Saints' plays and Agape meal. Let's all give thanks to God for a true Christian reason to celebrate this day!

I want to close with one final thought. Using witchcraft to foretell the future was against God's Law and caused King Saul of Israel to lose his life:

✠ "فقال شاول لعبيده ففتشوا لي على امرأة صاحبة جان فاذهب اليها واسالها فقال له عبيده هوذا امرأة صاحبة جان في عين دور. فتنكر شاول ولبس ثيابا اخرى وذهب هو ورجلان معه وجاءوا الى المرأة ليلاً وقال اعرفي لي بالجان واصعدي لي من اقول لك" (1 صموئيل 28: 7 - 8)

✠ "Then Saul said to his servants, 'Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.' And his servants said to him, 'In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor.' So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, 'Please conduct a seance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you'" (1 Samuel 28:7-8)

(It should be noted that familiar spirits are nothing more than demons). Has anyone ever told you about the psychic phone lines and readings offered on television? I have been told of these things and am appalled that anyone would use these whether in jest or seriously. Foretelling the future by psychics is clearly addressed here. Read further to discover what happened to King Saul and his involvement with "familiar spirits."

The Lord's punishment upon Saul was severe and pronounced unto him that very night. He plainly tells us:

✠ "وقد فعل الرب لنفسه كما تكلم عن يدي وقد شق الرب المملكة من يدك واعطاها لقريبك داود. لأنك لم تسمع لصوت الرب ولم تفعل حمو غضبه في عماليق لذلك قد فعل الرب بك هذا الامر اليوم" (1 صموئيل 28: 17 - 18)

✠ "And The Lord has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. Because you did not obey the voice of The Lord nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore The Lord has done this thing to you this day" (1 Samuel 28:17-18).

The Bible clearly warns us to flee from the practices of the occult. It delineates the consequences and makes it forbidden to mankind. I did not find one reference to “only doing this for fun.” How can one derive “fun” from a celebration of darkness and honoring the “lord of the dead?”

Satan worship is prevalent today in middle schools and high schools. We address this issue frequently in our youth meetings. Literature searches have revealed that at least 100 million Americans practice some form of the occult. We know that using witchcraft to foretell the future was a crime that cost King Saul his life. What will be the price we will have to pay “for just having fun?”

May we pray that God will grant us all the wisdom to abstain from this dark celebration, and in all things bring honor to His Holy Name.